

the Bulletin

A publication of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

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*Serving Bloomfield, Friendship, Garfield,
East Liberty, and Lawrenceville since 1975*

Arsenal Park plan moves forward in Lawrenceville

By Dave Breingan *Lawrenceville United*

Lawrenceville - On Dec. 17, community members held a virtual meeting to discuss the future of Arsenal Park.

The historic park's Master Plan, which was drafted during a robust community process from 2013-2014, created the groundwork for its first phase of improvements.

"It's exciting to be at this step in the process, after years of planning and community engagement," Lauren Connelly, Executive Director of Lawrenceville Corporation, said. "And it's great to see how the community's priorities - the ones that drove the original master planning process - are demonstrated and celebrated in the concepts we're reviewing now."

Now that \$1.8 million in capital budget funding from the City will be directed to-

See **Arsenal Park** | page 2



ABOVE: Despite the record-setting blizzard ahead of the Christmas holiday, Valley View Church's food distribution team perseveres on Thursday, Dec. 17. Check out the action on page 12. Photo by Joey Kennedy.



ABOVE: The Community Activity Center (113 N. Pacific Ave.) sports a festive holiday outfit in Garfield. Photo courtesy of Nina Gibbs.

Garfield Highlands project picks up another financing piece

By Joe Reuben *Bulletin contributor*

Garfield - A project that would deliver 25 new rental homes for working-class families picked up a second critical financing commitment on Dec. 18.

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh (FHLB), an agency that disburses monetary contributions made to it by member banks, announced a grant award of \$589,494 for the \$9 million project, to be known as "Garfield Highlands."

The FHLB does not utilize federal tax dollars to fund these awards. The Pittsburgh office of the FHLB is one of eleven in the

country; the agency administers funds under its "Affordable Housing Program" (AHP).

The Garfield Highlands project was one of 52 that the FHLB funded through the AHP - out of 151 applications it received this past summer. Housing developments in the Hill District, Homewood, and Hazelwood also received grants.

Every application must have a member representative (i.e., bank) standing behind it, and Standard Bank of Monroeville is

See **Garfield Highlands** | page 4

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ASSEMBLE CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF
CREATIVE EDUCATION IN GARFIELD

ALLEGHENY CEMETERY STORIES:
HALLOWED GROUND IN CONTEXT

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Arsenal Park *continued from page 1*

wards Arsenal Park in 2021, a number of the nearly 60 community members in attendance were palpably excited that their neighborhood's largest - and most centrally located - park will get some much-needed updates.

As the virtual meeting kicked off, Andrea Ketzal, Senior Landscape Architect for the City's Department of Public Works (DPW), explained that this stage of the process is about taking the Master Plan and creating buildable construction documents for Phase 1; this footprint includes the portion of Arsenal Park closest to the Arsenal PreK-5 and Arsenal 6-8 Schools.

"We are very excited to be able to share the work that has been completed to date, and engage with the community to ensure that the future of Arsenal Park meets the needs of all park users," Ketzal said.

Pashek + MTR, the design consultants contracted by DPW to prepare construction documents, shared three draft concepts with the audience. Some of the

key features were a connection from the schools into the park, a new pavilion and restroom, an outdoor classroom, a new ADA entrance at 39th Street, and - in two of the three concepts - an expanded play-space.

After walking community members through these three concepts, the audience broke out into smaller groups for discussion. While everyone contributed varying opinions on concept, there seemed to be a widely-shared enthusiasm for the park's overall progress.

More community meetings are planned [for winter and spring of 2021] to further refine the designs. Local residents who missed the meeting are invited to view the recording, sign up for future updates & meetings, and provide their feedback via survey at engage.pittsburghpa.gov/arsenal.

Anyone without a computer may contact Lawrenceville United at 412-802-7220 for help accessing materials offline. ♦



ABOVE: A potential site plan for Arsenal Park includes playgrounds, a baseball diamond, a basketball court, and other recreational facilities. Graphic courtesy of Dave Breingan.

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A year of 'firsts': Environmental Charter School's Ninth Grade Academy

By Deana Callipare *Environmental Charter School*

Pittsburgh - As schools prepared for an unusual start to the 2020-2021 school year last August, the Environmental Charter School (ECS) anticipated a year of "firsts" as it developed safety and virtual learning plans - all while growing another grade.

ECS opened its Ninth Grade Academy this past fall. Although students could not be in the building and classes were held over Zoom, the school administrators are pleased to have hit this foundational milestone for The Environmental Charter High School (ECHS). The pandemic created unimaginable challenges, but ECHS students and staff persevered to expand their student-teacher relationships over video calls.

Dr. Virginia Hill, ECHS Founding Principal, began meeting with Ninth Grade teachers during the summer months, collaborating to help address the needs of each individual student. This marks the first year that ECS has hosted a Ninth Grade class; it is also Dr. Hill's first year with the district.

"Staff [members] work diligently to ensure each student is heard, and relationships are built, while we remain in virtual learning," Hill said. "Students start every morning with announcements from me. I want to make sure each one knows that they're our national treasure; that their dreams are our dreams; that we believe in them; and - if no one has told them yet today - that they are so, very loved."

After students attend morning announcements, they break out into smaller "CREW" groups, where they take a deeper dive into announcements, review character traits, and discuss the tenets of ECHS: "Empathic, Collaborative, Honorable, & Scholarly."

Students take time to present their future endeavors to peers, and support their fellow "CREW" mates on projected educational paths.

