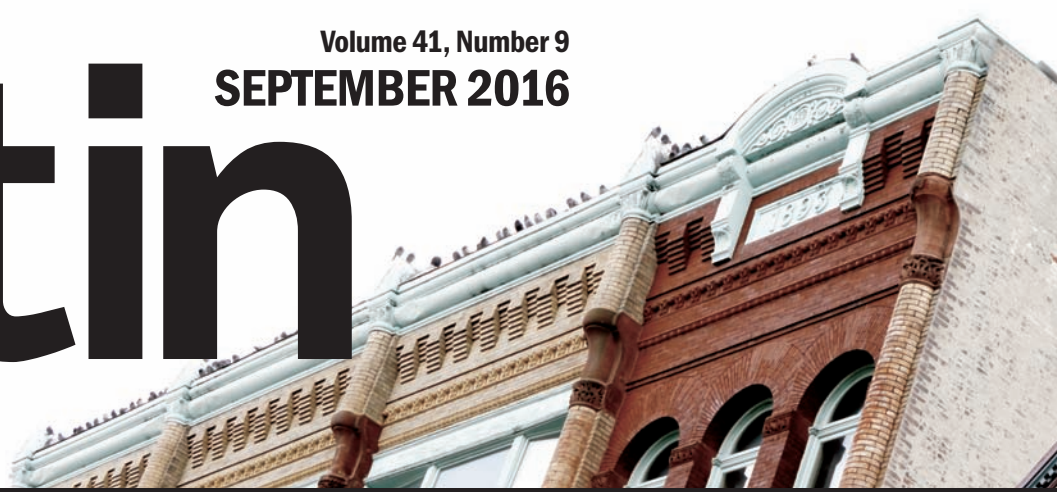


the Bulletin

Volume 41, Number 9
SEPTEMBER 2016

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



Amid great transition, local school pursues founding ideals

By Ethan Lennox *Bulletin* contributor

Stanton Heights - From its hilltop campus in Stanton Heights, the Neighborhood Academy (709 N Aiken Ave.) must navigate new transitions while maintaining an academically rigorous education that puts a four-year college program within ready grasp of all of its students.

The only school in Pittsburgh with such an overt goal, the Academy boasts a 100% matriculation rate, as well as a ten-to-one student-teacher ratio. The twelve-hour school days consist of academic instruction and training in financial, social, and interpersonal skills.

Working with a \$3 million budget, the bulk of which is raised independently, the school offers a truly different model for what a high school can offer its students. Thanks to the business sense of its co-founder, Jodie Moore, the Neighborhood Academy has positioned itself in the right direction – despite devastating gaps in the state budget.

Moore was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in February; she decided to step down from her post as president, effective at the end of August. So begins the

See **Academy** | page 5



ABOVE: “StartablePGH,” a free summer program that teaches students ages 16 to 18 valuable entrepreneurship and maker skills, heralds its students’ achievements with a community celebration at East Liberty’s Ace Hotel on Wednesday, Aug. 17. Winners of the night’s open “pitch contest” are (l to r) Cameron Kinsailus, who earned second place and a \$500 prize; Angel Andrews, who won first place and a \$1,000 prize; and Dorian Epps, who took home third place and a \$250 prize. Take a look at more shots from the event on pages 9 and 14. Photo by John Colombo.

Man-made mythos on display at Center for Postnatural History

By Arrysa Shultz *the Bulletin*

Garfield - Goats, mail-order toys, and the flu vaccine might not seem to have much in common, yet they all share a home at the Center for Postnatural History (4913

See **Postnatural History** | page 6

6

“Bike Data Open House” studies numbers, safety in Bloomfield

By Joshua Rolon *Bloomfield Development Corporation*

Bloomfield - Visitors to the July 16 Bloomfield Saturday Market may have been surprised to come across a booth with colorful charts and maps in place of the usual fruits

See **Bike Data** | page 11

11



ABOVE: West Penn Hospital (WPH) employees walk the perimeter of the 4800 Friendship Ave. campus on Tuesday, Aug. 9. Putting their best foot forward on the Bloomfield hospital’s new walking path, WPH staff members were excited to use the new ambulation amenity. Photo by Andrew McKeon.

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Bulletin

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Garfield green zone requires dedication from city, local community

By Joe Reuben *Bulletin contributor*

BELOW: A preliminary map of the proposed Fort Pitt Park expansion (parcels shown in green, inside darkened border). Graphic rendering courtesy of the BGC.



Garfield - In what many hope is the first step toward creating a dedicated zone of green space in Garfield, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) recently petitioned the city for help producing a master plan for an expanded Fort Pitt Park.

In a letter dated Aug. 9, the BGC asked city planning director Ray Gastil to work with the community to engage the services of a consultant; this professional could help produce a plan for acquisition and enhancement of properties - taking in the existing land parcel around the vacant Ft. Pitt School on Hillcrest St., as well as twenty-five additional properties that border it on all sides.

The larger park would include the football field used by the Garfield Gators, a playground, and basketball courts behind the school that sit on land owned by the Housing Authority. Among the properties is a cluster of untended lots on Breesport, Rosetta, Hillcrest, and N. Mathilda Sts. According to Rick Swartz, the BGC's executive director, most of these parcels are already owned by public bodies. However, several are still in the hands of private owners who have not paid their real estate taxes in a decade or longer.

"The goal is to create new opportunities for people to be outdoors; to enjoy a safe, larger park; and to preserve a key part of Garfield for the long term," Swartz said, noting that the acquired properties would not be subject to development pressures. "While this isn't the only strategy to make Garfield a livable place for years to come, it is an important piece of the puzzle."

The BGC's approach to the city comes on the heels of a comprehensive report finished this summer by the Western PA Conservancy. The report provides a road map to future initiatives that the agency says would allow Garfield residents "to have and use public space in their own neighborhood for outdoor recreation and ecological improvement." A push along these lines over the next decade would overcome "years of neglect" that have left many of the spaces vulnerable to "intentional, hidden dumping," the report went on, asking community members and the city to "keep good design in mind" and to recognize that "many people already utilize components of the green zone."

If the planning department signs on to the proposal, the community would have to work with the city to raise funds and hire a consulting firm. Then, all parties would resume a public process, which began in November of 2014, to define what investments are needed and how they would be funded. The city uses a concept known as "Adopt-a-Park" to formalize its collaboration with the community in carrying out improvements to any park area and engaging residents as the park's long-term stewards.

"The green zone doesn't end with Ft. Pitt Park," Swartz emphasized. "There are many other green assets in the neighborhood, some under city control and some not, that will need to be gathered and held under some form of community ownership. Whether that's a land trust or some other vehicle remains to be seen. But identifying who and what that is will need to happen sooner rather than later." ♦

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Carlow University summer program positions high-schoolers on stepping stones

By Drew Wilson *Carlow University*

Oakland - Twenty-two high school students from Pittsburgh Public Schools spent eight weeks of their summer vacation taking a college course at Carlow University, so a celebration was certainly in order.

Concluding with a ceremony on Thursday, Aug. 4, the "Carlow Summer College Program" was one of three youth-oriented programs offered through partnerships that the university has established with the Neighborhood Learning Alliance (NLA), the Bloomfield Garfield Corporation (BGC), and the City of Pittsburgh's Learn and Earn program.

Speaking not only as the director of Carlow's MBA program, but also as a professor of the human resource management summer course, Howard Stern, PhD, raved about the students and their dedication to learning.

"The students were really challenged, but they did an amazing job," he said, noting their 100% class completion rate. "One of the great things about this group was that they asked such great questions. They really challenged me."

