

the Bulletin

A publication of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Vol. 45, No. 7

JULY
2020



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PPS makes plans for remote learning, weighs options for reopening schools

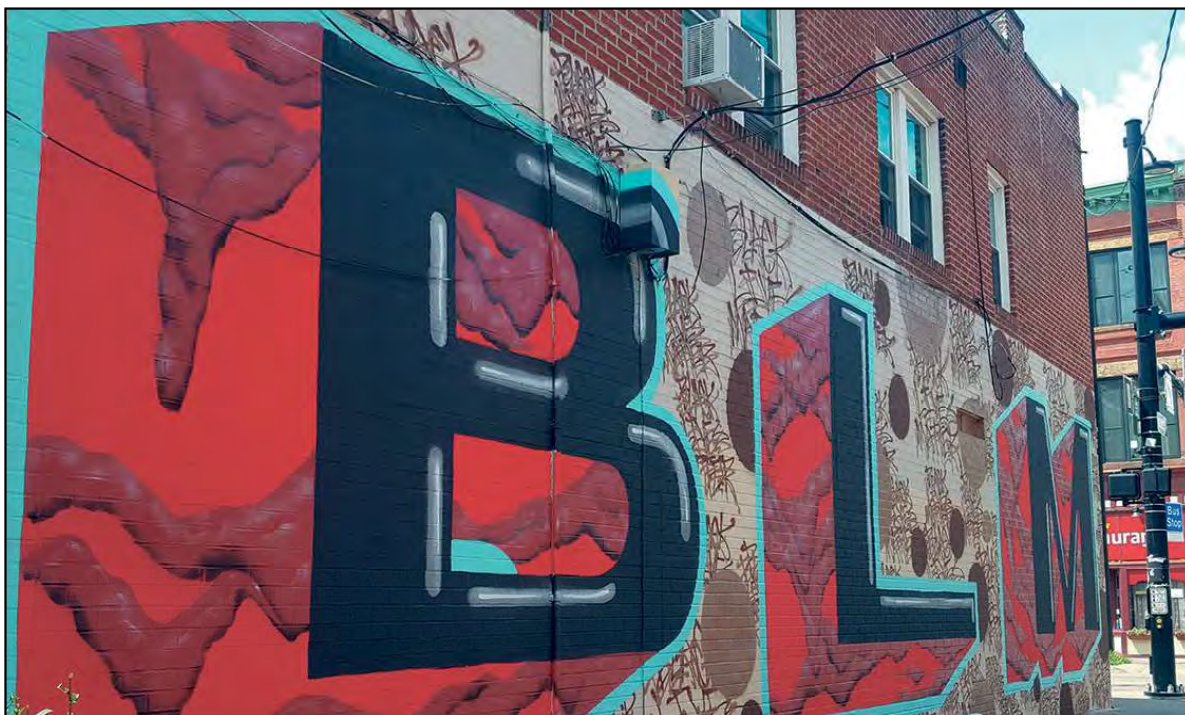
By Sandy Pontius *Bulletin contributor*

Pittsburgh - As the relentless contagion of COVID-19 keeps rearing its ugly head, the 2020-2021 school year is shaping up to be unlike anything on record for Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS).

Although dates for the first day of class have not changed, some classes might take place online - one of two scenarios discussed with the school board at an Education Committee meeting on Jun. 9.

PPS is also preparing a second scenario that would blend remote, or online, learning with traditional class time. If any of the approximately 23,000 PPS students return to class, social distancing and other protective measures will already be in place. The district is scheduled to release its final plan

See **PPS** | page 2



ABOVE: A mural stands in support of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement at the intersection of S. Evaline St. & Penn Ave. in Garfield. The Pabla family, owners of Peoples Indian restaurant and Peoples Grocery store, fast-tracked the mural after local BLM protests began in May. Next month, *The Bulletin* will highlight the Pablas' efforts to feed local residents throughout the pandemic. Photo by Andrew McKeon.

Kelly Strayhorn Theater pivots to online programming during pandemic

By Elizabeth Sensky *East Liberty Development, Inc.*

East Liberty - Over the years, the Kelly Strayhorn Theater (KST, 5941 Penn Ave.) has established itself as a community space where local residents, artists, performers, and leaders can get together to enjoy a diversity of programming and events.

When Pennsylvania's shelter-in-place orders went into effect in March, the KST team had to find ways to quickly adapt its programming, and also the physical essence of its community, for the online realm. But before Governor Wolf made the quarantine announcement, the theater was already navigating a transition of

its own; Joseph Hall took over for Janera Solomon as Executive Director of KST on Mar. 2.

"We were already in the midst of a big transition when the shelter-in-place orders were issued," Ben Pryor, KST's Senior Producer, explained. "While we were tentatively postponing programming at the end of March, Joseph felt clear about the need to stay connected to the KST public and honor our commitments to artists."

At the same time, City of Asylum, a non-

See **KST** | page 6



ABOVE: Young volunteers point the way to a food distribution event at Valley View Presbyterian Church in Garfield. Due to the (observed) holiday on Jul. 3, the church is now scheduled to distribute food on Jul. 10; drive-thru customers only. Photo by Joey Kennedy.

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*ANATOMY OF A HOUSING
RENOVATION, WARTS & ALL*

*BGC BOARD SPOTLIGHT:
DR. STACI CALHOUN*

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PPS *continued from page 1*

for the school year on Jul. 22.

The final plan, which is called "All-in to Reopen Our Schools," will follow safety recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the state health department.

A coalition of parents, school administrators, the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, and grassroots service organization One Pennsylvania, are deciding what school will look like if students return to

class - especially how to keep them safe inside buildings and on school buses.

"We are prioritizing real community voices and broad collaboration to find the solutions we need for our kids," Angel Gober, Western Pennsylvania director at One Pennsylvania, said.

