Community Groups and Politicians Engage West Penn Allegheny on Hospital Consolidation Plans

By Paula Martinac  The Bulletin

When West Penn Allegheny Health System (WPAHS) announced major changes on June 29, local community leaders sprang into action. Stakeholders from Bloomfield, Lawrenceville, and Garfield are now grappling with the potential economic damage to the East End and its residents and the dwindling health-care options of community members.

Among the consolidation plans announced by WPAHS are the closing of the West Penn emergency room in January 2011 (the ER is still open for business at the current time) and eventual lay-offs of approximately 1,500 employees.

WPAHS has set up a Career Services Center for West Penn employees, offering assistance with applying for unemployment and finding other positions within the system and at other health-care facilities.

On July 7, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) and the Bloomfield Citizens Council (BCC) convened separate meetings on the West Penn issue. In attendance at the BGC’s meeting were representatives from various East End community groups and key public officials, including Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, County Executive Dan Onorato, U.S. Rep. Mike Doyle, City Councilman Patrick Dowd, County Council President Rick Fitzgerald, and State Representatives Joseph Preston and Dom Costa. “These are the minds that we need,” commented Ben Forman of the Bloomfield Development Corporation about the roomful of heavy-hitters.

“We’ve got to get creative.”

Aggie Brose, deputy director of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, opened the BGC meeting by announcing that she had resigned from the board of the West Penn Hospital Foundation on July 6, “because it’s time for me to be an advocate for my community.” She observed that the community has “lived with rumors [about West Penn] for over three years and we don’t want to live with rumors moving forward.”

State Commits Support to East End Rental Housing Developments

By Joe Reuben  The Bulletin

Developments in two East End neighborhoods that would mean the construction of over more than rental townhomes in 2011 drew one step closer to realization with the recent announcement by a state agency that it will commit federal tax credits to assist with the financing of the projects.

All three will offer two-, three-, and four-bedroom units to individuals or families whose annual incomes fall below $35,000. Two of the developments will be in Garfield, and the third in East Liberty. Each will benefit from the sale of tax credits to private investors, who will, in turn, put their own funds into the projects as equity. This greatly reduces the amount of debt the developments must carry, thus allowing rents to be scaled to persons of working-class means, according to Rick Swartz, executive director of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC).

The BGC will be a partner in one of the developments, which entails the construction of 49 townhomes on scattered sites in an area of Garfield bounded by N. Mathilda Street on the west, Dearborn Street on the south, N. Atlantic Avenue on the east, and Kincaid Street on the north. The commitment by the PA Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) is a critical boost to the project, but funds must also come from other sources, Swartz cautioned. “This is not 100 percent financing by any means,” he said, “and it will leave the BGC and our partner, S & A Homes of State College, Pa., with the task of finding another $3 million or so in other funding.”

Swartz confirmed that a neighborhood meeting to review what the development entails will have to be held in the near future. “While the project will be consistent with the new housing and land-use plan for Garfield, we still want to neighbors to understand details about the project, including future management plans for the houses,” he told The Bulletin.

A second development of 40 townhomes along Columbo Street in Garfield was approved by PHFA for an allocation of tax credits. This will allow planning for Phase III of the replacement of the former public housing project, once known as Garfield Heights, to move forward. KBK Enterprises of Columbus, Ohio, and the city Housing Authority partnered in the construction and leasing of 90 rental townhomes under Phase I of what they call Garfield Commons. They currently have 45 townhomes under construction as Phase II of the project.
New Commander Meets BGC Staff

By Paula Martinac
The Bulletin

The new commander of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police’s Zone 5, Timothy O’Connor, visited the offices of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation on June 29 to get acquainted with the staff and the neighborhood. The 29-year veteran of the police force – who has been with Zone 5 overseeing the night patrol for a little over year – sat down with Aggie Brose, the BGC’s deputy director (see photo at right), and other BGC staff to talk about public safety issues in this part of Zone 5.

In the meeting, the commander noted one of the big challenges of his new job: Zone 5 currently has fewer than 100 officers to cover a large area with a higher incidence of reported crimes than the city overall. Responding to 911 calls, he said, “leaves less time for quality-of-life issues,” such as pro-active park-and-walks to deter antisocial behavior. But he said he hopes to add some officers from a new recruit class and a few high-visibility canine officers to discourage the “marauding” that has recently plagued Friendship and Penn Avenue, in particular.

Commander O’Connor further noted that, in the past few months, Zone 5 police officers have picked up seven young people specifically from the Garfield-East Liberty area and taken them to the City Curfew Center in Oakland. The likelihood of being brought in for curfew violations appears to be keeping a lot of young people off the streets late at night, he observed, because “there haven’t been the numbers out. They know the police will snatch them, and word gets around.”

The commander was invited to take part in the monthly meetings of the Public Safety Task Force, which is convened by the BGC and draws together public officials, police representatives, and community leaders to address public safety concerns in the community. O’Connor vowed to work with the Task Force on the goal of mounting three security cameras in Garfield to monitor hotspots, especially along Penn Avenue.

