Community center secures funding to upgrade facilities

By John Kohl  Bulletin contributor

Lawrenceville – The Stephen Foster Community Center (SFCC, 286 Main St.) represents an eclectic mix of old and new - the long-remembered and the now trending - in the middle of a neighborhood beset by change.

Owned and operated by the Catholic Youth Association (CYA), the center is located at the corner of Fisk and Main Sts. in Lawrenceville, adjacent to the Lawrenceville branch of the Carnegie Library. According to a photocopy of its original building permit, the SFCC was built in 1885.

In February, the center secured a $70,000 grant (financed by state lottery funds) to rehabilitate its fitness facilities. "We're really excited," Gretchen Fay, Executive Director of the SFCC, said at the time. "We're going to call the workmen today."

Construction has been underway for months now, as the third-floor gymnasium recently got a facelift and a new roof. The grant money will also cover the expense of improving the facility's restrooms, painting its interiors, and purchasing additional exercise equipment.

Stanton Heights steps ripen for re-purpose as public mosaic

A message from the Stanton Heights Neighborhood Assoc.

"GASP for Clean Air": local exhibit helps residents point out pollution

By Emily Persico  Group Against Smog & Pollution

Stanton Heights - Driving up Stanton Ave. from Lawrenceville, with the Allegheny Cemetery wall to the right, motorists catch a view of a neighborhood rain

See Mosaic Steps | page 4

Garfield - On Thursday, Aug. 10, as the avenue's rush-hour traffic gave way to weeknight calm, the air inside Assemble's 4824 Penn Ave. headquarters bustled with

See GASP Air Fair | page 7

ABOVE: Attendees of the Group Against Smog & Pollution's (GASP) "Air Fair" discuss various sources of air pollution at Assemble. The story begins at left and continues on page 7. Photo by Maren Cooke.
The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) is a membership organization that counts on residents and business owners like you to support its efforts.

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Please make checks out to Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation and mail to: Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, 5149 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA (15224). You may also donate via the United Way (BGC is option #260).

Thank you for your support!
Penn Ave. - Considering the spate of eyesore properties the Bulletin has investigated over the last few months, the newspaper's staff has decided to double down on showcasing the avenue's encouraging new investments. Two neighboring, women-owned businesses - Mixtape and Los Sabrosos Dance Co. are the joint winners of September's “Showcase of the Month.”

Both establishments arrived on Penn Ave. about three years ago, during the tumultuous first phase of the roadway's reconstruction project. Enduring the brunt of the disruption with grace, the visionaries behind Los Sobrosos and Mixtape could see the area's bright future on the horizon.

“We're not going to lie,” Mixtape co-owner Katie Molchan admitted. “Being a part of the avenue immediately after Phase 1 reconstruction wasn’t easy, but it has been worth the struggle. The neighborhood is slowly growing, but still maintaining its creative roots, and we love being surrounded by other small, locally-owned businesses and nonprofits.”

Thanks to the new streetscapes installed during reconstruction, the avenue is now more walkable than ever, which has paid dividends for local stakeholders like Los Sobrosos owner Nicolette Pawlowski, who relocated her studio from downtown Pittsburgh to Garfield. “As a dance studio that values diversity, we love the location because it is a major intersection for lots of different people to come together,” she told the Bulletin. “People love that they can walk here for ‘Salsa Night’ with their kids.”

Now that they have become staples of the avenue, both the lounge and dance studio are beginning to generate a significant amount of local foot traffic. “We have the most wonderful, diverse, and genuine regular [customers], many of them locals,” Molchan said. “It’s not uncommon for a regular to walk in and greet half of the people in the bar. We’re not even surprised by it anymore.”

BELOW: Dancers take to the sidewalk in front of Los Sabrosos Dance Co. (4909 Penn Ave.) during a May 2016 Unblurred event. Photo by Keith Williams.

ABOVE: In front of Mixtape (4907 Penn Ave.), colorful planters welcome customers to stop by for drinks and refreshments inside a hip, eclectic lounge environment. Photo courtesy of Mixtape.
Mosaic Steps  continued from page 1

Over the last few years, the all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization has secured a $10,000 grant from the Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority and two different $1,000 “Love Your Block” grants (the second of which was awarded for excellent project vision), as well as a $500 grant from local electricity supplier Constellation - all to support the neighborhood’s rain garden.

Across the street at Stanton and McCandless, the project expands around a sign reading, “Welcome to Stanton Heights.” Still, the most exciting development in the neighborhood might just be the “Stanton Heights Steps Project.”

Under the artistic leadership of Laura Jean McLaughlin - owner of the Clay Penn, an art gallery at 5111 Penn Ave. in Garfield - a set of city steps right above the rain garden will be transformed into a mosaic work of public art.

The artist’s vision for the steps emphasizes nature, diversity, and inclusion; she intends for the artwork to be funny and whimsical, and even funky. McLaughlin is no stranger to designing mosaic steps, either. Last year, she designed the Oakley St. steps on the South Side, near 27th and Josephine Sts.

As visitors travel up the hill, along a major gateway to Stanton Heights, her vision will unfold in one spectacular view. The scene, as depicted on the front face of each of the forty-four steps, will be evocative of the neighborhood’s unique demographics.