According to Ebony Pugh, public relations director at PPS, the planning has been divided into five categories with 14 subcommittees, all guided by state Department of

Education policies.

The plan also includes input from the 5,194 families who responded to the district's Remote Learning Parent Survey. Pugh said that a majority of parents were satisfied with the district's efforts to communicate with them during its shut-down, most notably with the information they received about COVID-19.

However, parents said they want more teacher-led instruction online, and that they need more resources to help their children learn. They asked for more guidance on what to expect from their students, and for technical help to manage the software used for online learning.

Some families also need access to technology. Based on the parents' survey responses, 64% of students used family-owned devices to do their schoolwork. Another 45% of students used "instructional packets," which are paper copies of their class lessons; 19% of students used devices provided by PPS.

The school district wants every student to have a laptop or iPad. By early June, it had already distributed 8,649 laptops and iPads to students who needed them.

With help from local foundations, PPS will begin the new school year with the goal of a 1:1 laptop ratio. Families are encouraged to contact their student's teachers or principal in order to request a laptop.

The first day of school is Aug. 26 for all grades, except kindergarten (begins Aug. 31) and grades 10 & 11 (begin Aug. 27). As in years past, the district will contact parents with information about the start of the school year.

"The Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers [PFT] has been eager to work with [PPS] on a plan that will bring students and staff back to school safely," Nina Esposito-Visgitis, president of the PFT, said. "Teachers have valiantly embraced our remote learning reality, but of course they're eager to get back inside the classroom, where teaching and learning flourish best." ♦

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Sidebar: planning for challenges

By Sandy Pontius *Bulletin contributor*

Pittsburgh - The 14 subcommittees responsible for planning the 2020-2021 Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) year have an "amazing undertaking" ahead of them as they envision new systems, Nina Esposito-Visgitis, president of the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT), said. "We really do have to go with what will be safe for students, and for educators."

The district invited 325 people - parents, teachers, administrators, and community leaders - to serve on the subcommittees; their recommendations will be included in the district's final plan, scheduled to be released on Jul. 22.

"I am thrilled with how inclusive [the plan] is," Esposito-Visgitis said. "That's how you make things work." Nonetheless, PPS faces a number of challenges to make remote, or online, learning work for students. "COVID-19 has taken us all by surprise," she admitted. "We've faced emergencies before, but nothing like this."

When schools closed a few months ago, a number of PPS families did not have laptops or iPads for their students. Many others had internet connectivity problems, Esposito-Visgitis said, and some families needed more training on the district's remote learning software.

"The one thing Pittsburgh Public Schools needs is the proper funding so that our kids and families get the exact training and devices they need to move in and out of distance learning," she noted. "It shouldn't be a struggle. All kids deserve a free and appropriate education."

With students at home, Esposito-Visgitis hopes that parents will connect with their kids' teachers. "Sometimes, we're nags because we love the kids," she said. "We don't want our kids to get behind. It's more important than ever that parents and teachers work together." ♦



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BGC issues statement on racial injustice

By the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation Board of Directors & Staff

We at the BGC stand with all in our community, in the face of murder and injustice. We stand with you, and all who are demonstrating their unhappiness with the status quo.

For nearly 45 years, the BGC has been an agent for change in our neighborhoods, serving as a catalyst for affordable housing, youth education, better employment opportunities, business development, and social justice.

But in these past two weeks, we mourn. We look inward and ask ourselves painful questions about what we could do better. In the wake of tragedies like the murders of George Floyd, Antwon Rose II, and Jonny Gammage, we need to see change. Change that will have both the police and the rest of American society placing a higher value on the well-being of the Black Community.

We stand in resolute support of those who have been protesting to bring justice to the actions of law enforcement agencies. We stand with Black Lives Matter (<https://blacklivesmatter.com>) and endorse their bold goals for a better America.

We call upon Mayor Peduto and Pittsburgh City Council to revamp our police bureau to prevent the excessive use of force by its officers in the future, and to toughen independent investigations of all charges of official oppression or misconduct.

Our community is actively working towards the changes that we need. We are proud of what our neighbors have been able to accomplish. Let us know what we can do to support the efforts of reformers everywhere.

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BGC Board of Directors & Staff

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Vol. 45, No. 7

Deadline for the August edition is Friday, July 17.

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Total Circulation 15,000 Copies Mailed [*bulk distribution will resume a.s.a.p.*]

Staff Andrew McKeon, Editor • John Colombo, Staff Photographer • Rick Swartz, Proofreading • Pamela Schön, Office Manager • Trib Total Media, Printing & Mailing • USPS, Home Delivery

Board Meetings are held by the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation at 6:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month, at the BGC Community Activity Center (113 N. Pacific Ave.), and are open to the public.

The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the publisher.

The Bulletin is made possible in part by funding from Dollar Bank and WesBanco Bank.

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Thank you!

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) would like to acknowledge its main corporate and philanthropic partners: PNC Foundation, BNY Mellon Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, WesBanco Bank, and Dollar Bank. Thanks also to Allegheny Health Network, West Penn Hospital, the City of Pittsburgh, *The Bulletin's* advertisers, and all BGC members for their ongoing support and assistance. Kudos!



ABOVE: Garfield Community Farm (GCF) volunteer Lisa Freeman brings a planted message to light. Freeman helped shepherd hundreds of donated tomato seedlings to the food distribution drive at Valley View Presbyterian Church on Jun. 5. Photo courtesy of GCF.

Employment Center reopens to serve clients

By **Brendan Duckett** *Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center*

I have some exciting news to share! As of Monday, Jun. 1, we reopened the doors of the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (5321 Penn Ave.) in Garfield. However, the center is operating under a range of protocols designed to protect clients and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What that means is our neighbors and local visitors wishing to meet with the Employment Specialist or Youth Program Coordinators can do so by either registering online at bit.ly/enec-appointment or by calling 412-362-8580. Individuals wishing to use the computers will also be required to register online at bit.ly/enec-computers or call ahead of time to reserve a space.

