

“Second Chance” Street Sign Distribution Brings Smiles to the Community!

On Saturday, February 7, 2009, the Skate Park Committee distributed the street signs that were sold to winning bidders online on eBay during the second round of the Livingston Street Sign Auction. Just over \$5,000 was raised during this "second chance" auction. HCHY President Alan Karpas reported that about 500 signs were sold during the original auction while this second auction brought in sales of another 250 signs. Many shoppers had already purchased signs from the first auction and decided to buy more signs this time for a variety of reasons. Some people bought signs just because they wanted the opportunity to own a piece of "Livingston, NJ history." Almost everyone who came to pick up their signs remarked that selling these signs through an online auction was such a wonderful way to raise funds to support the building of a skate park in town; they felt that this is such a worthwhile cause.

For the second time, the Livingston Board of Education generously allowed the Committee to use the LHS Cafeteria for the sign distribution and the Livingston Public Works Department helped to make the pickup go smoothly.

Once all of the signs were alphabetized and the purchased ones set aside, the winners who came to collect their signs were given the chance to browse through the unsold signs. Nearly 75% of the people who came to pick up a sign walked out with at least one additional sign! Committee members also made phone calls to people who they thought may be interested in buying some of the remaining signs. HCHY Vice President Martha Ackermann called a friend whose son was just accepted to "Columbia" to let her know that the Columbia Road sign was still available. When the original sale took place, the family was waiting to hear as to whether he would be accepted. The woman was very appreciative to learn that the sign was still available and glad that she could still support the cause by buying the sign for her son.

Because this distribution was a bit quieter than the first, Committee volunteers had the chance to sit and talk with some people to ask them why they bought their signs. Joseph Matotto spoke about his life growing up in Livingston as a young boy. He came to buy a Beaufort Ave. sign in honor of his mother, a buttonhole maker in the garment business. Michael Silla, who just moved back to Livingston, came with his young son Joseph to pick up the street signs for Clover Lane. His grandparents built the house in 1953, and he and his family just purchased it from the current owners, who are also family members. One clever man came to buy a Maplewood Dr. sign for his wife. She is planning to open her own medical practice in Maplewood, New Jersey and he bought Maplewood Dr. for her office! People came to purchase the sign bearing the name of a child's college or to buy their own street sign to send to their child in college so he or she remembers where home is! One woman bought a sign for each home she had lived in Livingston.

The Skate Park Committee is collecting stories and invites everyone to share the reason why they bought a sign and what they plan to do with it. The Committee would also like to receive any trivia that can be added to this historical collection of Livingston stories. Please e-mail Martha Ackermann at marthacack@aol.com or call her at 973-535-9679.

The last and final street sign sale will be a cash and carry event. It will be held during Youth Appreciation Week on Family Fun Day at the Oval on Saturday, May 23, 2009. There are about 300 signs left. If you were unable to pick up your purchased sign, please call Alan Karpas on the Skate Park Hotline at 973-992-6411.