Local residents will create each of the steps based on McLaughlin’s template, applying the tiles and grout in a process that takes from six to eight hours per step. Procedural training will be held at the Neighborhood Academy in Stanton Heights (709 N Aiken Ave.) at times to be announced.

A crowd-sourcing campaign to raise $7,240 is currently underway; contributions may be made at www.ioby.org/project/stanton-heights-steps-project. Checks may be made out to the SHNA and mailed to the following address: 4283 Coleridge St. / Pittsburgh, PA / 15201.

Friendship House Tour welcomes conversation about preservation

By Martha Ann Terry Friendship Community Group

Friendship - On Sunday, September 24, the Friendship Community Group (FCG) will hold its annual house tour, highlighting a wide array of homes and architectural styles throughout the neighborhood.

Chairied by FCG Board member Sara DeLucia, the House Tour Committee includes neighborhood residents Jennifer Haven, Mora McLaughlin, Luke Panza, Vicki Potter, and Board member Jeff Tobe.

Five homeowners have already committed to opening their homes to the public; among them are a solar-paneled domicile known as the “energy house” and a home that has been retrofitted to accommodate wheelchair access.

A two-time veteran of the event, DeLucia views the Friendship House Tour as a rewarding way to celebrate the neighborhood’s heritage. “Opening our doors to the public, among them a solar-paneled domicile known as the “energy house” and a home that has been retrofitted to accommodate wheelchair access.

For the uninitiated, house tours are somewhat of a local tradition, almost as ubiquitous as “cookie tables.” A city full of old housing stock, and one that prides itself on reuse and resourcefulness, Pittsburgh is always proud to show off its proverbial living room.

Local house tours illustrate a very accessible theme: how one can live in the city, grow a verdant yard, and make lasting friendships with neighbors. “They are a wonderful chance to showcase what’s behind those walls,” DeLucia said, “and the unique people who live there.”

Corrine DeBoer, a University of Pittsburgh student working to complete practicum hours for her Master of Public Health degree, assisted the committee in planning this year’s tour. Lending a hand to the recruitment effort, brochure design, and general event logistics, she did “a little bit of everything.”

“I have learned how dynamic a community can be,” DeBoer revealed. “Bringing people together can be hard but, without these connections, life would be boring.”

The tour begins at 11 a.m. at Baum Grove (400 Roup Ave.), a public green-space owned and maintained by the FCG. Tickets cost $25 apiece; proceeds will support the upkeep of Baum Grove. To learn more, and to pre-order tickets, visit www.friendshiphousetour.org.

SAVE THE DATE: Friday, Nov. 3, 2017 Annual BGC Luncheon

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation’s (BGC) annual luncheon is scheduled for Friday, November 3 at the Omni William Penn Hotel in Downtown Pittsburgh. This event is a great opportunity for friends and supporters to gather to reflect on the prior year and celebrate our accomplishments together.

For information about purchasing a ticket to the luncheon or signing up for a sponsorship, please contact Aggie Brose, Deputy Director of the BGC, at 412-441-6950 (ext. 15).
Creative writing program nurtures voice of young women in Garfield

By Vivian Lee Croft Girls Write Pittsburgh

Garfield – “Girls Write Pittsburgh” (GWP), a project of New Sun Rising, inspires young women to grow their voices through the craft of creative writing.

Encouraging self-empowerment, growth, and discovery, it is the city’s only program that focuses on the creative expression of writing for self-identified teen girls. Every Tuesday, Assembly (4824 Penn Ave.) hosts a Garfield workshop from 7 to 8 p.m.; the Brookline Teen Outreach Center (520 Brookline Blvd.) hosts a Wednesday session from 6 to 7 p.m.

These workshops are free and open to young writers between the ages of 13 and 18. The only requirements for participation are a completed application - which can be found on the Girls Write Pittsburgh website - and a willingness to write.

Led by writing professionals and published authors, the workshops cover prompt writing, genre exploration, and constructive criticism; educators encourage young authors to submit their works for cooperative review.

Since its October 2016 launch, the program has served over 100 young writers from over a dozen local neighborhoods. Girls now have a unique opportunity to participate alongside others who share a desire to write.

These safe, engaging workshop spaces have led to friendships, personal and emotional growth, improved writing, and new career opportunities. In addition to gaining valuable critical-thinking experience, young writers can learn how to build a foundation of portfolio work.

GWP’s next quarterly event (a longer, genre-specific version of the weekly workshop) is scheduled for Friday, September 22, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Andy Warhol Museum (117 Sandusky St) in the Northside.

Thanks to a partnership with “Girls Rock! Pittsburgh,” this songwriting workshop is free to those who register. All GWP events are posted on Facebook and Instagram (@GirlsWritePittsburgh). ♦

The grant is a great investment in the social, emotional and physical well-being of older adults in the community,” Rep. Ravenstahl said at the time.

The SFCC is currently the largest “Meals-on-Wheels” distributor in the city; every weekday, the center also provides more than 300 meals on-site to seniors who walk there from home. CYA employees offer adult and child daycare, and also host wellness classes and regular events like “Bingo Night.”

