

the Bulletin

Volume 39, Number 11
NOVEMBER 2014

Serving Bloomfield, Friendship, Garfield, East Liberty,
Lawrenceville, and Stanton Heights Since 1975



Unknown persons target community group, director

By Joe Reuben *Bulletin Contributor*

Lawrenceville – Persons with some sort of a grudge against the community group, Lawrenceville United, and its executive director, Lauren Byrne, have stepped up their attacks on both in the past year, causing the group to seek the help of the city police in finding and arresting the perpetrators.

In an email newsletter published the week of Oct. 13, Steve Sokoloski, board president for Lawrenceville United, recounted a number of events that have transpired in recent months. He called on all members of the Lawrenceville community to stand against what appears to be a campaign of intimidation.

On Sept. 27, a brick was thrown through the window of Lawrenceville United's office. Subsequently, Byrne's car was stolen from her Lawrenceville residence in early October. These crimes followed a number of incidents of vandalism and harassment that targeted Lawrenceville business owners and community leaders last November, February, and March. According to Sokoloski, these individuals

See **Lawrenceville United** | page 3



ABOVE: Esai Aliquo-Varela and Betty Nikia pose at a photo booth during the Penn Avenue Arts in Motion festival on Sept. 27. See page 5 for additional photos from the event. Photo by John Colombo Photography.

Training helps ex-offenders seeking jobs

By Mallory Helbling

Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center

Garfield – On Oct. 7, the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC) welcomed roughly 20 job seekers for a presentation on how to find employment with a criminal

See **Ex-Offenders** | page 4

4

Kelly Strayhorn builds community time capsule

By Trevor Miles

Kelly Strayhorn Theater

East Liberty – On Oct. 11, Kelly Strayhorn Theater began collecting memorabilia – including photographs, programs, letters, ticket stubs, and other items related to East Liberty –

See **Capsule** | page 6

6



ABOVE: Kelly Strayhorn Theater is celebrating its 100th anniversary with a community time-capsule project, Capsule 15206. Photo courtesy of Kelly Strayhorn Theater.

A Publication of The Bloomfield-Garfield-Corporation

Bulletin

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REBRANDING PENN AVENUE

Penn Avenue – As part of the revitalization of the Penn Avenue commercial district, a group of community stakeholders is beginning work on a branding initiative.

Branding is a process that involves the creation of a new name, slogan, or symbol to clearly identify a person, place, or thing.

With the increased interest in real estate and businesses in this area, having a distinctive name will help to distinguish this section from the other areas of Penn Avenue, which is 8.7 miles long.

The stakeholders group is seeking community input on a new name for the stretch of Penn Avenue between Negley Avenue and Mathilda Street. Keep in mind that Penn Avenue is more than just an arts district. It's a diverse mix of residents and businesses.

There are two ways to submit ideas:

1) Fill out the form below and drop it off or mail it to:
Penn Avenue Stakeholders Group
c/o Amber Epps
5149 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

2) Visit www.pennavenue.org/blog and fill out the online survey.

Name ideas will be collected from Oct. 10 through Nov. 10, and voting will take place from Nov. 14 through Dec. 5. Votes can be submitted online at www.pennavenue.org/blog or via a form that will be available in the next issue of The Bulletin. The group hopes to announce the winner in January.

The person who submits the chosen name will win his/her choice of either an iPod Nano or a \$150 gift card to Bottom Dollar grocery store. –*Amber Epps, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation*

Penn Avenue Name Idea Submission Form

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Phone Number _____

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c/o Amber Epps
5149 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

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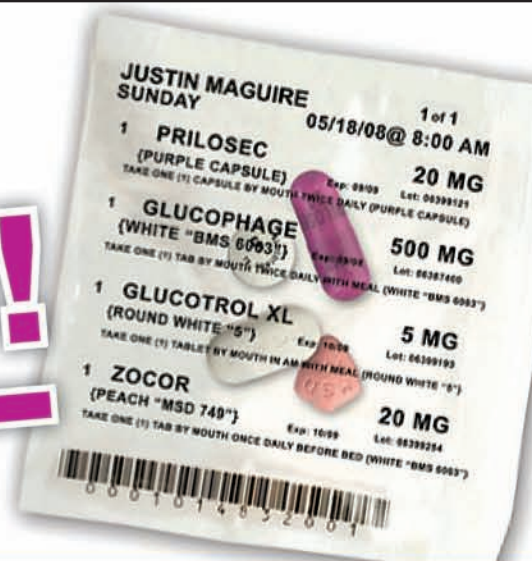
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Idea 3 _____

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November 14, 2014 - 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
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Tickets: \$70 - BGC members: \$40 - RSVP: 412-441-6950 x15

the Bulletin

A publication of the
Bloomfield-Garfield
Corporation



Serving Bloomfield, Friendship, Garfield, East Liberty, Lawrenceville, and Stanton Heights Since 1975 with the mission of reporting on activities affecting those communities and offering an opportunity for residents to express opinions and exchange ideas.

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www.bloomfield-garfield.org © 2014 by Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Lawrenceville United *from page 1*

had engaged in public meetings and hearings regarding high-profile neighborhood issues and positions taken by Lawrenceville United during the past year.

These attacks, together with anonymous Facebook postings that have mentioned Byrne by name, have drawn the interest of Commander Eric Holmes at Zone 2 Police Station. An investigation is underway by the police to identify the perpetrators.

"As our neighborhood grows, Lawrenceville United has organized the community around many issues, through open and inclusive processes that empower residents and the community to drive change and responsible growth," Sokoloski wrote in the email newsletter. "While our mission is to represent the majority of residents' interests, we also realize that there can be a contingent that does not always agree with the majority."

Lawrenceville United has taken several public stands in the last year, including opposing the opening of one liquor-serving establishment in the community and supporting the closing of another.

The first concerned an application for transfer of a state liquor license by a Butler Street establishment, to be known

as "Sorrel's," in the 5200 block of Butler Street. The license application identified the owner of Sorrel's, formerly a bar known as "Bottles," to be James M. Haney, Jr. A second individual, named in the application as the future manager of Sorrel's, is Thomas Simonic.

Simonic reportedly was tied to the operation of a club that opened several years ago in a Moose Lodge on 51st Street in Lawrenceville. The club became the target of neighborhood complaints, and in October of 2012, gunshots were fired outside the establishment, reportedly sending several hundred patrons, some of them teenagers, into the street. The club has since been closed by the regional Moose organization.

Rick Swartz, executive director of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), recalled an earlier time in the evolution of the Penn Avenue corridor.

"In the '80 and '90s, the BGC had to confront the problems that a number of bars and clubs were causing on Penn Avenue," Swartz told The Bulletin. "Their places were the backdrop for homicides, trafficking in cocaine and heroin, assaults, prostitution, and fencing of stolen property, all happening within our commercial district. It overshadowed the more legitimate tavern owners and made life



ABOVE: After someone broke Lawrenceville United's office window with a brick in September, community members wrote encouraging messages on paper hearts. They also showed support on social media with the hashtag #WeStandWithLU. Photo courtesy of Lawrenceville United.

miserable for everyone else."