"My favorite part about Ninth Grade is showing people what I can build or create, and then seeing their reactions," ECS student Jayier Johnson said. "For the future, I'm looking forward to making a few animated stop-motion series, and becoming a voice actor."

Students are encouraged to voice their thoughts on the school's academics, clubs, and activities. ECHS takes the students' opinions into consideration as the school continues to evolve, grow a grade every year, and incorporate Tenth Grade for the 2021-2022 school year.

"When you join us for Ninth and Tenth Grade, you won't get lost in a huge high school, you are not just another number; you are known and a part of something. Above all, you are cared for, loved, and worth it," Dr. Hill said. "We see you as an individual in a larger community and, in four years, we are sending you out into the world. We will do everything that we can to prepare you for success - whether that is one-on-one instruction or continued relationship-building."

ECS is currently accepting applications for all grades. The application deadline is Monday, Feb. 1; the lottery will be hosted on Tuesday, Feb. 16. For more info about how to apply, please visit ecspgh.org/apply. ♦



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the Bulletin

Serving Pittsburgh's East End neighborhoods since 1975

with the mission of reporting on issues affecting underserved communities and facilitating local residents' exchange of ideas.

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Board Meetings are held by the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation at 6:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month, and are open to the public. Meetings are currently being conducted online via Zoom; email Nina@Bloomfield-Garfield.org for more details.

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

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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!



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Thanks for your support!

Garfield Highlands *continued from page 1*

serving in that capacity for the Garfield Highlands development. The bank may have no other role in the project, but it is responsible for ensuring that the FHLB's funds are spent in accordance with the terms of the award.

If the nonprofit sponsor, which in this case would be the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), fails to abide by those terms, the bank can ask the FHLB to suspend or rescind the awarded monies.

"It's a very unusual arrangement, to say

the least," Rick Swartz, executive director of the BGC, told *The Bulletin*. "These are private dollars that are being awarded," he said, "but [FHLB] answers to the Federal Housing Finance Agency in Washington, while also being accountable to its member institutions who put up those dollars in the first place."

This is the second leg of the stool in an effort to get Garfield Highlands under construction by this fall, according to Swartz.

The first, he explained, transpired in Au-

gust with the commitment of federal housing tax credits by the PA Housing Finance Agency (PHFA); the PHFA commitment should cover roughly 85% of what the project will need to get built and leased.

The third leg needs to come from the city's Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), in the form of a long-term loan. According to Swartz, Garfield Highlands will need at least \$1 million from the URA, and that loan will need to remain in the project for at least 30 years after it gets built.

"This is housing for the local family making as little as \$1,000/month, which might come from a Social Security disability payment," he observed. "They can't pay more than 30% of their gross monthly income as rent, so projects like Garfield Highlands have to go in search of substantial subsidies in order to make the numbers work."

Swartz explained that the BGC will loan the grant to the project and, like the URA, wait for repayment at some date in the distant future. The BGC will also be a co-managing general partner in the project.

"This loan means the community will have a financial stake in Garfield Highlands," he said, "much as it does in the 64 homes that were built as part of the Garfield Glen housing developments. There will be no financial windfalls going to any private developers in 'year 31.'"

In the sixteenth year of the project, those living in the 25 single-family homes will have the opportunity to purchase said homes for the amount of debt that is recorded against them, Swartz maintained.

"Right now, we are looking at debt of around \$1.6 million, so it's possible the sales prices would be, on average, around \$70,000. If we begin leasing these homes by the end of 2022, then 2038 would be the first year tenants could make the jump to homeownership," he said.

Garfield Highlands will feature 14 three-bedroom homes and 11 two-bedroom dwellings, four of which will be accessible to persons using wheelchairs. To learn more, call 412-441-6950 (ext. 111) or email RickS@Bloomfield-Garfield.org. ♦



ABOVE: The site plan for Garfield Highlands, where 25 homes (in green) are scheduled to be built between N. Atlantic Ave. & N. Graham St. Graphic courtesy of LGA Partners.



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 for the latest neighborhood information and community updates.

Assemble celebrates 10 years of creative education in Garfield

By Nina Marie Barbuto *Assemble*

Insight/Garfield - This has been a year like no other. Throughout it all, I must say how proud I am to live and work in Garfield, especially with such excellent neighbors. I've also been blessed to work with the wonderful folks at Assemble (4824 Penn Ave.).

At Assemble, we had to make some hard decisions - based on our capacity to not have any in-person programs from the end of March to the end of 2020. In lieu of being in-person together, we swiftly pivoted to virtual programs.

We transformed our free Afterschool Program into a free virtual program, where all the materials and tools were still provided as kits. This also means that the kids get to keep the materials and tools for all of their other projects at home; there is still space if you want to sign up.

At Assemble, we were able to turn our Day Camps, which often happen on local school holidays, into 2-hour virtual experiences - complete with material kits delivered to Garfield residents' doorsteps.

Our beloved Saturday "Crafternoons" programs have inspired a new video series, now available on YouTube and PCTV21.

We've also been fortunate to continue offering off-site programs for partners such as Casa San Jose, Urban Academy Charter, Pittsburgh Public Schools, and more.

Since we migrated all of our programs online, it has become apparent that Assemble is missing many of its regulars. To help kids get connected, we managed to procure five computers and get them into the hands of Garfield kids - for keeps.

If you are still in need of some tech, please reach out to me (nina@assemblepgh.org, 412-661-6111).

