

## Children Connecting Neighbors

*By Emma G. Jackson*

When one thinks of "neighbor" the first thought that comes to mind is the person next door, or in close range of their address, i.e., the person next door or across the street. That definition is true as stated in Webster's Dictionary.

Neighbors change as we move from one location to another. Today, with changes in the culture of neighborhoods our perceptions of neighbors change also. In my family's earlier changes in address our growing children brought us together with other families raising same age children. It was easier connecting with other neighbors. There was sharing back fence conversations, children's birthday parties, school functions and more.

When children become adults and move out this leaves the empty nest. Neighbors may change as the neighborhood changes also. I recall our move to a different area, one with working adults or adults who were different ages and had other lifestyles. Connecting with neighbors was different and it took longer.

Another variable enters into the equation when thinking of connecting with neighbors; unfamiliarity with personalities and thought patterns of the new neighbors. How do they think about my moving into their neighborhood? How close were they with the previous neighbors?

After buying our first little home, we moved into our first real neighborhood after living in apartments for five-plus years. Neighbors came to visit – not for long talks, but to introduce themselves. In the second neighborhood following moving into a larger house, our neighbors to the back of us brought cookies, next door neighbors came to introduce themselves and the neighbors across the street came to welcome us.

As times and conditions change connecting with neighbors also changes. This reality came forth after the loss of my husband, the need for a smaller and more adapt place for my age; thus, the move into Windsor Gardens. Connecting with neighbors is different. As we grow older, and rightfully so, we are more observant of our neighbors and maybe more hesitant in connecting. I have met some neighbors, however, after 11 months the connecting process is different.

My most enjoyable connecting with neighbors occurred when our children were intimately involved in the process.