"As we began to press the issue of closing these places with the District Attorney's office and state office of Liquor Control Enforcement, a door was torn off of our storefront office, a Catholic priest's car was overturned in his parish parking lot, and anonymous death threats were left on the office answering machine," Swartz said. "But our board was not deterred. They pressed ahead. They realized the long-term viability of the community was at stake."

The Oct. 19 edition of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported that Common Pleas

Judge Terrence O'Brien upheld the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board's decision to deny the transfer of the liquor license for Sorrel's to Haney. The court ruled that he failed to prove that he is a "person of good repute."

Sokoloski announced in Lawrenceville United's October email newsletter that those who want to show support for Lawrenceville United can do so by tweeting with the hashtag #WeStandWithLU. The organization is also raising funds to repair its broken window. Donations can be sent to Lawrenceville United, 4839 Butler St., Pittsburgh, PA 15201. ♦

Sneaker shop launches in Friendship

By Carrie Garrison *The Bulletin*



ABOVE: Co-owners (from left) Sean Devine, Neil Tucker, and Baldwin Dawkins pose with their favorite sneakers sold at Refresh PGH. Photo by Carrie Garrison.

Friendship – Late last April, Baldwin Dawkins, Neil Tucker, and Sean Devine opened Refresh PGH – a consignment and retail store specializing in vintage sports merchandise – at 5450 Penn Ave.

The three entrepreneurs met when they attended Peabody High School, now Obama Academy of International Studies, in East Liberty. Dawkins, Tucker, and Devine remained friends through college, where they majored in sports administration, early childhood development, and journalism, respectively.

The three owners said they’ve always loved sneakers and started collecting them at an early age.

“I’ve played basketball every year of my life, and I always wanted to have the new [Jordans] on,” Dawkins said.

Devine said the business started online about 18 months ago, and the positive response received from customers provided the inspiration to open a storefront.

“Once it started to pick up steam, we decided to quit our jobs and make this full-time,” he said. “We’re relatively young, so we thought we might as well [start a business] now.”

The owners said they were drawn to the neighborhood by Daily Bread, a retail store that sells vintage clothing and hats. The two shops are now connected and share a vintage feel.

Refresh PGH offers consignment opportunities, as well as sneaker restoration and customization.

“The majority of the sneakers we have here are on consignment, so anybody could bring sneakers they have in here to sell,” Devine said. “They have to be either

brand-new or lightly worn. Once they sell, we do an 80/20 consignment split.”

The owners work with the sneaker sellers to set a price. Then they advertise on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

The owners explained that larger shoe stores, such as Foot Locker and Nike, receive limited-edition sneakers that sell out quickly. Refresh PGH relies on consumers to sell their sneakers on consignment.

“We keep things in stock that have already sold out of other stores,” Devine said.

So far, this tactic is working. The owners said the reception from the community and surrounding areas has been very positive.

“We get people from everywhere ... Ohio, West Virginia, Cleveland, [and] Harrisburg,” Devine said.

These ambitious entrepreneurs hold three or four sneaker events every year in addition to running the store full-time. Their most recent event took place last May at Obama Academy.

“We had about 1,300 people attend,” said Devine.

Their next event is Nov. 1, also at Obama Academy. Participants can buy a table for \$125 and buy, sell, and trade their sneakers.

This is the company’s fourth convention and will feature a Pittsburgh Pirate or other sports celebrity.

The owners said they’re looking forward to the event, as well as the future of their business.

“Sneakers are as popular now as ever,” Devine said. ♦

Ex-Offenders *from page 1*

background. The training touched upon items such as using a resume as a marketing tool, having a successful interview even with tough questions about a criminal record, and resources for expungement and other legal services.

Asia Carter, an employment coordinator at the ENEC, was one of the facilitators for the training. Carter said she believes the training was important for those in attendance.

“It gave people hope for [future] interviews. It showed them how to move past their bad experience and take charge of their future,” she said.

The training falls under a new initiative called “ReSTEP” (Reentry Support,

responsible and be a part of the working world and local community.”

In addition to the group trainings, the ReSTEP program gives those with criminal backgrounds the opportunity to have more one-on-one support to assist them in finding employment. Those with a record often find that whether they have a conviction from a year ago or 20 years ago, they may still face extra obstacles in finding employment or moving forward in their career once they have a job.

The program also utilizes other resources to help those with background issues.

“The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation and the ENEC bring in a variety of outside resources to help clients with

“Having someone to talk to has kept me from giving up or going back to my old life. I’m excited to work again and learn something new.”

– Client, Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center’s ReSTEP initiative

Training, and Employment Program), funded by the Poise Foundation with the support of Councilman Ricky Burgess.

“Employment services have been linked to a lower recidivism rate,” said Wesley Davis, assistant to the deputy director at the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation. “By finding employment, those with a criminal background will be less likely to utilize illegal means to sustain themselves, which is beneficial to both the individual and community.”

More than 200 people have self-identified as having a criminal background when coming into the ENEC in the past three months. ReSTEP’s goal is to help those clients find meaningful employment.

Working at the ENEC, Carter has seen how employment can be beneficial to someone with a criminal background.

“Employment shows how a person has changed,” she said. “It allows them to be

background challenges,” Davis said. “Clients can meet with a Neighborworks credit counselor to develop a budget and improve their financial literacy, meet with partnering health care organizations to enroll in an affordable health insurance plan, and develop their computer skills through regular technology trainings.”

By leveraging these resources, the ENEC aims to provide a holistic approach to helping job seekers find meaningful, sustainable work.

“Having someone to talk to has kept me from giving up or going back to my old life,” said an ENEC client involved with ReSTEP. “I’m excited to work again and learn something new.”

For more information on upcoming trainings, or to set up individual appointments regarding finding employment with a criminal background, call 724-230-6495. ♦



“Like” the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation
on Facebook for the latest neighborhood information and community photos.

Thank you! The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation would like to acknowledge its main corporate partners, WesBanco, Dollar Bank, and Allegheny Valley Bank. Thanks also to BNY Mellon, First Niagara Bank, PNC Bank, Allegheny Health Network, Citizens Bank, and all of The Bulletin’s advertisers.

School board approves Woolslair as STEAM partial magnet

By Dave Breingan *Lawrenceville United*

Bloomfield/Lawrenceville – Less than a year ago, parents and staff at Pittsburgh Woolslair K-5 received news that their school had been recommended for closure. Now they're celebrating a recent decision by the Pittsburgh Public Schools board that gives Woolslair approval to become a partial magnet school with a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) theme next year, as long as grant funding can be secured to support it.

"I'm very excited and appreciative," said Jaline Cunningham, a Woolslair parent who has been involved with the school's vision planning. "I think this is an improvement to the education of Woolslair students, and I hope families will be delighted in seeing the curriculum in action."

At September's legislative meeting, the

school board voted 8-1 to approve the plan, which also includes integrating STEAM into the technology and pre-engineering program at Pittsburgh Lincoln PreK-5, beginning a STEAM magnet option at Pittsburgh Schiller 6-8, and enhancing Pittsburgh Perry High School's biotechnology program. The plan lays out a K-12 pathway in STEAM programs through Pittsburgh Public Schools.

STEAM emphasizes hands-on, interdisciplinary learning to complete projects related to real-world issues.