NEXT PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE MEETING
Wednesday, August 11, 2010
4:00 p.m.
Community Activity Center
113 North Pacific Avenue, Garfield

The first 15 minutes of the meeting are open to residents who wish to bring specific public safety issues to the attention of the committee.

Drilling for Natural Gas in the Marcellus Shale
What’s It All About and What Can We Do?

In Pittsburgh, gas drilling in the Marcellus shale has recently become big news. Why?

1. It’s in our backyard. The Marcellus shale is a region of natural gas reserves that extends through much of Pennsylvania. To date, drilling has occurred in rural areas, but now drillers are turning their attention to urban areas.

2. Money. Gas in the Marcellus range is estimated to be worth 3 trillion dollars.

3. “Landmen,” who try to get residents to sign leases allowing gas drilling, have been making the rounds in Lawrenceville, where at least 60 drilling leases have already been signed. Over the last two years, millions of gas industry dollars have been appearing in our state’s legislators’ campaign coffers.

4. Danger. Gas wells in Clearfield and Tioga counties, as well as in Moundsville, West Virginia, had major accidents in June. One explosion caused toxic drilling fluid to spew 75 feet into the air for 16 hours. Imagine such an explosion within Pittsburgh’s densely populated neighborhoods.

What can we do about it?

Get the facts. The gas industry tells us that they’ve been drilling for decades. What they’re not telling us:

Today’s gas drilling must go deeper than ever before, fracturing shale 7,000 to 8,000 feet underground. (A mile is 5,280 feet).

A new process called “fracking” is used to extract the natural gas. “Fracking” takes millions of gallons of our clean water and mixes it with sand and dangerous chemicals. This mixture is forced into the well under much higher pressure than ever used before.

First the well is drilled down vertically to a depth of at least 7,000 feet. From this main well it’s drilled horizontally in several directions. It winds up looking like an underground spider of gas lines that can extend up to a mile. A well on the banks of the Allegheny could easily reach into most of residential Lawrenceville.

Currently, there are few federal or state protections regulating the gas industry’s use of our land, water and air. The gas industry has been spending millions to lobby our state representatives and senators to keep them from regulating and taxing natural gas. Most Pennsylvania cities have little recourse to limit drilling.

What can you, as a resident, do?

Talk to a lawyer before signing a lease. Landmen are not there to protect you or do you a favor. They’re working on behalf of a multi-trillion-dollar industry.

City Council plans to hold a public meeting on the issue, most likely in September. Call Councilwoman Maria Inman’s office for the details: 412-255-2140.

Ask the gubernatorial candidates for their stance on urban gas drilling. As of May 2010, Tom Corbett’s campaign received $361,207 from the gas industry, and Dan Onorato’s received $59,300.

Gloria Forouzan
Bulletin Contributor
412-583-8757 or gtforouzan@gmail.com
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Pittsburgh (HFHGP), an affiliate of the international nonprofit ministry that builds and renovates houses all over the world, is coming to Garfield. The Pittsburgh affiliate announced it will build four new houses on lots secured by the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation on Kincaid and N. Evaline Streets.

Maggie Withrow, executive director of HFHGP, told The Bulletin that the organization had originally intended to build four new houses in the Hill District, after receiving a Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP1) grant of $550,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Since 1986, HFHGP has built 68 homes across most of Allegheny County, including four in East Liberty on North St. Clair and Rippey Streets.

“We spent many months, but couldn’t find suitable sites [in the Hill District],” she says, noting that many old mines remain in that neighborhood, and they are too costly to fill in. Rob Stephany, executive director of the Urban Redevelopment Authority, suggested that HFHGP consider lots in Garfield instead, and a partnership with the BGC was born.

“I knew Aggie Brose’s reputation, so I was thrilled to work with the BGC,” says Ms. Withrow. “Sitting in Aggie’s car, driving around looking at sites…she lived up to her reputation. Other groups know their streets, but Aggie actually knows the people.”

The first Garfield house, designed by Jim Sheehan of the Southside firm Renaissance 3 Architects, will be built at the corner of North Evaline and Kincaid Streets, and will have three or four bedrooms. The design will follow a basic Habitat for Humanity style, with modifications worked out in consultation with the BGC. For example, although Habitat houses do not usually have porches, the Evaline house will have a wraparound porch to make it contextual with the neighborhood. On some projects, Ms. Withrow observes, they have also received donations that allowed for “extras,” like a grant from Dominion Foundation for landscaping or materials from Redland Brick Company to brick a house’s façade.

Though Ms. Withrow says she does not yet have a firm construction timetable for the Evaline house, “I’m hoping the family will be home for the holidays.” The family selected by the HFHGP board is headed by Roxanne Cole, a single mother of five who works as an addiction counselor at Pennsylvania Organization for Women in Early Recovery (POWER) Connection and is studying for her MSW. As a condition of ownership, Ms. Cole will put 350 hours of “sweat equity” into building her residence and other Habitat homes. She will also be responsible for repaying a 30-year, interest-free mortgage to Habitat’s Fund for Humanity, which “recycles” mortgage payments to build more Habitat homes.

