Aldi to announce decision on Penn Avenue store by March 31

By Carrie Garrison The Bulletin
& Rick Swartz Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Pittsburgh – The community surrounding the now-shuttered Bottom Dollar grocery store at 5200 Penn Ave. waits anxiously, now that more is known about the timetable for its ultimate disposition. Executives from Aldi, the purchaser-to-be for this store and eight others in Allegheny County, made it clear to elected officials and community representatives at a Feb. 2 meeting that Aldi will not rush into any type of decision on their collective fate.

In attendance at the meeting were Mayor William Peduto; Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald; a representative from U.S. Sen. Bob Casey’s office; Brent Laubaugh, a vice president at Aldi’s regional office in Saxonburg; Christina Moraczyk, Aldi’s regional real estate director; and three representatives from the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC).

Recruitment for hospital, police underway

By Wesley Davis Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield – West Penn Hospital and the Pittsburgh Police Bureau will both be in Garfield on March 11 to share with East End residents the opportunities for employment available with each.

West Penn Hospital will open the event with a 1 p.m. presentation by Patrick Boyle, its human resources director, at the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation’s Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Ave.

Garfield ‘tiny house’ plan presented to residents

By PJ Maloney Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield – “Tiny houses” have generated quite a buzz these days, offering people the chance to own a home without having to pay for a house that’s larger than what they need or want. One of

Community plans future of Lawrenceville parks

By Lauren Byrne Lawrenceville United

Lawrenceville – Over the past five years, Leslie and Arsenal Parks have served as sites for food truck roundups, Google stargazing events, public art exhibition sites, fireworks celebrations, and
PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE

East End – The Pittsburgh Police Department reports that there were three incidents in Zone 5 in the month of January and one arrest. Crime rates are at an all-time low in Garfield, according to Zone 5 officers. The police department has also reported that the “Shot Spotter” system is now operational in Zone 5, which includes the Bloomfield, Garfield, Friendship, East Liberty, and Homewood neighborhoods of Pittsburgh. The Shot Spotter is an electronic sensor system that detects gunshots and provides officers with immediate information on the location of gunfire. Zone 5 officers have indicated that the Shot Spotter system has helped them to make several arrests following gun-related incidents.

Residents who notice graffiti are encouraged to call 311 to submit a complaint that includes the address of the graffiti. Residents can also visit www.pittsburghpa.gov/311/form to submit a 311 complaint to the city. – Aggie Brose, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Shahira Wahba, employment coordinator for the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC), said Boyle will lead an in-depth discussion on open positions at West Penn Hospital, how to apply for them, and what his staff is looking for in terms of qualified candidates.

Wahba said that attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and have a dialogue with West Penn Hospital’s recruiters on their hiring process.

“The ENEC will then be able to work with attendees on their applications to West Penn,” Wahba said.

Rick Flanagan, manager of the ENEC, highlighted the need for diverse and skilled candidates at West Penn Hospital.

“The range and number of positions available within the hospital means that just about any job seeker should consider attending this recruitment event,” Flanagan said.

The Pittsburgh Police Department’s recruitment event will follow at 6 p.m., also at the activity center.

Michael Gay, community relations officer for the police bureau, said that serving as an officer presents an opportunity “to effect change in our neighborhoods.”

Gay encouraged neighbors to “get off the sidelines,” and apply to be an officer.

“If you want to be a part of the progress in our neighborhood and in our city, this is a great opportunity,” Gay said.

The City of Pittsburgh’s 2014 fiscal year operating budget lists the salary of a first-year police officer as $42,548. The hourly wage paid to recruits while they are in the police training academy is $14.24, according to the 2014 budget.

Flanagan explained that there would be a limited timeframe to apply to be an officer, running from Feb. 23 to May 11. Flanagan encouraged those who are interested in applying to attend this event as a way to learn about what the application process entails and the assistance available to interested applicants.

To register, call 412-465-0425. ♦
Penn Avenue – Patrick Hassett, assistant director of the City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Works, reports that the Penn Avenue reconstruction project's winter suspension will be lifted by the end of February.

Contractor Matcon Diamond is then slated to return to the avenue to install new streetlights and traffic signals. Crews will also begin limited work on the vaults – storage spaces under the sidewalk.

Hassett said that additional vaults have been discovered since the initial count completed in the summer of 2013, which will impact the construction schedule. – Sarah Burke, The Bulletin

#OpenOnPenn Campaign

Penn Avenue – #OpenOnPenn is a video and social media campaign designed to promote businesses that have suffered due to the Penn Avenue reconstruction project. The campaign seeks to help those affected by the roadwork by encouraging people to purchase gift cards to local businesses. The video features the perspectives of several business owners discussing how they were impacted by the construction, sharing their excitement to be a member of the commercial district, and inviting viewers to come back and rediscover the avenue. Funding for the campaign was provided by the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh. View the video and purchase a gift card at http://pennavenue.org/openonpenn. – Amber Epps, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Bottom Dollar from page 1

Aldi representatives said they will share plans for the Penn Avenue site by March 31, when they purchase the building from Bottom Dollar’s parent company, the Delhaize Group.

“We understand the importance of the site itself to the community,” Laubaugh said in the meeting. “We cannot share our decision on its future before we’ve done the necessary due diligence.”

Laubaugh expressed willingness to “look at all possible opportunities to make this a positive outcome for the community and Penn Avenue.” More than 250 people have signed an online petition in support of retaining a grocery store on Penn.

“We will be open to not restricting the potential for the site to remain a grocery store if we decide not to open a store there ourselves,” Laubaugh said. “The circumstances surrounding this store would lead us to refrain from incorporating things like restrictive deed covenants that would cause a different outcome than what the community obviously wants.”