In March, Pennsylvania Department of Aging Secretary Teresa Osborne visited the Lawrenceville hub to spread the word about the state’s new Community Healthy Choices program, which aims to serve persons with disabilities and older Pennsylvanians in their homes and communities, rather than inside a nursing facility.

“The Department of Health and Human Services will continue to make critical investments that improve the lives of older Pennsylvanians, such as Community Health Choices and senior community center grants,” Secretary Osborne said during her visit.

Apart from all the new indoor attractions, some local seniors still flock to the center because of its antique architecture. Considering the building’s lintel structure, it maintains an unassuming humility.

Heavy masonry and concrete work frame everything in a way that communicates endurance over style. Integrated into the building’s façade, a tower and sloped roof recall an old, Italian countryside motif, providing both function and form on a site that has always been integral to the neighborhood.

SFCC’s namesake, Stephen C. Foster, was born into privilege on July 4, 1826 - one of ten children. As a young man, Foster attended the best schools; his music studies proved monumentally successful at an early age.

The young musician was accepted into Jefferson College (now William & Jefferson College). In spite of the robust instruction he received, Foster left the campus without a degree.

He soon moved to Ohio, hoping to help his brother in the boating business. While in Ohio, Foster wrote several classic songs, including “My Kentucky Home,” “Oh! Susanna,” and “Hard Times Come Again No More.”

Unfortunately, the songwriter’s appetite for success and drink was greater than his stomach for the limelight. At the age of 37, Foster died penniless (under mysterious circumstances) inside a New York City tenement, where he apparently fell and cut his neck.

His life serves as a reminder of how much can be accomplished, and also how much can be undone, during a lifetime of creative achievement.

Ironically enough, the man’s legacy is now entwined with the service of people who have lived much longer than he ever did – seniors who frequent the SFCC to socialize and improve their quality of life.

Local residents who would like to engage with programs at the SFCC may call 412-621-3342. ♦

Above: Lawrenceville’s Stephen Foster Community Center (SFCC) remains a community hub for many local residents. Thanks to a new state grant funded by lotto monies, SFCC is now upgrading its exercise facilities. Photo by Andrew McKeon.
Lawrenceville - On Saturday, September 9, Lawrenceville United (LU) will host its fifth annual party and fundraiser, “LIVE! in Lawrenceville,” from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Teamster Temple (4701 Butler St.).

This year’s event features food and libations from some of the neighborhood’s favorite restaurants and breweries, a dance party deejayed by AriCole, raffle baskets, and retro games throughout the night - including “Skee-Ball,” “Roller Bowler,” and “Money Wheel.”

The evening will also include awards for “Neighbor of the Year” and “Outstanding Community Partner.” Nominees for this year’s “Neighbor of the Year” include Barb Kelly, Wayne Grgurich, Kate & Josh Bayer, and Jennifer Kupin Kiley. Nominees for “Outstanding Community Partner” include Pittsburgh Arsenal 6-8 School, Community Relations Officer Antoine Davis of Zone 2 Police, and the Foundry at 41st Street.

All proceeds from the night will benefit LU’s mission to improve and protect quality of life for all Lawrenceville residents. LU works on public safety, holds free community events, partners with neighborhood schools, helps older adults age in place successfully, cleans and greens the neighborhood, and much more.

The organization’s all-volunteer board applauds the generosity of the following event sponsors: the Century Group, Gerbe Holdings, Industry Public House, mossArchitects, 52nd Street Market, Allegheny Cemetery, Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania, Cavacini Garden Center, Nancy Gippert, Elisco Advertising, Espresso a Mano, Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania, the Pizza Company, Be Galleries, Nied’s Hotel, Teamsters Local Union 249, Wildcard, Arsenal Bowling Lanes, Pittsburgh Pirates, Salonika Imports, Pusadee’s Garden, Phoenix Boutique, Wheel & Wedge Chees Shop, A+ Schools, Salem’s, and EngineHouse 25.

Tickets are now available for purchase on LU’s website (www.LUnited.org), and may also be purchased at LU’s office (4839 Butler St.); each ticket includes admission, food, and drink.

Tickets will cost $30 at the door ($10 for members of LU’s AdvantAGE and PEP Rally programs, and $15 for volunteers who take a shift). For more information, please call LU at 412-802-7220 or email info@LUnited.org.

LU fundraiser spotlights local stakeholders

By Dave Breingan Lawrenceville United

Many Bulletin readers connect with the paper at dozens of bulk pickup spots throughout the city. If you would like to have copies of the Bulletin delivered to your local business or community organization every month, email Bulletin@Bloomfield-Garfield.org.
energy. Eight tables, crammed edge-to-edge, wrapped around the room; each one featured a different group advocating to enhance local air quality.

Billed as an “Air Fair,” the event was organized by the Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP), a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit devoted to improving air quality in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

According to the organization’s executive director, Rachel Filippini, “[GASP’s] goal for the Air Fair was to provide community members an opportunity to meet with organizations working to improve Pittsburgh’s air quality.”

Representatives from Allegheny County Clean Air Now (ACCAN), Clean Water Action, PennEnvironment, Citizens for Pennsylvania’s Future, Reducing Outdoor Contaminants in Indoor Spaces (ROCIS), and the Sierra Club were able to connect with local residents at the fair. “In connecting people with these organizations, we hope to empower and direct them towards a deeper involvement in the fight for clean air,” Filippini said.