In 2021, Assemble will be 10 years old. It's been quite a ride! We've been able to create with so many amazing artists, makers, technologists, and learners [age 5 and up]. I've seen kids grow and then enroll in college, and even grad schools.

Over the last 10 years, Assemble has employed 101 folks as teachers and staff, featured

over 90 artists at "Unblurred" shows, and served more than 77,000 people through programs and events at our space in Garfield - and across Pittsburgh.

Let's keep building confidence through making. Let's keep practicing what it's like for everyone to belong, to be valued, and to let their creativity shine.

I hope to see you at Assemble when it's safe again. Until then, I hope you will join us for our free online programs [info at Assemble.org]. We are here and we miss you. ♦



ABOVE: Local kids learn how to use a typewriter - as a means of learning about the history of communication - at Assemble (4824 Penn Ave.) in Garfield. Note: this photo was taken before the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo courtesy of Nina Marie Barbuto.

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Friendship artist explores human connection through Haiku

By Rita Meadowbrook *Bulletin contributor*

Pittsburgh - Friendship artist and writer Staci Backauskas fell in love with Haiku, the ancient form of Japanese poetry, almost 20 years ago.

"Because it's only 17 syllables, it really connects people to their experiences and emotions in a way that is powerful," she said.

After facilitating Haiku workshops and doing pop-ups around the city for almost three years, in March 2019 she partnered with *The Incline* to do an online "Haiku Happiness Party" - albeit at the start of the national quarantine/shutdown.

"The response made me realize that people were going to need creative outlets," she told *The Bulletin*. "We had no idea, at the time, what would happen with COVID-19, but I felt it was going to be a while before anything looked like normal again."

Shortly after, she started what became known as "The Haiku Ninja Collective," a group of people who met weekly throughout the summer via Zoom; members still create Haiku together on an almost weekly basis. "It was clear how we were all affected by the enormous changes," Backauskas explained. "So I began to lead discussions about how each of us was navigating this new world. Then, we transformed our thoughts and feelings into Haiku."

In July, she applied to have her work shown in "Corona Crafted," an art show sponsored by Dormont Arts. "I've dabbled with watercolors and acrylics for years," Backauskas explained, "but I really threw myself into the deep end here. I had absolutely no idea

what I was doing."

She created four paintings - each featuring 10 Haiku, created by the Collective - that were hung in the window of the Dormont Florist.

"There was art in windows all along Potomac Avenue for people to safely enjoy, since galleries and museums were closed," she recalled. "It was a fabulous idea that managed to put beauty into the world, in a way that respected physical distancing."

Her first art show in the books, Backauskas got a call from the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, which sought artists to design holiday windows for city businesses. She pitched a few ideas to Brianna Herr, from the Peter Lawrence boutique, the partner venue. After she showed Herr a few examples, everything was "kismet."

"As it turned out, [Herr] was a costume design student at Point Park," Backauskas exclaimed. "It was like the stars were aligned."

Herr sewed the cape, and crafted the pattern pieces, while Backauskas designed the rest of the window. Under a concept of "Space & Grace," the Friendship artist hand-inked two original Haiku on the front panels, accompanied by more than a dozen themed phrases on the flipside. "I was over the moon about how it turned out, and didn't think things could get any better," Backauskas said, "until I got an e-mail [from Awesome Pittsburgh] awarding me \$1,000 to put the collective's COVID-19 haiku on outdoor venues like billboards and bus stop shelters."

As of press time, three local shelters now display the collective's haiku posters: Centre & Millvale Aves.; 50th & Butler Sts.; and Crane Ave. & Banksville Rd. Backauskas created an Indiegogo campaign to continue sharing her work.

"It just keeps getting better," she told *The Bulletin*. "I love showing people the simple truth that we're all connected, especially through the epic challenges we've all experienced in 2020."

To learn more about Backauskas' work, and the art of Haiku, visit stacib.com. ♦



ABOVE: Designed with Haiku in mind, a holiday window display piques interest at the Peter Lawrence boutique (413 Wood St., Downtown). Photo by Patrick Cannon.

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Bloomfield Development CORPORATION



Holiday spirit now contagious in city's East End neighborhoods



ABOVE: Workshop DIY PGH's holiday wreaths, available for Penn Ave. pickup, are a hot commodity in Garfield. Photo courtesy of Kelly Malone.



ABOVE: The 'Friends of Albright Church' hosts a free Thanksgiving dinner on Centre Ave. as part of its annual tradition in Shadyside. Photo courtesy of the Friends of Albright Church.

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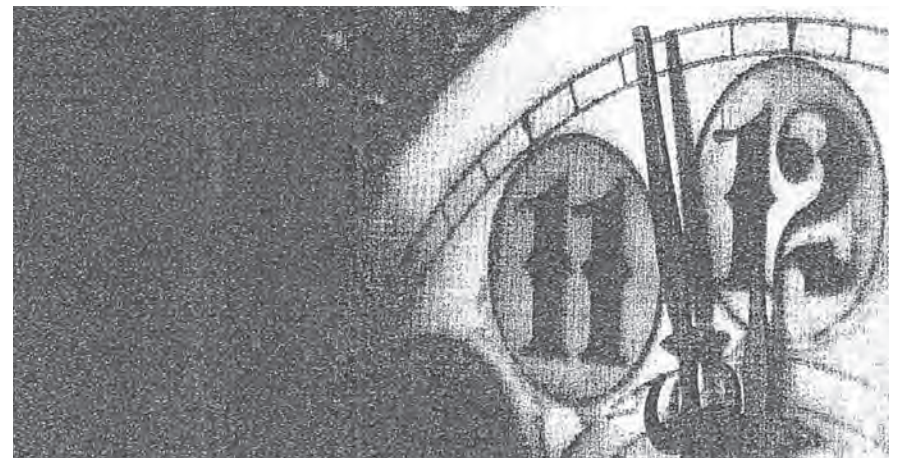
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Neighborhood FOCUS

OHM opening doors to housing in East End neighborhoods

By Cheryl A. Lowitzer Open Hand Ministries

East End - Open Hand Ministries (OHM) may well be the East End's best kept secret. This small, yet mighty nonprofit [founded in 2008] is driven by its mission of opening doors to opportunity for Pittsburgh's Black community.