A group of Woolslair parents, staff, and community members put together a STEAM proposal for the school's future after receiving input from families and touring other schools, including those in South Fayette Township School District, a member of the national League of Innovative Schools. During their first visit to

South Fayette, parents and staff observed a class of third-graders testing and critiquing the video games that their classmates had designed.

If the grant funding comes through, all students in kindergarten through second grade at Woolslair will receive the new STEAM curriculum next year, with other grades added annually.

Students inside Woolslair's feeder pattern – which includes the neighborhoods of Bloomfield, Lower Lawrenceville, Friendship, Polish Hill, and the Strip District – will still be accepted at Woolslair automatically, while families outside those neighborhoods have the option to apply through the district's magnet system. Magnet registration is open now through Dec. 12 and is available on the district's website at www.pps.k12.pa.us.

At Woolslair's family movie night on Oct.

10, Superintendent Linda Lane visited to provide an update and let families know that the district is pursuing grants to fund Woolslair's STEAM program.

"We were very happy that she was able to come out and give us an update on what the status is for Woolslair," said Valerie Allman, a parent at Woolslair. "It's great to have open communication between the district and the families, and we're excited that they're pursuing the funding not only for Woolslair but for the other schools."

In the meantime, Woolslair is beginning an afterschool STEAM program for students at the end of October in partnership with the Sprout Fund's Digital Corps program. Students will be taught how to use Scratch, an application that teaches kids the basics of computer programming and video game design. ♦

Art gains momentum on Penn Avenue

Photos by John Colombo Photography



ABOVE: Jared Boyer uses acrylic paint to embellish an "art car" – a decorated, road-ready vehicle – at the Penn Avenue Arts in Motion festival on Sept. 27.



ABOVE: Nina and Jason Sauer, co-owners of Most Wanted Fine Art, pose with an art car. Most Wanted co-sponsored Penn Avenue Arts in Motion along with Artisan and Craftsman Supply, BOOM Concepts, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, Carl's TV, and Spak Brothers Pizza. The event featured live performances, art battles, vendors, kids' activities, and a "mobile masterpiece roundup."

County presents health assessment

By Vanessa Dunn & Wesley Davis *Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation*

East Liberty – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) is hosting a series of 13 public meetings to discuss its community health assessment as part of its "Our Voice, Our Health" public outreach campaign. On Oct. 6, ACHD representatives hosted one of the meetings at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – East Liberty.

In a statement released prior to the public meetings, County Health Director Dr. Karen Hacker said, "The meetings are critical to helping the health department and residents work together to create a countywide health improvement plan and move toward a common vision of making Allegheny County the healthiest county in the nation."

Air quality and countywide asthma rates were discussed at the East Liberty meeting.

"I can do a lot to take care of my own personal health, but I have no control over the quality of air that I breathe," said one resident in attendance. "I am really looking to the health department for a solution in this."

Another East End resident highlighted the effect that public safety hazards, especially gun violence, have "on every facet of life and everyone in the community. The health department has major responsibilities to address this issue along with others."

Dr. LuAnn Brink, an epidemiologist, presented statistics related to Allegheny County residents' health. Allegheny County ranked 40th out of 67 counties in Pennsylvania for general health and well-being in 2013. Thirty-four percent of deaths occurred due to heart disease, and 30 percent were caused by cancer in 2013.

Dr. Brink also pointed out that in Allegheny County, 62 percent of residents are overweight or obese. Thirty-seven percent of residents say they do not have access to fresh fruits and vegetables, while 57 percent say they have easy access to fast food.

"If you aren't well-fed and housed, poverty and the associated risks that come with it will always be present," said a resident in attendance.

Dr. Hacker said to those in attendance, "This is the first time the ACHD has done not only community meetings, but an overall comprehensive needs assessment."

There are three remaining community health assessment meetings scheduled for November in Moon Township, Penn Hills, and Beechview. All residents are encouraged by the county to attend. Residents can contact Casey Monroe at 412-578-8364 or cmonroe@achd.net for more information, or if special accommodations are needed. ♦

Capsule from page 1



ABOVE: Kelly Strayhorn Theater originally opened in 1914 as the 1,100-seat Regent Theatre, which housed one of the first nickelodeons in the country. Photo courtesy of Kelly Strayhorn Theater.



ABOVE: This season is Kelly Strayhorn's busiest yet, featuring works by Carmen de Lavallade, choreographer and dancer Moroccan Hind Benali, and returning artist André Koslowski. Photo courtesy of Kelly Strayhorn Theater.

for its legacy project, "Capsule 15206."

Capsule 15206 invites community members to preserve their East Liberty experience by contributing items to a time capsule. After 100 days of community submissions, the capsule will be placed in the vaults of Kelly Strayhorn Theater following the "East Liberty Celebrates Martin Luther King Jr." event on Jan. 19.

In addition to the physical time capsule, there is also a digital component to Capsule 15206. Using Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, people can create a short video or post

See **Capsule** | page 9

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Arsenal PreK-5 wins innovation grant

By Dave Breingan *Lawrenceville United*

Lawrenceville – Pittsburgh Public Schools was recently awarded a grant from the state to create an "Arsenal Innovation Zone" at Pittsburgh Arsenal PreK-5.

This project will work to connect the school, the community, and Arsenal parents in a strategic way to improve the third-grade outcomes of all Arsenal students.

The grant provides \$75,000 to develop stronger relationships between early childhood programs and the school district to build alignment from birth through third grade, increase family support and engagement, and strengthen the network and coordination of community organizations that serve young children and families.

"I am extremely excited about this opportunity," said Ruthie Rea, principal of Pittsburgh Arsenal PreK-5. "When the community and school work together to strategically impact the lives of children and families, everyone wins."

The project aims to expand the school's successful "Ready Freddy" attendance program, while adding three new innovative strategies to spur student achievement.

Among these are "Ready Rosie," a daily email with a video curriculum that teaches parents how to incorporate early learning into daily activities, and a two-way text-messaging system to improve communication between the school and families.

The plan also calls for the establishment of the Arsenal Committee, made up of early childhood centers, community groups, parents, and health providers to coordinate strategies to impact school success. The committee's first meeting is scheduled for mid-November.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to build on what families and providers do during the early years to promote success in the elementary school years. This project will give families even more resources to help strengthen that foundation," said Ken Smythe-Leistico, assistant director of the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development.

The Office of Child Development will be a leader for the project, along with Pittsburgh Public Schools and Lawrenceville United's PEP Rally program. For more information or to get involved, please contact Lawrenceville United at 412-802-7220. ♦

December Bulletin Deadline: November 11

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Cultivating leadership

PULSE participants make a difference in East End nonprofits

By Carrie Garrison *The Bulletin*

East End – Each year, PULSE (Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience) invites talented university graduates to serve Pittsburgh nonprofit organizations, help transform neighborhoods, and cultivate leadership skills.

Created by John Stahl-Wert in 1994, PULSE brings young “servant-leaders” to Pittsburgh for 11 months, with the hope that they will remain in the city and continue to serve local neighborhoods. PULSE participants have collectively served more than 100 nonprofit organizations to date, according to the PULSE website.

Jess Sprunger and Molly Recka are two PULSE participants matched with nonprofits in the East End this year. After one month of service, they have already made a difference in the Pittsburgh community and have fallen in love with their respective neighborhoods.