Lest anyone think the course's standards were lowered to benefit high school students, that myth was quickly dispelled. "This class was taught with the same rigor and the same requirements as any course at Carlow," Deanne D'Emilio, Carlow's provost, explained.

As long as the students earn a "C" or better in the course, she said, their credits will transfer to any college that will accept

them. "We hope this first taste of college encourages you to pursue a college education," D'Emilio urged the students. As parents listened in, she told the program's participants that if they choose to come to Carlow, not only will the university accept the credits they earned this summer, but it will also offer them a \$2,000 renewable scholarship for all four years.

Maia Akiva, the NLA's program coordinator, was amazed at the incredible progress students were able to make over the course of eight weeks. "By the final paper, their writing and thinking skills were so strong and developed," she said.

Apparently, the students appreciated the opportunity as well. Jose Andino, who will be a senior in high school this coming year, said the class "gave [him] a good college experience." Right now, he is still deciding what career path he will follow, but he hopes to own his own carpentry business or possibly study forensic science.

Five of the students worked to create a seven-minute video; they interviewed fellow students about their experiences in the program. After the video was over, two of the creators, Usamah Abdul-Ghaffar and Alonzo Hall, took it upon themselves to address the audience and speak about what the program meant to all the students.

"I honestly want to say 'thank you,'" Abdul-Ghaffar said. Hall added that he is very appreciative of what he learned in Carlow's summer program. "This is not an opportunity everyone is given, especially in the inner city," he said. ♦

the Bulletin

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PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE

A message from Jason Lando Zone 5 Commander, Pittsburgh Police

Commentary

Dear Zone 5 Neighbors,

Zone 5 is currently putting together a plan with our Intelligence team and detectives from Major Crimes. This plan will involve additional uniformed officers, as well as officers working in plainclothes capacity, so you may or may not notice an increase police presence in your neighborhood. Please know that we are working diligently on a plan to address these issues and we will keep you posted if and when we are able to make any arrests.

In the meantime, please exercise these common safety precautions when you are out after dark: stay in well-lit areas; be aware of your surroundings (avoid texting or listening to your headphones while you are out walking around); whenever possible, travel in pairs; do not walk around with large amounts of cash, credit cards, or jewelry; and avoid using an ATM machine when alone after dark. If anyone ever approaches you and demands money, please do not argue. Do not fight with them. Just do your best to get an accurate description of the suspect(s) and relay this information to the responding officers.

Take care and be safe,

Jason



ABOVE: Carlow's summer learning program celebrates eight weeks of success as (l to r) the university's Dr. Howard Stern, student participants Steven Bermudez and Kiah Kyles, and program coordinator Maia Akiva gather to share their accomplishments on Thursday, Aug. 4. Photo by David Holzemer.

Changing demographics to be reflected in Lawrenceville Hospitality House Tour

By Kate Bayer *Bulletin contributor*

Commentary

Lawrenceville - Thanks in part to various pundits from the New York Times and elsewhere, Lawrenceville has quickly become Pittsburgh’s premier “destination neighborhood.” This entails quite a stark contrast from its previous label which, as recently as ten years ago, was simply, “your grandfather’s industrial neighborhood.” Yet, both the old and new reputation are well-earned, and for good reason.

Founded in 1814 by William B. Foster, father of composer Stephen, Lawrenceville gets its name from war hero James Lawrence. During the War of 1812, Lawrence issued his dying words, “don’t give up the ship,” a battle cry that still resonates with many of the neighborhood’s longtime residents.

Lawrenceville had the unique advantage of the Allegheny River running through its back yard, affording an ideal location for the development of industry in the “steel city.” For decades, when steel was king, the river served as an excellent conduit; coal and coke were easily transported to giant steel mills, where the raw materials for bridges and skyscrapers all over the country were made.

The decline of steel manufacturing in the 1980s could have been the death knell for Lawrenceville. Instead, the neighborhood began welcoming artists into the fold, its name-sake’s immortal words inspiring positive change along Butler St. Now home to “hipsters,” “techies,” and a huge range of medical professionals, Lawrenceville is experiencing a demographic transformation that is now reflected in its housing stock.

Over the past year, locals have witnessed a jaw-dropping pace of demolition, construction, renovation, and reconstruction in their neighborhood. Long-abandoned row houses are now selling like hotcakes while construction crews and dumpsters seem to appear out of thin air, raising many questions among longtime residents.

Most Lawrenceville natives never get the chance to see exactly what their new neighbors

are building down the street; much less tour any of the impressive new buildings in the area. This year’s “Lawrenceville Hospitality House Tour” will provide an opportunity for everyone to walk through some of the neighborhood’s most progressive architectural gems. From 12 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, October 2, tour-goers will get a chance to explore stunning new homes in Lawrenceville.

Take the 5440 Dresden Way home of Anthony Koulianos, for example. What was once a derelict property, an abandoned duplex, was finally given a new lease on life when a developer chose to renovate the structure rather than demolish it. Koulianos, who already lived in the neighborhood as a renter, always knew that he wanted to purchase his first home in Lawrenceville. He specifically chose the Tenth Ward because it was “up and coming” and provided significant input on the rebuild.

The resulting “dream house” boasts a front porch that invites guests to sit down and relax for days. Koulianos opted for an open floor plan with a huge kitchen island so that his guests can enjoy plenty of room to dine and mingle above the white quartz countertops. All of the kitchen furnishings, including the trash cans and a refrigerated wine cooler, are built-in for ultimate convenience. The painted first-floor wall sports an unusual touch in its canvas panels, which enhance the room’s visual texture and depth.

Such fine architectural features speak to the endless potential of a neighborhood still adjusting to the fit of its new “destination” label. Even the most skeptical of tour-goers will enjoy riding Molly’s Trolleys as they travel to new local treasures around Butler St.

After Labor Day, advance tickets for the Lawrenceville Hospitality House Tour will go on sale for \$15 at the following establishments: City Grows, Gallery on 43rd St., Dandelions, and Pavement. The tour is proudly sponsored by the Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC. For more information, visit <https://lha15201.org>. ♦

BELOW: Like many other Lawrenceville homes, 5440 Dresden Way, the site of a once-abandoned building, now boasts modern architectural flair. Photo courtesy of Kate Bayer.



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This publication begins and ends with you, the community, so we respectfully invite your opinions and insights. Please contact our neighborhood tip-line/suggestion box/commentary pipeline at Bulletin@Bloomfield-Garfield.org.

Academy *continued from page 1*

first of the school's great transitions; Mark Kurtzrock, a businessman with more than thirty years of experience, has taken over as president.

Kurtzrock has started companies - he sold his own communications company, Metis Secure, in April 2015 after seven years at the helm - and developed others in his more than three decades on the Pittsburgh Technology Council. A founding member, Kurtzrock has actively served on the Academy's Board for ten years.

He made the decision to become president because, he said, "it just seemed like, at this point in my life, it was an opportunity to take a life's work and apply it to something that would hopefully do some good."

Kurtzrock's experience in helping businesses "institutionalize," as Moore phrased

it - that is, developing from a startup to a more established, viable enterprise - will come in handy as the school undergoes another, more subtle transition.

What started in 2001 as a street ministry was not unlike a startup company, Kurtzrock said. Fifteen years later, "the challenge is to take the school up a notch so that we are truly more of an institution...so that fifty years from now, when we're all gone, this school is just cooking right along."

One of these developments involves what will be the academy's most visible change: the construction of a 5,500 square foot expansion to its current facilities, which will enable faculty to add sixth and seventh grade programs to the current (eighth through twelfth grade) curriculum.

