



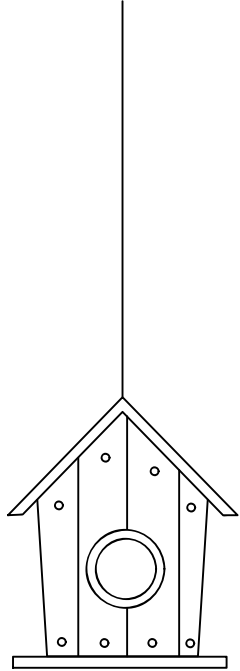
FRIENDLY FRONTS TOOLKIT

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN CREATING A FRIENDLY FRONT IN YOUR COMMUNITY. ADDITIONALLY, THANK YOU FOR YOUR PASSION TO MAKE YOUR YARD, YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, AND YOUR COMMUNITY A MORE WELCOMING PLACE.

AND OF COURSE, THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE CREATION OF THE FRIENDLY FRONT YARDS PLATFORM AND TO THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR TIME, ENERGY, AND FUNDING TO GET THE TOOLKIT WHERE IT NEEDED TO BE FOR ALL COMMUNITIES TO USE. TO NAME A FEW: THE KNIGHT FOUNDATION, FRIENDLY STREETS INITIATIVE, THE RESIDENTS OF FROGTOWN AND HAMLIN MIDWAY IN SAINT PAUL, THE RESIDENTS OF WHITTIER IN MINNEAPOLIS, AND MANY OTHERS

WE ARE TRULY GRATEFUL.

-THE MUSICANT GROUP

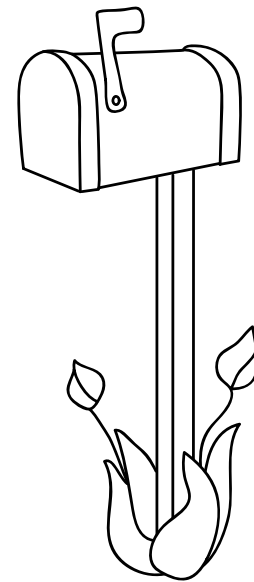


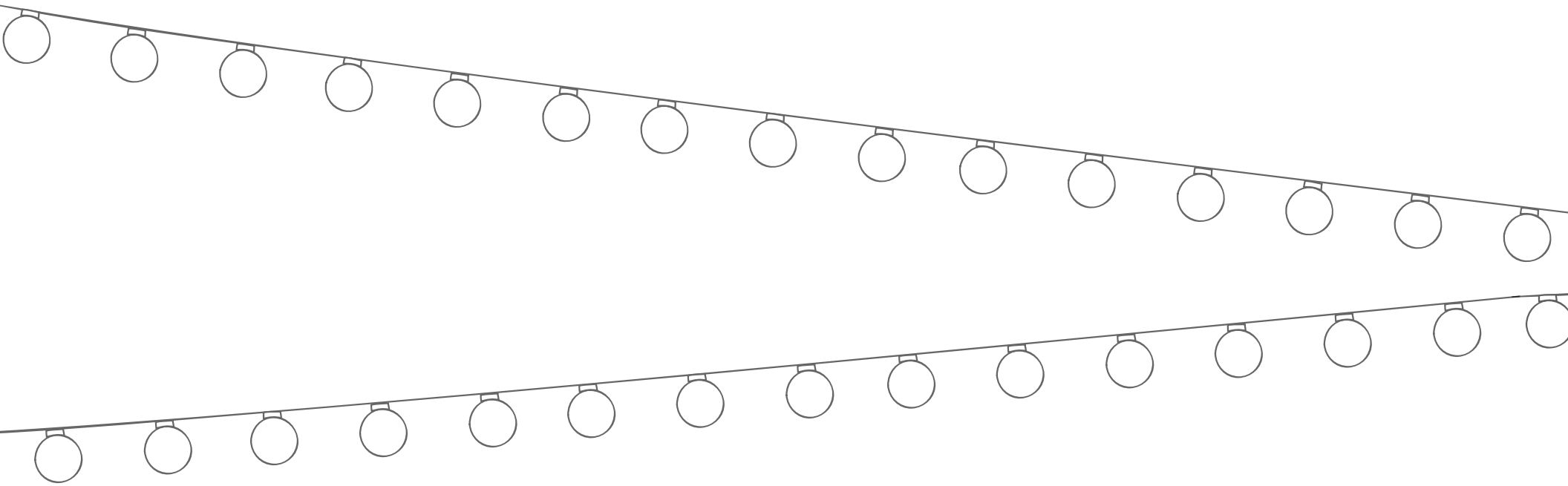
A WELL-DESIGNED PLACE IS A SPACE THAT CONSIDERS AND PRIORITIZES THE INDIVIDUALS WHO USE IT. THE PLACE WILL FOSTER A SENSE OF BELONGING, ACT AS A COMMUNITY HUB, AND PLAY A PART IN MAKING ITS SURROUNDINGS SAFER AND MORE PLEASANT.