Moraszczyk said that Aldi, which operates 16 stores in Allegheny County, conducts much of its market research in-house, through surveys of the population in that market, or shoppers at existing stores.

"[Were] proud that we have gotten fairly good at it," she said. "There isn't a single store in the county where we've regretted our decision to open the store in that location."

Laubaugh said that Aldi will immediately share its decision on the Penn Avenue site with the mayor and county executive.

"Everyone will be kept in the loop," he said.

Laubaugh declined to make a visit to the neighborhood, ostensibly to get better acquainted with the circumstances surrounding the Penn Avenue store.

No matter what Aldi decides, Aggie Brose, deputy director of the BGC, said the BGC's goal is to make sure the community continues to have access to fresh, affordably priced food.

"If Aldi doesn't open a store on Penn Avenue, then our goal would be to free the real estate, with all of the fixtures and equipment, for purchase either by the BGC itself, or by another food store operator directly," Brose told The Bulletin.

The BGC is also talking with other potential grocers to gauge their interest in the site.

"The BGC has met with several interested parties already, but much will depend on what the price tag ultimately is for the acquisition or the leasing of the site," Brose said. "We would prefer that it be Bottom Dollar that sells it to us or someone else, and not Aldi. But Aldi would have to allow that to happen. We think the acquisition cost could be reduced significantly if the property doesn't have to pass through Aldi's hands first."

Bottom Dollar has agreed not to sell any grocery fixtures or equipment until the Penn Avenue building’s sale is finalized.

ABOVE: The Penn Avenue Bottom Dollar closed its doors – and painted over its sign – in January. Photo by Rick Flanagan.
Mayor to expand summer employment program

By Wesley Davis Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Pittsburgh – The City of Pittsburgh plans to expand this year’s summer youth employment program to allow more young people to participate, according to LaTrenda Leonard, deputy chief of operations and administrator in the office of Mayor William Peduto.

“We want people to realize that this is the future workforce of the region. We can keep kids safe and we can keep them here through employment,” Leonard said, adding that the city hopes “to lead badging efforts to certify and quantify what the youths are learning.”

Leonard said the city also plans to create a tiered system of internships, providing exploratory experiences for first-year participants and allowing returning participants to take responsibility for individual projects at their worksites.

The application period for the summer youth employment program will start in early April.

The City of Pittsburgh’s summer youth employment program is a six-week internship program for qualifying city residents between the ages of 14 and 21. Program participants are paid an hourly wage to take part in a work experience that aligns with their career interests.

Robert Best, a senior at Pittsburgh Milliones 6-12 who participated in last year’s summer youth employment program, stopped by the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporations Youth Development Center recently to discuss his future employment plans with program coordinator Mallory Helbling. Photo by Wesley Davis.
Garfield – The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) had hoped to see 19 new rental houses under construction in Garfield by the beginning of this month, but initial construction estimates for a second phase of the “Garfield Glen” development have come in well above projections.

Andy Haines, a vice president with S & A Homes out of State College, Pennsylvania, and a partner with the community group in the project, received a preliminary bid from a local general contractor in January that leaves the development more than $600,000 short.

There had been some hope that the units, which would consist of a mix of two-, three-, and four-bedroom houses, could be built for a cost in the neighborhood of $3.3 million. But that hope has evaporated, according to Rick Swartz, the BGC’s executive director.

“We are finding, as other developers have, that to deliver a good-quality house that will be here 60 years from now, you’re going to have spend more than $170 per square foot,” Swartz said. “But that hope has evaporated, according to Rick Swartz, the BGC’s executive director.

According to Swartz, the two-bedroom houses should rent in the range of $550 per month, the three-bedrooms in the neighborhood of $675 per month, and the four-bedrooms in the vicinity of $800 per month.

The goal, he said, is for “working-class families earning under $38,000 a year to be able to move into the community, and keep it diverse economically.”

The second phase received an award of federal tax credits last year from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency. Those credits will help deliver $3.9 million to the project in the form of equity capital, as opposed to debt, a key factor if the rents are to be priced as Swartz proposes. That investment, however, would be lost if the project does not move forward.

So what happens if the gap cannot be closed?

“We’re not even contemplating that possibility at the moment,” Haines said. “We definitely feel this is fixable.”

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The strategy now, according to Haines, is two-part: solicit some additional bids that will bring competitiveness to the pricing for the construction work, and pursue additional financing that will be needed under any circumstances.

“We are not going to abandon the project at this juncture,” Haines told The Bulletin. “Fortunately for us, we have partners here in the city, who realize there is a tremendous need for more affordable housing, and will help us without forcing us to drive up the rents.”

Haines said most of the gap would likely be filled from private rather than public sources.

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Second phase of Garfield Glen hits roadblock

By Joe Reuben Bulletin Contributor


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

By Carrie Garrison The Bulletin

Garfield – At its lowest point during the Penn Avenue reconstruction project, enrollment at Community Preschool and Nursery – a center that is licensed to care for 57 children – dropped to just nine. Now that the avenue has reopened to two-way traffic, center representatives are hopeful about the future of their business.

“Because we’re still standing and because we have such a beautiful center, I believe our enrollment will pick back up soon,” said Heather Carter, the center’s director.

Since the reconstruction project began its winter suspension, the center has already admitted four new children and has spaces for 25 more, said Frank Papposki of MetroCom Management, the organization that oversees Community Preschool and Nursery. Papposki said he is not surprised that attendance at the center went down as a result of construction. He believes that the lack of parking and easy access slowly wore away at parents, and they began to search elsewhere for child care.

