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Community Picnic carries on legacy of late community activist

By MICHAEL HUGHES mhughes@northfieldnews.com Jun 29, 2019 Updated Jun 30, 2019



A boy blows bubbles during Saturday afternoon's Community Picnic at Jefferson Park in Northfield. (Michael Hughes/Northfield News)

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A legacy can be represented in a variety of ways.

Sometimes, it can be a memory. In other instances, that legacy is featured in the actions of others.

Both were true Saturday afternoon at Jefferson Park in Northfield, where the legacy of Najwa Bukhari was carried on in the second annual Community Picnic, which is designed to bring neighbors that otherwise may be strangers together.

"She passed away because of cancer, and when she passed away, this is her legacy," Northfield Human Rights Commission Chairwoman Mar Valdecantos said. "She mentioned in the Human Rights Commission that she saw roads and streets that divide sides of the neighborhood that don't know each other."

Last year, the inaugural picnic was outside Greenvale Park Elementary School. After the success of that event, and positive feedback, the second was Saturday at Jefferson Park in an effort to unite the tenants of apartments and townhouses on one side of Jefferson Parkway with the residents of single-family homes on the other.

"You have apartments on one end and you have single family homes on the other side, and they don't quite mix," Valdecantos said. "That's why this location was chosen this year. We don't know eventually if we'll always have the same place or the same park."

The event was catered by Maria's Catering, in addition to attendees being encouraged to bring along snacks of their own to share. Performances by Bonnie & the Clydes as well as Ruby Loretto were scheduled throughout the picnic.

While attendance was lower than last year's event, Valdecantos still believes the picnic more than accomplished its goal.

"Today there's so many things happening in town that we got less people than we did last year, and the heat of course," Valdecantos said. "I think people were like, 'No way,' and we should have advertised that we had a tent."

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