WHAT THE TOOLKIT OFFERS

PLACES, LIKE PEOPLE, HAVE personalities. They can be warm and inviting or they can be desolate and cold. Although it is relatively easy to create a warm place, many urban areas remain distinctly uninviting. This is unfortunate. The problem is in a large part due to the nature of a space's 'face' so to speak. Namely, front yards, gardens, stoops, windowpanes and nearby parking spaces are too often void of the human touch. Empty expanses of grass and unadorned stretches of concrete make us uncomfortable so we hurry past. The discomfort is instinctive, deeply rooted, and pervasive. When we start to look around we can see countless spaces that are underused with social and economic benefits needlessly, thoughtlessly, forfeited.

With this toolkit we seek to help individuals and their neighbors transform the most commonly underused space in America—the front yard—from empty expanses of grass into active, inviting places. Our goal is to help you and your neighbors, through small and easy steps, build stronger communities.



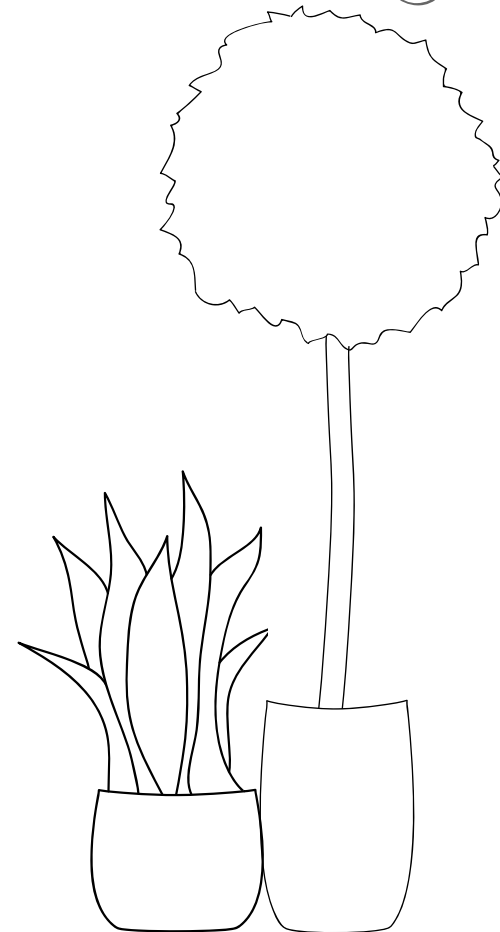


FRIENDLY FRONTS

CREATING COMMUNITY ONE FRONT YARD AT A TIME

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IF YOU ARE GOING TO DO ONE THING

I HAD BEEN LIVING in my apartment building in Minneapolis for a little over a year. I liked the area—the tree-lined streets, the shops and parks I could easily walk to, the friends and family who lived nearby. But something was missing. The apartment building had no space to sit and be outside so when the weather was nice I had to go to a café or a park; the 6-foot expanse that was our front yard wasn't doing anybody much good.

One late summer afternoon the fire alarm went off. As the building's residents shuffled outside in their undershirts and pajamas, I glanced around at my neighbors. I didn't know any of them. In more than a year I hadn't forged a single meaningful relationship, which made sense; we had no comfortable venue where we could come to know one another.

I wanted to do something about it.

The next weekend I went to my local hardware store and bought two canvas bucket chairs for \$20. When I got home I set the two chairs out in the small expanse of concrete walkway that was within our six foot buffer. With permanent marker I scrawled on the chairs: "Please sit here!"