“I completely understand where they were coming from,” Papposki said.

Since its founding in 2003, Community Preschool and Nursery has aimed to provide affordable child care to local residents.

The center provides a mini-bus for school-age children, ages 6 and up. The staff is interested in providing a bus for younger children as well, but cannot do so without the interest of parents and coordination of schedules. Children are also provided three meals a day at the center.

The center’s child care fees are based upon the parents’ income and are ultimately determined by the state of Pennsylvania.

While Penn Avenue reconstruction has been a challenge, Papposki said the center’s families and employees are feeling more optimistic now.

“It has been difficult to remain positive,” Papposki said. “I believe now that the construction is somewhat finished, the whole mood of the center has been lifted.”

For more information on Community Preschool and Nursery, located at 4809 Penn Ave., call 412-441-2595.

Summer Employment from page 4

year’s program, described the experience as “a very valuable way to spend my summer,” adding that he “learned a lot and made great connections.”

Mallory Helbling, program coordinator at the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, explained that the summer employment program benefited Best because he took the initiative to “make connections during his summer internship to find employment during the school year.”

Rick Flanagan, manager of the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC) in Garfield, said that the ENEC and BGC are partnering with Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh’s East Liberty branch, 130 S. Whitfield St., to host a teen job fair on April 10 from 3 to 6 p.m.

Flanagan indicated that this event will be a great opportunity for 14- to 21-year-olds to network with potential summer employers. Businesses who wish to recruit at the fair are encouraged to call the ENEC at 412-362-8580.

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Circus training program thrives in Bloomfield

By Carrie Garrison The Bulletin

Bloomfield – “Everybody thought I was crazy, and I said, ‘Trust me on this.’”

Those are the words of Holly Dayton-Kirby, owner and artistic director of Pittsburgh Dance Center in Bloomfield.

When Dayton-Kirby saw Cirque du Soleil perform in May 2011, she was instantly mesmerized by the aerial silk dancers. After unsuccessfully trying to find a class in Pittsburgh to learn aerial silks, Dayton-Kirby hired a circus training coach. Now, she’s developed her own circus training curriculum and is teaching others in her studio, located at 4765 Liberty Ave.

Pittsburgh Dance Center now holds circus classes every night of the week except Fridays, including a special needs circus class on Wednesday nights. The studio is home to more than 20 different dance classes and 47 teachers, ten of whom teach the circus classes.

“We are pretty much setting the circus standard here in Pittsburgh,” Dayton-Kirby said.

The circus training program includes trapeze, lyra (aerial hoop), beam, acrobatics, and contortion training.

Dayton-Kirby said the suggested age to begin circus training is 6 and older. The studio is preparing to start teaching tightrope walking, and a unicycle training course is planned for March.

Pittsburgh Dance Center is equipped with 15-foot aerial silks and other circus gear. The circus training program has grown to incorporate a 15-member performance company, called The Air Masters, that travels and performs a full circus show.

Dayton-Kirby said she is excited for the first aerial showcase, “Pure Imagination,” which will be held March 1 at the studio. The event will begin at 4 p.m. and encompasses a meet-and-greet, live aerial show, and reception. It costs $10 for spectators.

Part of Dayton-Kirby’s inspiration for the studio came from her own dance training. A Bloomfield native, Dayton-Kirby noticed that there were very few local, affordable dance training programs. She has aimed to make her studio affordable and open to all.

“I’m not trying to make everyone a dancer, but I want to give everybody the opportunity to dance,” she said. “Our niche is really just to offer as much as we can, keep it affordable, and have fun.”

Dayton-Kirby is committed to giving everyone – including dancers with special needs, amputees, and children – the chance to participate.

Her classes are tailored to each dancer and aim to get everyone on the dance floor. Dayton-Kirby said her unique approach has been well received by the Bloomfield community.

“I can’t tell you how many ‘thank yous’ I’ve had,” Kirby said. “My goal is to get everyone on this floor doing something and having fun.”

“I want to give everybody the opportunity to dance.”

– Holly Dayton-Kirby, Pittsburgh Dance Center
Students receive SAT help, mentoring

Hill District – Malcolm Thomas (left photo), the director of Neighborhood Learning Alliance’s “Reaching Back” male mentoring program, and Jason Rivers (right photo), Pittsburgh Public Schools’ “We Promise” project manager, addressed a group of 25 juniors at Pittsburgh Milliones University Preparatory School on Feb. 11 to introduce an SAT preparation class.

Participating students will receive rigorous SAT training that will be complemented by culturally appropriate mentoring and support as they move towards the SAT on May 2. This class is a partnership between Pittsburgh Public Schools, Neighborhood Learning Alliance, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, Pittsburgh Prep, and the University of Pittsburgh. Photos by Wesley Davis.

Woolslair students win poster contest

Bloomfield – A group of “Little Learning Warriors” enrolled in Pittsburgh Woolslair PreK-5’s afterschool program recently created a poster, “We’re Hooked on After School,” to promote regular attendance. Their poster was recently chosen as a winner in a “Be There” poster contest, sponsored by the United Way of Allegheny County. The after-school program at Woolslair is a partnership between Neighborhood Learning Alliance and the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation. Photo by Jessica Jacobs.

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‘Moms and Cops’ seminar raises awareness

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation hosted a “Moms and Cops” seminar on Feb. 4. Maurita Bryant, assistant chief of investigations, organized this event to train local mothers and social service providers on child safety, domestic violence prevention, and how to access helpful local resources. This event was supported by BNY Mellon.