Sprunger, originally from Goshen, Indiana, majored in fine art and is serving at Garfield Community Farm and Pittsburgh Food Policy Council. She said she’s enjoying her placement and thinks it will influence her art.

“It’s a really good balance between practical, digging-in-the-dirt kinds of things and policy things,” she said.

Garfield Community Farm, located on Wicklow Street in Garfield, encourages community involvement by hosting volunteer nights every Thursday.

“We want to work harder to get more involved in the community of Garfield ... and give [residents] access to freshly grown vegetables and fruits,” Sprunger said.

PULSE emphasizes an “intentional community” and requires that participants live in group housing and share a food stipend.

“It’s that element of community that is hard to seek out on your own that PULSE does really well,” Sprunger said.

Sprunger lives with seven other participants in the Lawrenceville PULSE house, the largest of three. The other PULSE houses are located in Garfield and Highland Park.

“My fellow ‘PULSers’ are one of the best parts of the program,” Sprunger said. “They’re a great support system.”

She said she’s enjoying her service in the Garfield community and is open to staying in Pittsburgh after her service ends in July 2015.



ABOVE: Garfield Community Farm is one of the East End sites hosting a PULSE participant this year. Photo by Carrie Garrison.

“[Participants’] lives have been changed by Garfield residents, and, in turn, they are hopefully making an impact on the lives of others.”

– Chris Cooke, PULSE

Chris Cooke, executive director of PULSE, says PULSE has been successful in its mission of keeping young minds in Pittsburgh, especially in the Garfield area.

“[Participants] have fallen in love with the people of Garfield,” Cooke said. “Their lives have been changed by Garfield residents, and, in turn, they are hopefully making an impact on the lives of others.”

PULSE values “celebrating the creative energy of young adults,” Cooke said. He added that participants have been very inspiring and influential in Pittsburgh.

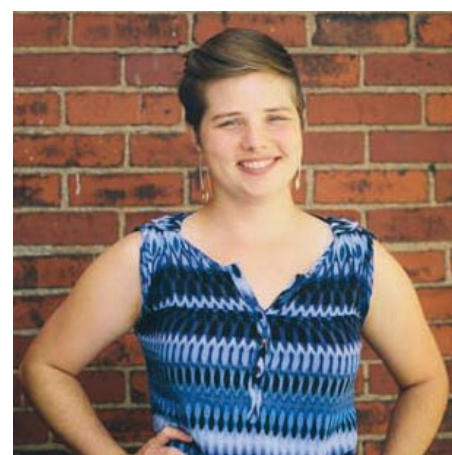
“I love coming alongside people’s dreams and exploring creative ways to do something awesome,” Cooke said.

Another East End PULSE participant, Molly Recka, is originally from Boston. She majored in anthropology with a minor in history and environmental studies at Wooster College in Ohio. She is now serving the Lawrenceville Corporation as communications and marketing assistant.

“I really like the people, and I really like the organization,” she said, noting that she has enjoyed going out into the community to talk to residents and business owners.

Recka said she’s already made many connections within the community and is open to staying in Pittsburgh after the program’s completion.

“I’ve only been here a month, and it’s growing on me,” she said. “Pittsburgh seems like a good place ... to put roots in.” ♦



ABOVE: Jess Sprunger (left) and Molly Recka (right) are serving East End nonprofit organizations through PULSE. Photos courtesy of Cara Rufenacht.

Capsule from page 6

a picture of their East Liberty experience using the hashtag #Capsule15206. The theater will also accept online submissions via the Capsule 15206 Facebook page.

Janera Solomon, the theater's executive director, said she's thrilled about the Capsule 15206 project.

"This is an opportunity for people to bring photos and things that they value to the theater and keep them there," she said. "East Liberty has changed so much – it's interesting to think what it will be like 100 years from now."

Kelly Strayhorn Theater is also using Capsule 15206 as a way to reflect on its history. Originally opened as the Regent Theatre in 1914, the building housed one of the first nickelodeon theaters in the country. After opening and closing several times during the last 100 years, the theater underwent a name change in 2001 and took on its new identity as the Kelly Strayhorn Theater, named after Pittsburgh celebrities Gene Kelly and Billy Strayhorn.

Today, Kelly Strayhorn Theater prides itself on presenting creative, engaging contemporary works. This season is the theater's busiest yet, boasting works by the legendary Carmen de Lavallade, international choreographer and dancer Moroccan Hind Benali, and returning artist André Koslowski.

Families from East Liberty and surrounding neighborhoods can be a part of Capsule 15206 by leaving their memorabilia at the Kelly Strayhorn Theater during any event.

For more information, visit www.kelly-strayhorn.org. ♦

Learning center opens in East Liberty



East Liberty – Children as Professionals (CAPS), a new learning center located at 5850 Centre Ave., officially opened its doors on Sept. 2. Renee Freeman, owner and director, said CAPS is pursuing a partnership with Google to offer age-appropriate STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) instruction to children, and Home Depot is offering support for craft classes. The center emphasizes career exploration, literacy, healthy eating and exercise, understanding of diverse cultures, and foreign languages. Spaces are available for children six weeks to five years of age. For more information, call 412-361-6090 or visit www.childrenasprofessionals.com. *Photo by Renee Freeman.*

Penn Avenue groups visit World Maker Faire

By **Nina Sauer** *Most Wanted Fine Art*

New York City – Some 85,000 ticket holders and 700 innovators gathered in the New York Hall of Science Sept. 20 and 21 for the fifth annual World Maker Faire in New York City. Not only was Pittsburgh well-represented, but Penn Avenue had the spotlight as the Sprout Fund, Assemble, and Most Wanted Fine Art participated in the event.

The World Maker Faire, nicknamed "The Greatest Show-and-Tell on Earth," celebrates science, technology, and the creative spirit. This was the second year Most Wanted Fine Art co-owners traveled to the fair, this time bringing three of Most Wanted's resident artists – D.S. Kinsel, Dante Lombardi, and Sam Thorp – with them.

The team towed an "art car" – a decorated, road-ready vehicle – from Pittsburgh to New York to be smashed by the "Life Size Mousetrap," a handcrafted,

16-piece, 50,000-pound kinetic sculpture set atop a 6,500-square-foot game board complete with a Vaudevillian-style show.

Since 1995, Most Wanted co-owner Jason Sauer has chosen a car, painted it artistically, and then participated in an American folk art performance of demolition derby. While the mousetrap smashed the car eight times throughout the weekend, Most Wanted artists live-painted on a car-trailer stage.

"Going to the NYC Maker Faire was a great chance to watch Jason Sauer, who I admire, take the next step in pursuing his dream," said Kinsel, who is co-owner of BOOM Concepts on Penn Avenue. "Jason was able to carve out his own niche by using his passion around art cars to connect with other professional artists and an entirely new audience, and he was kind enough to let us come along for the adventure."



ABOVE: (From left) Dante Lombardi, Jason Sauer, and D.S. Kinsel participate in New York City's World Maker Faire. Lombardi and Kinsel made five new art pieces in two days. *Photo by Nina Sauer.*

Kinsel said that attending the event gave him the opportunity to showcase his performative action painting for a crowd of thousands.

"Resident artist Dante Lombardi and I created five new pieces together over two days," he said.