Ms. Withrow says that HFHGP relies heavily on teams of volunteer laborers who work with a paid construction manager and professional subcontractors, performing jobs like installing insulation. She herself started out as a volunteer in Nashville in 1993, on an all-women building project, and learned carpentry skills that she still uses. “It gives you a good feeling to go to a neighborhood and see the houses you helped build,” she points out. “It makes you think, ‘I did that.’”
**SHOWCASE OF THE MONTH**

**Good Morning, Sunshine**
**Bloomfield House Brings Splash of Color to Neighborhood**

This month, we congratulate Audrey Malek, owner of 4790 Cypress Street in Bloomfield. Ms. Malek has resided at this location since 2007.

The BGC staff visited the site and knew instantly why the property was nominated as showcase of the month – the property seems to sing out, “Good Morning, Sunshine,” and puts a smile on your face. This two-story, old-style, single-family frame structure is painted bright yellow with new white windows; the front door and gleaming white fence are adorned with colorful flowers. Plants hang from the awning over the front door, and large planters grace the sidewalk. Small statues in the front window send a message of love and peace to the rest of street.

When the BGC contacted Ms. Malek to inform her that her house had been nominated as Showcase of the Month, she said, “I think it’s cool.” She informed the BGC staff that when she was growing up, all houses seemed to be red or green. The house on Cypress Street, she said, was a dull green when she bought it, with no fence.

Because she loves happy, bright colors, she dared to be different and purchased paint in a shade called “Happily Ever After” – a dazzling, sunny yellow. Ms. Malek also installed new white windows and ordered shutters to match. Friends teased her that she should get black shutters instead, so her house would be a “Steelers’s house.”

In addition to Ms. Malek’s property, the entire block of Cypress is lined with other showcases that suggest the neighbors there live in respect of each other, maintaining their homes beautifully.

Thank you, Ms. Malek, for choosing Bloomfield as your home and bringing a little happiness into the neighborhood with a vibrant splash of color.
Foreclosure is a sad, all-too-common occurrence that has a profound effect on both individual families and entire neighborhoods. Owners who lose their homes due to a financial crisis may feel humiliated and overwhelmed, while their neighbors' morale slips as house after house on a block becomes abandoned. Perhaps the saddest part of foreclosures, however, is that so many could have been avoided if the homeowners knew where to turn for help.

A homeowner who misses three mortgage payments and receives a foreclosure notice in the mail from the lender will often retreat, mistakenly believing that it's over, and the writing is on the wall. When lenders move to foreclose, the information goes public, and a homeowner may be inundated with mail from lawyers and for-profit foreclosure-rescue companies offering to assist them through the process. Embarrassed and depressed, they stop opening their mail and answering phone calls.

Randi Lowe, Client Relations Manager at Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG), says she advises homeowners first of all to communicate with their lenders. "A loan modification may be possible," she told The Bulletin. "Lenders are trying to work with people. It's in their best interest to get income from these properties," not to have them sit vacant and deteriorate.

She also notes several programs available to homeowners in foreclosure that, unfortunately, too few are using. The first vital piece of mail that homeowners get is an Act 91 notification of the Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP). This state-sponsored program originated in the city in 1983 when the mills began closing, to help prevent people from losing their homes. HEMAP is a loan and not a grant; it will have to be paid back, but the Pa. Housing and Finance Agency (PHFA) will work with a borrower in setting up the payment and review it on an annual basis for any adjustments.

Sadly, only 19 percent of eligible homeowners even fill out and return the form. "Don't put it aside; apply. If the application is approved, you will be contacted by PHFA, and they will provide further instructions and set up a loan closing."

Allegheny County instituted a program last year to help besieged homeowners, but only a fourth of those eligible are enlisting this option. The Mortgage Assistance Program, or "Save Your Home," is a Court of Common Pleas initiative that puts a 90-day stay on Sheriff's sale proceedings if homeowners agree to work directly with a housing counselor and the lender. To be eligible, your foreclosure proceedings must have begun since January 2009, and you must live in the property as your primary residence.

In addition, the Allegheny County Sheriff's Office website (sheriffalleghenycounty.com/realestate/fore_ass t.html) lists the many local nonprofits that work with homeowners free of charge to try to resolve foreclosure problems, including NeighborWorks Western Pa. (see related listing on page 10), Garfield Jubilee Association, PCRG, and ACTION-Housing Inc.

Making Home Affordable, a federal initiative commonly called the Obama Plan, is another tool that can buy a homeowner time. This government program provides opportunities to homeowners in foreclosure to refinance or modify their mortgages, or to short-sell if they can no longer afford the costs of homeownership. More information is available at makinghomeaffordable.gov.

Ms. Lowe recommends applying for all of these programs. "Don't hide. Apply for everything. Show up, and you may be able to save your home," she says. "The damage foreclosures cause to neighborhoods is incalculable. A block may feel the effects 10, 20 or 30 years into the future. Foreclosure is a downward spiral."

She also reminds homeowners that a mortgage is a contract and that no matter what happens in their lives, "you are not excused from repaying the money you borrowed."