The groups provided petitions, pamphlets, stories, and statistics as event-goers snacked on cheese and crackers and explored GASP’s interactive exhibit entitled “GASP for Clean Air.” Thanks to Shelby Brewster, a PhD student in Theater and Performance Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, cheese and crackers were not the only refreshments on hand.

With a nod to GASP’s tradition of using cookies to bring people together and drive political change, Brewster whipped up some “polluted meringues” for the crowd. “Meringues are up to 90% air,” she explained, “so, by whipping up egg whites in polluted areas, the meringues capture any pollutants currently present in the air.”

With advocacy in the air and sweet pollution on the tongue, attendees were free to wander; the exhibit remained on display through the month of August. During the fair, kids got a chance to pump up real pig lungs and literally pick knowledge from a giant nose while their adult counterparts roamed through the environmental justice installation and quizzed each other about different sources of air pollution.

As a member of ACCAN, and also a GASP board member, Karen Grzywinski could not have been more enthused about the creative programming. “The whole exhibit is amazing,” she exclaimed. “Great work by all.”

In partnering with Assemble for the Aug. 10 event, GASP was able to reach engage hundreds of local residents in critical dialogue about the air around them. The organization begged one question of every attendee: “Now that you know Pittsburgh has some of the worst air quality in the country, what are you going to do about it?”

Although it was a one-night-only affair, the air fair managed to nurture a dialogue that can help further GASP’s year-round mission. Those who missed the event can still connect with plenty of local opportunities to get involved and advocate for clean air. Visit www.gasp-pgh.org to sign up for hikes, RSVP for “GASP-toberfest,” and subscribe to the GASP Alert.
Garfield - Nursing his arm in a sling after undergoing shoulder surgery, Jason Sauer is still itching to drive out of state and bring all of Penn Ave. along for the ride. Together with his wife, Nina, Sauer owns and operates Most Wanted Fine Art (MWFA, 5015 Penn Ave.) - an art gallery that feels more like a community hub - in Garfield.

MWFA was recently invited to exhibit at the Oglebay Institute, a nonprofit arts organization based in Wheeling, WV. The Sauers will bring a new exhibit called “#OpenOnPenn” to the Stifel Fine Arts Center, Oglebay’s beautiful brick-and-mortar nucleus housed in a historic mansion. Curated jointly by MWFA and the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), the exhibit will feature Jason’s work alongside local artists, Danielle Robinson, D.S Kinsel, J.R Holtz, and Sam Thorp.

Incorporating artworks and historical documents (including back issues of the Bulletin), “#OpenOnPenn” aims to transport the essence of what the Penn Ave. arts district is to West Virginia, where it will be on display through October. MWFA will also screen films from local visionaries like Chris Ivey (East of Liberty: In Unlivable Times) during an opening reception at the Stifel Center on Thursday, Sept. 7.

Currently building their own progressive arts institute on Colombo St. in Garfield, just up the hill from their gallery, Jason and Nina are eager to take notes at Oglebay. In August, the Bulletin caught up with the arts’ ambassadors as they prepared for a screen-printing workshop at the Andy Warhol Museum before packing up MWFA’s signature “art cars” and setting off for Wheeling.

“We are hoping to portray a sense of wonderment that will lead people to visit the avenue and experience it firsthand.”

~ Nina Sauer, Most Wanted Fine Art

**Bulletin: What makes Penn Avenue unique in your eyes, both as an arts district and as a neighborhood artery for the rest of the city?**

Nina: “We try to visit several arts districts a year to take notes and get a feel for how they address community needs in their neighborhoods. We are always impressed with how Penn Ave. is full of friendly, diverse spaces that all have their own very unique flare, but are still unified in a do-it-yourself spirit. Everyone is doing their own thing but always helping each other and the community at large.”

**Bulletin: How did you guys arrive at name “#OpenOnPenn”?**

Jason: “We have loved the ‘#OpenonPenn’ hashtag since its inception [amidst Phase 1 of the Penn Ave. reconstruction project]. The idea of rolling out the welcome mat seemed to fit in with the idea of the show. But, we wanted to make sure to show that there are struggles happening around us and illustrate how Penn Ave artists are working to help elevate these struggles for new audiences.”

**Bulletin: The show seems like it really invites discourse about life on Penn Ave. In conversation with the exhibit’s visitors, do you think you’ll learn anything new about the avenue once you see it through their eyes?**

Jason: “This dialogue is the conversation we want to create – one that constructs new and better language for artists – to stress the cultural importance of the Penn Ave. arts scene. We are hoping to portray a sense of wonderment that will lead people to visit the avenue and experience it firsthand.”
Bulletin: Are you worried that any of the Penn Ave magic might get lost in translation for out-of-state audiences?

Nina: “We are really excited to be able to introduce Penn Ave arts scene to other cities. MWFA has independently been traveling to major and minor cities, across all regions of America, to discuss and encourage artistic tourism and relocation to Pittsburgh. We have been giving away copies of the Bulletin as business cards - to provide a serious example of the strength of the Penn Ave. arts district.”