Consider the fact that wealth - more than income - is the basis of all opportunity, stability, and power in the United States. Yet, for 350 of the 400 years in this country's race relations, Black citizens have been legally prevented from accumulating wealth.

According to an episode of Netflix's "Explained" [*Racial Wealth Gap*], "slaves didn't just represent wealth, they were wealth...the median white household's wealth - their savings and assets, minus their debts - is \$171,000 today; the median Black household's wealth is \$17,600."

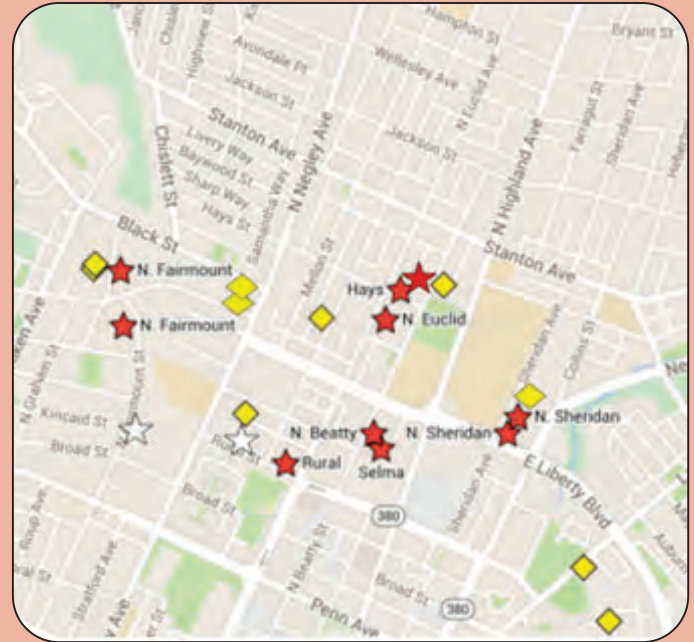
Research probing the root causes of the racial wealth gap has traced its origins to historic injustices, from slavery to segregation to redlining. The City of Pittsburgh's record in this regard, especially in the East End, is less than stellar.

In order to address this issue, Michael Stanton founded OHM with the support of a cadre of churches in the city's East End.

OHM's Family Development program addresses the psychology of poverty and race among the low-income families it serves. OHM's family members' choices and behaviors are often dictated by underlying emotional & psychological issues; issues are often tied to the race, gender, and financial realities into which most of the families were born.

'The construction arm of OHM identifies and rehabilitates vacant properties in the East End to create affordable homeownership opportunities'

BELOW: Open Hand Ministries' plan to bring new opportunities in homeownership to Garfield (red stars indicate new homeowners). Graphic courtesy of Cheryl A. Lowitzer.



Each cohort of family members and advocates goes through an intense training program to prepare them for important cross-cultural relationships. Participant families and advocates are then matched for at least 14 months of "life together" to identify relevant goals, develop plans and habits necessary to accomplish those goals, and identify available resources to revise the plan as necessary.

Weekly meetings ensure ongoing support, help lower barriers to participation, and

- continued on next page -

HOMEOWNERSHIP AND RENTING IN PITTSBURGH BY RACE



ABOVE: A bar graph (furnished by PublicSource) illustrates the divide in homeownership for the Pittsburgh region. Graphic courtesy of Cheryl A. Lowitzer.

TELL THE CITY WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE IN GARFIELD!

Neighborhood plans create a path to sustaining a place - and its people - at the local level, but the ForgingPGH Comprehensive Plan aims to set a vision for the entire city.

ForgingPGH incorporates city-wide goals into each neighborhood's plans for growth and development. View the City's plan, and sound off on what you'd like to see in your neighborhood, at forgingpgh.org.

February Bulletin Deadline: Friday, Jan. 15th

Download advertising information: bit.ly/bulletin_ad

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- continued from previous page -

foster stronger relationships within the overall OHM Community. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings were held in person; although it has been challenging to simulate the face-to-face dinner meetings across a virtual divide, the OHM teams have proven themselves to be resilient and committed to progress.

In 2021, OHM plans to launch an online curriculum to support the launch of its next cohort. OHM now has six different cohorts consisting of 30 families, 50 advocates, and over 20 children [between the ages of 5-18].

Another element of OHM's mission to promote economic justice is its mission to place low-income families into equity-building, homeownership situations. The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania identified "unequal access to home ownership for non-white Pennsylvanians" as one of the state's key housing-related issues.

PublicSource's "Let's Talk about Race" series highlights the issue in Pittsburgh [see graph at bottom-left of page 8].

The construction arm of OHM identifies and rehabilitates vacant properties in the East End to create affordable homeownership opportunities. Since its inception, OHM has placed 15 families into first-time homeownership within the redeveloping Garfield and East Liberty neighborhoods, putting 15 abandoned properties back onto the tax rolls.