Assemble and the Sprout Fund joined forces to represent "Digital Corps," which promotes digital literacy for youths during out-of-school time. The Sprout Fund recruits and trains mentors in the use of digital learning tools, then matches them with afterschool programs where they work to empower the next generation of digital innovators. Digital Corps shared its

teaching kit – which includes lessons on making hummingbird robots, building arcade games in Scratch, hacking websites, and designing applications for portable devices – at the Hive Learning Network tent.

"It's always good to look beyond your back door, go meet others working in relevant fields, and see the world," said Ani Martinez, program associate at the Sprout Fund. "But more than that, there is an underlying current in Pittsburgh right now to push to be more global, and having grown up here, I can see that. Participating in global events seems like a smart place to work on that." ♦



ABOVE: The Sprout Fund created "Baby Bots" with Maker Faire attendees. *Photo courtesy of the Sprout Fund.*

Mayor Peduto meets with Penn Avenue stakeholders



Pittsburgh – Mayor Peduto hosted Penn Avenue stakeholders in his conference room on Oct. 7 to discuss the ongoing Penn Avenue reconstruction project, and how the city can alleviate some of the strain on business owners and residents. Photo by Wesley Davis.

They were missed then.
They're missed now.



Now is the time we especially remember those who served for our country. They fought to make a better world for the rest of us, and we will never forget them.

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Poverty simulations widen perspectives

By Elizabeth Sensky East Liberty Development, Inc.

East Liberty – Do you know what it feels like to be in poverty? That's the question Circles East Liberty invites you to address during its poverty simulation taking place from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Nov. 17 at East Liberty Presbyterian Church.

The simulation is a tool designed to help people understand the realities of daily life in a low-income family.

Sponsored by Just Harvest; Open Hand Ministries; East Liberty Development, Inc.; Repair the World: Pittsburgh; and East End Cooperative Ministry, the poverty simulation is in support of Circles East Liberty, an anti-poverty initiative.

Circles is a national program that creates relationships between low-income families and middle- to high-income community volunteers, called "allies." Allies are trained to support the family's economic goals and create meaningful opportunities for success.

Developed by the Missouri Association for Community Action, the poverty simulation is a way for Circles to raise awareness and support.

During the hour-long simulation, participants play out assigned roles and are challenged to survive four weeks of life, finding ways to support their families while staying within the law.

Stations around the perimeter of the room act as institutions, from schools to jails to grocery stores. Participants are arranged in family units and receive a packet with their storyline, play money, play bus passes, play benefit transfer cards, and cards depicting household items that can be pawned.

Elements of daily life, as basic as getting

around, become obstacles to survival during the simulation.

"The ubiquitous issue was, 'How do you get to where you need to go to address the problems of your daily life?'" said Ted Cmarada, a participant in the September simulation and a Circles ally. "Families had to make choices and decisions in order to prioritize tasks and the use of their funds to get through."

Although the simulation is only a temporary exercise, participants are forced to consider difficult dilemmas, and the weight of those tough choices builds up.

"I found my anxiety level continually rising," Cmarada said. "Considering my true nature as a calm and relaxed guy, it was striking that I was getting anxious and feeling the tension in the room."

Participants walk away from the simulation with a broader definition of what poverty looks like.

Yijen Wu, director of UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh's research imaging center and research faculty, also took part in the September simulation. She said the experience influenced her view of poverty.

"We will never label poor people as 'lazy,' 'uneducated,' 'irresponsible,' 'not caring for the children,'" she said. "We learned that ... people could try all they could but still not make it. Our own 'family' was a middle-class family in the suburbs. But when several things happened, we spiraled down quickly."

People interested in attending the November simulation can register by calling Akirah Robinson at 412-254-3038 or emailing circles@eastliberty.org. ♦

COLD CASE REOPENED



Point Breeze – New leads, including possible DNA evidence, are being collected in a 22-year-old homicide investigation into the strangulation death of a teenager in Point Breeze.

The body of Demetria "Mia" Holland (left), 15, was found behind a warehouse in the 7500 block of Thomas Boulevard on May 27, 1992. She was last seen alive the previous night ordering pizza with a friend.

Anyone with information is encouraged to call the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police homicide squad at 412-323-7161 or 412-728-6363. – Sonya Toler, City of Pittsburgh

Lawrenceville pilots neighborhood forest plan

By Molly Recka *Lawrenceville Corporation*

Lawrenceville – In an April issue of The Bulletin, Tree Pittsburgh expressed excitement to start building an urban forest plan in Lawrenceville. Now, its efforts are officially underway.

Jen Kullgren is the community forester for Tree Pittsburgh. She moved from Baltimore to Pittsburgh in early 2014 to help implement the city's Urban Forest Master Plan. After researching and discussing the many neighborhoods of Pittsburgh, Tree Pittsburgh chose Lawrenceville as the project's first focus.

"Lawrenceville is a great pilot neighborhood for this project," Kullgren said, noting the neighborhood's engaged residents and community organizations, large business district, and low tree canopy.

Now, thanks to community support organized largely by Lawrenceville United, the cleverly named "ReLeaf Lawrenceville" is well underway.

One of these active community residents and supporters is Molly Dimond-Stephany. She is one of Tree Pittsburgh's



ABOVE: Molly Dimond-Stephany and her son, Oliver, present at a community meeting in April at the Stephen Foster Center in Central Lawrenceville. It was Tree Pittsburgh's first of three meetings related to ReLeaf Lawrenceville. Photo by Jen Kullgren.

neighborhood ambassadors and has been an active member of the Lawrenceville Tree Tenders, a group that existed long before Tree Pittsburgh arrived in Lawrenceville.

Before launching ReLeaf Lawrenceville, Tree Pittsburgh distributed an extensive survey to better understand the needs and desires of the neighborhood.

They surveyed business owners, residents, and school students, asking specific questions about how each group would like to get involved, where they would like to see more trees, and what benefits – such as better air quality, stormwater control, and beautification – trees would bring to the community.

Through outreach efforts, including multiple community meetings, the survey received 1,100 responses. With this wealth of information, the ReLeaf Lawrenceville plan was developed.

"Overall, people loved trees and wanted to see more," Dimond-Stephany said.

Between the months of October and November, Tree Pittsburgh will be planting and restoring more than 300 trees in Lawrenceville, and that's just the beginning. The ReLeaf Lawrenceville plan is divided to target five separate segments of the neighborhood: residential home-

owners, industrial property owners, commercial owners, cemeteries, and community spaces. A specific project plan has been developed for each of these five segments.

"This plan that Tree Pittsburgh put together for us is a huge tool," Dimond-Stephany said. "Now we just have to implement it, get the leaders in place, and then get our feet on the ground and start going."

Tree Pittsburgh, Lawrenceville United, and the Lawrenceville Corporation hosted a happy hour at Hop Farm Brewing Company on Oct. 16 to celebrate the project and the community's work and support. Three tree planting and restoration projects took place in October.

A TreeVitalize street trees event organized by Lawrenceville United will take place Nov. 1, and there will be a pruning event on Nov. 20. (See the Bulletin Board on page 14 for details.) Tree Pittsburgh will also be hosting a Tree Tender course in January 2015.