Bulletin: Now that you are in the process of creating your own art institute in Garfield, what kind of insights are you hoping to get from your visit to Oglebay?

Nina: “We are definitely interested in the ability to fund projects of this scale. Creating an art show that has over fifty artists really merits some historical notation; that is the goal of our new space. We really want Pittsburgh artists to explore their surrounding cities and their respective arts districts. The ability of an artist to travel and show their art while building a national exhibition resume is a truly rewarding experience.”

Bulletin: How can Garfield - and Pittsburgh as a whole - work to nurture the development of arts organizations like Oglebay?

Jason: “Group art shows create an environment that is unlike a solo show because they use networking and common goals as underlying themes. We, Pittsburgh, can use the successes of other arts programs to help with our future destination as an art scene. We believe that Pittsburgh is the best city for an artist’s ‘home base’ as they vie for national recognition. The stability of Pittsburgh allows an artist to try out scenes in other cities; if they fail out there, these artists know that they can always return home, where they are loved and respected.”

Visit www.facebook.com/MostWantedFineArt or www.OIonline.com/stifel to learn more about “OpenOnPenn.”

AT LEFT: Volunteers collaborate during a “Paint Duncan Park” workday on July 15 in Lawrenceville. The park, which has seen better days, has lately been receiving some tender love and care from the folks at Lawrenceville United (LU) and their network of neighborhood volunteers. A fresh coat of paint is already doing wonders for the formerly derelict site; basketball and four-square games will now be more vivid than ever. LU has also engaged nearby community members to spruce Duncan Park up by planting milkweed and other foliage on the grounds. The organization’s efforts have been made possible by “Love Your Resilient Block,” a partnership between the City of Pittsburgh, People’s Natural Gas, and Cities of Service to revitalize Pittsburgh - block by block. Photo by Aaron Dray.
Lawrenceville neighbor’s creative reuse on display for house tour

By Kate Bayer Bulletin contributor

Lawrenceville - A self-proclaimed “urban dumpster diver,” Dr. Colleen Krajewski has decorated her Lawrenceville home with items found in the trash and others purchased at estate sales, flea markets, or businesses that specialize in the sale of retro and “art nouveau” objects.

In a sitting room, she has rejuvenated an Adrian Pearsall coffee table into an exquisite accent piece – in concert with refinished dining room chairs (saved from a dumpster). A vintage credenza and bar-cart complete the stunning dining room motif. Much of the brass found in Krajewski’s home, like a handmade chandelier, is old and recycled.

All these rescued treasures, and more, will be on display during the annual Lawrenceville Hospitality House Tour on Sunday, October 1; the self-guided tour runs from Noon to 5 p.m.

Beginning Sept. 5, tickets will be made available for purchase at the following local businesses: City Grows, Gallery on 43rd St., Wild Card, 52nd Street Market, Pavement, and C’s Upholstery. Molly’s Trolleys will be on-site for visitors to take a historic trolley ride through the neighborhood’s main streets, accompanied by a docent from the Lawrenceville Historical Society.

Advance tickets cost $15 each. Any senior (age 55 and over) who can provide proof of their age may buy an advance ticket for $12. More information about the tour is listed at www.lha15201.org. E-mail lawrencevillehospitality@gmail.com to learn more.

Enright Community Garden seeks volunteers

Hello,

Back in 2008, with the help of East Liberty Development, Inc. (ELDI), Grow Pittsburgh, Kentucky Avenue School, Whole Foods Market, various partners, and a crew of enthusiastic neighbors, Enright Community Garden was established in East Liberty. The site of the garden is a vacant lot that was acquired by ELDI through tax delinquent property sales. Prior to its conversion as a garden, the lot was an eyesore and, frankly, a blight on the neighborhood.

Up until 2015, the garden was managed by a staff member from Whole Foods, who was paid to run programs and coordinate volunteer efforts. It was a great project and very successful. That support ended due to restructuring in upper management, and changed priorities for the company. We have been trying to reinvent ourselves this year in partnership with Kentucky Avenue School - and working with Repair the World on volunteer hours and days - but on-going changes in the neighborhood have been taking the key community players away from the garden to work on other issues, and everyone’s time is limited.

I’m putting out a call to see if there is anyone who is interested in getting involved in the garden, and acting a community liaison for the site. I simply don’t have the capacity to continue at this time, and would love to bring some other people into the mix. It’s a great spot; good bones and well located. Please let me know if you are interested by sending a message to enright.park@gmail.com.

Thank you,
Sallyann Kluz
Enright Community Group
“Join me in confronting mental health issues”
By State Rep. Jake Wheatley (D) Allegheny

Op-Ed

19th District - To my first born, Jayla: Daddy loves you even during those dark, self-imposed days of isolation and despair. Shaka and Baby: your shining, beautiful faces keep me pushing toward the light even when I fight to stay in the dark.

I have faced so many days of isolation, confusion and just a desire to let go. It’s taken me years to get to this point of acceptance. But, because of my belief in God and the undying love of my children, I am committed to managing my emotional issues.

Today, for my babies, Daddy is embracing his perfect imperfections so that I can show them how to live their lives to their fullest potential.