All appointments and computer use times will be limited to 45 minutes. Additionally, all visitors and staff will be required to wear a mask and use hand sanitizer upon entering the building. Visitors needing fax or copy services do not need an appointment. Should you have any further questions, please call me at 412-441-9833. We look forward to helping you with your job search and placement.

Yours in service,

Brendan Duckett

Employment Specialist ♦

THE BULLETIN WANTS YOUR FEEDBACK!

This publication begins and ends with you, so we invite your opinions & insights. We'd love to hear from you!

Please email our tip-line/suggestion box:

Bulletin@Bloomfield-Garfield.org.



ABOVE: On Thursday, Jun. 11, volunteers from the Stanton Heights Neighborhood Association distribute food and necessities to local residents in the SunnySide school parking lot on Stanton Ave. Photo by Barry Werber.

BELOW: Friendship residents make music from their front porches, delighting audiences with acoustic sets - from a distance - on Sunday, Jun. 14. Photo by Eileen Kraus-Dobratz.



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Garfield Green Zone gets help from community service program

By Sandy Pontius *Bulletin contributor*

Garfield - Sometimes, good people land in hot water with the courts, hurting their job prospects for years.

To avoid this stigma, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) and District Magistrate Judge Mik Pappas have partnered to offer an alternative for those accused of nonviolent summary offenses, the lowest level of criminal offense.

Through the "1520 Adjudication Alternative Program" in the Pennsylvania Judicial Code, Pappas can assign community service or other self-improvement activities to nonviolent defendants without rendering a judgment, levying a fine, or ordering jail time. Defendants are not required to plead "guilty," and charges are dismissed once the defendant completes the program; their record is automatically expunged.

"Community service can be assigned before a verdict is rendered, when a verdict is rendered, or even after a verdict is rendered," Pappas said. "There really is a lot of opportunity to intervene."

Defendants can tell a judge that they want to participate in the program and, if accepted, they will either be assigned to a work site or get to choose from a list of

available sites, he said.

The BGC has been a designated work site for about a year, Community Engagement & Planning Specialist Nina Gibbs said. Defendants who contact BGC are interviewed to determine their skills or needs; community service might include an outdoor project, an office project, or a class assignment, for example.

"We're trying to connect with resources that we already have in the neighborhood," Gibbs said, highlighting the BGC's vision for a Green Zone that could make Garfield a healthier place to live, with better walking paths, bike trails, and open spaces for outdoor recreation.

The zone, which includes 30 acres of green and undeveloped property, loops around Hillcrest St. and Fit Farm, Fort Pitt Field, Healcrest Urban Farm, Garfield Commu-

nity Farm, and Kite Hill Park. As green zones often play a crucial role in community development, the BGC partnered with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to gather community input, arriving at four goals related to their preservation act:

1. "See The Views" refers to Garfield's steep slopes, where spectacular city views can be enhanced as Green Zone destinations.
2. "Save The Trees" highlights the need to remove vines that threaten the branches and crowns of mature trees - critical for capturing stormwater, cleaning the air, and anchoring the environment.
3. "Nature Places" are the green, open spaces most valued by the community.
4. "Connect the Dots" means creating a walking and cycling network where city steps and other local paths connect through green spaces.

Adjudication Alternative defendants and other volunteers may participate in community clean-ups, trail building, and maintenance such as the weeding of invasive plants.

The program even provides an opportunity for sculpting that combines welding and nature-based art components.

"We're going big," Gibbs said, noting the BGC has created a 30-hour/week position for the Garfield Green Zone & Public Safety Coordinator. This new position involves coordinating the BGC's community, environmental, and public safety efforts.

Gibbs and Pappas believe any nonprofit could mold the program to fit its own needs. To become a designated work site, nonprofits must fill out a two-page form to be submitted to the Court Administration of Allegheny County for approval.

Pappas is encouraging other district magistrate judges to use this sentencing option. "I would love to see people bettering themselves and their community," he said.

"I have a vision of rejuvenating the program," Pappas continued. "We could make a map of the city and make sure there's a spot for every offender." ♦

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KST continued from page 1

profit that provides housing to exiled writers, began collaborating with KST on what soon became "The Show Must Go On(line)," a daily webcast that streams programs by Pittsburgh-based arts organizations.

The call for digital content was strong, so the theater sprang into action to help develop the "KST Global Stream" concept.

The Global Stream offers a multi-pronged approach with a mix of digital programming, from Instagram Live conversations with KST leadership and their network of artists to exclusive Zoom performances and digital screenings.

According to Pryor, the organization put a renewed emphasis on its weekly email newsletter, utilizing e-blasts to promote

its virtual events and also highlight recommended streaming content from other arts institutions like the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and others.

"The digital program has been a great opportunity to pull together our audiences and artist contacts," Pryor said, "both in Pittsburgh and throughout the USA."

Hall echoed this sentiment, noting how the transition to digital content has offered new abilities to stay connected with artists and audiences. "Audiences who attended a performance by Jaamil Kosoko at the theater a few years ago," he said, "were able to hear him in conversation with Ben on May 21 on Instagram."

KST's move to digital programming comes

with the added bonus of a built-in archiving system, with many of the presentations living online well after the presentation date. Regardless, adapting the programming of a live theater into digital-only content was not without its challenges.

Pryor noted that while the programming has become more accessible to a greater number of people, KST still struggles with total accessibility. Enjoying digital performances requires access to the internet and a computer/smart device, which many local residents do not have. Additionally, digital formats make it more challenging to provide ASL interpretation for audience members. The instantaneous nature of the Global Stream also means that KST staffers have much less time to prepare and develop concepts for shows. Despite these roadblocks, the frequency and variety of KST's engagement points are now appealing to a wide array of communities.