By Aggie Brose
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Research assistance by Paula Martinac
Members of East End Works, a coalition aimed at developing the workforce of Pittsburgh’s East End neighborhoods, met with officials at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC on July 12 to discuss ways that the hospital and the community can partner on issues such as employment opportunities for residents and business development of the East End. Representatives of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center, Lawrenceville United, Wireless Neighborhoods, Bloomfield Development Corporation, Pittsburgh Community Services, YMCA, Oakland Job Links, and CareerLink met with President and CEO Chris Gessner, Vice President Eric Hess, and Vice President Rhonda Larimore, to introduce the Children’s Hospital leadership to the development and employment-related issues facing the region. “We’re very interested in being good neighbors,” Mr. Gessner told the groups. He added his commitment to finding “good employees and staff. If we get the right people in the door, we know they’ll stay.”

What do a local radio station, an Asian fusion restaurant, and the City of Pittsburgh have in common? Any other time of year the simple answer would be “nothing.” But for six weeks this summer, these workplaces, along with dozens of others throughout Pittsburgh, are hosting youth interns employed with the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation’s (BGC) Summer Youth Employment Program.

Devonte Williams, a 17-year-old senior-to-be at Pittsburgh Peabody High School, is currently an intern with KQV Newsradio. A week into his position, Devonte was not only carrying out traditional intern tasks like filing and copying, but had the opportunity to research stories and even go out into the field.

McKinley Sandling, a 21-year-old recent graduate of culinary school, is working at Plum Pan Asian Kitchen in East Liberty. His time so far as an intern has given him hands-on experience with customer service, dining room management, and the workings of a kitchen, all important lessons for anyone pursuing a future in running a restaurant.

Phillip Allen, a 17-year-old Pittsburgh Schenley High School student, landed a spot with the City of Pittsburgh’s Emergency Medical Service. With aspirations of eventually becoming a doctor, Phillip has gotten the chance to witness and take part in running a fast-paced medical office on a daily basis.

These are just a few of the opportunities that the youths working with the BGC have received. Worksites ranging from the Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild and Prism Stained Glass to the Office of City Councilman Lavelle and the Coro Center for Civic Leadership represent how diverse these youths’ experiences are this summer. In total, the BGC has nearly 140 young people ages 14 to 21 at 74 different worksites throughout the city.

The BGC’s program is part of the broader Pittsburgh Summer Youth Employment Program, which is funded and coordinated by the City of Pittsburgh’s Partnership. The focus of the program is twofold: to give youths their first exposure to the workplace, while earning a paycheck; and to help them evaluate career paths of interest to them. Every participant goes through Jump Start Success, a job-readiness curriculum prepared by YouthWorks, Inc. that provides interactive instruction on things like workplace etiquette, money management, interview skills, resume building, and much more.

Throughout the entire process, the youths are directly engaged by Summer Internship Coordinators employed by the BGC who ensure that all participants are receiving individual attention and having a safe and enriching work experience. August 13th is the last day of the program, but these young interns still have a good deal of learning ahead of them. For many, this summer will not just be a great memory, but the first step in a career that not only pays the bills but employs their skills and excites their passions.

THE BULLETIN SURVEY

Thanks to everyone who participated in The Bulletin’s 35th anniversary survey, which ran in the June edition. Approximately 140 people returned their surveys in the mail or answered the questions online or via email. Our two lucky gift bag winners will be notified by phone and then announced in the September issue, along with some of the findings of the survey. Check back next issue for the results!
Dogs Get Their Day in Lawrenceville

After months of research and consultation with public agencies and civic groups, a community proposal for a fully enclosed dog park in Lawrenceville is complete.

This proposal for an enclosed, off-leash dog run under the 40th Street Bridge in Lawrenceville builds on existing community initiatives to increase liveability in the neighborhood. It aims to create a much-needed new type of public space that addresses two current neighborhood weaknesses: A lack of legal recreational space for dogs and their owners, and limited riverfront access.

The dog park will be accessible and centrally located within Lawrenceville, and will include a separate section for small dogs and large dogs. A stewardship committee made up of local residents will monitor and fundraise to maintain the dog park in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh Department of Parks & Recreation and Department of Public Works.

The Lawrenceville dog park effort is dedicated to the memory of Jay Bernard, a Lawrenceville resident, entrepreneur, artist and abandoned-dog advocate whose big heart and countless contributions to his community continue to inspire. Learn more about the park at LawrencevilleDogPark.org.

Celebrate Dance Icon Gene Kelly’s Birthday

The doors of the Kelly Strayhorn Theater (KST) will open to the community for a free event celebrating the life and talent of one of its namesakes, Pittsburgh’s own Gene Kelly. The Gene Kelly Birthday Party will be held on Saturday, August 21, from 2 to 5 p.m. at 5941 Penn Avenue, East Liberty. Birthday cake will served. Admission is free and no reservations are needed.

A Gene Kelly film, Cover Girl (1944), featuring the dance and film icon with Rita Hayworth, will be shown at 3 p.m. with an admission of just $2. Free tours of the theater will provide background on the history of the former Regent Theatre, a film house that opened in 1914. Today, the Kelly Strayhorn Theater produces arts programming, and provides a venue for local organizations’ events.