Each family now owns a property with increasing value. Coupled with an affordable mortgage, and the work OHM does to prepare homeowners for financial success, this opportunity benefits the future generations of many local families.

Pause, for a moment, to consider just what a difference that makes for a hard-working family that has struggled to overcome economic, social, and cultural injustices historically based on skin color. ♦

BOOM co-founder creates self-guided art tour

A Message from the City's Office of Public Art

Pittsburgh - The City's Office of Public Art (OPA) is pleased to announce "Jaunt", a public art tour designed by local artist Darrell [D.S.] Kinsel.

In collaboration with Pittsburgh artist Maggie Negrete, Kinsel curated a series of postcards featuring work by local artists; each postcard invites people to treat it like a coloring book.

By design, Jaunt encourages safe exploration of the region's public art during the pandemic.

The free postcards are available at the following locations [based on varying hours of operation]: BOOM Concepts (5139 Penn Ave.); Small Mall (5300 Butler St.); CDCP Project Space & Small Mall Outpost (317 S. Trenton Ave., Wilksburg); Ujamaa Collective (1901 Centre Ave.); and People's Grocery (5136 Penn Ave.) in Garfield.

Jaunt is designed to introduce recipients of the cards to art in the public realm by Black and femme artists. The cards feature work such as Thad Mosley's "Mountain Top," Deavron Dailey's "Arms of East Liberty," and Janel Young's "Home Court Advantage," among others.

Kinsel, a visual artist and co-founder of Garfield's BOOM Concepts, researched and selected the artworks to be featured on each card.

He soon hired Negrete, a Pittsburgh-based illustrator and teaching artist, to create black-and-white line drawings of each artwork - to be colored in by the recipients.

"Our original intention in commissioning 'Jaunt' was for Darrell to lead a walking tour of public art as part of OPA's regular public programming," said Rachel Klipa, OPA's program manager for education and outreach.

"When the pandemic arrived, Darrell had to pivot to create a new approach that did not involve in-person activities. His artist's lens was critical to creating a fresh way of looking at what a public art tour can be. It's exciting to see how he is connecting spaces across the city and making them accessible to more people."

"Public art, and the way we enjoy visual work, is essential during these times. 'Jaunt' helps us experience works in the public space in a different way - together, yet still apart," Kinsel explained. ♦

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Rent relief: Feds to disburse \$25 billion to states

By Joe Reuben *Bulletin contributor*

Perspective

Pennsylvania - This is a classic “good news/bad news” story.

The good news: the federal government is ready to disburse billions of dollars to the 50 states for rent relief in an effort to aid financially hard-pressed tenants. The bad news: it wants to give these funds to the states to distribute.

Yes, you did read that correctly.

Pennsylvania tried running a similar program with its own funds in 2020 and failed miserably, by most accounts. According to data collected by Regional Housing Legal Services, a nonprofit based in downtown Pittsburgh, the state succeeded in disbursing only \$54.4 million of the \$175 million that Pennsylvania lawmakers authorized last year - monies that were intended to help renters in danger of losing their homes.

How could this happen?

Evidently, the Republicans in the state House wrote so much red-tape [for this

type of assistance] into the authorizing legislation that, of the 46,000 applications the state received from tenants, only 16,500 could meet all of the paperwork requirements.

The same dismal performance was true for landlords who applied on behalf of their tenants; of the 28,600 landlords who submitted applications, only 10,000 were approved.

Meanwhile, the Republicans were understandably concerned about waste, fraud, and abuse. However, the only ones who got abused, in the end, were renters in serious trouble of losing a place to live. As if to put an exclamation point on this effort in absolute futility, state lawmakers dictated that any unspent funds were to be assigned over to the Department of Corrections.

I wish that I was only kidding about their actions. If this was merely a ride at Kennywood Park, it would be one that induces nausea.

The passage by the U. S. Congress of the new coronavirus stimulus package [on Dec. 21] tucked away \$25 billion in the bill for rent relief. Nothing was set aside for homeowners who have fallen behind

in their mortgage payments, unfortunately. Nonetheless, Congress will be sending out the money to the states as early as this month [January]. It is possible that Pennsylvania could receive as much as \$500 million or more.

What can the state do to avoid the disaster that characterized its own program? How about sending the funds out to local governments to distribute this time around?

The state's urban, suburban, and rural counties would each get an allotment equal to the percentage of their population - as it relates to the Commonwealth as a whole.

The formula for determining the actual amount would ultimately need to incorporate, in some way, the poverty rate in each county. Rural counties with small populations, but high poverty rates, should not

get short-shrifted in the process.

These are the very places that federal and state lawmakers have a notorious habit of leaving behind, especially when it comes to funding.

The city has set up its own system, the “Housing Stabilization Program,” that has managed to distribute several million dollars to landlords on behalf of their tenants, without tying everyone up in red tape. The state could use the URA's program as a model.

If you want to add your voice to this recommendation, please email the state lawmakers who represent our area: costa@pasenate.com (Jay Costa), fontana@pasenate.com (Wayne Fontana), egainey@pahouse.net (Ed Gainey), and sinnamorato@pahouse.net (Sara Innamorato). ♦

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.



Pittsburgh's winters present challenges for some neighbors.

Are you a resident of Pittsburgh who is 60 years of age and/or living with disabilities who needs assistance shoveling snow this winter? Or would you like to volunteer to assist a neighbor near you?