The school's leadership hopes to break ground on the project in October. The end result, an almost entirely self-contained middle school, will give faculty more time to help prepare their students for college. Staff will be now able to provide not only academic, but also more intangible instruction, to even younger minds than before.

"Most of our kids will likely be first-generation college students like [me]," 2008 graduate Shannon Prentiss explained. Currently working as one of the school's recruiters, she really values such a disciplined education. "It shapes our character and helps us with our confidence."

Other aspects of "institutionalizing" include strengthening the alumni network and creating an internship and career development program. Even after she steps down, Moore will run this program, which focuses on continuing relationships with Academy graduates currently enrolled in college.

Both Kurtzrock and Moore are not shy in claiming that the school's model works. It does so, they say, because of its size constraints, which permit only a limited number of students. Perhaps these proportions have prevented such a model from

getting more attention - a fact that Moore will readily acknowledge is a frustration - and being replicated on a local, regional, and national level as an example of what a high school can really do for its students.

It is conceivable that there could be multiple Neighborhood Academies across Pittsburgh in several years' time. But, as Kurtzrock reminded, "it's all about money."

This fundamental ethos came into stark relief during last year's state budget crisis. A tax credit program, one that allows corporations to receive tax credits of up to 90% of their tax burden upon donating to the Academy or other schools like it, was held up for approval.

Therefore, the school received no corporate contributions during those six months of gridlock, losing an estimated six figures of funding in the process. Despite the fact that raising money is, as Kurtzrock noted, "a never-ending effort," the Academy's unique approach, which may resonate more with businesspeople than academics, certainly sets it apart.

"I can firmly guarantee that the Neighborhood Academy is the most entrepreneurial model out there," Moore said. "People are generous and want to fund success - and everybody wants kids to succeed." ♦

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Penn Ave. thrift store pays customers' parking

By Andrew McKeon *the Bulletin*

Garfield - Shirley Gleditsch, the founder and store manager at East End Community Thrift (5123 Penn Ave.), is quick to point her customers toward potential acquisitions. "Need a watch that works," she asked. But Gleditsch is no car salesman; she is a community conduit who works to connect area residents with quality used clothing and household goods at a low cost.

Run by an all-volunteer staff - in affiliation with the neighboring Thomas Merton Center - since 1993, the Penn Ave. thrift store donates a portion of all its donated clothing to people served by homeless shelters, half way houses, and low-income supported housing arrangements.

Now, Gleditsch and company want to help their customers out like no other store in Garfield. East End Community Thrift will now compensate customers for their parking fees - up to the tune of a dollar - in an effort to offset the new, higher parking rates along Penn Ave. "If someone comes in the door and says they've just parked out front, we'll give them quarters for their trouble," the store's founder explained.

Her shop will continue offering this progressive promotion for the foreseeable future. "Until the city takes the parking meters out - and that doesn't look like it's going to happen anytime soon - the offer stands," Gleditsch said with a laugh. According to long-time customer John Napolitano, such a neighborly gesture would not be lost on the local government. "The city should be doing little things like this here to help make life better," he told *the Bulletin*.

Gleditsch acknowledged the frustrations Garfield residents and business owners experienced during a reconstruction project that was slowly outpaced by molasses. "First, you couldn't park here for three years. Now, you've got to pay too much just to park here," she said. "We think it's off-putting for our customers, so we're just trying to help out a little bit." ♦

Postnatural History *continued from page 1*

Penn Ave.) in Garfield. Unbiased and informative, the center/museum concentrates on displaying organisms that have been purposefully and genetically altered by humans. When he is not probing the postnatural world for new museum specimens to display, founder Richard Pell teaches electronic media at the Carnegie Mellon University School of Art.

The idea for this unique museum came from a chance meeting with an old classmate during a high school reunion in 2004. At that point, Pell had already been interested in robots, as well as the relationship between technology and power, for nearly a decade; he studied the space between the arts and engineering, the “political economy of technologies.”

According to Pell, he focuses on “look[ing] at technology as cultural inventions that have more going on than just on the surface.” While busy exploring drone warfare and robotics, he never even considered studying synthetic biology before speaking with his fellow high school alumnus, who worked in the field. Pell realized that the way humans create and alter organisms’ DNA was too important to his field to ignore any longer.

“The way I get into something is by doing it,” he said. “I explore the ethics of something by doing it.” After attending events and conferences about what was then called “life engineering,” Pell realized he was not alone; many others shared a fresh curiosity in a field that would soon come to be known as synthetic biology. “We were a group of outsiders trying to wrap our heads around what’s possible,” Pell recalled.

He began regularly visiting museums founded by individuals, such as the California-based Center for Land Use Interpretation, looking for inspiration. Since each of his robotics projects required starting from scratch all over again, Pell yearned for a project that would expand

BELOW: Richard Pell, founder of the Center for Postnatural History (4913 Penn Ave.), stands behind his “Freckles,” a BioSteel goat engineered to produce spider silk in its milk. Freckles and other curiosities are on display at Pell’s strange Garfield museum. Photo courtesy of Center for Postnatural History.



and grow over time - and he saw that in a museum. By 2012, he had gathered enough specimens and ideas to found the Center for Postnatural History in Garfield. “The definition of ‘post-natural’ has gotten larger, but simpler,” Pell explained. “It’s really any intentional changes human beings make to the living world, from our pets to laboratories.”

The center’s summer exhibit showcased some creations made by Harold von Braunhut, a mail-order toy maker who also patented his own weapons. One of Braunhut’s most well-known inventions is the “sea monkey,” a mail-order pet for children. As noted in the exhibit, a sea monkey was a creature whose “lifespan matches that of a toy.” The display does well to highlight what Pell called the “two Harolds,” the one who was a toy-maker and the other who funded hate groups.

After four years of reading about Braunhut, Pell could not figure out why someone who enjoyed making toys also wanted to make weapons. “The intentions behind these things end up being more complicated than on the surface,” Pell said. “The simple things ended up being the most complex.” One of the center’s most iconic permanent exhibits is “Freckles the

BioSteel goat.” Only one of four goats originally bred to produce spider silk in their milk, Freckles is one of Pell’s favorite specimens. The museum founder is also proud to point any visitor’s attention to a mouse embryo that has developed without any ribs.

The embryo, which is going to be featured in a show in London later this year, has already been shown in Berlin and Amsterdam. “It’s so breathtakingly tiny, only the size of a thumbnail,” Pell said. “But it presents us with a very striking, almost violent, cultural affect because it can’t survive without ribs.”

He explained that looking at his specimens

up close is much different than simply reading about them in a science magazine. “You lose ‘good’ and ‘bad’ and connect with another organism...a specific creature.” Pell believes that the way humans change organisms is very revealing. “In order to understand ourselves, we create organisms that embody our anxieties and find a way around them,” he said. “We shape the living world as a product of ourselves. We see ourselves in it.”

Man-made creations like diabetic lab mice are just one example of humans’ ubiquitous paw prints. Pell hopes that by calling attention to such “culturally specific” creations, his museum can ignite patrons’ appetite for enlightenment. “I want people to leave hungrier than when they arrived, wanting to figure out more of what they don’t know,” he divulged.

Although his museum has already earned recognition from many experts in the field of synthetic biology, Pell wants to make sure it functions equally for everyone. “This museum doesn’t exist to only talk to academics. It’s here for people to discover,” he said.