The afternoon celebration will feature a handmade paper workshop for all ages led by East Liberty artist Erika Johnson, beginning at 2 p.m. Her installation, “uproot,” comprised of handmade, recycled paper circles, is on display in the theater lobby. Those participating will make their own circles and contribute to the completion of the installation.

Gene Kelly and his family lived in the East Liberty area, where his mother owned a dance studio. Kelly was born on August 23, 1912, and passed away in 1996. A Pitt graduate, he went on to become a film legend. The Kelly Strayhorn is named for Kelly and Pittsburgh jazz great Billy Strayhorn, whose birthday the KST celebrates with “Suite Life,” this year on Saturday, November 27.

For details on the Gene Kelly Birthday Party and the Kelly Strayhorn, visit www.kelly-strayhorn.org or call 412-363-3000.

Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center Happenings

Informational sessions will be held at the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC), 5321 Penn Avenue in Garfield, for both the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) and Bidwell Training Center. CCAC sessions on health, accounting, welding, HVAC, EMT, and other careers will be held August 13 at 10 a.m. Bidwell Training Center will present an information session on chemical lab, horticulture, culinary arts, medical, and office technology on August 20 at 11 a.m.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is available for appointments on August 9 and 23. The office serves those with disabilities (physical, mental or emotional) that create a barrier to finding employment. A representative from the office will provide an hour intake session to determine each individual’s needs, interests, aptitudes, education and work experience to best assist them in an employment search.

NeighborWorks Western Pa. will offer one-on-one counseling sessions every Tuesday in August from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to help individuals and families with financial counseling, homebuyer education, and affordable loans needed to improve and keep their homes.

To register for these services, please call ENEC at 412-362-8580.

Green Energy Project at JobCorps Center Gets a Lift from ARRA

More than 60 Pittsburgh Job Corps Center students received valuable hands-on training during the construction of a 62-foot wind turbine that will provide clean power for the center. Facilities Maintenance students built forms and poured the concrete for its 8-foot hexagonal base, while Advanced Manufacturing students installed the reinforcement bars. The Electrical students learned to set up all of the turbine’s electrical wiring. The wind turbine will continue to serve as an ongoing training tool, with Electrical students closely monitoring its energy usage over time. The goal is to have the wind turbine and the center’s photovoltaic solar panels, both projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), produce more energy than what is consumed by the greenhouse on campus. The turbine currently generates 2,400 watts of energy with 20 mph winds. To learn more about Job Corps, call 800-733-JOBS or visit www.jobcorps.gov.
Three Rivers Youth Offers “A Place Called Hope”

This year, Three Rivers Youth celebrated its 130th anniversary at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens. There they paid tribute to past honorees by inducting them into the Nellie Leadership Hall of Fame.

In 1880, Reverend Fulton, a white man, spotted a 4-year-old African-American girl by the name of Nellie Grant wandering the streets of the North Side of Pittsburgh (then called Allegheny City) on a rainy day. At that time, there were no homes for African-American homeless people. Reverend Fulton did what he thought best, and built what became known as the Home for Colored Children. It eventually grew into Three Rivers Youth, which is proud to be the oldest provider of services to abused and neglected youth in Western Pennsylvania.

Three Rivers Youth's newest office and program site is located in East Liberty at 6117 Broad Street. As I sat down to talk with President and CEO Peggy B. Harris, she told me all about the organization and how she got started working with them. “I like to say that this field chose me,” she said.

Her interests were originally focused on writing, but when she finished her schooling, she took on a job working with the FBI in Human Resources. While there, she served on numerous boards and took on various volunteer experiences. In the mid-1980s, she began working in the nonprofit sector, where she has been for 27 years. In 1994, she started working with troubled youth and in 2000, joined Three Rivers Youth to become President and CEO.

According to Ms. Harris, Three Rivers Youth is all about “preserving and uniting families, combating homelessness and building life skills for at-risk youth.” While listening to Ms. Harris speak, I could tell that is exactly what this place is all about. It offers five group homes, one emergency shelter, outreach and drop-in center/residential services for homeless and runaway youth, a transitional living program, the City Curfew Center, and crisis and non-crisis home-based family counseling. Each of its residential sites provides shelter and living quarters for at-risk youths who are runaways, homeless, or abused, and are referred by the county’s Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF). A few of the programs offer financial assistance and skills development so older youths are able to transition into adult independence.

All of these services are funded through contracts with CYF, CYF Philadelphia, the United Way, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, foundations and donations. The staff is fully committed to helping at-risk youths. Ms. Harris believes that “when you give your best, you are making it so that others can have the best.” And that is what the people at Three Rivers Youth want for the children. The organization values the staff through what is called an incentive program. Once staff have completed a minimum employment period, they receive a recognition package, including money, a plaque, and two to three additional days of vacation.

Three Rivers Youth has been a safe place for 130 years, where children in Pittsburgh can come for help and guidance. To contact Three Rivers Youth, call 412-441-5020 or visit www.threeriversyouth.org.