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Reader response: on 'being a light' in dark times

By Anonymous Bulletin contributor

Pittsburgh - It was bold of you to quote Biblical scripture (Matthew 25:40) at the end of your article ["Who Knew?: 2020 hindsight on COVID-19 pandemic"] in last month's *Bulletin*.

However, I think the real focus needs to be on how caring for our brothers and sisters has become hindsight. Nowadays, we do not automatically see injustice and suffering as it's happening – not the way we used to, at least.

Responding instinctively to our families and neighbors during their time of need has become something that we "think about" first, before deciding if we should respond at all! What happened to our basic sense of responsibility?

I was raised in Lawrenceville during a time when you automatically helped your neighbors and family members. There was nothing to think about – you just did it. You were right, Mr. Swartz, to say that we need to "take a long look in the mirror each morning, and make sure you can still recognize the face you see." It's all too easy to deceive ourselves into thinking that we, and everything around us, is just fine. Indifference can cause us to think and act the way we do sometimes. It's an easy trap to fall into, even though the Bible advises us "not to grow weary in doing good."

With churches closing and new people moving into our neighborhoods, those of us who remember "how things used to be" need to step up and be examples of what "love thy

neighbor" looks like. We need to close the gap of division with a common purpose. We need to bring back unity! Our job is to hold onto our history as something to be honored, and not lose ourselves when darkness falls.

All in all, I think we need to take advantage of these times in order to help make us better people. As the world seems to be on pause, so to speak, we need to use this time well.

I would encourage you to continue writing in terms of Biblical principles. We don't have a problem with boldly proclaiming our political views, so let us not be afraid to act and speak boldly regarding our spiritual views.

Be a light, everyone, and may God bless the work of your hands. ♦

Preparing & Filing 2020 Tax Returns?

WE CAN HELP!

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), in cooperation with the IRS, will once again be assisting individual taxpayers with filing their federal and state tax returns online. There is no charge for this service, which will be offered every Saturday - beginning Feb. 6, and ending on Saturday, Apr. 14. Taxpayers will need to make appointments in advance, and then come to:

**BGC Community Activity Center
Lower Level
113 North Pacific Avenue
Garfield (15224)**

The earliest appointment we offer is at 12:30 and the last at 4:30 p.m. We do not assist business filers or individuals who have rental income or numerous capital gains' transactions to report. City residents will also be able to receive help in filing their city tax returns. All taxpayers will need to have photo ID's and proof of their Social Security number. Call either Pamela Schon (412-441-6950, ext. 110) or Rick Swartz (412-441-6950, ext. 111) at the BGC to schedule an appointment.



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Valley View Church members support local food drive

BELOW: Valley View congregants brave the cold, and limited parking spaces, to support an East End food drive. Photo by Joey Kennedy.



BELOW: A simple December snowfall cannot stop the dedicated team at Valley View Church in Garfield. Photo by Joey Kennedy.



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PENN AVENUE PHASE 2 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

PROJECT PURPOSE & NEEDS

- The purpose of this project is to improve the existing riding surface and to provide a safe transportation facility that accommodate all modes of traffic.
- The project is needed due to poor pavement conditions on Penn Avenue. The road is showing signs of deterioration, which indicates a general need for full reconstruction or more extensive base repairs. The existing pedestrian facilities are deteriorated, and ADA facilities are not in compliance. The existing stormwater catch basins are deteriorating or not functioning properly. The existing traffic signals contribute to congestions and do not adequately serve pedestrians.

PROJECT DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- Provide new infrastructure including concrete pavement, curbs, bump-outs, sidewalk, drainage, and signals to enhance the corridor for all users
- All reconstructed sidewalks and handicap ramps will be designed and replaced to current standards.
- No permanent acquisition of right-of-way is anticipated.

PROJECT DATA

- Pedestrian and bus detours will be implemented by allowing one lane of Penn Avenue to remain open to alleviate traffic congestions.
- Addition of ADA curb ramps and detectable warning surfaces.
- A combination Phase I/III Environmental Site Assessment, and Section 106 studies are currently being conducted for the project area.
- Anticipated Project Schedule:
 - NTP Date - 11/08/2021
 - Completion - 08/11/2023



The Penn Avenue Phase 2 Reconstruction Project involves the reconstruction of Penn Avenue between Evaline Street and Graham Street. The project includes new subgrade and paving on Penn Avenue, drainage improvements, landscape improvements and intersections improvements for the accommodation of all users.



CONTACT INFORMATION

ERIC J. SETZLER, P.E. – CHIEF ENGINEER - CITY OF PITTSBURGH DEPARTMENT OF MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE - ERIC.SETZLER@PITTSBURGHPA.GOV - 412-255-2883

Garfield Jubilee’s YouthBuild Program

Garfield Jubilee Association, Inc. is now recruiting for its YouthBuild Program. Eligible youths must be 16-24 years of age, meet low income requirements, and live in the City of Pittsburgh or Allegheny County. Participants without a high school diploma may complete the necessary GED requirements. Career tracks include opportunities in construction, as well as health care (CNA); the age requirement for this career track is 18-24 years, and participants must have a high school diploma. Information on the YouthBuild Program is available at garfieldjubilee.org. For more info, call program coordinator Dion Jones at 412-665-5206; email DionJones@garfieldjubilee.org or YouthBuildPgh@gmail.com.