Yes, I am claiming publicly that I struggle with depression and issues associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Being a proud man, and a Black man at that, I am not comfortable talking about these types of things.

We are led to believe that to share something about our emotional selves is a sign of weakness. Today, I claim victory over those thoughts of fear and doubt.

The stigma associated with mental health issues has led to situations where many African-Americans are left untreated or undiagnosed. Nationally, according to the U.S. Surgeon General, African-Americans are less likely to receive mental health diagnoses and treatment.

African-Americans have less access to mental health services - and the services that are rendered are of poorer quality. We are also underrepresented in mental health research.

I am aiming to use my personal example to show that seeking help is a sign of strength, and to try to move our communities toward a continual and healthier examination of our mental health, collectively and individually.

July was National Minority Health Awareness Month. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has worked with professionals, practitioners, patients and others to draw attention to mental health and mental health services in marginalized communities across our country since 2008.

NAMI is working to develop innovative ways to inject mental health into larger discussions, including the recommendation of bringing mental health issues into health fairs that typically focus on medical screenings, physical fitness, and nutrition.

In August, I hosted my fifth Annual “Health & Wellness Weekend” with events scheduled throughout the 19th district. Our annual Health & Wellness Weekend’s original purpose was to offer a safe, nurturing and empowering environment where citizens can come and find a supportive hand with whatever struggles they are facing.

Times are changing, and we only have to reflect on Jay-Z’s “4:44” to hear the leaders in our culture and community embracing mental health services.

Although a weekend of events will never be enough time to find and resolve years of hurt, pain, and despair - like what I have slowly begun to rise from - it can help those suffering see through years of fog.

I hope to be a part of this shift, locally and nationwide; I thank my babies, Jayla, Shaka, and Baby, for giving me the courage.

PUBLIC NOTICE

MAGNET RECOGNITION PROGRAM® — SITE VISIT

• West Penn Hospital was designated as a Magnet organization in 2006 and 2012 by the ANCC Magnet Recognition Program®. This prestigious designation recognizes excellence in nursing services. In September 2017, West Penn Hospital is applying for re-designation.

• Patients, family members, staff, and interested parties who would like to provide comments are encouraged to do so. Anyone may send comments via e-mail, and direct mail. All comments received by phone must be followed up in writing to the Magnet Program Office.

NOTE: All comments are CONFIDENTIAL and are not shared with the health care organization. Comments may be anonymous, but they must be sent in writing to the Magnet Program Office.

• Your comments must be received by September 10, 2017.

Address: AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER (ANCC)
MAGNET RECOGNITION PROGRAM OFFICE
8515 Georgia Ave., Suite 400
Silver Spring, MD  20910-3492
E-Mail: magnet@ana.org
Phone: 866-588-3301 (toll free)
All comments received by phone must be followed up in writing to the Magnet Program Office.
Pittsburgh - It's amazing how much progress can happen in twenty-seven days.

"You were scared to let go of the wall, and now you're motorboating and jumping in," Obama Academy swim coach Mark Rauterkus says to his campers, the majority of which struggle to stay afloat in the pool at the beginning of camp. Though he is usually coaching teenagers to lower their times and perfect their technique, he spends the summers with beginners.

Rauterkus led swimming and water polo classes for Summer Dreamers, a Pittsburgh Public Schools summer program, ensuring his assigned campers build confidence in themselves and their ability to swim. Summer Dreamers aims to make camp an accessible option for all the city's youth, no matter their socioeconomic background.

The 5½-week summer program couples academic classes taught by PPS teachers in the morning with more traditional camp activities, led by community partners or coaches such as Rauterkus, in the afternoon.

Learning to swim early on sets kids up for success, Rauterkus said, whether they want to pursue the sport in the future or just stay safe while in the water.

"We're teaching the kids a skill, a lifetime skill," Rauterkus said. "And we're also spending a lot of time in fitness, so they're getting stronger, more endurance. They're learning about exercising, kinetic movement, and their teamwork and sportsmanship."

The program is free for attendees and aims to combat summer learning loss.

"If you look at the availability of opportunities, there's just a lot more for middle class or upper student," James Doyle, coordinator of out-of-school time for PPS, said. "So I might be going on vacation, I might be going to a really expensive day camp, because traditionally when you think 'summer camp,' you think you're going to this place that's out in the woods and you're riding horses and doing all these things."

Summer Dreamers, which began in 2010, took place at Pittsburgh King PreK-8, Carmalt and Pittsburgh University Prep, spread out so families don't have to travel far to a campsite, though the sites do occasionally rotate to other PPS schools. The program concluded Wednesday, Aug. 2, allowing parents to watch a video of their kids' day-to-day activity at camp and tag along during activities to watch their progress.

Weaving through the halls at Pittsburgh King, Three Rivers Fencing employees challenge kids to bouts, using plastic foils. Attack Theatre staff leads an adventures in movement class, teaching dancing and encouraging the group to work as a unit.

The activity in every corner of the school stretches across the North Shore, with children going on miniature "safaris" outside to learn about nature, others practicing public speaking in the Children's Museum radio studio and a group learning about police dogs from a city police officer.