"One of my favorite moments is when I see community from Pittsburgh, New York, and beyond all experiencing the same program together and chatting about it live on the platform," Hall said. "We've had more social media followers and engagement on our platforms than ever."

The KST Global Stream also lends more visibility to KST leadership. Hall, Pryor, and Orlana Darkins Drewery, KST's Deputy Director, all regularly conduct interviews on Instagram Live with local and national artists, arts leaders, and community members.

"It's my goal to continually find ways to hand KST over to the community," Hall said, "and bringing visibility to our staff

moves us closer to achieving [this goal]."

This emphasis on serving has become even more vital in light of the recent Black Lives Matters protests. In response, and as a continuation of its mission to end the disproportionate ways that resources are distributed in Pittsburgh, KST is hosting "Hotline Ring" on Jul. 16.

The virtual fundraiser will not only raise money for KST, but also for six local organizations - in community with or led by queer, Black, and/or people of color: 1Hood Media, BOOM Concepts, Braddock Carnegie Library Association, Dreams of Hope, The Legacy Arts Project, and PearlArts Studios.

"The Arts is simply a microcosm of society's larger issues," Hall explained. "For years, national and local reports like the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council's *Racial Equity in Arts Funding* have repeatedly found inequity in funding for Black artists and Black-led organizations. Redirecting power and resources to Black and historically marginalized communities is a way to be an ally and create positive change."

BOOM Concepts, a local creative hub dealing with setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic, is one of Hotline Ring's featured arts organizations. After being forced to temporarily shutter its Garfield gallery space (5139 Penn Ave.) and cancel multiple programs, the organization is now applying for grants just to stay afloat.

"The [Hotline Ring] fundraiser will help us close the gap of income lost, and still pay the artists we support throughout the year," BOOM co-founder Thomas Agnew explained.

As Pittsburgh begins to reopen, KST will continue evolving its approach. The theater is now considering a hybrid model that includes in-person and virtual components. A few outdoor concerts in the fall, as well as some limited capacity indoor programming, are among the possibilities currently being explored.

"When we do resume in-person programming, the safety of participating artists, staff, and audiences is as much of a priority as the welcoming environment for which KST is known," Hall said.

Stay tuned to Kelly-Strayhorn.org for ongoing updates. ♦

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Garfield Night Market cancelled until August

Due to concerns about COVID-19, the July installment of the Garfield Night Market has been cancelled. At this time, the market is still scheduled to operate in August, September, and October. For updates, follow the Garfield Night Market (facebook.com/GarfieldNightMarket).

Bloomfield Development Corp. Board & staff respond to police violence

By Kyle Gracey Bloomfield Development Corporation Board of Directors

Perspective/Bloomfield - Recent police violence against Black citizens has forced us at the Bloomfield Development Corporation (BDC) to reevaluate what it means to serve all of our community members. This reflection has affirmed some of our existing efforts, increased the importance of new efforts already underway, and made us face the realities of where we still fall short.

The BDC has always been proud to champion farmers markets as essential food access points for low-income families, so we worked to help local markets open for on-site sales during the coronavirus pandemic.

We celebrate Pittsburgh and Bloomfield's Black-led organizations - True T (truetpgh.com), Level Up Studios (leveluppgh.com), and Few of a Kind Store (fewofakindstore.com) to name a few - that are creating new spaces in the neighborhood and doing meaningful work for the community.

We fought, and won, against cuts to transit access, which would have affected transit riders who are disproportionately Black, Brown, and low-income residents. Since the local housing crisis also inequitably harms our Black residents and other people of color, we are currently developing an affordable housing strategy.

In order to address our personal and organizational biases, BDC staff and Board members will participate in diversity & anti-racist training. Thanks to a recently confirmed grant, we can now assist minority-owned businesses by offering technical assistance with their e-commerce platforms and other needs.

At the same time, we have tried to confront our shortcomings. Despite efforts to recruit a more diverse Board and staff, we do not fully represent the many identities in Bloomfield, particularly Black residents.

We recognize that some Black residents and visitors experience Bloomfield as an unwelcoming community. Some have even experienced explicit racism.

While actively pursuing funding to extend our anti-racism education to the community, we have formed a Racial Justice Task Force to better understand how our organization

can become an ally in the fight against racial injustices.

BDC is collecting feedback from the community, as well as from local organizations more experienced in dismantling systemic racism - and will continue these efforts well beyond this moment.

In solidarity with ongoing protests in Pittsburgh, we released a full statement outlining our thoughts, successes, and struggles in responding to this moment. Read it at bloomfieldnow.org/statement-from-bdc.

As a means of supporting Black Lives Matter protests occurring in Bloomfield, BDC created a "rapid response team" that informs those who live and work in Bloomfield about participating in the protests; team members also attend the protests to defuse any potentially hostile counter protesters.

Adopting an actively anti-racist approach takes work. We know our work is just beginning, but we are committed to making Bloomfield a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community. ♦

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation & Assemblies are looking into Wifi access and computers for the community. We want to get an idea of what people have and what people need.

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- ☐ A computer (desktop or laptop) ☐ Tablet (Ipad etc)
- ☐ Phone ☐ I can't get online

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Neighborhood FOCUS

'Anatomy of a Housing Renovation': 5213 Gem Way in Garfield

By Joe Reuben *Bulletin contributor*

Garfield - The task of saving Pittsburgh's vacant houses from demolition is filled with many daunting challenges. Take, for example, a small rowhouse at the end of an alley in Garfield.

The 5200 block of Gem Way consists of seven rowhouses; several are occupied and the rest are in varying states of disrepair. In another era, when the suburbs were beckoning inner-city residents to homes with long driveways and multi-car garages, a number of these rowhouses would have likely seen a wrecking ball.