February Bulletin Deadline: Friday, Jan. 15th

Download advertising information: bit.ly/bulletin_ad
Download guidelines for stories, photos, and notices: bit.ly/bulletin_news

LOCAL REAL ESTATE BLOTTER

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

Real Estate Sales (for the month of November 2020)

Compiled by Lillian Denhardt, RE/MAX Select Realty

Bloomfield

Christine-Lynne LLC to Phineas Street LLC
916 at 211 Taylor St. for \$100,000.

Enrico & Angela Dimatteo to Jason O'Toole
at 424 Edmond St. for \$190,000.

Enrico & Angela Dimatteo to Silvia Dimatteo
at 412 Pearl St. for \$1.

Gunian Real Estate LP to Hame Shadyside
LLC at 307 S. Aiken Ave. for \$1,500,000.

Jack M Becraft to Nicholas C Kozlowski at
4817 Sciota St. for \$237,000.

Joseph G & Elizabeth A Posteraro to Pacific
Rental LLC at 4812 Liberty Ave. for \$358,900.

Sean Lehr-Nuth to Daniel A Patel at 435
Taylor St. for \$193,000.

Friendship

David A Williams to Natalie Yanko at
118-120 Stratford Ave. for \$380,000.

Garfield

Shirley & Nonie Buckner to Pittsburgh Street
LP at 209 N. Fairmount St. for \$140,000.

Yvette R Gant to P D Investments LLC at 512
N. Aiken Ave. for \$65,000.

East Liberty

Arlene Coles to Jonathan Allen Harchick at
332 Enright Ct for \$72,997.

David Huggins & Mary Jo Daines to Kimmer
L Graham at 723 N. Beatty St. for \$325,000.

East Liberty Development Incorporated to
Monica George at 515 N. Beatty St. for
\$132,000.

Eldevco Associates to Mcknight Maystern
LLC at 5947 Penn Ave. for \$8,325,000.

Lorraine Mungo to Paris M Coles at 5639
Rural St. for \$150,000.

Margie & John Eva Hayes to R-Stock Global
Inc at 366 Enright Ct. for \$70,000.

Morgan Virginia to Geb Investment Partners
LLC at 725 Mellon St. for \$180,000.

Traffic Effect LLC to Ethan Jaffe Silverman at
735 N. Saint Clair St. for \$700,000.

Lawrenceville

360 Ocular LLC to Isaac Siebach Hartung at
324 Service Way for \$293,000.

393 40th LLC to Pravesh K & Kothari at 393
40th St. for \$420,393.

39th Street Associates LLC to Gabriel P Isaac-
son at 208 39th St. for \$554,500.

5515 Butler Street Development LP to Jacen
F Sherman at 139 55th St. for \$552,995.

5515 Butler Street Development LP to Tricia
Egry at 135 55th St. for \$449,700.

Adam Koberna to Deema Abdallah at 5265
Carnegie St. for \$485,000.

Andrew D Rape to Alex W Blystone at 5208

Carnegie St. for \$265,000.

Brian L & Laura C Greenert to Kimberley &
Nunn at 149 Home St. for \$375,000.

Carolyn & Don Williams to Kara Rose Pauly
at 159 1/2 42nd St. for \$295,000.

Chan Li to Matthew J Simpson at 346 39th St.
for \$180,000.

Drew Donegan to Daniel Vargo at 341 42nd
St. for \$345,000.

Edward A & Regina Novak to Kathleen M
Brogan at 175 38th St. for \$1.

Eileen Miner to Cullen Capital LLC at 5224
Dresden Way for \$79,000.

Georgette Farah to John Michael Haig
Mcculloch at 150 44th St. for \$380,000.

Harry M Vansach to Hubpitch LLC at 295
Main St. for \$215,000.

Helen McMullen to Bradley Lewis at 5315
Keystone St. for \$378,500.

Jakob Marsico to Andrew P & Erica J Godish
at 306 44th St. for \$312,500.

James A Fici & Patricia S Fici Revocable
Living Trust to Emad Abdelnaby at 185
Almond Way for \$307,500.

John G Balsamico to Celia W Rutt Revocable
Trust at 246 42nd St. for \$725,000.

Kate Coddington to Danielle Phifer at 5231
Poe Way for \$128,000.

Lauren Brandes to Robert & Nicole Klasmier
at 4522 Plummer St. for \$390,000.

Lawrenceville Corporation to Rafael Victor
Migoyo at 184 34th St. for \$127,500.

Lois M Boyle to 1301 Grandview I LLC at 276
38th St. for \$140,000.

Nesby LLC to Christopher B Carson at 215
38th St. for \$730,000.

Richard & Paula Misutka to Rp2All LLC at
5143 Carnegie St. for \$157,000.

Robert M & Jacqueline B Fazio to Kyle Sean
O'Rourke at 3944 Mintwood St. for \$239,000.

Robert S & Dorothy Grady to Flynn
Construction Management-General

Contracting Inc at 3443 Denny St. for
\$150,000.

Three Rivers LP to Emad Abdelnaby at 144
43rd 1/2 St. for \$319,000.

William F Briston to Benjamin J Briston at
232 Fisk St. for \$225,000.

Stanton Heights

Aaron Todaro to Robert J Geisler at 6210
Sawyer St. for \$165,000.

Daniel J Loheyde to Stacy A Fitzsimmons at
1055 Premier St. for \$230,000.

Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation to
Miriam Weiss at 5502 Camelia St. for
\$160,000.

Jo C Conrad to Daniel J Broughton at 7236
Butler St. for \$165,000.

Kyle Siler Evans to Kieran M Coleman at 957
Brintell St. for \$293,000.