From robotics classes, Lego STEM classes, biking activities, swimming and water polo sessions to creating a mosaic, the idea is to help kids find an out-of-classroom passion they can stick with after camp. The kids don't rotate activities, but specialize in one per summer.

Tracy Calhoun, camp director and third-grade teacher at Pittsburgh King, sees children who have struggled in the classroom thrive in more creative environments. Maybe some students aren't great at math, but they are excellent dancers or artists.

"Those are the things that make me happy," Calhoun said. "To see them shine in their own space." The confidence campers build out of the classroom often carries over into academics, Calhoun said.

When the program began with stimulus dollars, an initiative by President Obama, it could fund up to 5,500 students, and it now funds about 1,500-2,000 students per year, surviving with donations from Heinz Endowments, the Grable Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation and McAuley Ministries, as well as the district's general fund dollars, according to Doyle.

The Wallace Foundation, which studies "ideas and information you can use to help improve learning and enrichment for disadvantaged children and foster the vitality of the arts for everyone," per its website, includes the program in its ongoing long-term study to determine if voluntarily attended summer learning programs help students' academic success.

In 2014, the study determined high attenders of the programs outperformed nonparticipants in both math and English Language Arts on fall and spring testing.

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[Editor's Note: Since 2015, Coach Rauterkus has coordinated a swim & water polo camp for the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation under the United Way's "Summer Dreamers" program.]
Bloomfield
Annabelle F. Javier & Jason R. Wilburn to Diana Tofan at 235 Gross St. for $259,000.
Edward & Lora Adlesic to Kristian Burzuk at 4780 Liberty Ave. for $242,000.
Emily K. Berezin to Kristie Muscara at 235 Sapling Way for $154,000.
Gavin Steingo to Steven Robert Chen-Shan Woodcock at 29 Hemingway St. for $295,000.
James E. Tagge to Longshore Places LLC at 210 Taylor St. for $80,750.
James Edward Cullen to John A. & Mary T. Cullen at 217 G ross St. for $1.
Little Pink Houses LLC to Vito Vergari at 411 Garnet Way for $230,000.
Sarah Fetter at 819 Collins Ave. for $485,000.
Amanda McClintock to Grace B acharach at 1511 M ccandless Ave. for $175,000.
Rose M. & Anna Klobuchar Flajnik to Lynsey F. Kryzwick at 714 53rd St. for $123,500.
Robert & Elizabeth Rodgers Lees to Sth Development LLC at 5414 Harrison St. for $90,000.
Robert J. & Avis A. Morris M grin for Palais Real Estate LLC at 5430 Carnegie St. for $175,000.
Ronald & Kathleen Ann Kopeck to Michael Golensky at 4516 Davison St. for $175,000.
Mark Dibartolo to Andrea A. Lash at 245 Edmond St. for $315,000.
R&R Real Estate Solutions LLC to Sean Wallace & Laura Balch Mahan at 112 S. Atlantic Ave. for $390,000.
Ryan A. & Stacy E. Keene to Dolores S. Kaufmann at 741 S. Millvale Ave. for $45,000.
Christopher T. Proud to Matthew B. Bruchon at 229 N. Fairmount St. for $250,000.
Christopher T. Proud to Matthew B. Bruchon at 231 N. Fairmount St. for $250,000.
Edward L. Powell to Bobby Joynar at 418 N. Mathilda St. for $2,500.
Frank H. Tipton to S 150 LLC at 5150 Penn Ave. for $479,700.
James E. Tagge to Longshore Places LLC at 414 N. Mathilda St. for $71,250.
Louis Carter LLC to Ppre-A LLC at 5419 Broad St. for $57,500.
Marc Anthony Fiore to Jaden Hummel at 5156 Hillcrest St. for $25,000.
Rhett Lieberman to Lydia & Michael Yoder at 5003 Broad St. for $115,000.

East Liberty
Christopher Alan Mundie to Andrew M. Sweet at 5811 Hays St. for $270,000.
Rankin Property Management LLC to 5212 Coral Mng LP at 5533 Black St. for $120,000.
Steel Town Properties MLLC to David H. & Sarah Fetter at 819 Collins Ave. for $485,000.
Thomas D. Mccomnell to K Bennett Enterprises LLC at 628 Collins Ave. for $92,000.
Wayne & Carrie Hawkins to Wayne L. Hawkins Sr. at 613 S. Clair St. for $1.

Lawrenceville
Jane E. Alexander to Kristen A. Budris at 196 36th St. Unit 2-D for $237,000.
Amanda McClintock to Grace Bacharach at 258 39th St. for $271,000.
Bonnie H. Chen to Kevin Yang at 3644 Penn Ave. Unit 307 for $205,000.
Christopher A. Whaley to Richard J. Becker at 3932 Liberty Ave. for $270,698.
City Of Pittsburgh to Roger L. Besecker at 5418 Carnegie St. for $1,500.
Denise M. Burton to Steel Town Properties MLLC at 172 Lodi Way for $80,000.
E Properties & Development to Wai Ching Lam at 5318 Natrona Way for $29,000.