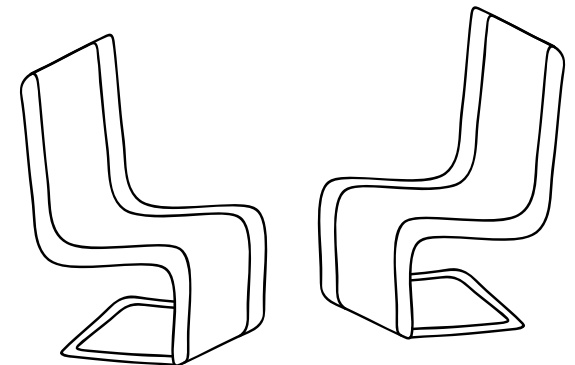
That evening, I returned with a book and read in those chairs for an hour. The next afternoon I did the same thing with a newspaper, and then I decided to eat my dinner there as well. Over and over that first week I was simply present in those chairs in front of my building, on my block.

I started meeting people. Over that week I got to know almost half of the residents in my building. Their names, where they worked, their personal interests and goals, what movies they liked, what movies they didn't. They sat down with me, we shared meals, drinks, books. The simple presence of two chairs, inscribed with an invitation to sit, had created a comfortable place to have meaningful interactions.

Before long, others from the neighborhood started sitting in our chairs. They were particularly popular with the 'mini-mayor' of our block, a retiree who walked his Pomeranian dog, Blondie, seven or eight times a day. Someone added a third chair. By the middle of summer, there was a grill and tongs. The chairs transformed the social dynamics of our entire building and block.

There are lots of fancy things you can do to improve your yard and make it an active and pleasant place. Many of these fancy things are, however, unnecessary. What's most important is to create the opportunity to be in the yard – to have a place to stand or sit, and something to do while standing or sitting around.

IF YOU CAN DO ONLY ONE THING,
GET A FEW CHAIRS, PUT THEM
OUTSIDE, SIT DOWN, AND BE
PRESENT IN YOUR YARD AND IN
YOUR COMMUNITY. THEN YOU ARE
READY TO START TALKING TO
PEOPLE AS THEY WALK BY.





WHAT A FRIENDLY FRONT LOOKS LIKE

JON AND JENNY HAD LIVED IN AND RENTED OUT THEIR four-plex home for the past two years. During this time they made many different improvements for themselves and their residents that were a natural fit for them to start a Friendly Front Yards project.

Prior to starting their project, Jenny and Jon had mostly thought about improving their backyard to create a more social and welcoming environment, but had paid little attention to the front yard and the value it would bring to the community.

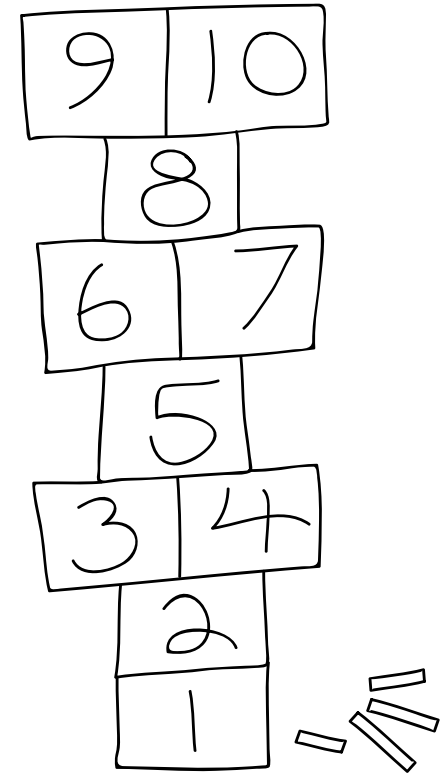
Jenny and Jon, with the help of their tenants, used the Friendly Front Yard Toolkit to envision a more inviting atmosphere. They brainstormed extending their small porch into an unused area of their front lawn to create additional space for seating, games, as well as an opportunity to remove some grass that was time consuming to mow.

The creation of a front patio included two inviting stairways into the space that were surrounded by beautiful plantings and solar lights along a pathway to guide visitors into the warm comfort of the patio.

Through the creation of a friendly front, they were able to meet and connect with their neighbor(s) like never before. They felt comfortable spending many hours in their space. They enjoyed the view and having more visitors to their front yard and neighborhood.