The Center for Postnatural History is open on Sunday (12 to 4 p.m.) and on the first Friday of every month during Unblurred (6 to 8 p.m.). For more information, visit <http://postnatural.org>. ♦

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Join the BGC at 6 p.m. at the Community Activity Center (113 N. Pacific Ave.) on Monday, Sept. 26, for an informal orientation session on how to join the Board of the organization.

Members of the community with an interest in promoting youth education and employment, public safety, and neighborhood revitalization are invited to attend. Please RSVP to Aggie Brose at 412-441-6950 (ext. 15) by Friday, Sept. 23.



Garfield advocates for better public transportation, earns weekend bus service

By Wesley Davis Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield - On Sunday, Sept. 25, the Port Authority of Allegheny County will renew weekend and holiday service for the 89 Garfield Commons bus line. According to Molly Nichols, Director of Pittsburghers for Public Transit (PPT), "the residents of Garfield came together to fight for this service, with support from the Bloomfield Garfield Corporation and Pittsburghers for Public Transit."

Port Authority spokesperson Adam Brandolph said that, after Sept. 25, the 89 Garfield Commons bus will run from 5:30 a.m. until 11:29 p.m. on weekdays; riders will be picked up every forty-five to fifty minutes. On Saturdays, it will run from 6:15 a.m. until 11:29 p.m. with pickups every forty-five to fifty minutes. On Sundays, the bus will run from 7:00 a.m. until 8:29 p.m. with the same pickup schedule. Brandolph added that the route for the 89 Garfield Commons bus will remain the same as ever.

PPT will host a 10:30 a.m. celebration of the returned weekend bus service at the Kelly Strayhorn Theater (5941 Penn Ave.) on Saturday, October 8. The celebration provides an opportunity for Garfield residents - who led the campaign to renew 89 weekend bus service, and Penn Hills residents - who campaigned to renew Port Authority service in their neighborhood, to come together and celebrate their big wins.

"We're all thrilled [the 89] will be returning this fall and commend everyone who worked to make it happen," Nichols said. Residents are encouraged to ride the 89 down together to arrive at the theater by 10:30 am. For more details in the coming weeks, check out <https://pittsburghforpublictransit.org/campaigns/89-garfield-action-team/>. ♦

East Liberty "Workforce" bridges local opportunity gaps

By Shannon M. Anglero East End Cooperative Ministry

East Liberty - A "benefit corporation" (B-Corp) incorporated in 2015 under the East End Cooperative Ministry (EECM, 6140 Station St.), "EECM WorkForce" is a for-profit entity that contracts with local businesses for environmental services, landscaping, and snow removal.

Beyond that, it functions as a lifeline - a second, third, or fourth chance for men and women who are traditionally overlooked for job opportunities because of the stigma of homelessness, poverty, or previous incarceration.

Along with the direct benefits to WorkForce's employed men and women, the long term rewards spread to the entire community as employees have greater capacity to rent or buy property, address medical needs, purchase groceries, dine out, and buy new clothes.

"WorkForce is removing the stigma of hiring men and women who are homeless, in fragile housing, or have a criminal background," Michael J. Mingrone, EECM's president and CEO said. "By contracting with us, companies witness the employees' hard-work and dedication, first-hand. Then, they see the individual and community value of investing in those who are often left behind. It's a win-win for everyone."

Katrina Blye is the model WorkForce employee; she started in EECM's education and employment program to build up

her professional skills along with the personal skills needed to succeed. After serving as a peer mentor where she coached other participants, Blye was hired into WorkForce.

By providing excellent customer service and conducting her work thoughtfully, she ultimately earned a stable, full-time position. Blye was recently promoted as the first WorkForce "Team Lead." Now, she can still put her coaching skills to good use by engaging new employees and helping them settle into their new position. "I've learned more than job skills, learned that I'm stronger than I thought; I'm a leader," Blye said.

EECM's investment in Blye and other employees has produced twin-fold advantages. Blye is currently looking into buying her first home and WorkForce was able to secure environmental services, landscaping, and snow removal contracts with local businesses in order to provide a stable revenue stream for EECM.

"We want men and women to have a chance at a variety of careers, with the opportunity to grow in meaningful ways," Mingrone said. "WorkForce makes that happen, and we're excited to work with local businesses to create a true community of opportunity."

Readers interested in contracting WorkForce for one of its many services may call Tony Cortese at 412-345-7118. ♦

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Neighborhood FOCUS

Maelene Myers: twenty transformative years in East Liberty

By Elizabeth Sensky *East Liberty Development, Inc.*

Commentary

East Liberty - When Maelene Myers became Executive Director of East Liberty Development, Inc. (ELDI) in 1996, the organization was in turmoil. Coming from Cleveland, where she worked for six years as the Executive Director of Hough Area Partners in Progress (an inner-city, non-profit community development corporation), Myers encountered an ELDI that had seen two directors resign within a year and was criticized for not being representative of the community.

Meanwhile, East Liberty was facing high crime and unemployment rates, deteriorating housing, and a public environment known for drugs and alcohol. Despite these challenges, Myers was not fazed. Before undertaking any development activities, she set out on a three-year community engagement and organizing effort that aimed to understand what the community wanted, along with what kind of work was required to attain it.

Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy, Associate Pastor for Mission Ministries at East Liberty Presbyterian Church and ELDI Board President - and member since 1998, witnessed Myers' determination from the beginning. "She was willing to do what so many others were not," the reverend said.

"She made sure that those who live in the community defined their future. Maelene has been on the other side of development in a community, therefore she understands that the community must drive the transformation in order to achieve sustainable success," Fowler-Searcy observed.

Skip Schwab, Real Estate Investment Officer at ELDI, explained that the organization's 1999 "East Liberty Community Plan" clearly articulated two major insights: for one, the concentration of poverty was not healthy; also, the existing low-income residents wanted to live in a mixed-income community.

"Maelene has recognized that multiple development partners can work collaboratively and incrementally over time to realize a community plan and vision rather than trying to initiate neighborhood change with one master developer," Schwab noted.

"Maelene has been on the other side of community development, therefore she understands that the community must drive the transformation in order to achieve sustainable success."

- Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy, ELDI Board President

Born out of the 1999 plan were new development goals for the neighborhood - including the redevelopment of New Pennley Place, the Spinning Plate Artist Lofts, the conversion of the former Sears site into a Home Depot, and the establishment of the East Liberty Farmers Market.

Within the bigger picture, ELDI's mission was to continue fighting to decrease crime, de-centralize poverty, develop mixed-income housing, boost economic development, and address traffic and parking concerns. Key to all of those goals was improving the reputation and image of the neighborhood while ensuring East Liberty remained welcoming to long-time residents.

Rick Swartz, Executive Director of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), got to know Myers for her resolute demeanor as they collaborated on several ELDI and



ABOVE: A living touchstone of community development in East Liberty, Maelene Myers (r) poses with her good friend and City Councilperson, Rev. Ricky Burgess, during a commemoration of her twenty years helming East Liberty Development, Inc. Photo by John Colombo.

BGC initiatives, including the development of the Penn Ave. corridor. "If you're someone who makes a habit of wavering, you're not going to find a lot of common ground with Maelene," he said. "That's not to say that what she thinks is always what will happen in the end. Still, she is not going to be moved off of her position by any folks who want to engage in theatrics or histrionics as opposed to serious conversation."

This "no-nonsense" attitude can be traced back to Myers' early life in Akron, Ohio. Nearly thirty-six years ago, Myers organized tenants to march in protest of pooling water in the basement of her subsidized apartment complex. This earned her a place on a subsidized housing committee and led to a community development job with the North American Cultural Center in Cleveland.