The house at 5213 Gem Way was owner-occupied for a period of time in the 1980s and 1990s before falling vacant and tax-delinquent by the early 2000s. Then, people started using the unsecured structure as a dump site for old TVs and other debris. By 2010, the roof had started to cave in, dimming the prospects for its renovation even further.

With help from the staff at the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group, Aggie Brose, the longtime deputy director of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), managed to get the city to list the house for Treasurer's Sale in 2012. Thanks to Brose, the city then committed to doing a dedicated sale to the BGC once it cleared that process.

At Treasurer's Sale, the city normally seeks to recover what it has lost in unpaid taxes and related collection costs. But using an instrument known as the Vacant Property Reserve, the city can take a vacant house through a second process that removes all of the outstanding liens against the property, and then sell it to a qualified community development corporation for \$1,000.

This can take three years or longer, and requires a state judge, at a public hearing, to clear the property of all the debts recorded against it. The only lien-holder the judge cannot cast aside is the Internal Revenue Service. But as the wheels of clearing the title turn ever so slowly, the house continues to sit, generally sustaining even more damage, which was the case with 5213 Gem Way.

A BGC board member who lived in close proximity to the house offered ongoing encouragement to the group's staff in not giving up on the property, as hundreds of owners in Garfield have done over the decades. Finally, in 2016, the city got the court's blessing to sell the house to the BGC for \$1,000.

BELOW: The exterior of the house at 5213 Gem Way needs almost as much attention as the interior. Photo by Joe Reuben.



'The house became like the brother-in-law who comes for a short visit and ends up staying through Thanksgiving'

- Rick Swartz, BGC Executive Director

"That might sound like the deal of the decade to folks, given what's transpired in the neighborhood since then," Rick Swartz, the BGC's executive director, observed. "But this was no bargain. We had inherited a property that was asking to be taken down. For over a year, we hoped we could find someone to take it off our hands, but we finally had to throw in the towel on that, and start figuring out what to do next."

In early 2018, the organization approached First National Bank, and managed to obtain a loan for \$70,000 to handle what would become the first phase of work: cleaning out all of the debris on the property, tearing off the roof and the roof's sub-structure, and removing the staircases leading to the basement and second floor. According to Swartz, everything had rotted through completely from years of water damage. "When we were done with the interior demo, we had a house with no floors, no stairs, no roof, and just four brick walls," he reminisced. "It made an even stronger case for a total razing of the structure."

Some light finally broke through the clouds when a contractor, who had recently lived in Garfield, agreed to undertake a first phase of restoration after several others decided to pass. By early 2019, with construction plans in hand from Lisa Whitney, a Swissvale architect, Jeff Ault General Contracting had taken everything down to the bare walls, replaced the roof, installed new staircases and floors, and put a new front door on the house.

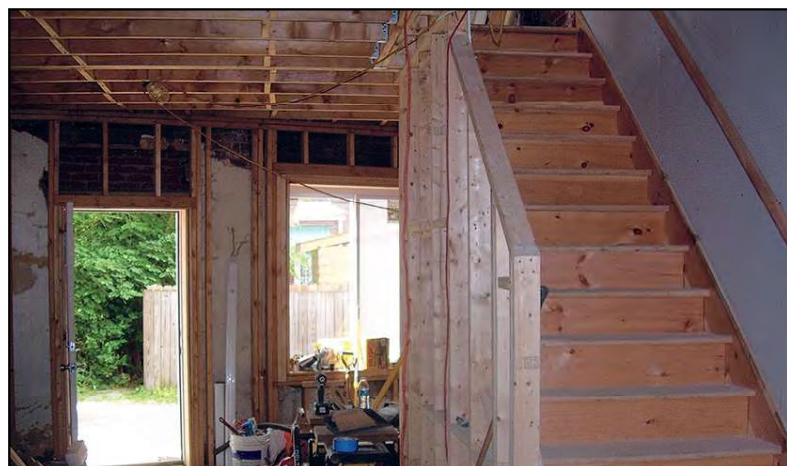
"That [process] was probably the equivalent of reaching the first tent camp on the slope of Mt. Everest," Swartz said. The BGC tried to sell the house once again as a

- continued on next page -

August Bulletin Deadline: Friday, July 17

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ABOVE: A new staircase, installed by Ault Contracting, leads to the second floor of the home at 5213 Gem Way. Photo by Joe Reuben.

- continued from previous page -

do-it-yourself project, but still could not find a buyer able to get the necessary financing to complete the work. "The house," he mused, "became like the brother-in-law who comes for a short visit and ends up staying through Thanksgiving."

When First National Bank began to ask when its \$70,000 construction loan might be repaid, the summer and fall of 2019 became a "do-or-die time for the reclamation of the house," Swartz recalled. The BGC went back to Ault Contracting, and was able to get an itemized bid from the firm to finish off the renovation work at a fairly reasonable price.

But would another lender want to pick up where First National was leaving off? And would the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) provide some help to offset all of the non-construction, or "soft," costs which the BGC was absorbing on the house every month?

Fortunately, the BGC knew where to look in its "rolodex" of contacts: Landmarks Community Capital Corp. (LCCC), a nonprofit lender in the city. Having partnered with the BGC on similar projects over the years, LCCC was willing to pay off the First National loan and finance another \$70,000 in work on the house.

The URA said that it could not help with any of the renovation costs, but was willing to reimburse the BGC for nearly \$30,000 in out-of-pocket costs incurred over 3+ years. That reimbursement could then be put towards what has turned out to be a \$95,000 construction budget for the second phase of renovations, Swartz said. In return for the URA's help, the BGC would have to agree to sell the house for no more than \$154,500.

A future buyer, with an annual income of \$46,500 or less, will be able to apply to the URA for a deferred-payment, second mortgage loan of \$40,000. Since the second

loan carries no interest rate and no monthly payment for as long as the buyer uses it as their primary residence, Swartz projects that someone will spend about \$925/month on their first mortgage loan from the bank.