Follow the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation on Twitter @BloomGarCorp!

EYESORE OF THE MONTH

Garfield – The eyesore of the month is 4827 Penn Ave. in Garfield. According to the Allegheny County real estate website, the recorded owners are “Big Ham Group, Inc.” They acquired the property on Feb. 9, 2012 for $1. Their tax billing address is 321 Bingham St., Suite 301, Pittsburgh, PA 15211. The owner’s mailing address is 1224 E. Carson St., Suite 301, Pittsburgh, PA 15203-1238.

The property was nominated as an eyesore because it had all the markings of an abandoned property, with the first story completely covered in graffiti. Piles of debris on the Millvale Avenue sidewalk forced pedestrians to walk in the street. Some of the second-story windows were partially covered with boards, and others were broken with hanging glass.

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) contacted the Permits, Licenses, and Inspections Bureau (PL&IB) record room and found that the property had been condemned. A building permit issued on Nov. 2, 2012 has since been revoked.

BGC contact the owners to ascertain why the building was still sitting vacant three years after they had acquired it, and to find out their plans for the building, which occupies a prominent corner on Penn Avenue.

BGC located the owners of the property through their listed address, 1224 Carson St., Suite 301, which houses the firm of Rewis & Yoder.

Mr. Joe Rewis responded to the call and informed the BGC that he and his partners had acquired the building with the intent of rehabilitating it. They would like to see the first floor used for a bar, restaurant, or doctor’s office, due to the close proximity of Children’s Hospital, with an apartment on the second floor and a rooftop deck.

Rewis told BGC staff that he and his partners had not abandoned the property, and that substantial interior cleaning and demolition had been done to-date. He informed the BGC that an ongoing issue with Duquesne Light’s alleged failure to repair a dangerous utility pole had caused a substantial setback in getting the roof replaced.

Upon receiving the call from BGC regarding the graffiti, windows, and debris, the owners immediately had a crew clean up the debris and take care of the graffiti by painting the entire first story. Rewis also said he would have his contractor clean out the broken windows and properly board them up until spring.

Rewis said he will complete the exterior renovations in the spring. He also provided all of his contact information and said he looks forward to working with BGC to make the neighborhood a better place for all businesses and residents.

Penn Avenue eyesore shows potential

By Aggie Brose Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

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Below: The owners of 4827 Penn Ave. have removed debris and painted over graffiti on the first story, but several second-story windows remain broken and unboarded. Photo by Wesley Davis.
experiential learning for local schools. Despite the increased and recent activity, there is potential to restore the parks so that they can serve even more residents and attract more users.

The Lawrenceville community has been working since the fall of 2013 with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and the City of Pittsburgh to create a master plan for Arsenal Park, Leslie Park, and the connections through Lawrenceville between both parks. The goal of the plan is to bring the parks to a new level of usability, safety, and accessibility while preserving their historical significance for current and future generations.

To create this plan, hundreds of residents and stakeholders collaborated with each other and with MKSK, a design firm hired to lead the project. Community members participated in block walks and interactive discussions in the parks, reviewed and created concepts in focus groups and community meetings, and participated in online dialogue at http://arsenalpark.mindmixer.com. This robust community process will culminate with a “Master Plan Party” celebration on the evening of March 26, when the final plan will be shared and implementation will begin. The location and start time are still being determined, but those interested in attending can visit www.lunited.org or call 412-802-7220 for updates.

Engaged stakeholders have ranged in age from young children with their parents and teachers, to young professionals, long-time residents, and even a 93-year-old who has used the park since age 3. The diverse community of Lawrenceville and the broader community of park users have weighed in to create a vision that is reflective of the community’s history and the desires of current Lawrenceville residents.

Some concepts that emerged through the planning process include multi-purpose courts, educational gardens and green infrastructure, performance areas, accessible gateways into the park, improved paths throughout the park, picnic shelters, and informal areas where large groups can congregate. Water features, public art, and innovative play spaces that complement the natural topography of the parks are also priorities for local families.

“Not having previously participated in a planning process with a strong community input component, I did not know what to expect, but I am very excited about how the process has unfolded,” said Randall Sulkin, president of Friends of Arsenal Park. “The community has actively participated both in person and online at every planning step along the way, giving valuable input and feedback. That feedback has allowed MKSK Studios to create wonderful plans for Arsenal and Leslie Parks with modern features and amenities, while still retaining the history of both parks.”

The Park Master Planning Project is a collaborative effort of Lawrenceville United, Lawrenceville Corporation, Friends of Arsenal Park, the City of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, and MKSK. Funding for the project was made possible through a Community Development Block Grant from former City Councilman Patrick Dowd and current City Councilwoman Deborah Gross, and a matching grant from the Allegheny County Economic Development Community Infrastructure and Tourism Fund through former Sen. Jim Ferlo’s leadership and advocacy.

A steering committee comprised of community stakeholders and partner organizations has helped guide the project, which is being managed by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy with MKSK as the lead design firm and consultant. ♦
Youths learn how to lead

East End – In an effort to increase youth involvement in social advocacy, MGR Youth Empowerment, a socially conscious nonprofit, offers an innovative leadership development program for middle- and high-school students.

The program, known as the “Youth Leadership Network” (YLN), provides an opportunity for students to create social campaigns centered on the issues that matter to them and their communities. Although guided by Darrell Kinsel, coordinator of MGR’s environmental justice program, the activities of the group are student-driven.

The program started when a group of young people wanted to stay involved after participating in MGR’s “Positive Spin” cycling program, part of Pittsburgh Public Schools’ Summer Dreamers Academy. After learning about bicycle advocacy in Positive Spin, several young people approached Julie Mallis, MGR’s “Active Health” program coordinator, about participating in a campaign to increase the number of safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian routes in their communities.