As Dr. Mona Generett, former Vice President of Community Development at Dollar Bank, explained, that sense of responsibility drives Myers to speak up for the residents of East Liberty who might not be able to speak up for themselves. "Both Home Depot and Whole Foods learned that there would be no free passes when difficulties arose in attempting to employ community residents," she said. "Both received ELDI's assistance in screening and training community residents and creating a good workforce. What looked impossible was made possible with Maelene's guidance and direction."

One of ELDI's core ideas for de-concentrating poverty and making East Liberty a safer place to work and live was the demolition of the neighborhood's Section 8 high-rises. Liberty Place, the East Mall, and Penn Circle Apartments' buildings - the last of which came down in 2009 - were constructed in the late 1960s and early 1970s during initial attempts at urban renewal. By razing the structures, ELDI made way for a Target store - as well as mixed-income housing at Pennley Commons, New Pennley Place, Penn Manor, and East Liberty Place North and South.

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While property values slowly inched back up closer to the city's average, Myers worked to ensure a healthy stock of affordable housing and supportive services remained in the neighborhood. One of her initiatives, "Sojourner House MOMS," is a supportive housing complex for women offering addiction and counseling services; another is "Dad's House," a supportive housing center that helps men get back on their feet after times of crisis.

Like countless community development organizers before her, Myers still struggles to find a balance; she knows the small, everyday developments are just as vital to the neighborhood as any of the high-profile developments like Target and Whole Foods Market. In her twenty years with ELDI, Myers has achieved notable victories. East Liberty has seen resurgent shopping and employment opportunities, along with new affordable housing for over 800 families and individuals. Neighbors recently welcomed improved transportation access with the opening of the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway and the conversion of Penn Circle back to a series of two-way streets.

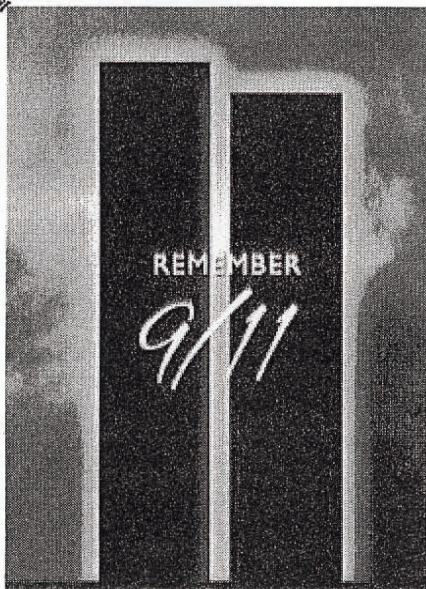
As a Senior Program Officer for The Pittsburgh Foundation, an organization that provides endowment funds for community projects throughout Pittsburgh, Jane Downing has noticed some positive changes in market conditions since the early days of ELDI. "Deep public subsidies are no longer needed to encourage development," she noted.

While the revitalization of East Liberty increasingly garners national attention and praise, Myers is not one to take the credit. As Generett articulated, "[Myers] is not fond of the spotlight. She would rather all the accolades go to the members of her 'team.' Myers intends on sticking around until the original 1999 plan's vision of an equitable and diverse mixed-income community becomes a reality for everyone in East Liberty.

"She sees herself as a change agent," Swartz said. "Until the quality of life is good for all, her work will not be done." ♦



ABOVE: Tracie (l) and Dave Moniot try drawing each other during an audience participation warm up before the "pitch contest" at StartablePGH's Aug. 17 event, held at the Ace Hotel in East Liberty. Turn to page 14 for another glimpse of the attendees. Photo by John Colombo.




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ABOVE: Tyhir Frost, a performer representing “IHood Media,” threw verses down over a few tracks during Garfield’s National Night Out celebration at Nelson Mandela Peace Park on Tuesday, Aug. 2. Photo by Andrew McKeon.

BELOW: Pittsburgh Police Zone 5 Commander Jason Lando exchanges funny faces with neighborhood kids.



NATIONAL NIGHT OUT
GARFIELD (8/2/16)



ABOVE: Garfield’s favorite youth-oriented nonprofit, Assemble, provided stacks of comic books and other periodicals during National Night Out; neighborhood children used the materials to create new artworks. Photo by Andrew McKeon.

BELOW: Children get a lift as they tour a fire truck during National Night Out (NNO). Public safety officials, like the firefighter pictured below, are integral to NNO’s mission. Photo by Andrew McKeon.



BELOW: Choir members from King of Kings Baptist Ministry sing songs of hope and praise to punctuate Garfield’s community celebration at Nelson Mandela Peace Park. Photo by Andrew McKeon.



Friendship House Tour kicks off at Baum Grove

By Staci Backauskas Friendship Community Group

Friendship - Neighbors are opening up their doors once again to showcase the unique and beautiful architecture of Friendship. The Friendship House Tour will begin at Baum Grove (the park behind the Aldi grocery store on Baum Blvd.) on Sunday, Sept. 18 and will run from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Houses on the tour will range in style from Victorian to “Four Square,” including homes that have retained many of their original features as well as those that have been renovated. Participants will receive a special treat this year with the opportunity to tour one of the neighborhood’s delightful gardens. Refreshments will be available at various locations along the route, like the Friendship Montessori School Play Park on Graham and Friendship Aves., where tourists will get a chance to see the improvements to the park.

Thanks to sponsors such as UPMC and Diggins Builders, tour organizers were able to plan for a few more surprises this year. Last year, the tour attracted over 300 people; all proceeds benefit the Friendship Community Group, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission includes maintenance and improvements at Baum Grove and the local play park.

Advanced tickets are available for \$15 at <https://www.showclix.com/event/friendship-housetour>. Tickets may be purchased at Baum Grove for \$20 on the day of the tour. Any local residents or businesses who are interested in sponsorship and program ad opportunities can e-mail FriendshipHouseTour@gmail.com for more information. ♦



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Bike Data Open House *continued from page 1*

and vegetables. There were some beans at the booth: "dream beans." People voted on projects by placing beans in jars labeled with topics things like "public art projects" and "improved bus stops." This was the scene at the "Bike Data Open House," an interactive exhibit designed to gather input about biking in Bloomfield from local residents.

The open house was organized by Bloomfield Livable Streets (BLS), a neighborhood group looking to make local streets safe and enjoyable for all people. The charts and maps on display were based on a survey where over 200 people answered questions on what it is like to bike in Bloomfield. The open house allowed visitors to learn and react to the information, but also think about what could be in the works for Bloomfield.

"We wanted this event to look forward, not back," BLS chair Bruce Chan explained. "We wanted to have people think about what kind of improvements they want to bring to Bloomfield. Lots of people surveyed said that they wanted protected and painted bike lines. We wanted to plant the seed for people to think about what we could have in Bloomfield."

Organizers pointed out some surprising findings to their fellow market-goers. Chan pointed to a map highlighting bicycle-friendly streets (as indicated by the survey data) and said, "more people than we expected rode on Coral St. because it's residential. Coral is parallel to Penn and people may be using Coral to avoid conditions on Penn."

Visitors were also interested in a chart from the U.S. Census that illustrated the rapid growth of biking in the neighborhood; 8% of Bloomfield residents rode a bike to work in 2014, compared to 0% in 2000. Meanwhile, the percentage of residents walking to work has dropped from over 25% in 1990 to about 15% in 2014.