Still, this story's ending remains unscripted. A fair amount of work lies ahead, and Swartz acknowledged there could be a few more surprises in store before the renovation is completed. Because the house is not very large and situated on an alley, he wonders if the BGC will have a house that, in the end, someone will want to own.

But now that renovation work has started on the house next door, a positive ripple effect - something the BGC was always aiming for - might soon be felt along the alley. *The Bulletin* will check back to see how the story of 5213 Gem Way ends. ♦

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'Bike Match' program connecting local residents with essential transportation

By Alexandria Shewczyk *Bike Pittsburgh*

Insight/Pittsburgh - In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, local residents are looking for safe, affordable ways to navigate the city while carrying on with work and other essential activities. BikePGH has partnered with "Bike Match" to connect people who have an extra bicycle with anyone who might need one.

Whether you have a bike or need a bike, we are here to help. Join the #BikeMatch program, or spread the word to help us match as many donors and recipients as possible. Together, we can make biking a safer way to navigate our new world.

For this program, we will only accept bicycles that are in ready-to-ride condition, or that require very minor maintenance (i.e. flat tire, basic adjustments, or lubrication). To learn more, read the steps below and visit bikematch.safelanes.org/pittsburgh.

1. Fill out the appropriate form to either donate or request a bike.
2. If you match with someone nearby, we'll send you and your match an email with details about the bike and how to make a safe exchange.
3. Determine a time and place to meet. A BikePGH match coordinator will be included on the email thread if you have any questions or concerns.
4. Exchange the bicycle; please observe cleaning and social distancing guidelines.
5. Take a picture and send it to volunteer@bikepgh.org to confirm the exchange, and feel free to post it online with #BikeMatch #BikePGH.

For potential donors whose bikes are not quite ready-to-ride, Free Ride will soon be accepting donations of adult bikes in need of minor repairs. You can drop off your bike during a donation event or bring it to a "repair day" to utilize the stands, tools, and parts to get your bike ready for Bike Matching. Follow "@BikePGH" for more info.

If you need help deciding whether to donate as-is or put in some elbow grease, just contact Free Ride (FreeRidePGH.org/contact). Email volunteer@bikepgh.org with any questions about the Bike Match program. ♦



ABOVE: Cyclists pedal along Bryant St. in Highland Park. Photo courtesy of Bike PGH.

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY MEETING: LAWRENCEVILLE RESIDENTS

Until it's safe for us to meet again in person, Lawrenceville United will host a monthly, virtual community meeting on Zoom. This month's meeting goes live on Jul. 21, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. We invite our neighbors to participate by phone, or online, and to ask questions and offer comment via Facebook Live.

Every month, we will feature speakers who can share information, resources, and connections to help us cope with life during the pandemic - and also to celebrate our community and all the good things we are doing for our neighbors. If you want to take part in any of these meetings, please RSVP to info@lunited.org or call 412-397-8488.

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BGC Board Member spotlight: Dr. Staci Calhoun

Intro by Dr. Staci Calhoun / Interview by Nina Gibbs Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Perspective/Garfield - In 2005, I created the "Kyle's Hope" foundation in honor of my son, Kyle, who was born with a terminal disease.

Kyle's Hope provides supportive services for families dealing with any and all needs. When you have a medical, mental, or physical condition and don't know where to turn, we step in to help advocate for, and maintain, all supportive services.

In addition to running a foundation, I work as Case Manager Supervisor for Youth Build students at Garfield Jubilee, Assoc. My work in the local community has created valuable partnerships with Laurentian Hall Apartments, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (Board Member), Sojourner House (Board President for the "Mom's" program), and Pittsburgh Police Zone 5, among others.

My mission in life is to serve others and give back to the community. You can "like" Dr. Staci on Facebook, email me (kyleshope@live.com), or call 412-277-4716 for more information. If you or someone you know need assistance, please contact me as soon as possible.

I try to remind people that, even though life can be rough, they can get through anything - and that it's how we endure hardships that shapes how we move on with our lives. "Never give up!" I say. Links to my podcast are available via Facebook. Join me as I try to inspire others.

BGC: When did you begin volunteering?

Dr. Staci Calhoun: "I have been volunteering all of my adult life because, growing up, we were always taught to give back and help others. When my son was born with a terminal disease, it gave me a passion to support others with all needs."

BGC: What do you hope Kyle's Hope can achieve in the local community?

Dr. Staci Calhoun: "Just being able to give back to others and support them with services is what makes my world a better place. It motivates me to support others suffering from physical or mental health problems or social services needs. I also help with interventions and drug & alcohol counseling."

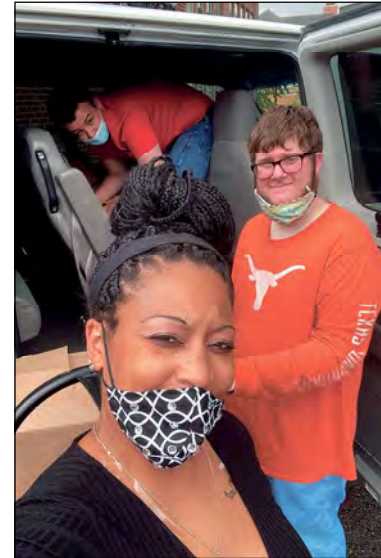
BGC: How have you and your fellow volunteers in Garfield responded to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Dr. Staci Calhoun: "We've all been helping out to feed the local community. At this point, I've assisted somewhere around 4,000 families during the crisis."

BGC: What inspires you to keep up the good work?

Dr. Staci Calhoun: "My son is my inspiration for all that I do. It's also a big help to have a loving spouse that has the same mission in life, which is to give back." ♦

BELOW: Dr. Staci Calhoun (foreground) helps volunteers distribute food in Garfield. Photo by Dr. Staci Calhoun.