Mallis established a program for interested students to learn more about creating and managing advocacy projects. The group, which consists of ten participants from Pittsburgh Arsenal 6-8, Schiller 6-8, Langley K-8, CAPA 6-12, and the Student Achievement Center in Homewood, meets once a month in MGR’s office to discuss community issues and generate ideas for improvements.

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CityLAB is working with the BGC to help make Garfield a destination for a type of housing that can’t be found anywhere else. Their hope is that tiny houses will draw people to Garfield because of the quirkiness, sustainability, and thrift embodied in living small.

“You feel that you should know everyone’s perspective, to give everyone what they want and need,” said Arsenal student Mikeiya Bennett.

Participants in the group demonstrate their dedication to learning and leading through the time they give to the meeting sessions and working with their peers. Since the group brings together students from a range of schools and grade levels, meetings take place on days when all of them are free, mainly weekends and days off from school.

In some cases, transportation to meetings presents a challenge, and students make the effort to get a ride or take public transportation. One particularly committed student, Atronice Wilson, an eighth-grade student at Arsenal, walked all the way from her home in Garfield to attend a meeting.

While YLN provides a learning experience for current participants in MGR’s programs, it’s also intended to be a way for young people who have moved beyond the schools and grade levels MGR serves to stay involved with the organization. Because the group is intended to be youth-driven, it’s important to retain the young people who display strong leadership abilities, who can help guide the next group of aspiring advocates.
Crime reduction drives change in East Liberty

By Elizabeth Sensky East Liberty Development, Inc.

East Liberty – Pittsburgh’s so-called revival has been a hot topic lately. From articles in the Huffington Post praising Pittsburgh as “The Coolest American City You Haven’t Been To” to The Economist ranking Pittsburgh as “The Most Livable City” in the continental U.S., Pittsburgh has been racking up the accolades. If we zoom in closer, East Liberty in particular has also been gaining its fair share of the media spotlight.

The revitalization of East Liberty and its increasing standing as a “neighborhood of choice” is at the center of this discussion. That’s why East Liberty Development, Inc. (ELDI), a nonprofit community development corporation dedicated to developing a mixed-income and safe East Liberty neighborhood, decided it was time to take a closer look at this renewal and examine the causes behind it. In a series of white papers written by Numeritics, a Pittsburgh-based consulting practice, the organization is doing just that.

The white paper series is an evolution of a crime study commissioned by ELDI and completed by Numeritics in October 2013. In the analysis, Numeritics examined the links between lowered crime rates, increased property values, and ELDI initiatives. With the white paper series, ELDI and Numeritics take the research a step further.

“The white papers give us an opportunity to explore concepts and ideas not in the original crime study,” said Eric Jester, former project manager at ELDI and current chief executive officer of New Burgh Real Estate, a boutique real estate firm focused on developing sustainable, mixed-income communities.

The first white paper, published in early February, takes a look at crime rates in relation to property values. Numeritics identifies ELDI’s crime reduction strategy in East Liberty as a significant driver of increased property values and the neighborhood’s subsequent status as a desirable place for families and developers.

The paper claims that the recent, large commercial developments in East Liberty, including Home Depot, Google, and Whole Foods, had no impact on residential housing values. Home prices only increased after the neighborhood was safe, it contends.

Along with identifying relevant research and theories on this topic, Numeritics used statistics from the City of Pittsburgh Police Department, housing data from RealStats, and qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders to evaluate the correlation between ELDI’s actions and the large reduction in East Liberty’s residential crime since 2006.

They found that from 2006 to 2013, East Liberty saw a 49 percent reduction in crime in the residential area. Between 2006 and 2013, residential property prices also rose 120 percent.

Despite these increased property prices, Numeritics highlights ELDI’s commitment to ensuring that East Liberty remains affordable. They cite the organization’s method of using a combination of creative financing and low-income housing tax credits to purchase slum properties in locations with chronic criminal behavior. This strategy not only creates housing that is clean and safe, but also affordable.

“One of the most unique and possibly most beneficial aspects of the ELDI approach is the use of targeted, scattered-site, low-density interventions that do not create newer versions of concentrated poverty,” said Victoria Hill, one of the paper’s authors.

ELDI’s long-term work to develop the East Liberty neighborhood began in the 1980s, as a way to to reverse the effects of urban renewal the neighborhood underwent in the 1960s.

ELDI and Numeritics will release the rest of the white paper series in the coming weeks. The next papers will delve further into ideas relating to crime’s impact on communities and strategies for eliminating it.

Visit www.eastliberty.org to view the current white paper, “East Liberty Revitalization: Crime Trend and Property Prices.” To get the next papers sent directly to your inbox, you can subscribe to ELDI’s newsletter on their website, www.eastliberty.org, or stay tuned on social media.
March 2

EAST LIBERTY
Dr. Seuss Read-Aloud

Come to the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – East Liberty, 130 S. Whitfield St., to listen to one of Dr. Seuss’ famous books. Read-alouds will take place at 11 a.m., 4 p.m., and 6 p.m. Open to all ages.

March 3

STANTON HEIGHTS
City Hall Update

Join the Stanton Heights Neighborhood Association at 7 p.m. at the Three Rivers Village School, 4721 Stanton Ave., for an update on city services from City Councilman Rev. Ricky Burgess and City Councilwoman Deb Gross. A question-and-answer session will follow.