Molly Dimond-Stephany enthusiastically reflected on her 15 years in Lawrenceville and the many changes in tree efforts and attitudes over the years.

"I remember going door-to-door when I first started, and now people see how wonderful trees are. It's a new wave of thinking," she said.

For more information about how to get involved with Tree Pittsburgh and the ReLeaf Lawrenceville project, visit www.treepittsburgh.org/lawrenceville. ♦

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Volunteers spruce up Kite Hill Park

Garfield – On Oct. 2, volunteers from TIAA-CREF, the University of Pittsburgh's human resources department, and the Garfield neighborhood worked at Kite Hill Park as part of United Way's Day of Caring event.

The volunteers painted wooden kites, built a new perennial garden bed, and filled it with plants donated by an East End neighbor.

Paulette Poulet (right) was one of the nearby residents who participated in the project. Photo by Wesley Davis.



Swim and water polo leader takes on new challenge



ABOVE: Mark Rauterkus stands on deck with the Carnegie Mellon University women's water polo team at one of his first practices this fall. Photo courtesy of Mark Rauterkus.

Pittsburgh – The leader of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation's swim and water polo camp, part of the Pittsburgh Public Schools' Summer Dreamers Academy, is also coaching the women's water polo team at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). Mark Rauterkus has been leading water polo activities for the past five years with city school students and this year continues as the varsity boys coach for Pittsburgh Obama 6-12, in addition to serving as water

polo coach at CMU. Rauterkus said he hopes that the additional coaching duties can make for a bigger and better summer experience in 2015.

"With the college program and those student-athletes, we are able to widen our capacity and build better relationships with aquatics, athletics, and fitness," Rauterkus said. "The local students are sure to benefit, as well as the college players, as we work to improve Pittsburgh's teamwork and wellness at the local swim pools." – Bulletin staff

Fashion entrepreneur chases dreams

By Carrie Garrison *The Bulletin*

Lawrenceville – Emily Slagel has realized her passion for ethically sourced clothing and accessories in her retail shop, Mid-Atlantic Mercantile, located at 4415 Butler St. in Lawrenceville.

Owner and lone sales associate, Slagel describes herself as the "one-woman team" behind Mid-Atlantic Mercantile, which opened in May 2013. Her creative personality and keen eye for style are reflected throughout the shop, from the items she stocks to the small, painted animal skull that decorates her desk.

A Pittsburgh native and 2010 graduate of Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), Slagel said she was inspired by

"About 90 percent of our inventory is made in the United States," Slagel said. "If we can source something locally, we absolutely will."

She said she's happy with her store's location in Lawrenceville, where sales have been going well. Now, she's looking forward to the future and said she hopes to expand her product line to include more gifts and homewares.

"The neighborhood has been really supportive," Slagel said. "Everyone has something really special to contribute here."

Mid-Atlantic Mercantile's unique logo is Slagel's own design. It depicts an acorn, a

"I've always been interested in style over fashion ... There's definitely a market out there for well-made, quality goods."

– Emily Slagel, Mid-Atlantic Mercantile

her classes on global sourcing and saw a gap in the market for high-quality and sustainable fashion.

"A lot of times, the standard is to produce a garment by [determining] how much you want it to retail for, and then finding the lowest-cost way to actually produce that item," Slagel said. "I'd rather go out of business than concede to that."

She said she hopes her shop will introduce customers to high-quality, sustainable pieces that will last over generations.

"I've always been interested in style over fashion," Slagel said. "I was finding that there's definitely a market out there for well-made, quality goods ... especially in women's clothing."

Slagel also holds a deep concern for the environmental and social aspects of fashion.

"It's a huge environmental concern when people feel like what they purchase [is] disposable," Slagel said. "Today, everything is ending up in a landfill."

Mid-Atlantic Mercantile focuses on stocking American-made clothing made from natural fibers rather than synthetics. Slagel said Tellason Denim's products, which are milled and woven in North Carolina and sewn in San Francisco, are among the store's best-sellers.

wishbone, and an arrow, all within a diamond shape.

"It's like a little crest or stamp for the store," Slagel said. "I'm trying to start a business ... I'm chasing this thing that's not easy ... The arrow through the wishbone is chasing that dream and nailing it." ♦



ABOVE: Mid-Atlantic Mercantile, located in Lawrenceville, is committed to high-quality, sustainable fashion and is owned by Emily Slagel. Photo by Carrie Garrison.



Common Plea Catering is hiring experienced event bartenders, event service staff, and a full time service manager. The service manager position will require 40 hours a week and starting wage of \$17.00 per hour. Anyone interested in either of these positions please forward a resume to info@commonplea-catering.com



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GCAT CHAT

Volunteers Needed for Garfield's Holiday Party

Tues. December 2, and Fri. December 5, from 6-8 p.m. at the Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Ave. Tuesday we'll be decorating the Activity Center in preparation for the Holiday Party. Friday we'll need extra hands running the craft activities and passing out cookies and cocoa. Email GCAT if you are able to help: gcatpg@gmail.com

Garfield Neighborhood Holiday Party

Friday December 5, from 6-8 p.m. at the Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Ave. Enjoy a concert by King of Kings Ministry's choir, crafts led by Assemble, and free cocoa and cookies. Await the arrival of Santa Claus at the end of the night. This is a FREE event for all families and children.

GCAT Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, January 21, at 6:30 p.m. at 5201 Penn Ave.



Follow the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation on Twitter @BloomGarCorp!

Nonprofit promotes community artists

By Shannon Hussey MGR Youth Empowerment

Garfield – On the first Friday night of every month, gallery owners along Penn Avenue offer the opportunity to experience art in a free community event known as Unblurred. As a part of the Nov. 7 lineup, MGR Youth Empowerment, in collaboration with BOOM Concepts, will showcase the work of two MGR instructors.

MGR, a nonprofit that provides art, health, and environmental-consciousness programs to under-resourced youths, sees the exhibition as a way to highlight and empower the talented teaching artists who share their expertise with young people in the community.

“Supporting our artists supports all people who care about youths,” said Mayada Mansour, Pittsburgh MGR director.

The exhibition will feature a collaborative work created by visual artist Jordan Martin and performance artist Riva Strauss.

Martin, an instructor for MGR’s “Positive Spin” youth cycling program, presents a series of abstract mixed-media paintings inspired by the texture of sculpture and informed by themes of decay, decomposition, and residue.

“I’m interested in what’s left behind,” Martin said.

As Martin reflected on his work with youths, the importance of access to art for young people became clear.

“Kids who struggle to express themselves in writing have expressed themselves profoundly through visual art,” he said. “It’s a language that’s available to them. Visual art can open the doors of expression.”

Riva Strauss, a teaching artist for MGR’s “Arts in Action” program as well as a yoga instructor for Active Health, will incorporate a performance piece into the presentation of Martin’s series of visual works. The collaboration centers on connection – how young people connect to art, how they connect to each other, and how they connect to their communities – and how access to art enhances those connections.

Strauss describes the project as a representation of forging relationships with self, others, and community.

“The choices we make create an intricate patchwork of interweaving moments,” she said. “Just like the neurons in our brain, the roads we’ve built, and the interstellar pathways, connections are created



ABOVE: A Nov. 7 exhibit at BOOM Concepts will feature works like “#04812,” a mixed-media piece by Jordan Martin. Photo courtesy of MGR Youth Empowerment.

from point to point.”