BLS plans to use this information to prioritize its advocacy work in the neighborhood and send the results to elected officials and City of Pittsburgh staff. A similar survey and open house focused on Bloomfield's walking conditions will be held in the coming months. The bike survey data will soon be available online at <https://bloomfieldlivablestreets.org>. Those interested in learning more about this data or volunteer opportunities at the walking survey may email bloomfieldstreets@gmail.com. ♦

Local student wins Pratt scholarship

By Christine Bethea *Bulletin contributor*

Friendship - The face of infant Gigi Nieson came through on a fax from China shortly before her American parents adopted her. "I was imaging even then," the 18-year old Friendship resident and fashion student said. Nieson recently received a full scholarship to attend New York City's Pratt institute this fall.

According to her adoptive parents, writer/filmmaker Marc Neison and dancer/choreographer Beth Corning, their home environment in Minnesota left quite an impression on young Gigi and everyone else. "We lived on a farm in the country where food was grown, not purchased, and live animals were raised. Seeing nature up close every day made me very protective of the environment," Marc aid. "It was an experience I wouldn't have traded for the world."

When Corning was offered a job at Dance Alloy, the family moved to Pittsburgh, which meant a major transition from its rural lifestyle. After several attempts to find the right educational fit, Neison ended up at The Ellis School, an independent school for girls located in Shadyside. Ellis provided Nieson with opportunities like "Girls of Steel Robotics,"



ABOVE: Recent high school graduate and *Friendship* resident Gigi Nieson looks forward to beginning her studies at Pratt Institute. Nieson's tuition is funded by a prestigious scholarship. Photo courtesy of Christine Bethea.

a CMU initiative open to girls from all Pittsburgh neighborhoods, regardless of their family's financial status. In 2015, with Nieson in charge of the electronics, her school won the Chairman's Award in its first regional robotics competition.

The young thinker was also was involved in "Future Cities," a youth-oriented program aimed at creating cityscapes. "I built a whole Gigi community," Nieson said. "We had to learn about architecture and development, and even put a budget together. We had to learn about sustainable resources, too."

From her earliest recollections, Nieson's basement was her very own creative lab; a place where she could invite other neighborhood children to draw and paint, it was also a place where stepping on Legos was a fact of life. Considering a career in science and engineering, Nieson was well into her high school years before she was bitten by the fashion bug.

"I was pretty busy already with the engineering stuff, doing photography, and playing my violin," Nieson said, forgetting to mention that she is also the senior student body president.

Upon meeting up with family friend Katy DeMent, a well-known salvage artist, she found her vision for a senior class project; Nieson modeled her final project at DeMent's new Swissvale studio. She was soon offered her first gallery show at Mt. Lebanon's Artsmiths, exhibiting her work alongside internationally known Pittsburgh artists.

When Nieson won the Pratt scholarship, which is one of only two awarded annually, she felt as if she had finally come full circle. "My first school in Minnesota was called 'Pratt,'" the young fashion student noted. "Now, I'll be in New York with my bike, where I can cross the Brooklyn Bridge and really explore Chinatown whenever I want." ♦

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Paying nursing home workers a living wage will improve care

By State Rep. Ed Gainey (D-Allegheny)

Op-Ed

Pennsylvania - Auditor General Eugene DePasquale recently published a report about deficiencies in the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s oversight of nursing homes statewide, providing yet another reason why nursing home workers deserve a living wage. A wage increase would benefit nursing home residents by reducing turnover, improving continuity of care, and lowering recruitment and training costs.

Last year, the Keystone Research Center released a report confirming that 52% of Pennsylvania nursing home workers cannot support their families on the wages they earn, with many relying on public assistance benefits or working more than one job.

The state reimburses nursing facilities that participate in the Medical Assistance program at a level that is sufficient to pay its employees a living wage so that they do not have to rely on public assistance programs.

My legislation, the Nursing Facility Accountability Act, would incentivize nursing home employers to pay their workers \$15 an hour; the creation of a statewide Living Wage Certification Program would also provide nursing facility residents and the public with information on minimum wage rates.

Additionally, nursing home employers would have to reimburse the state for the costs incurred by providing public assistance benefits to workers across Pennsylvania. To guarantee our growing older population receives the high quality care and services they require, we need a well-trained and well-compensated workforce. ♦

Bloomfield’s West Penn Hospital vying for third “Magnet” designation

By Morgan Rupert Allegheny Health Network

Bloomfield - Nurses are truly the heart and soul of a “Magnet” organization. Their competency, efficiency, and compassion are key components to ensuring excellent patient outcomes; they are the lens through which patients and their families experience the hospital and the care they receive.

The American Nurses Credentialing Center’s “Magnet Recognition Program,” is an avenue to demonstrate how nurses share best practices and recognize nursing excellence among their colleagues. The program also encourages the sharing of strategies for successful nursing practice.

In 2006, Bloomfield’s West Penn Hospital (WPH, 4800 Friendship Ave.) applied for and received Magnet designation, the first hospital in western Pennsylvania to achieve this distinction in nursing excellence. In 2012, WPH achieved Magnet re-designation, becoming the first hospital in the region to achieve the nation’s highest credential for patient care quality and outcomes for a second time. The hospital recently submitted its application for a third designation.

Ever since the University of Washington Medical Center in Seattle became the first designated organization in 1994, Magnet designation has served as the ultimate credential for high quality nursing to patients and clinicians. Internationally recognized, this honor has been achieved by only about 6% of the country’s health-care facilities.

Research has apparently found that Magnet hospitals experience shorter lengths of stay, improved patient

outcomes, and improved patient safety. “Magnet recognition is a tried and true roadmap to creating excellence in a culture that is sustainable over many years,” WPH’s vice president and chief nursing officer Scott Croonquist, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, explained.

“Nursing excellence is exemplified in a measurable way in terms of patient care outcomes, increased quality and patient satisfaction, and patient safety.”

To achieve this prestigious recognition, organizations must complete a rigorous and lengthy process that demands widespread participation from leadership and all staff; employees must submit extensive documentation of satisfaction outcomes and conduct an on-site visit to clarify and amplify patient care quality. For re-designation, organizations must document how their standards, performance, and quality were sustained and improved since the initial recognition was received. Many outcomes must be documented as outperforming national benchmark means.

“It’s an honor to have earned Magnet designation and an honor as a nurse to work in a Magnet designated hospital. But it’s not only about achieving the recognition and staying there,” WPH’s director of nursing operations Jacqueline Collavo, MA, BSN, RN, NE-BC, acknowledged.

“It’s about the continuous improvement process that drives patient care and safety that makes remaining a Magnet hospital so desirable.” To learn more about the hospital’s Magnet designation, as well as all WPH’s available nursing services, visit <https://www.ahn.org/node/734>. ♦

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Rodman Street Baptist Church brings communities together in song

By Tiffany Merriman-Preston *Emmaus Community of Pittsburgh*

East Liberty - The Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church, affectionately known by neighbors as “the Street,” has been part of the East Liberty neighborhood for more than a century, thanks in part to its vibrant music ministry.

On the morning of Sunday, July 31, three diverse communities came together to celebrate the intersection of music and faith – and the church began bursting with song. South Side-based nonprofit the Emmaus Community of Pittsburgh, which provides permanent homes and services for people with intellectual disabilities, was on hand to partake in a special worship and arts celebration – with a little help from some friends.

The Friends of Emmaus are Korean-born high school students from Vincentian Academy, North Allegheny High School, and Fox Chapel High School who formed a volunteer group to build friendships with and support the residents of Emmaus.

Carl Doerr sat at the keyboard as the minister welcomed guests; he was not always a musician. He came to the Emmaus non-residential program in hopes of learning some new skills and making new friends.