March 4

BLOOMFIELD
Dogs & Toddlers

Created by a certified dog behavior consultant and mother of four, Dogs & Toddlers® is for families with children between 3 months and 3 years and exploring their independence for the first time. It is offered as both a group training class and private in-home consultation which parents and other caretakers can attend with their dogs to learn. The class takes place from 7 to 9 p.m. in West Penn Hospital’s Burnstein Room, 4800 Penn Ave. $25 per family. For more information, visit ahn.org/westpenn or call 412-578-7030.

March 5

GARFIELD
Green Zone Meeting

Join the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to discuss plans for a potential “Garfield Green Zone” at 6 p.m. at the Bloomfield-Garfield Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Ave. Residents will have the opportunity to vote on their preferences, and refreshments will be provided.

March 6

GARFIELD
Grande Opening

LOCAL 412, a new retail business located at 4901 Penn Ave., will host its grand opening event on the evening of March 6 as part of the “Unblurred” gallery crawl on Penn. LOCAL 412, which stands for “Love Our City A Lot,” will hold auditions for Rhyme Calisthenics, a Pittsburgh-based game show where contestants spin a wheel and then demonstrate their lyrical ability based on the category selected.

March 7

BLOOMFIELD
Pet Therapy

Learn what pet therapy is all about and how it can help with your healing journey. Free information session with two professional dog trainers and their therapy dogs. Meet Elissa Weiner, a professional dog trainer, and Shane Gentry, a professional dog trainer, behavioral consultant, and owner of “Sally Said So Professional Dog Training.” The session takes place from 1 to 3 p.m. at West Penn Hospital – Wintergarden, 4800 Friendship Ave. RSVP to Mykia Bianchi at 412-578-4316 or mbianchi@wpahs.org.

March 8

GARFIELD
Weight Loss Info Session

Our Lady of the Angels Holy Name Society has partnered with PNC to facilitate a free, full-day homebuyer education workshop sponsored by PNC. The workshop will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Saint Maria Goretti Activity Center, 140 N. Atlantic Ave. Lunch is provided. Anyone interested in becoming a homeowner is encouraged to attend to learn about money management and savings, credit, mortgage loans, and the right steps to shop for, purchase, and maintain your home. Experts from financial institutions, real estate agencies, insurance companies, and home inspectors will be present to speak and answer questions. Pre-registration is required by calling 412-281-9773.

March 9

EAST LIBERTY
Trades Career Fair

East Liberty Development, Inc. and commercial development partners are hosting a trades career and apprenticeship fair at Kingsley Association, 6435 Frankstown Ave., from 3 to 6 p.m. This forum offers several apprenticeship application events and will feature local building trades employers such as PJ Dick and Mistick Construction.

March 10

GARFIELD
Homebuyer Education

Join NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania as they facilitate a free, full-day homebuyer education workshop sponsored by PNC. The workshop will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Saint Maria Goretti Activity Center, 140 N. Atlantic Ave. Lunch is provided. Anyone interested in becoming a homeowner is encouraged to attend to learn about money management and savings, credit, mortgage loans, and the right steps to shop for, purchase, and maintain your home. Experts from financial institutions, real estate agencies, insurance companies, and home inspectors will be present to speak and answer questions. Pre-registration is required by calling 412-632-1842.

March 11

EAST LIBERTY
Police Recruitment

Learn more about becoming a Pittsburgh police officer and navigating the application process at 6 p.m. at the Bloomfield-Garfield Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Ave.

West Penn Recruitment

Come to the Bloomfield-Garfield Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Ave., from 1 to 3 p.m. to learn about job opportunities at West Penn Hospital and Allegheny Health Network, the application process, and how to make your resume stand out to recruiters. Register by calling 412-465-0425.

March 12

GARFIELD
Pet Pan Selections

Come to the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – East Liberty, 130 S. Whitfield St., to hear performers from Pittsburgh Musical Theater sing songs from Peter Pan Selections. Learn more about Pittsburgh police officer and navigating the application process at 6 p.m. at the Bloomfield-Garfield Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Ave.

March 13

STANTON HEIGHTS
Neighborhood Meeting

The Stanton Heights Neighborhood Association will meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Three Rivers Village School, 4721 Stanton Ave. Ron Porter of RDP Consultants will continue working with the area.

March 14

EAST LIBERTY
Storytime Sing-Along

Come to the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – East Liberty, 130 S. Whitfield St., at 11 a.m. to sing songs, make music, and more. For children between 3 and 5 years of age, and their caregivers.

March 15

LAWRENCEVILLE
Free Lecture

Our Lady of the Angels Holy Name Society has invited local historian and author James Wudarczyk to speak on Pittsburgh events during the first two years of the Civil War. Wudarczyk, the author of the book "Until the Morning Comes: Civil War Era Pittsburgh," will discuss heroes and scoundrels, the first training camp in Pittsburgh, and lost facts regarding the 1862 Allegheny Arsenal explosion. The free event will take place at 11 a.m. in the new social hall under the parish’s Saint Augustine Church at the corner of 37th and Bandera Streets.

March 16

BLOOMFIELD
Weight Loss Info Session

You are invited to a free information session to enhance your understanding of weight loss surgeries and services offered by Allegheny Health Network’s Bariatric and Metabolic Institute. The presentations include an informational talk given by bariatric surgical staff and a question-and-answer period. All sessions are free; registration is appreciated, but not required. There are two daytime classes – 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 2 to 3 p.m. at the Cercone Building, 4727 Friendship Ave, Suite 140 – and an evening class from 6 to 7 p.m. at West Penn Hospital – Wintergarden, 4800 Friendship Ave. For questions or to register, call 412-235-5900.