Billie Patterson graduated from Pittsburgh Peabody High School in 2010 and will continue her education at Cheyney University in Philadelphia.

Lawrenceville Vision Care, P.C.

Metzger & Associates

By Billie Patterson

Wireless Neighborhoods

Lawrenceville Hall Apartments

Lawrenceville Vision Care, P.C.

Lawrenceville Hall Apartments

Offering These Amenities:

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A meat-packing house and a community theater have found new uses as daycare centers, adding to the array of early childcare facilities in the Bloomfield, Friendship and Garfield communities. (See box below for additional options.)

Both Kidsville Daycare at 113 South Aiken Avenue and Community Preschool and Nursery at 4809 Penn Avenue opened their doors within the past year and weathered the storm of the 2010 state budget deadlock that made Child Care Information Services (CCIS) funds unavailable.

Kidsville Daycare, owned by the Stuckeys, a Garfield family, now has 23 children enrolled. Originally, the Stuckeys intended to include both older adult and youth daycare into their services, "but the child daycare picked up faster," says Tiffany Coffee Stuckey, director of the center. The long-range plan, she says, is to eventually have a variety of centers around the city, caring for both seniors and youngsters.

The building, which used to house a meat-packing facility, was completely renovated to accommodate the daycare program. Though it looks dark from the outside, the interior space is bright and spacious, decked out in vibrant colors with a lot of inviting toys and play equipment available. Kidsville accepts children as young as 6 weeks; infants are cared for in a separate "Baby Room."

With five staff and two interns, Kidsville offers a jam-packed day for their charges in two separate sessions: a day shift from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., and a night shift from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. (the night session is slightly more expensive).

Activities include free play, educational videos, phonics, puppet shows, physical exercise and dress-up time. For school-age children up to 12 years old, Kidsville also runs an after-school program, where students can get homework help. The center provides two meals and two snacks to each enrolled child, with Ms. Coffee Stuckey preparing all the meals herself.

"I wear very many hats," she quips. "My two babies come here, too, and I know what kids like." In her time away from the center, she is working toward a master's degree in early childhood education.

Down Penn Avenue near Allegheny Cemetery, Community Preschool and Nursery is part of a franchise, with five locations throughout the greater Pittsburgh area. The building, which used to house a small, dark community theater, has been magically transformed into a bright, airy, and colorful space, with separate rooms for different age groups.

A full day of activities includes everything from free play to arts and crafts to flash cards, and children as young as 2 years old are introduced to computer games. HeadStart comes in every six weeks and works with the staff and children. In pleasant weather, one of the staff members wheels out what Briana Jackson, director of the center, jokingly refers to as "our Cadillac stroller" - a big, sturdy, covered stroller that can accommodate four toddlers for outdoor walks. Children receive three hot meals, prepared at the company’s McKees Rocks facility and driven in daily.

Community Preschool has had a slower start than Kidsville (the day The Bulletin visited there were only two children present), but Ms. Jackson says she expects business to pick up as parents - particularly employees at nearby Children’s Hospital - find out about their services; the maximum capacity is 50 children. The center is open daily from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., with weekly rates determined by income.

To contact Kidsville, call 412-441-6249 or visit www.kidsvilledaycare.com. To reach Community Preschool and Nursery, call 412-441-2393.
Free Help with Foreclosures

Pittsburgh-area residents who are scared, embarrassed or concerned about losing their homes should call NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania for help. NeighborWorks provides individuals and families with free foreclosure prevention assistance that educates and empowers the client to move forward. Their certified counselors work one-on-one with clients in a private setting and are continually commended for their genuine concern and trustworthiness. The possibility of losing your home can be an overwhelming and frightening experience. Let NeighborWorks help you keep your home. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 412-281-9773.

Community Garden Care

Weekly garden care and tending take place at the Garfield Community Farm every Wednesday from 6 p.m. until dusk (weather permitting), at the farm site, corner of Wicklow and Cornwall Streets in Garfield.

Stanton Heights Yard Sale

Stanton Heights will hold a Neighborhood Yard Sale on August 21st from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. All Stanton Heights residents are invited to participate; sign up by emailing stantonheightspho@gmail.com or call 412-973-9802.

L’ville Little Flea

Visit the Lawrenceville Little Flea this and every Saturday (weather permitting) at the corner of Butler St. and 36th from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Little Flea is a weekly outdoor marketplace featuring a rotating variety of flea, thrift, craft, food and cultural activities. We’re actively seeking vendors, musicians and artists. For more info and to apply, visit lawrencevillelittleflea.blogspot.com or call 412-353-0109.

Summer Family Festival at New Church

East End Ecclesia (E3) is a new multi-cultural, interdenominational, Christian church located at 4905 Butler Street in Lawrenceville. On Saturday August 21, E3 is holding an end of the summer family festival at our church facility on Butler St. The event will begin at 1 p.m. and run until 6:30. There will be many games and activities for the kids and plenty of food, drinks and desserts. Music will be provided by live bands along with a DJ. There will also be a group performing acoustic rock, blues, folk, and classic rock songs by request (with over 400 songs to choose from). This event is free of charge, and everyone is invited. For more information, contact East End Ecclesia at info@eastendecclesia.org, call 412-551-1345, or visit our website at www.eastendecclesia.org.