Erhard Schranz, an Emmaus Direct Support Professional, asked if he had any desire to learn a musical instrument. When Doerr expressed an interest in the keyboard, Schranz found him one and set out to teach him how to read and play music in a way that fit his needs.

Seeing Doerr’s intellectual disability as a difference, not a barrier, Schranz developed a new kind of music by transcribing notes into colorful shapes and applying

matching labels to the keys. He then set out to teach the new musician some of his favorite songs.

While practicing every day for four months, Doerr has enjoyed several opportunities to perform for an audience. After performing with musicians from Rodman Street and watching Alton Mitchell, the church’s music director, play the keyboard at a springtime community event, Doerr was motivated to work harder.

He soon asked Mitchell if he could perform at the East Liberty church. The music director welcomed the idea, inviting Doerr to play alongside the congregation’s “Praise & Worship” team of musicians; a three-part string and clarinet ensemble from the Friends of Emmaus group – including Thomas Kim, Suhye Park, and Cuna Kim – also joined them onstage for the July 31 arts celebration.

As Schranz guided him, Doerr counted out the beat before he and his fellow musicians launched into performances of “Amazing Grace” and “How Much I Love Jesus.” Afterward, as Doerr bowed, many applauding congregants were moved to tears by his determination, as well as the support of the student volunteers.

Many of the individuals with intellectual disabilities whom Emmaus serves attended the celebration and the Rodman Street church members welcomed their guests with open arms, encouraging everyone’s full participation in the service.

Sharing their love of music, various communities came together with musicians and audience members of varying abilities for a truly unforgettable East Liberty morning. ♦

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Become a BGC member today by visiting:

<https://www.youcaring.com/bloomfield-garfield-corporation-625640#>

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) is a membership organization that counts on residents and business owners like you to support its efforts. Our membership has been a part of recent accomplishments like bringing an ALDI grocery store to Penn Avenue, facilitating the Garfield Night Market, and starting construction on 19 new affordable rental units in Garfield!

Visit <https://Bloomfield-Garfield.org> to learn more about the BGC. Donations are also encouraged via standard mail; please call 412-441-6950 to a receive a printed remittance card and become a BGC member.

the
Bulletin BOARD

Local Events
Announcements **Classes**
Fundraisers

Sorry, but we do not accept listings by phone.

The Bulletin Board publishes listings of volunteer opportunities, free or low-cost events and classes, fundraisers, and services that are of particular interest to our neighborhoods. Listings are published on a space-available basis; we cannot guarantee placement or thorough edits of any listings. Announcements for the **October** issue of *the Bulletin* are due by **September 16**. Please submit listings using our online form at http://bit.ly/bulletin_submit.

September 3 - Saturday

GARFIELD

Unity for the Community

Morningside Church of God in Christ (5173 Dear-born St.) presents “Unity for the Community Day” on September 3, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be entertainment of all kind for kids of all ages; bounce house, dunk tank, hoops, cornhole, horse-shoes, and much more. Plenty of delicious food and cold drinks - including chicken wings, tacos, hot dogs, cotton candy and ice ball for all. There will be puppet shows, live music, and a DJ. Silent Auction for a 32 in. flat-screen TV. Baskets to be raffled, along with prizes for the kids. A host of vendors will be sharing their talents. All are welcomed to come enjoy a festive day together.

September 9 - Friday

LAWRENCEVILLE

“Shades of Light” exhibit

The next exhibit at Gallery on 43rd Street is Shades of Light, paintings by local artist Marian Sallade. This show runs Sept. 9 - Oct. 22. The opening reception is Sept. 9 - from 6 to 9 p.m. Gallery hours are Tues., Fri., Sat. from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. - Wed. and Thurs. from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more info, visit www.galleryon43rdstreet.com or www.facebook.com/gallery.43rdstreet



ABOVE: Adorned in beautiful scarves, *Fartuna Mugasa (l)* and her older sister, *Mukufu Mugasa*, mingle with other makers at the Ace Hotel for StartablePGH’s summer celebration. Mukufu, who participated in the entrepreneur program, runs a scarf design company, *Tuna Textiles*. Photo by John Colombo.

September 17 - Saturday

LAWRENCEVILLE

LIVE! in Lawrenceville

Get ready to boogie and have some fun at Lawrenceville United’s (LU) 4th annual LIVE! fundraiser - held at the Teamsters Temple (4701 Butler St.) from 7 to 10 p.m. This year, LU is celebrating 15 amazing years of working with a night of fun and games. Opt-in competitions will be held all night, including: “Jeopardy,” featuring Lawrenceville’s own Jeopardy star, Liz Quesnelle of The Gilded Girl PGH; musical chairs; hula hoops; and limbo. This year’s awards ceremony will have some fun new categories to vote on, too. Tickets are available through Eventbrite; \$25 each or \$40 for two. Seniors and Pep Rally parents’ tickets are \$15a piece. Volunteers get in free. For more information - including sponsorship and volunteer opportunities - email helen@lunited.org.

September 21 - Wednesday

STANTON HEIGHTS

SHNA Meeting

Join neighbors for a community planning discussion around upcoming public art and green infrastructure projects in the neighborhood. Representatives from city offices and public safety departments are also available to discuss city initia-

tives and take questions.

September 24 - Saturday

GARFIELD

Homebuyer Education Workshop

Attend a free NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania Homebuyer Education workshop from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Bloomfield-Garfield Community Activity Center (113 N. Pacific Ave.). Learn everything from credit to closing in this workshop taught by certified instructors with presentations by respected professionals such as loan officers, real estate agents, insurance representatives, and others. Call 412-281-9773 or visit www.nwwpa.org for registration and details.

September 25 - Sunday

LAWRENCEVILLE

“Growing up with Baseball in Pittsburgh”

On Sunday, September 25, the Holy Name Society of Our Lady of the Angels Parish will host baseball enthusiast Jim Haller. “Growing Up with Baseball in Pittsburgh” is a lively and entertaining presentation about one of the city’s most loved sports. The event will take place in the social hall under the parish’s Saint Augustine Church at 11 a.m. The event is free and open to the public. No reservations required.

September 26 - Monday

LAWRENCEVILLE

Duncan Park/ Natrona Way Cleanup

Join your neighbors at either Duncan Park or 5220 Natrona Way in cleaning up the lots, picking up trash, and beautify the areas. Duncan Park is a decommissioned city park in Upper Lawrenceville at the intersection of Duncan and 54th St. The 10th Ward community has worked with local organizations Lawrenceville United (LU), Lawrenceville

Corporation, Tree Pittsburgh, The Penn State Center: Engaging Pittsburgh, and others to create plans for a permanent community green space with an orchard, community gardens, rain garden, and children’s playscape. 5220 Natrona Way is LU property that will be used as a future greenspace. It currently needs updating, landscaping, and trash pick-up.

September 27 - Tuesday

GARFIELD

Community Health Fair

Free health screenings - including flu shots, blood pressure, bone density, and more - will be available at Fairmont Apartments (5461 Penn Ave.) from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. This event is open to the public. Light refreshments will be provided.

September 29 - Thursday

LAWRENCEVILLE

Learn Google Drive

The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Lawrenceville and Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania have teamed up to offer free computer classes to residents who want to brush up on their computer skills. Our September 29 class is an introduction to using Google Drive (including Google Calendar) to create and save documents, photos, and other files, as well as how to share them with other users. Classes are held in the computer lab at Goodwill’s Workforce Development Center (118 52nd St.) from 6 to 8 p.m. Participants must register in advance by calling 412-632-1842.