March 18

LAWRENCEVILLE
Social Media Class

The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – Lawrenceville and Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania have teamed up to offer free computer workshops to residents who want to brush up on their computer skills. The workshop topic on March 12 is social media. Classes are held in Goodwill’s computer lab at 118 52nd St. and run from 6 to 8 p.m. Participants must register in advance by calling 412-632-1842.

Sorry, we do not accept listings by phone.

The Bulletin Board publishes listings of volunteer opportunities, free or low-cost events and classes, fundraising events, and services that are of particular interest to our neighborhoods. Listings are published on a space-available basis; we cannot guarantee placement.

Volunteer Opportunities & Services

March 19

LAWRENCEVILLE

Free Lecture
As part of the Lawrenceville Historical Society’s public lecture series, Ken Kobus will address the development of the Allegheny Valley Railroad and some of the industries served by the railroad. The Kobus lecture will present a photograhic train ride soaring past many of the areas long-gone and forgotten train stations on an imaginary commuter trip from Braeburn to Pittsburgh. The event takes place at 7 p.m. at Canterbury Place, 310 Fisk St. It is free and open to the public. No reservations required.

Art and Aesthetics
The Aesthetic Skin & Laser Center will host its quarterly open house from 6 to 8 p.m. at 4242 Penn Ave., Suite 102. Come to view the art of Sarah Zeffirino, meet and learn about the latest in aesthetics from Dr. Roxana Barad and her staff, and enjoy nutritious food from Marty’s Market while sipping Zeffiro, meet and learn about the latest in aesthetics. RSVP to Jamie@aestheticpittsburgh.com.

March 21

LAWRENCEVILLE

Inversion Workshop
Come to The Shala of Pittsburgh Ashtanga Yoga, 4319 Butler St., from 1 to 3 p.m. for an interactive workshop discussing proper alignment and techniques for a safe headstand, forearm stand, handstand, and shoulder stand. Participants should be able to hold plank and downward-facing dog for several minutes without any pain. Cost is $25 if you pre-register online, or $30 for walk-in participants.

March 22

LAWRENCEVILLE

Comics Workshop
The Labs at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – Lawrenceville, 279 Fisk St., will be running comics workshops every Wednesday from 4 to 7 p.m. Activities include writing and drawing exercises, hands-on tutorials with formally trained comic artists, developing your own projects from start to finish, and showcasing your finished work at the end. This workshop is free for teens in sixth through twelfth grades. Call 412-363-8232 or email eastlib@carnegieliblibrary.org for more details.

March 25

EAST LIBERTY

Beatrix Potter Program
Come to the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – East Liberty, 130 S. Whitfield St., at 4 p.m. for an “Artful Stories” program, including a read-aloud, discussion, and hands-on activity featuring Beatrix Potter’s work. For children in kindergarten through fifth grade.

March 26

LAWRENCEVILLE

Internet Basics Class
The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh in Lawrenceville and Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania have teamed up to offer free computer workshops. The workshop topic on March 26 is internet basics and safety. Classes are held in Goodwill’s computer lab at 118 52nd St, and run from 6 to 8 p.m. Participants must register in advance by calling 412-632-1842.

April 10

HIGHLAND PARK

PULSEations 2015
Join PULSE, Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience, for its annual party and fundraiser at the Union Project, 801 N. Negley Ave. “PULSEations 2015: Vision” is an opportunity to celebrate and support the work of PULSE in Pittsburgh. Join us for a fun evening of cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, and a silent auction. There will be a special VIP reception from 6 to 7 p.m., followed by the main event from 7 to 10 p.m. Call 412-361-0124 or visit www.pulsepittsburgh.org/pulseations/ for more details.

Ongoing

BLOOMFIELD

Wellness Programs
The Cancer Caring Center in Bloomfield, 4117 Liberty Ave., hosts free wellness programs for cancer patients and their families. Classes are offered in Zumba, hands-on therapy, yoga, art therapy, and reiki. Call 412-622-1212 for an appointment.

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March 27

BLOOMFIELD

Spring Craft Fair
Come to West Penn Hospital – Wintergarden, 4800 Friendship Ave., from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be an array of gift items for your shopping pleasure and a basket raffle. Call April at 412-578-5482 for more details, or if you are interested in participating in the fair.

ROSS TOWNSHIP

Job Fair
Representative Dom Costa will hold his annual job fair at the Ross Township Community Center, 1000 Ross Municipal Dr, behind the Big Lots on McKnight Road, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Come meet with more than 50 employers hiring in and around the Pittsburgh area. Those attending are encouraged to bring copies of their resumes. For more information, call 412-361-2040.

March 28

BLYTHE PARK

Acupressure and Reiki Workshop
Blythe Parks Yoga and Wellness, 3620 Imperial Blvd., will be offering an Acupressure and Reiki Workshop on Monday and Tuesday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The workshop is for anyone interested in exploring the ancient art of Acupressure and Reiki. Participants will learn how to use their hands to balance the energy body and how to use the body to create a relaxed and balanced system. The workshop will be held in our private and comfortable Yoga Studio. All participants must bring a white t-shirt. Call 412-963-5765 to register.

April

GARFIELD

Inversion Workshop
Representative Dom Costa will hold his annual job fair at the Ross Township Community Center, 1000 Ross Municipal Dr, behind the Big Lots on McKnight Road, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Come meet with more than 50 employers hiring in and around the Pittsburgh area. Those attending are encouraged to bring copies of their resumes. For more information, call 412-361-2040.