In Search of Cookie Recipes

Even though we are in the middle of summer, plans for Lawrenceville’s Cookie Tour are coming together. What we need now are recipes and lots of them. If you have a family favorite or a recipe from a cookbook or magazine that you especially like, please share with us. Send your recipes to Dandelions, 4108 Butler St., Pittsburgh, PA 15201. Please include the source of the recipe and any other interesting facts about why it is a favorite. Also, include your name, address and phone number so we can notify you that your recipe will be used in this year’s Cookie Tour. Deadline for submissions is August 31. Contact: 412-683-6488.

August “Unblurred”

With the first Friday of August right around the corner, get ready for Unblurred: First Fridays on Penn. Join the Penn Avenue Arts Initiative and Penn Avenue Artists for our monthly art event on Friday, August 6, for an evening full of great art, great people, great food and great fun! This month’s Unblurred showcases events at TecRex, Awesome Books, Tango with Richard Walters and many more. For a complete schedule visit www.pennaunearts.org or pick up a handbill/map at participating locations. Unblurred is a monthly event that opens the Penn Avenue Arts District (4800-5500 Penn) for exploration by adults and children.

National Night Out in Friendship

Join in for Friendship’s Annual National Night Out on Tuesday, August 3. Host a porch party or visit one! Summer is here, and with the warm weather and backyard barbecues comes the nearly inevitable spike in crime. The best way to prevent crime in our neighborhood is to make our presence known and to have positive relationships with our neighbors. National Night Out is the perfect opportunity to do just that. So, whether you decide to host a party or attend many, please participate in this awareness-raising event. For questions, contact Emily of Friendship Preservation Group’s Public Safety Committee at missessamick@yahoo.com.

Leslie Park Pool Events

Nina Barbuto and the Leslie Park Collective are presenting two family fun events at the empty Leslie Park Pool. The events are a continuation of prototype events to keep interest alive in the Leslie Park Pool Project. These are free, family-friendly, and alcohol-free events. Bike Fest/I Made It Market, August 7, noon to 5 p.m.: Bike Fest is Pittsburgh’s biggest cycling event for cyclists by cyclists. It’s a celebration of bicycling, showcasing Pittsburgh in all of its uniqueness and beauty. The I Made It! Market is where people can sell the things they make, encouraging the local handmade economy. Similarly, the Bike Swap lets neighbors sell their bikes, parts, and services. Disposable Film Fest, August 12, 8:30-11 p.m. The Disposable Film Fest is a unique festival that was created in 2007 in San Francisco to celebrate the artistic potential of disposable video: short films made on non-professional devices such as time-use video cameras, cell phones, point and shoot cameras, webcams, computer screen capture software, and other readily available video capture devices. The event will premiere the documentary of Accordion Pool Party, the event held at the pool last September. Sponsored by Zip Car. For more information, contact Deborah Knox at 412-344-3966 or Susan Engler at 412-559-1861.

Friendship Hour Tour Tickets

Tickets are now available online for the 17th Annual Friendship House Tour Tradition & Innovation Sunday, September 19, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Guests will explore homes ranging from grand Victorians to lofts and townhouses. This year’s tour showcases the diverse housing that Friendship offers, with everything from traditional character to sleek modern design. Tour guests will also enjoy the creative arts spaces along the Penn Avenue Arts Corridor and enjoy free food samples from some of the best restaurants in the East End. Tickets are $18 in advance and $20 the day of the event. Tickets purchased tour day between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. receive a $2 early-bird discount. Pre-sale tickets can be purchased online at our website, www.friendshiphousetour.org. The tour begins at The Glass Lofts, on the corner of Penn Avenue and N. Fairmount Street. The self-guided tour takes three to four hours to complete on foot, and trolley tours will depart from The Glass Lofts. For more info: www.friendshiphousetour.org or 412-441-6147 x 7.

YPA Community Conversations

The Young Preservationists Association (YPA) of Pittsburgh, in partnership with the Power of 32, a regional visioning project taking place across Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, and West Virginia, invites you to participate in one of its community conversations. These conversations will help develop a vision for the region, and participation is vital to its success. The Friendship / Highland Park / East Liberty conversation will be held August 5 at the Union Project, 801 N. Negley Avenue, from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information and to RSVP, please visit www.powerof32.org.

Join YouthBuild

Build your community and get paid while in training in Garfield Jubilee’s YouthBuild Program, offered in partnership with Hill House Association.
Inc. & Housing Authority City of Pittsburgh. Earn Your G.E.D or high school diploma; learn skills that can help increase your income. To apply, you must be: interested in learning construction trades; between 16 to 24 years old; a resident of Garfield or the Hill District; interested in further education; serious and committed; and unemployed and out of school. To qualify applicants must have: birth certificate, proper I.D. and Social Security card. For more information, contact Renee Robinson or Tonya Daniels at Garfield Jubilee Association, 5315 Hillcrest Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15224; phone: 412-661-6275.