Ongoing Opportunities

FRIENDSHIP

Complete a high school diploma as an adult

Earthen Vessels Outreach is looking to enroll 5 - 10 adults (young adults) who had their high school education derailed and now want to make it right. You can now change the past, and have a new

SAVE THE DATE: Friday, Nov. 4, 2016

Annual BGC Luncheon

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation’s (BGC) annual luncheon is scheduled for Friday, November 4 at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association in Oakland. This event is a great opportunity for friends and supporters to gather to reflect on the prior year and celebrate our accomplishments together.

For information about purchasing a ticket to the luncheon or signing up for a sponsorship, please contact Aggie Brose, Deputy Director of the BGC, at 412-441-6950 (ext. 15).

Volunteer Opportunities & Services

opportunity to obtain your high school diploma. On-line learning with flexible working hours. All high school credits are applied to the program to help complete your degree. No out of pocket cost for you. Please call 412-681-7272 or stop by at 250 South Pacific Ave. & Friendship Ave. for additional information. E-Mail earthenvessels98@gmail.com. Childcare available.

Kitchen for Rent

Earthen Vessels Outreach (250 South Pacific Ave.) has a fully equipped, Allegheny County Health Department licensed, commercial kitchen for rent - perfect for caterers and chefs. If you are looking for a certified kitchen to use for business, this may be your solution. EVO has hosted a variety of caterers and market vendors to help them start their business. The kitchen is equipped with the basic equipment of pots, pans, utensils, a Vulcan 12 shelved convection oven, a 6 burner range, & a 24" griddle. Dry, cold, and frozen storage is available for a moderate cost. The kitchen is rented in 5 hour shifts for \$75 a shift and rates are based

upon frequency of use. For more information about renting this professional kitchen right on Friendship Ave., call Becky at 412-979-1895 or e-mail rsdalton.lcs@gmail.com.

PITTSBURGH

"WalkFest" Wants You

"WalkFest" will take place Saturday, October 1st through Sunday, October 9. From step treks to urban hikes, a plant walk through one of our city's parks, a dog walk meetup, or historic walking tour, there are many ways to get involved in WalkFest this year. With Pittsburgh's great sidewalk network and historic stairways, Bike Pittsburgh can't wait to see what people come up with for the brand new WalkFest. Set a meeting time and location, and submit your event today. Contact jane@bikepgh.org or 412-325-4334. Bike Pittsburgh will add your event to their calendar, publicize it, and get people out walking.

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Please call between 12 p.m. and 6 p.m.

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Participate in a research study investigating why some people with depression have thoughts of suicide and others do not.

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Men 55 or older who have been feeling **sad or down**, have **less interest** in activities, or who may have noticed a decrease in energy, concentration, sleep, or appetite.

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- fMRI scan (optional, \$150 extra)

If interested, contact: dnpl@upmc.edu, or call 412-246-6014

N3D NEXT THREE DAYS
GARFIELD

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N3D BLOCK PARTY & KICK OFF
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N3D GARFIELD FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2016
WINEBIDDLE & PENN + GARFIELD HOT SPOTS: NOON-4PM
Featuring the Penn-Ave-Anew Celebration + Ribbon Cutting:
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FREE AND ALL AGES!

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Afro-Cuban artist visits Garfield, unpacks photos of “poverty culture”

By Andrew McKeon, *the Bulletin*
Additional reporting by Amber Epps, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield - When it comes to people purchasing his art, Boris Balsindes Urquiola prefers to get to know his potential buyers. As he experiments in theater, music, photography, and film production, the young Afro-Cuban artist wants to make sure that his work is going to be appreciated and not end up in a closet somewhere.

Urquiola has found a temporary home in Garfield, where Most Wanted Fine Art (MWFA, 5015 Penn Ave.) hosted his artist residency for the month of August. His first solo show in the United States, a photo installation about the “real” Cuba, was held in partnership with local production company and Hispanic advocacy group Café con Leche.

Working within what he came to know as his homeland’s “poverty culture,” Urquiola began following his natural instincts once he was done following orders. While serving in Cuba’s military academy, he pursued the few opportunities available to young adults born and raised in Havana’s unforgiving Buena Vista neighborhood.

“Many of my people continue thinking that revolution is the best idea,” Urquiola said in reference to some of his former comrades. Although Cuba recently opened up its doors to America, it still has many secrets to bear. Nobody knows this better than the island’s Afro-Cuban population.

“Blacks in Cuba, we have our own culture. We need to build and create our own stuff, teach our own people about art,” Urquiola said. “That can be the key to the right door.”

Despite all the hurdles in a tightly governed arts sector, the former soldier-in-the-making was able to achieve great things as an artist. Urquiola soon became

the Great Theater of Havana’s first Afro-Cuban producer, an honor he had to leave behind when packing for a one-way flight to the United States.

Occasionally lost in translation, but more often flummoxed by others’ lack of cultural understanding, the visiting artist brought many photos from home – but for more public than personal reasons.

One of the most striking photos depicts Urquiola’s childhood home, a tiny residence few Americans could ever relate to; he often produces this image in order to save a thousand words when helping people understand his world back home.

While residing in Providence, Rhode Island and working as a “Lyft” driver to pay the bills for some months, Urquiola bore witness to a power structure that seemed



ABOVE: Boris Balsindes Urquiola, an Afro-Cuban artist from the Buena Vista neighborhood in Havana, explains his creative perspective during a Q&A at Most Wanted Fine Art (5105 Penn Ave.) on Friday, Aug. 19. Photo by Andrew McKeon.

just as “out-of-whack” as the one he left behind in Cuba. The well-intentioned elite throw parties for themselves in the name of inclusivity while Latino artists and other marginalized creatives struggle to find a place to sleep, much less program funding.

Regardless of the struggles he faces state-side, the artist is glad that he made the decision to leave home. Now that he is staying in Pennsylvania, a state that measures roughly the same square footage as Cuba, his options are expanding.

Urquiola recently linked up with BOOM Concepts’ D.S. Kinsel and even managed to contribute to a mural on the avenue. During an Aug. 19 artist talk at MWFA,

local filmmaker Chris Mason told *the Bulletin* that she had invited him to work as a cultural consultant on “Three Rivers to Cuba,” her forthcoming documentary about the unique connections between Pittsburgh and Cuba.

When travelling abroad, Urquiola looks no further than his small figure of a Yoruba gate-keeper, “Eleggua,” for inspiration. He maintains that the religious icon centers the energies in his life, directing him toward prosperity.

“Back when I lived in the ‘poverty culture,’ I had eggs for dinner because that’s all we had,” Urquiola said. “Now, for me here, eggs are only for breakfast.” ♦



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Anita Balachandran, MD
Family Practice

Dr. Balachandran received her medical degree from the Kilpauk Medical College in India. She completed her family medicine residency at UPMC St. Margaret and is board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine. Dr. Balachandran recently was a hospitalist at UPMC St. Margaret. She will be working at our Renaissance Family Practice RIDC office in Blawnox.



Elaine Boron, DO
Family Practice

Dr. Boron received her medical degree at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed her family medicine residency at UPMC St. Margaret. Dr. Boron is board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine. She is a member of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians and the American College of Family Physicians. Dr. Boron will be working at our Renaissance Family Practice office in Millvale.

To schedule an appointment at Renaissance Family Practice-UPMC, or for more information, call 412-821-2277 (Millvale Office) or 412-781-1917 (RIDC Office).

Millvale Office
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412-821-2277

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