BOOM Concepts at 5139 Penn Ave., a gallery and workspace created for the development and promotion of local artists, will host the event from 7 to 11 p.m. The exhibition is open to all, and young people especially are encouraged to attend.

“The show is a reinvestment in the community,” said Julie Mallis, co-creator of BOOM Concepts and coordinator of MGR’s Active Health program. “It’s a chance for performance and visual art to interact, and for young people to interact with these forms in a new way.”

MGR hopes the event will encourage more young people to explore local art, and to use art more frequently to express their ideas and connect to others.

“For young people, the event will showcase art as something beyond a school activity – something not only present in, but vital to their communities,” Mansour said. ♦

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the

Bulletin

BOARD

Local Events
Announcements

Classes
Fundraisers

November 1

BLOOMFIELD

Saturday Market

Celebrate harvest season at the market with a Harvest Festival. Featuring artists and crafters, fun kids’ activities, and, of course, lots of delicious food and produce. Stock up during the last market of the season. Call 412-708-1277 or email christina@bloomfieldnow.com for more information.

LAWRENCEVILLE

Prayer Breakfast

Join the women’s ministry at New Bethel Baptist Church at 9:30 a.m. for a prayer breakfast. This church is located at 221 43rd St. Call Ann Walker for more information at 412-231-3128.

November 4

EAST LIBERTY

Foam Crafts

At 5 p.m., kids are invited to make projects out of fun foam material while supplies last. For children ages 3 and up at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – East Liberty, 130 S. Whitfield St.

November 6

LAWRENCEVILLE

Sisters Revival

Come hear guest revivalist Dr. Lisa Weah, pastor at New Bethlehem Baptist Church in Baltimore, speak at New Bethel Baptist Church, 221 43rd St., on Nov. 6 and 7 at 7 p.m. Call 412-231-3128 for more information.

November 7

FRIENDSHIP

Exhibit Opening

The “Emerge/Evolve” exhibit features artists from all over the world displaying their works of kiln-glass at the Pittsburgh Glass Center, 5472 Penn Ave. Visit www.pittsburghglasscenter.org for more information.

GARFIELD

Unblurred Gallery Crawl

The first Friday of every month, from 6 to 11 p.m., various venues in the Penn Avenue Arts District, 4800-5500 Penn Ave., open their doors to showcase the work of a variety of artists and performers.

Sorry, we do not accept listings by phone.

The Bulletin Board publishes listings of volunteer opportunities, free or low-cost events and classes, fundraising events, and services that are of particular interest to our neighborhoods. Listings published on a space-available basis; we cannot guarantee placement. Announcements for the December issue are due Tuesday, November 11 to bulletin@bloomfield-garfield.org. Download submission guidelines: bit.ly/bulletin_news

Garfield Night Market

Stop by North Pacific Avenue between Penn and Dearborn between 6 and 10 p.m. for the last Garfield Night Market of the season. New vendors will be in attendance along with old favorites.

Unblurred @ Assemble

From 7 to 10 p.m., Assemble, located at 5125 Penn Ave., will feature “The Muck and the Mire,” a two-person show by Brad Bianchi and Danny Devine. In their first show together, the two will be showing new paintings, drawings, and sculpture. There will also be an interactive activity.

Pittsburgh Art Exhibit

From 7 to 10 p.m., the Irma Freeman Center for Imagination at 5006 Penn Ave. presents “Pittsburgh by Pittsburgh Artists IV,” a group exhibition of over 20 artists. Musical guests Standing Wave to perform.

BLOOMFIELD

Bellydance Festival

This event, hosted by Pittsburgh Bellydance Academy and Pittsburgh Dance Center, takes place Nov. 7, 8, and 9 at 4765 Liberty Ave. It’s a weekend full of workshops, shows, competition, and crowning the “Belly Dancer of the Year.” For information, visit www.pghbellydancefestival.com.

Kids’ Step Class

Earthen Vessels Outreach is beginning a free step class for children in grades 1 to 4. Classes begin on Nov. 7 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at 250 S. Pacific Ave. and continue weekly, with a final stage performance occurring on Dec. 19. Classes will be taught by Ms. Tia, a community resident who has taught step for more than five years. Call 412-681-7272 or 412-414-2993 to register. Class size limited to 12.

Digital Corps

Earthen Vessels Outreach is offering a free Digital Corps weekly engineering series for middle-school youths from Nov. 7 through Dec. 12 from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Youths will learn about the Hummingbird Robotics Kit, Visual Programmer, and the Scratch Programming Environment. Call 412-681-7272 or 412-414-2993 to register.

November 8

LAWRENCEVILLE

Studio Tour

From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., furniture designers, fiber artists, painters, sculptors, photographers, glass artists, printmakers, and others will open their doors to the public to teach and converse about their disciplines. Watch artist demonstrations, view works-in-progress, purchase local artwork, and experience the environments that energize

Lawrenceville’s expanding creative culture. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, please call 401-965-6099 or visit www.facebook.com/LawrencevilleArtistsStudio-Tour.

November 9

LAWRENCEVILLE

Free Lecture

At 11 a.m., the Holy Name Society of Our Lady of the Angels Parish will host Jim Wudarczyk, who will speak on “Pittsburgh on the Eve of the American Civil War.” Wudarczyk will present an informative and amusing talk on some little-known events that helped to spark America’s bloodiest confrontation. The event will take place in the social hall under Saint Augustine Church, 225 37th St. It is free and open to the public.

Sisters Revival

Come hear Reverend Ayonna Johnson, from St. James AME Church, and Pastor June Jeffries, from New Life Baptist Church, speak at New Bethel Baptist Church, 221 43rd St., at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Call 412-231-3128 for more information.

November 13

STRIP DISTRICT

Eco Art PGH

“Eco Art PGH: Visions of a Sustainable Pittsburgh” is a student art contest based around the theme of a futuristic, sustainable Pittsburgh. This 21+ event takes place from 7 to 10 p.m. at 2425 Liberty Ave. and is hosted by Ziggy Sawdust and state Senator Jim Ferlo. Enjoy works of art by local university students, live music, free beer and wine, and light refreshments. Tickets are \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. Student works will be available for purchase. Proceeds benefit Pittsburgh Green Innovators and the Larimer Green Team. For more information, visit www.ecoartpgh.eventbrite.com.

November 14

OAKLAND

Annual Luncheon

The board of directors of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation invites you to a luncheon celebrating this year’s achievements at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, 4215 Fifth Ave., from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and Mayor Bill Peduto will speak. For tickets and information, call Aggie Brose, 412-441-6950 ext. 15.

November 16

BLOOMFIELD

Princess Dance Party

Come dressed as your favorite princess between 3 and 4:15 p.m. at Pittsburgh Dance Center, 4765 Liberty Ave. Parents must stay with their child, and all ages are welcome. The event costs \$5 per child. Each child will receive a certificate for a free dance class.

November 17

EAST LIBERTY

Poverty Simulation

A simulation to increase understanding of what it’s like to live in poverty will be held at East Liberty Presbyterian Church from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Free to the public. To register, call Akirah Robinson at 412-254-3038 or email circles@eastliberty.org.