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GARFIELD

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Tuesday July 21, 2020 | 6pm-7:30pm

Online via Zoom (register for the link)


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The BGC wants to hear from the community!
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Agenda includes
Crime update from Zone 5 Commander Stephen Vinansky

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LOCAL REAL ESTATE BLOTTER

- Bloomfield, Friendship, Garfield, East Liberty, Lawrenceville, & Stanton Heights -

Real Estate Sales (for the month of May 2020)

Compiled by Lillian Denhardt, RE/MAX Select Realty

Bloomfield

Carmela F Puciata to Ella 237 LLC at 237 Ella St. for \$196,525.

David A & Deborah S Levy to Matthew Pomy at 327 Orwell Way for \$207,000.

Elizabeth Susan Campbell to Olivia Staso at 4002 Howley St. for \$199,464.

Jena Corporation to Joseph T Bellisario Family Limited Partnership at 231 S. Millvale Ave. for \$305,000.

Pugliano Family Revocable Living Trust to Sapphire 329 LLC at 329 Sapphire Way for \$145,000.

Friendship

Michael M Jr. & Susan M Mullen to James Lawrence & Cindy Ann Durrell at 5124 Friendship Ave. for \$600,000.

Garfield

Andrea Martin to Heather Anderson at 5167 Penn Ave. for \$250,000.

Dante Lawson to Aspen Associates LLC at 5333 Brown Way for \$65,000.

Pho Real Estate LLC to Michael K & Anabelle Lee at 5107 Dearborn St. for \$325,000.

Soptoshi Penn Properties Ltd to Afsin Properties LLC at 5435 Kincaid St. for \$54,000.

East Liberty

Annette T Atwood to Fuzzy Penguin Properties LLC at 307 S. Negley Ave. for \$535,000.

East Liberty Development Incorporated to Elaine D Fleming at 331 Enright Ct for \$140,000.

Michael S White to Hayden Andrew Kuhn at 5459 Hays St. for \$275,000.

Patricia L Brown to Orange Pear Ordinary Trust at 429 N. Negley Ave. for \$0.

RD Real Estate Debt Fund II LP to Jeffrey & Monica Schointuch at 6041 Saint Marie St. for \$420,000.

Lawrenceville

100 Awoa LLC to Matthew V & Julia Lorenz at 0 Kent Way for \$85,000.

5515 Butler Street Development LP to Margaret Pusateri at 5585 Butler St. for \$474,900.

5515 Butler Street Development LP to Molly E Sanjule at 5587 Butler St. for \$549,900.

Andrew & Adrianna Zaleski to John Myrga at 5225 Lotus Way for \$307,000.

Angela Jean Torcaso to Natrona 5126 LLC at 5126 Natrona Way for \$95,000.

Edward H & Carol J Hughes to Cameron Cochran at 4510 Penn Ave. for \$130,000.

Edward L & Gary E Sauer to Giancarlo A Fasano at 5425 Butler St. for \$206,000.

Harrison Street Associates LLC to Justin Eric Phillips Rossini at 5240 Harrison St. for \$349,900.

Isaac Smith to Russell Michelson at 172 44th St. for \$330,000.

James L Jarzynka to Seth T & Mallory M Jarzynka at 4210 Calvin St. for \$1.

Joseph Torrisi to Duane & Teresa Ann Barnes at 518 Kendall St. for \$145,000.

Joseph V & Denise Mazzocchetti to Ana C & Jeffrey Hernandez at 4106 Garden Way for \$195,000.

Lawrenceville Corporation to Madison M Sieber at 297 46th St. for \$127,500.

LPB Properties LLC to 234 57th LLC at 234 57th St. for \$123,428.

Mary P Shook to Kristian Kasemen at 262 57th St. for \$501.

Nesby LLC to Robert G Malkin at 211 38th St. for \$735,000.

Paula G McWilliams to Nicole R Dieschbourg at 194 42nd St. for \$145,117.

Quality Home Investments LLC to Victor E & Linda A Grijalva at 5322 Butler St. for \$500,000.

Richard L Bzdziak to Joey C Kennedy at 3513 Leech St. for \$78,900.

Samy Barakat to Steven A & Kiler J Wilson at 170 46th St. for \$554,350.

Scott D Cousins to Carnegie 5159 LLC at 5159 1/2 Carnegie St. for \$240,000.

Sheila Finch to Daniel Markosky at 3514 Leech St. for \$211,000.

The Edward F Sr & Priscilla J Banaszewski Revocable Living Trust to Melissa K Yee at 265 Fisk St. for \$300,000.

The Margaret A Parks Revocable Trust to John R & Shirley V Rossi at 261 38th St. for \$318,000.

Timothy J & Mary Ann O'Donnell to Jarrett T Jarvis at 356 45th St. for \$296,000.

TMNL LLC to Natrona 5233 LLC at 5233 Natrona Way for \$105,000.

Wiley Properties LLC to Christina Payne at 3813 Foster St. for \$349,900.

Stanton Heights

Joseph & Lucille C Pavuk to Keren Wheeler at 1515 Trinity St. for \$196,205.

Kathleen Diulus to Linda Pittler at 5416 Camelia St. for \$330,000.

Lori J Russo to Kathryn Haas at 1571 Woodbine St. for \$154,000.

This column uses data from Allegheny County that contains occasional errors (sale price, owners' names, etc.). We strive for accuracy every month so, if something looks off, please let us know.

For questions, comments, or just to chat about real estate in our neighborhoods, feel free to email Lillian at lillian@agent-lillian.com or call 412-335-6068. ♦

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Pittsburgh's contract with its police has a lot to say about officer discipline

By Rich Lord *PublicSource*

Pittsburgh - The Allegheny County Black Activist/Organizer Collective demanded a dozen changes in policing policy, budgeting and staffing on Monday, June 15.