Jenny and Jon have valued being able to provide a space for tenants to enjoy the same comforts they do. The enhanced front yard now provides additional space for everyone to socialize, eat or work on their computers.

Ultimately, as landlords and neighbors, Jenny and Jon's Friendly Front Yard created opportunities for them to invite the community into their space and share what they value and love.

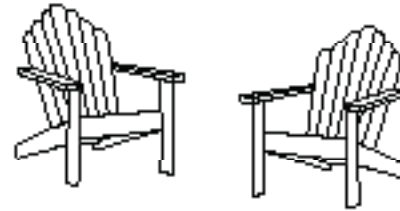


IT ENCOURAGED US
TO BE CREATIVE AND
INSPIRED OUR
NEIGHBORS

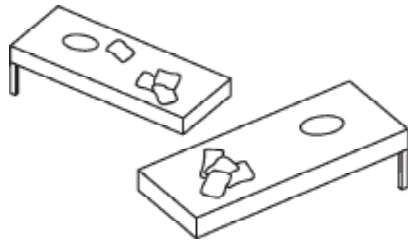
WHAT IS THE SECRET: THE BIG SIX



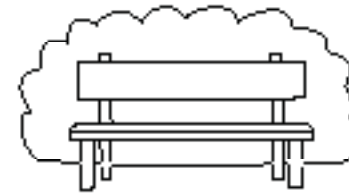
SEMI-ENCLOSURE FEELS GOOD



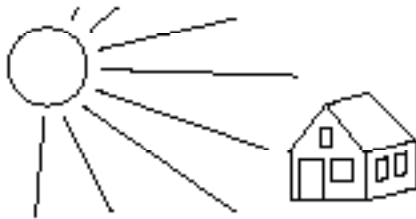
ADD {MOVEABLE} SEATING



HAVE MANY THINGS TO DO



PROTECT YOUR BACK



DAYLIGHT AND SUNSHINE



ACTIVE EDGES MAKE ACTIVE INTERIORS

In order to create a Friendly Front Yard, or really comfort in any space, people generally like to have the following six things in a place in order to want to remain there.

Have many things to do

If there is nothing to do, you won't be there. Think about what you and others like to do in your neighborhood.

Daylight and sunshine

Sun in the morning comes from the east. In late afternoon and evening it is from the west. The sunniest direction is the south. Consider how activity areas interact with the sunny and shady parts of your space.

Semi-enclosure feels good

Spaces that are too open make us feel exposed; too closed and we feel safe, but cut off. The semi-enclosure of a good porch or a cozy booth at a restaurant feels good. These spaces allow you to choose whether to be social or private.

Adding moveable seating

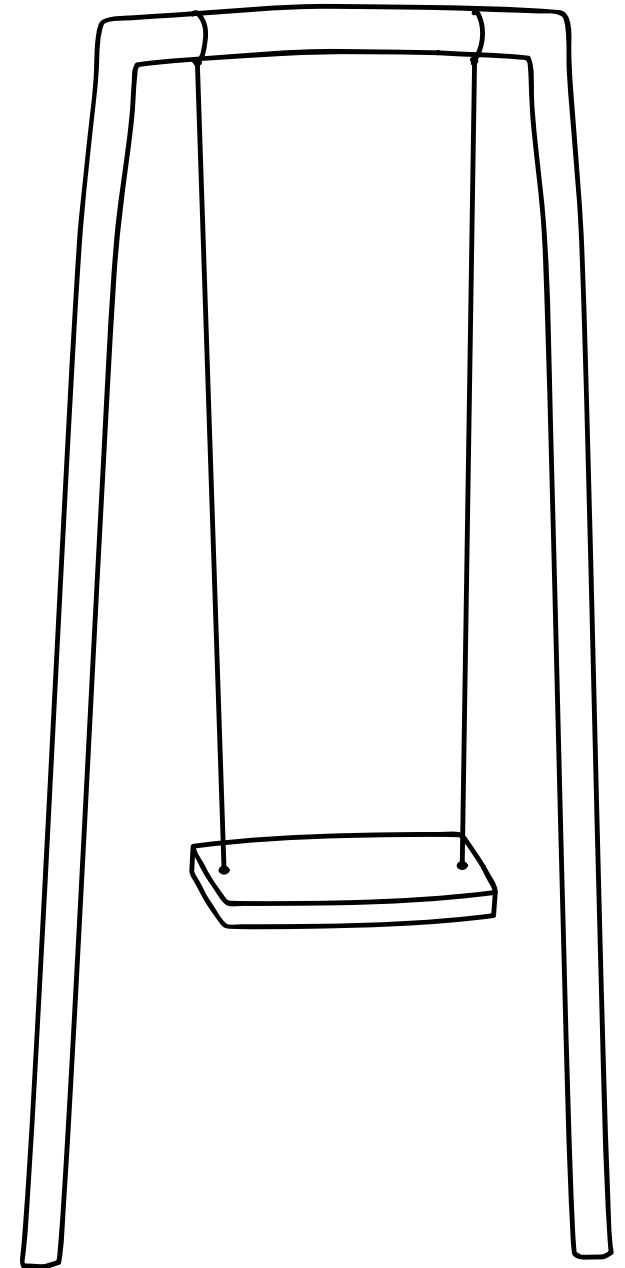
If you can't sit down comfortably you won't want to stay in your front yard.