Lego Club

At 6 p.m. at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – East Liberty, 130 S. Whitfield St., families with children ages 2 and up are encouraged build creatively with Legos, Duplos, wood blocks, straws, connectors, and more.

November 20

LAWRENCEVILLE

Free Lecture

As part of the Lawrenceville Historical Society’s public lecture series, James Halttunen will speak about the last remnant of Fort Pitt, the Block House. This lecture is based on “The Fort Pitt Block House,” a recent book by Emily Weaver. Halttunen is the current curator of the Block House. Lecture will take place at the McVey Auditorium of Canterbury Place, 310 Fisk St., at 7 p.m. Free and no reservations required.

Pruning Event

Join fellow community members for a pruning event from 6 to 8 p.m. in Lawrenceville. For more information, call 412-781-TREE or visit www.treepittsburgh.org/lawrenceville.

November 22

GARFIELD

Thanksgiving Dinner

At 11:30 a.m. Morningside Church of God in Christ, 5173 Dearborn St., is giving away free winter wear. Later on, a free Thanksgiving dinner will take place. If you need transportation, call Sister Cathy Bryant at 412-853-2022.

EAST LIBERTY

Cathedral Concert

At 5 p.m., East Liberty Presbyterian Church, 116 South Highland Ave., will have a concert showcasing the dedication of the chapel’s newly refurbished Steinway piano. For more information, call 412-441-3800.

November 23

BLOOMFIELD

Ballroom Dance Party

Come to Pittsburgh Dance Center, 4765 Liberty Ave., at 4 p.m. for a ballroom dance lesson, and from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. for an open ballroom dance party. Refreshments provided, BYOB. The cost is \$10 per person, and no partner is necessary. Begin-

Volunteer Opportunities & Services

ners are welcome.

November 25

LAWRENCEVILLE

Thanksgiving Dinner

Join the members of New Bethel Baptist Church at 6:30 p.m. at 221 43rd St. to enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner. Contact Ann Walker at 412-231-3128 for more information.

Ongoing

HIGHLAND PARK

Seeking Volunteers

Literary Arts Boom relies upon volunteers and interns to add expertise and energy to its programming. This fall, volunteers are needed for weekday-morning storytelling workshops and for National Novel Writing Month in November. For more information, email literaryartsboom@gmail.com or call 412-906-9522.

Classroom Field Trips

During Glorious Group Stories, your group of young authors will learn about narrative structure and character development from our enthusiastic team. Volunteers will be on hand every step of the way to help students express their ideas and hone their storytelling skills. For more information, visit http://bit.ly/LAB_GloriousGroupStories or call 412-906-9522.

LAWRENCEVILLE

Young Adult Bible Study

A weekly young adult Bible study began on Oct. 19 from 7 to 8 p.m. at Crazy Mocha, 4032 Butler St. This free program is being sponsored by Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church. For more information, call 412-621-2720.

GARFIELD

Call for Proposals

5511 Penn Ave. is looking for artists to submit proposals for events, exhibits, and performances to take place in that space during Unblurred in

November and December. Please note that this space is still very "raw," meaning that it is not a typical gallery or performance space. All ideas are welcome. Visit www.pennavenue.org/blog for more information and pictures of the space. Submit proposals to mainstreets@bloomfield-garfield.org for consideration.

Saturday Crafternoons

The Saturday Crafternoon program at Assemble, 5125 Penn Ave., offers free craft workshops every Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. Youths in grades 1 to 8 and their families can stop by and participate in fun new projects every week.

Assemble Afterschool

Assemble, 5125 Penn Ave., offers a safe space for kids to develop their problem-solving skills and creativity through making and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) education. Open to youths in grades 1 to 8 on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 4 to 6 p.m. through Dec. 18.

EAST LIBERTY

Storytime: Baby & Me

Come to the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – East Liberty, 130 S. Whitfield St., on November 6, 13, and 20 at 10:30 a.m. to listen to stories, sing songs and participate in rhymes. For ages birth to 2 with an adult. Call 412-363-8274 to register.

Storytime: Family Fun

Come to Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – East Liberty, 130 S. Whitfield St., at 10:30 a.m. on November 7, 14, and 21 to listen to a story, sing songs, and recite rhymes. Parent will hear tips to help their child get ready to read. For ages 2 to 5 with a parent or adult.

Community Notices

SHADYSIDE

Book Released

Expected End Entertainment, LLC, and EX3 Books announced on Oct. 13 the release of "The Hair Commandments: Shalls and Shall Nots of Wigs, Weaves, and Natural Hair" (ISBN 978-0-9885545-5-9) by Pittsburgh businesswoman LaToya Johnson-Rainey.



Give Thanks

On Thanksgiving we are supposed to give thanks.

But what does that mean?

It means being thankful for what you have and not dwelling on what you don't have.

May you and your family be blessed with many reasons to be thankful for.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!



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TechShop helps veterans become makers, entrepreneurs

By Carrie Garrison *The Bulletin*

East Liberty – Gio Attisano, a United States Navy veteran, said he felt lost after his four years of service ended in 2009. Thanks to a free membership program for veterans at TechShop in East Liberty, he has learned new skills and started his own business.

“Being my own boss is the best thing ... I couldn’t recommend [this program] enough.”

– Gio Attisano, Puzzle Pax co-founder

“I always had a ton of ideas and things I wanted to do,” Attisano said. “These pie-in-the-sky things don’t really mean anything until you’re able to produce something.”

TechShop, which is a membership-based, do-it-yourself workshop that provides access to industrial equipment, gave Attisano the tools and connections he needed to make his vision a reality.

“It all started out when I was looking online for a wooden six-pack bottle holder,” Attisano said. “I couldn’t find anything I liked.”

Attisano was at TechShop when he met a fellow woodworker, Nick Thompson, who was making six-pack holders. Attisano said he liked Thompson’s idea, but saw some flaws in the design.

“I approached him and said, ‘Hey, I really like what you’re doing ... I’d like to help you out with some of the design aspects, and maybe we can team up,’” Attisano said.

Now business partners, Thompson and Attisano have started “Puzzle Pax,” a business that creates and sells reusable, wooden six-pack carrying cases that incorporate customized design elements. Attisano said Puzzle Pax has attracted a great deal of interest from customers since it launched this past August.

“People like the fact that you don’t have to use any nails or glue to put it together. It fits together like a puzzle,” Attisano said. “The fact that we can laser-engrave anyone’s logo onto it is really cool, too.”

East Liberty’s TechShop opened in March of 2013 through a partnership between Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department and Research Arm of the Government (DARPA). In addition to its Pittsburgh branch, TechShop has locations in Arizona, California, Michigan, Virginia, and Texas. Collectively, these locations have made free memberships

available to 2,000 U.S. veterans.

“All veterans have access to one year of free membership plus \$350 worth of training,” said Les Gies, senior accounts manager at TechShop in East Liberty, where more than 100 veterans of all ages have taken

advantage of the membership program.

“They’re finding basically some side income or, in some cases, lifestyle business incomes,” Gies said, noting that many participants sell their products online or at local markets.

Attisano said it has been very rewarding to learn how to take a project from concept to completion.

“Being my own boss is the best thing,” he said. “I couldn’t recommend [this program] enough.” ♦

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