Matthew J Stansfield to Emory Revocable
Trust at 4701 Stanton Ave. for \$314,900.

Peter A & Audrey L Carricato to Ean Disilvio
at 6020 Sawyer St. for \$225,000.

Rita Margaret Moan to Lu Bai at 5534
Camelia St. for \$75,000.

The Firefighter Benefit Trust to Shane J
Regel at 919 Brintell St. for \$288,000.

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 your neighborhood, email Lillian at lillian@agent-lillian.com or call 412-335-6068. ♦

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Book review: local author James Wudarczyk's 'Allegheny Cemetery Stories'

By Tom Powers *Lawrenceville Historical Society*

Lawrenceville - To anyone who has taken a walking tour in one of Pittsburgh's largest neighborhoods, Lawrenceville Historical Society board member and researcher James Wudarczyk is a very familiar local guide.

Those who have joined him on the Allegheny Arsenal tour, or his tours of Lawrenceville's three wards, can attest to Wudarczyk's vast knowledge of the area. Now, his popular walking tour of Pittsburgh's largest cemetery is available in book form.

Allegheny Cemetery Stories is a collection of Wudarczyk's knowledge [in short story form] fit to delight any reader - whether or not they have walked along with him. The publication contains 250 pages; 24 chapters highlight the eventful biographies of some of the most important people buried in Lawrenceville's hallowed grounds.

Incorporated in 1844, Allegheny Cemetery encompasses 300 acres of serene beauty, a showcase of classical architecture reflective of ancient Roman, Grecian, Egyptian, and Byzantine civilizations, and numerous stories of prominent Pittsburghers.

This is Wudarczyk's seventh book that explores and documents the rich history of Lawrenceville and its institutions. In addition, he has written two other books relating to the American Civil War and is a frequent contributor of articles and reviews to various publications and websites. This is the third contemporary work exploring the rich heritage of Allegheny Cemetery.

Walter Kidney's *Allegheny Cemetery: A Romantic Landscape*, published by the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation in 1990, emphasized the monuments of the grounds. Then in 2016, Lisa Speranza and Nancy Foley wrote *Images of America: Allegheny Cemetery* for Arcadia Press.

While this latest study includes a number of color photographs, what differentiates *Allegheny Cemetery Stories* from these earlier works is the emphasis on the stories behind the stones. The book explores the early history of the park's Memorial Day services and includes biographies of Emil Winter, Civil War generals, Lillian Russell, Joshua Barney, and others who shaped the national and local landscape; reference sources accompany each chapter.

Interested readers may purchase *Allegheny Cemetery Stories* by sending \$13.00 (plus \$3.00 postage) to James Wudarczyk / 417 Fisk St. / Pittsburgh, PA / 15224. ♦

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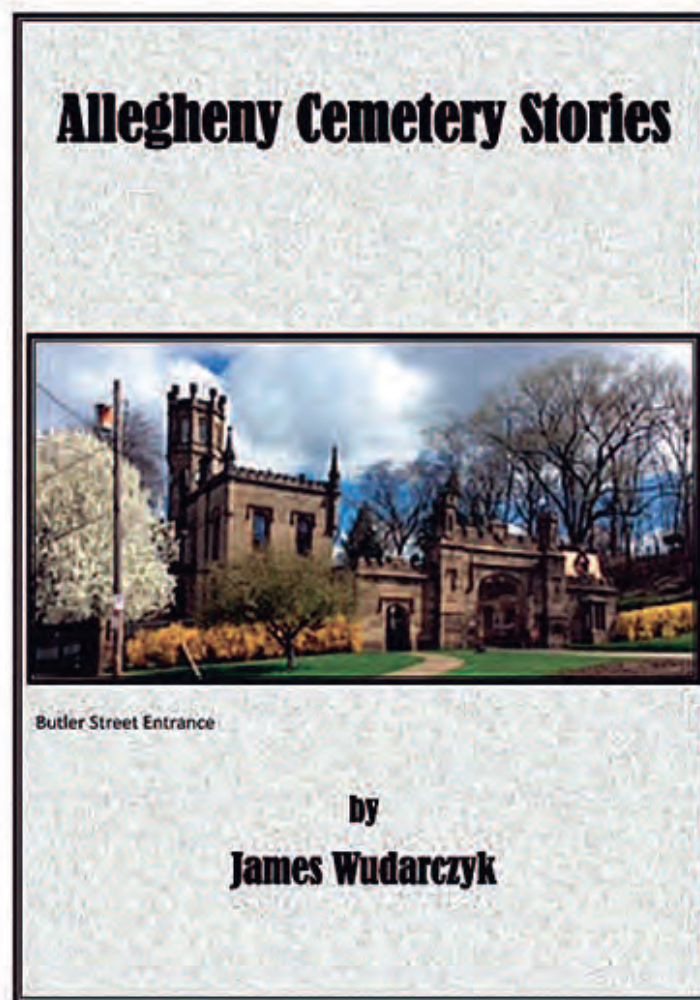
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ABOVE: The latest release from local author James Wudarczyk, a veritable oracle of Lawrenceville history, unpacks the stories of Allegheny Cemetery. Image courtesy of Tom Powers.

RENTER/HOMEOWNER RELIEF

Do you need help understanding which local programs could help your family survive, and maybe even thrive, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic?

No matter where you reside, you should apply for benefits, most of which you probably already deserve. To connect with a local navigator, please call 412-534-6600; register for assistance at RentHelpPGH.org.

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