**L'VILLE FARM STAND**

The Farm Stand Project of the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank provides fresh, affordable produce to low-income neighborhoods that have limited access to grocery stores. The farm stands accept payment in cash, WIC and Senior Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) checks, and Food Stamps/EBT. The East End farm stand is located at the Stephen Foster Center, 286 Main Street, in Lawrenceville, every Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The stand operates every week through November 11.

**West Penn, from page 1**

The county and federal officials in attendance were directly involved in negotiations on behalf of the community when UPMC closed its Braddock hospital, and they brought information to the meeting table about that recent crisis. Executive Onorato observed, unfortunately, "there's a big difference between Braddock and this system" - specifically that UPMC has deep pockets, and WPAHS is in financial crisis. He pledged, however, that "the county is there in any way you want us to help."

Rep. Doyle noted that his biggest concern is the closing of the West Penn ER; he said he would like WPAHS to answer the question, "Can we get an urgent-care center?" Mayor Ravenstahl acknowledged he also has questions, specifically about which parts of the West Penn facility WPAHS will continue to use, and exactly how many jobs will be lost. "Is it 1,500 jobs or more or less?" he asked. The mayor stated that, although the WPAHS consolidation plan seems to be firmly set, he is still hopeful about a "happy medium" solution that might see the retention of the ER and redevelopment of the rest of the unused portions of the Bloomfield facility.

Councilman Dowd laid out what he views as the "three areas of concern" he would like WPAHS officials to address: jobs; use of the Bloomfield facility, and healthcare in the region. The group agreed to develop a set of questions in these three areas to bring to a structured meeting with WPAHS management, convened by the mayor and attended by community and public leaders. The group further agreed that the mayor, the county executive, and Rep. Doyle should drive the effort, not an individual community group.

A week later, a unified group of community organizations and public officials, under the leadership of the mayor, convened at the City-County Building to finalize a list of questions for Dr. Christopher Olivia, WPAHS President and CEO. More than 50 questions addressed such issues as severance packages and pensions, the reuse of the physical plant and equipment, and the system’s marketing plan for the medical services that will remain in Bloomfield. Perhaps the most pointed question was: "If this [consolidation] plan fails, what will be the contingency plan to save Allegheny General?" so that Pittsburgh will maintain a two-hospital system to serve residents. "We don't want to end up with a monopoly," remarked Aggie Brose.

The working group met with Dr. Olivia and other WPAHS officials on July 21, and received answers to all their questions; the meeting was off the record. The mayor has convened another meeting for the group on July 28 to continue formulating an action plan based on Dr. Olivia’s responses. WPAHS expects to release a final consolidation plan, detailing which services will remain in Bloomfield, in October. In the meantime, community residents are encouraged to continue using the West Penn facility, which is open for business as usual.
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Rentals, from page 1

development. Phase I featured units priced for households of limited eco- 

nomic means, as well as for persons willing to pay market-rate rents of $750/month or more.

East Liberty will see another 71 townhouses built under the auspices of a partnership headed up by McCormick Baron Salazar, Inc., a St. Louis-based firm with offices locally. This project will be a second phase in the Liberty Park development started in 2006 along Collins Avenue, between Penn Circle and East Liberty Boulevard. East Liberty Development Inc. has been instrumental in securing the land for the units and providing planning support to the project. Like Garfield Commons, this complex has featured townhomes for a mix of incomes.

"Each of these developments will be privately-owned or managed. Each is aimed at working-class folks who can’t afford the more pricey neighbor-

hoods," Swartz observed. "Each will also have a number of houses designed for persons with special needs.

"These homes can be the dawning of a new era for neighborhoods that have struggled with poorly managed or maintained rental housing," Swartz added, "thanks either to the government or to private landlords who have simply milked properties for all they’re worth. There are some private owners who have done it well, though, and our challenge will be to join their ranks in terms of being at the top of the list when it comes to rental housing in the inner city."

BGC MEMBERSHIP IS ONLINE

Did you know that the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation is a membership organ- 

ization, composed of people like you who want change and improvement in their neighborhoods? If you like the work the BGC has been doing in housing, public safety, and youth development, or if you regularly read The Bulletin, you can show your support by becoming a BGC member or renewing your mem-

bership online... for as little as $10! Just visit www.bloomfield-garfield.org, click on "Donate / Become a Member," and follow the easy instructions for paying either via PayPal or by check. Two options - two easy ways to support your com-

munity! We hope you will join us and your neighbors in our commitment to the revitalization of Garfield, Friendship, and Bloomfield.

Introducing...  
The Lupus Center of Excellence  
at West Penn Allegheny Health System
Under the direction of Susan Manzi, MD, MPH, and Joseph Ahearn, MD, the Lupus Center of Excellence at West Penn Allegheny Health System provides world-class patient care. For more information or to schedule an appointment at the Lupus Center, please call Elaine Scanlon, Lupus Patient Concierge, at 412-578-1152.