The City of Pittsburgh's interactions with its roughly 900 police officers are governed by an arbitration decision handed down in January. That 30-page decision — which modifies past contracts and decisions — came after a year of evidentiary hearings, pitting the city against the Fraternal Order of Police [FOP]. While much of the contract deals with wages and benefits, it includes planks that govern procedures when an officer is the subject of a complaint, or is suspected of misconduct or criminal activity.

The arbitration decision states:

- Police can't be compelled to testify before the independent Citizen Police Review Board.
- Officers who are the subjects of complaints are interviewed by the city's Office of Municipal Investigations [OMI], which must give 24 hours notice before interviewing the officer. The officer can have an FOP representative present for that interview.
- Anonymous OMI complaints without corroborative evidence are automatically classified as unfounded, unless they could lead to criminal charges.
- Any OMI complaint that is ultimately deemed unfounded is destroyed one year after the investigation is completed, along with the records of the investigation.
- Police brass can mete out disciplinary action, from an oral reprimand to termination.
- Officers can file grievances to seek to reverse any disciplinary action from a written reprimand to a termination, which leads to a series of meetings and, ultimately, can end in binding arbitration before a three-member panel of arbitrators.
- An officer's disciplinary history can be considered when the bureau considers promotions, and when weighing punishment options if the officer is subjected to another disciplinary action.
- However, disciplinary actions are removed from officer records after certain periods of time. Oral reprimands go away after two years, written reprimands after three years, suspensions after five years. (Records of the actions remain in the city Law Department and in OMI files, but are no longer considered in promotions or new disciplinary decisions.)
- When an officer is sued for any action taken in the course of the officer's duties, the city provides a legal defense.
- In addition to defending officers against civil complaints, the city must pay \$100,000 a year into a Legal Defense Fund to cover any other legal counsel officers might need to address lawsuits arising from their duties. Those funds can also be used to pay lawyers to represent the officers before OMI, the Citizen Police Review Board or in critical incident investigations.
- The city is allowed to transfer officers to other assignments "where events or circumstances jeopardize the ability of the officers to safely perform the duties of their position, including pending litigation or disciplinary action."

[Reprinted in full with permission. *PublicSource* is an independent news organization in Pittsburgh. Visit PublicSource.org.] ♦

- CORRECTIONS -

- Last month, we ran a typo in the headline for "Where to vote: consolidated polling places..." on page 14. Thanks to Martha Ann Terry, an avid reader, we were able to correct the online version of the June Bulletin.
- Also, please note that All God's Creatures (5121 Penn Ave.) is celebrating 24 years in business - not 30, as it was mis-printed last month. Kateri and her team look forward to serving the local community for many years to come!



ABOVE: The demolition of two buildings at 5532 and 5534 Penn Ave. has exposed the east facade of 5530 Penn for the first time in nearly 100 years. This demolition is part of the development of a new KeyBank branch office at Penn & S. Negley Aves. Photo by Joe Reuben.

Due to the success of The Big Easy, we are moving to a larger facility not only to facilitate our clients, but to expand our services, including daycare, boarding, a Cafe and grooming.

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-Tribune Review

Safety Measures - Facility Design

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Pitt students spending summer at Assemble, getting to know Garfield community

By Taylor Campbell Browne Leadership Fellows program, University of Pittsburgh

Insight/Garfield - In the midst of economic and social turmoil going on all over the world, civic leaders are needed now more than ever. The University of Pittsburgh has allowed us, as students, to lend our hand to local communities through the Browne Leadership Fellows program.

This program has a mission of advocating for social policies and resources to meet basic human needs; to create accessible, responsible human service programs; and to deliver quality services to those in need of support.

As Browne Fellows, we are working this summer with Garfield's learning center, Assemble (4824 Penn Ave.). With guidance from the staff members at Assemble, who have graciously welcomed us to the community, we will work to engage local youths in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) learning activities. In order to adjust to COVID-19 concerns, our engagement with the program has been converted to a mostly virtual experience, allowing everyone to work together from the comfort of their own homes.

As University of Pittsburgh students, we feel it is our responsibility to act as an asset to our neighboring communities. Many college students let their short time in Pittsburgh pass by without fully appreciating the area they resided in for four years. We applied to become part of the Browne Leadership Fellows Program because we want to take the time to fully immerse ourselves within the community – and to give back as much as we take from the experience.

During our time with Assemble this summer, we will meet with community members and leaders to discuss how we, as University of Pittsburgh students, can be of service to Garfield residents.

If you would like to contribute your thoughts to our assessment, or if you have questions about Assemble's summer programs, feel free to contact us at the following emails: taylor@assemblepgh.org, drea@assemblepgh.org, damilola@assemblepgh.org, and meganm@assemblepgh.org. ♦

Innamorato: more than \$1 million awarded to county food pantries

By Nick Malawskey House Democratic Communications Office

Allegheny County - More than \$1 million in emergency federal funding has been awarded to help local food pantries during the coronavirus crisis, state Rep. Sara Innamorato, D-Allegheny, announced on May 26.

Locally, organizations that received grants included 412 Food Rescue, Earthen Vessels, and St. Juan Diego.

"The ongoing pandemic has not just threatened the physical health of our communities, but has pushed our social programs - already underfunded and hobbled - to the breaking point. That is why it's critical that we get resources to the people and organizations that need them the most, like our community food partners," Innamorato said.

The grants will allow food banks, shelters, and soup kitchens to cover the costs of equipment purchases. Examples of eligible equipment include refrigerated or non-refrigerated box trucks, industrial-sized refrigerators, pallet jacks, and dollies. Installation and shipping costs were also eligible for support.

Increased demand on the charitable food system related to COVID-19 has demonstrated an immediate need for resources to support additional cold storage space, and more flexibility.

This grant program encouraged partnerships between nonprofits - food banks and farms, processors and cooperatives - that continue to experience challenges within the food supply chain. ♦



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-Thomas Jefferson



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