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GARDEN IN GARFIELD

Garden in Garfield
Are you a Garfield resident looking to grow your own food this year? At Kincaid Street Community Garden you can adopt a plot, volunteer, or participate in events. Leave a message at 412-450-0371 to learn more or visit gc.gardens.com/kincaid-gardens.

Night Market Vendors
This year’s Garfield Night Market was a success, and the planning process has already begun for next season. If you are a vendor, or are interested in becoming a vendor, send an email to garfieldnightmarket@gmail.com. Also, stay tuned to http://garfieldnightmarket.org for updates.

LAWRENCEVILLE

Sunday Market
The Night Gallery hosts a market every Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. Come to 4936 Harrison St. for artisan bread, fresh coffee, and amazing jewelry.

Adult Game Night
Join your neighbors at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – Lawrenceville, 279 Fisk St., every Monday at 4:30 p.m. for Teen Time. Play Xbox 360 or Xbox One, make movies, and play music. Or you can just come and hang out.

April Bulletin Deadline: March 13
Download advertising information: bit.ly/bulletin_ad
Download guidelines for stories, photos, and notices: bit.ly/bulletin_news

Little Learners
Come to the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – Lawrenceville, 279 Fisk St., every Wednesday at 6 p.m. for family playtime. Using a wide array of age-appropriate toys, little learners will experience something exciting with their caregivers at their sides. Recommended for newborns to 3-year-olds and their families.

Youth Tennis Clinics
Beginner and intermediate tennis clinics for ages 6 to 10 are offered every Thursday night from 7 to 8 p.m. at Arsenal Middle School’s gym, 220 40th St. No experience necessary. Rackets are provided or you can bring your own. $10 per session or $45 for five sessions of your choosing. Non-marking shoes only, please. For questions or to pre-register, please contact Dave at Lawrenceville United, 412-802-7220 or Dave@LUnited.org.

Art Exhibit
The next Gallery on 43rd Street exhibit is “Plein Air Landscapes” by Lisa Brenner. Brenner is an associate professor of art at Givens State College in West Virginia. She recently traveled to Spello, Italy for a plein air workshop, and her show focuses on work from that trip. The exhibit runs at 187 43rd St. from March 6 to April 18, with an opening reception on March 6 from 7 to 10 p.m. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. For more information, call 412-683-6488, or visit www.facebook.com/gallery.43rdstreet.

Volunteers Needed
The Estelle S. Campbell Boys & Girls Club is looking for adult volunteers for arts and crafts, computers, sports, and/or fitness. Volunteers must have current child abuse and criminal clearances. For details, call 412-682-4013.

Afterschool Programs
The Estelle S. Campbell Boys & Girls Club is accepting applications for membership in after-school and evening programs. Children ages 5 to 18 are welcome. The monthly fee for individuals is $12, or $10 per child for a family of two or more children. Call 412-682-4013 for more information. Don’t miss out on the fun.

MORNINGSIDE

Tax Return Assistance
Representative Dom Costas office will help seniors with simple income tax returns at 6808 Greenwood St. You must be 65 or older with an income under $35,000 to be eligible. Participants must schedule an appointment by calling 412-361-2040.

SHADYSIDE

Curious About Quakerism?
The Religious Society of Friends holds a “Meeting for Worship” each Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. at 4836 Ellisworth Ave. Earlier arrival is encouraged, and all are welcome. Light refreshments and fellowship follow the service. For more information, call 412-683-2669 or visit www.quaker.org/pghpamm.
Lawrenceville partnership matches employers with job seekers

By Moira Egler Lawrenceville Corporation

Lawrenceville – The “Lawrenceville Works” program has been wildly successful in matching local job seekers with nearby companies since its creation in July of 2013.

Lawrenceville Works is a partnership between Lawrenceville United, Lawrenceville Corporation, and Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Pennsylvania aimed at reducing unemployment and targeting poverty in the East End.

According to statistics provided by Goodwill, Lawrenceville Works has successfully placed 125 candidates with local businesses, 93 of whom hail from the 15201 ZIP code.

Jeff Sapienza, employer engagement liaison for Goodwill, said that the program not only helps community members find gainful employment, but also provides employers with high-quality, pre-screened candidates.

“Companies save time and energy searching for candidates,” Sabo said. “We know they are thankful for that.”

According to Goodwill, Lawrenceville Works has engaged 28 employers within Lawrenceville alone, and many have offered rave reviews of their experience.

The influx of retail and hospitality businesses into the neighborhood translates to potential employment opportunities for residents in those fields. Dora Walmsley, co-owner of Lawrenceville’s own 52nd Street Market, used the program to hire one of the market’s employees.

“We were given a pool of candidates whose missions and philosophies were very much in line with our own, and had skill sets that were already complementary to what we were trying to achieve at the market,” Walmsley said.

Tender Bar and Kitchen, another Lawrenceville establishment, hired a dishwasher though Lawrenceville Works who was able to move up through the ranks to a prep cook position.

In addition to smaller businesses, Lawrenceville Works has provided staffing solutions to large regional companies like UPMC.

Shaina Walker, a workforce development recruiter for UPMC, noted that UPMC has hired for a diverse range of positions through Lawrenceville Works.

“[The staff] prepped the candidates ahead of time to make sure they were work-ready and prepared to interview,” she said. “The program has provided us with individuals who are accountable, responsible, and who remain employed.”

Lawrenceville Works team members said the program helps to build positive connections within the Lawrenceville neighborhood.

“Employers walk away from their experience with Lawrenceville Works feeling really good, like they’re giving back to the community,” Brandolph said.

Above: The Lawrenceville Works team, from left to right: Jeff Sapienza, Ashley Brandolph, and Andrew Sabo. Photo by Jen Kropinak.