Protect your back

Having a structure behind you – like a house, ledge, or hedge makes one feel comfortable. Protecting your back prevents being surprised and ensures a good view out to a larger vista.

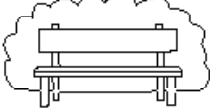

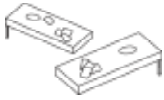



Active edges make active interiors

Celebrate and enhance the places where two things meet: grass and path, house and yard, garden and hill. The possibilities are endless! Additionally, if you don't feel comfortable on the edge of a space you won't venture into the middle.



USING THE BIG SIX

Jon and Jenny used the toolkit to dream and design how their Friendly Front would make them want to be outside more as well as create a place to connect with neighbors. In order to turn these dreams into reality they based their design of "The Big Six" principles.

- 1** The use of the home and the original porch was used to protect the backs of those using the porch

- 2** The original porch provided the space with a sense of semi-encloser for times when they wanted to be more private, but have views into the neighborhood and talk with passersby's

- 3** The new hardscape space provided opportunities for socializing, eating, playing games, or using wifi outside

- 4** The porch was extended into the yard where it has both shady and sunny areas. The areas of the yard that received a lot of sunlight was planted with beautiful and inviting plants

- 5** Pillows, moveable chairs, and the porch itself created many opportunities for seating

- 6** The patio's edge was reinforced with lighting and plantings to create a comfortable border to be within, yet approachable from the outside






OTHER FRIENDLY FRONT EXAMPLES



GAMES AND ENTERTAINMENT



EATING OUTSIDE



SLEEPING AND RELAXING



TALKING TO NEIGHBORS



THE BOULEVARD



CHILDREN PLAYING



HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN FRIENDLY FRONT

Answer the following questions below with words, drawings, photographs or anything else that can help you brainstorm.

1 What do you want to have happen in your front yard?
Need help? What things do you already do inside or in the backyard that could benefit from being in the front. What activities do you see yourself enjoying with your neighbors?

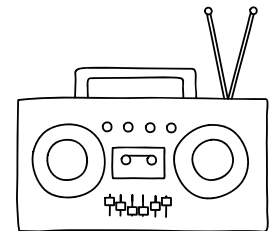
2 What items do you need in order to make those activities or feelings happen?
Do you already own some of these items?

3 How can you use one or more of the “Big Six” strategies to make your desired activities and feelings occur?
Here is a hint: if you can’t remember all of them: moveable seating, protect your back, active edge, things to do, semi-enclosure, and consider the sun.
Good places to start: near your front door, along sidewalks and pathways, next to fences, trees, gardens, and along the edges of the house or hills.

PROJECT PLAN SKETCH

Write, draw, or use photos to create a plan of your new friendly front yard below. Then gather the needed items to execute your plan. Place them, test out how it works and feels, and if your plan seems off, experiment by placing items in different areas until it is just right. Lastly, make sure to **ENJOY!**

Stuck? Start by sketching the edges and items that feel the most important. And don't forget to write in where you can include "The Big Six"



FOR MORE INFO

WWW.FRIENDLYFRONTS.COM