Garfield
Beatrice Frye to Bloomfield Garfield Corporation at 4827 Broad St. for $38,500.
Castle 2015 LLC to DKH Properties Inc. at 5171 Kincaid St. for $37,000.
Castle 2016 LLC to DKH Properties Inc. at 5169 Kincaid St. for $37,000.
Christopher T. & Lindsay J. Proud to Edward J. Flynn to Flyingneers LLC at 378 42nd St. for $1.
Christopher T. Proud to Matthew B. Bruchon at 229 N. Fairmount St. for $250,000.
Edward L. Powell to Bobby Joynar at 418 N. Mathilda St. for $2,500.
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Rhett Lieberman to Lydia & Michael Yoder at 5003 Broad St. for $115,000.

Stanton Heights
Brandon B. & Jessica A. Thompson to Ralph A. Thompson at 4239 Stanton Ave. for $82,539.
Coralie Kartesz to Chalon Carroll Young at 915 Mccandless Ave. for $287,500.
Debra Victoria Thomas to Debra V. Banks at 5159 Rosecrest Dr for $50, Elizabeth Zalec to Erik Thiessen at 5432 Celadine St. for $50,000.
Elizabeth Zalec to Erik Thiessen at 5432 Celadine St. for $50,000.
Heather E. Sekura to Heather E. Dillion at 1184 Woodbine St. for $1.
Kelvin C. Hill to Philip Harry Phillips at 1162 Woodbine St. for $105,000.
Levi C. Shelton to Alessandro L. Pizzini at 1016 Brintell St. for $155,000.
Regina R. & Augustus M. Wagner III to Christopher M. Loren at 1126 Downlook St. for $206,000.
Trent & Barbara Satterthwaite to Jacob M. Kupas at 1026 Downlook St. for $186,979.

For questions, comments, or just to chat, feel free to contact Lillian at 412-335-6068 or email agent.lillian.pgh@gmail.com.
The Bulletin Board publishes listings of free or low-cost events, classes, volunteer opportunities, fundraisers, and services that are of particular interest to our neighborhoods. Listings are published on a space-available basis; we cannot guarantee placement or thorough edits of any listings. Announcements for the October issue of the Bulletin are due by Wednesday, September 20. Please submit listings using our online form at www.bit.ly/bulletin_submit.

**September 2 - Saturday**

**BLOOMFIELD**

*Bloomfest* Block Party

From 3 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 2, neighbors will gather at Friendship Park for a "block party" style community picnic that celebrates Bloomfield. The Bloomfield Development Corporation (BDC) is taking it back to the basics with a stripped down, family-friendly, potluck to meet and celebrate the neighbors and business owners that make Bloomfield an amazing place to live. Bring your friends, kids, a side dish, and a suggested donation ($5 per person, $20 max per family) and listen to jams from Bloomfield's own B Eagle Brothers. Main dishes, water, and sodas will be provided (including retro games, and raffle baskets, all proceeds benefit Bloomfield's amazing place to live. Bring your friends, kids, a side dish, and a suggested donation ($5 per person, $20 max per family) and listen to jams from Bloomfield's own B Eagle Brothers. Main dishes, water, and sodas will be provided (including retro games, and raffle baskets, all proceeds benefit the rider experience and grow ridership and other forms of revenue. Outcomes of planning are intended to be a collaboration of the agency, City, and neighborhood. RSVP to karen@breanassociates.com.

**September 9 - Saturday**

**LAURENCEVILLE**

"LIVE! in Lawrenceville"

Join Lawrenceville United (LU) for its fifth annual signature party and fundraiser, "LIVE! in Lawrenceville" on Saturday, Sept. 9, from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Teaster Temple (4701 Butler St.). Featuring local food and libations, a dance party, retro games, and raffle baskets, all proceeds benefit LU's mission to improve quality of life for all Lawrenceville residents. For more info, contact LU at 412-802-7220 or visit www.LUUnitedOrg.

**September 12 - Tuesday**

**GARFILD**

A. Philip Randolph Institute Hiring Event

Come visit the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENE, 5321 Penn Ave.) on Tuesday, Sept. 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and meet with recruiters for the A. Philip Randolph Institute. They will be looking for participants who are interested in training for Union jobs here in Pittsburgh. This program accepts those with criminal records and also pays for training. For more info, visit www.enecepittsburgh.org.

**September 15 - Friday**

**GARFILD**

Assemble “MakerDate”

MakerDate is a fundraiser and celebration of the impact of Assemble’s Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) based educational programming. Besides being a great party, MakerDate is a one-of-a-kind event, pairing skilled creators with people who want to learn something new. Attendees are able to bid on “dates” with craft makers, designers, technologists and innovators, who will work with the winning bidders to make a piece of art, a personalized piece of technology, or practice a new skill. Instead of a single object, winners receive an unforgettable experience and a new relationship. MakerDate attendees represent a wide range of Pittsburgh businesses, interests, and neighborhoods. All funds raised at the event go toward Assemble’s educational programs. Check out the list of Makers at www.assemblepgh.org/makerdate-2017/.

**September 17 - Sunday**

**LAURENCEVILLE**

Arsenal Album Release

The Stapletons will release their debut album, “Ballads and Battles”, with a live concert in front of the historic powerhouse in Arsenal Park. The show will be opened by local indie-folk stars Arlo Aldo. The Stapletons will perform the songs featured on their debut album, including the “Ballad of the Arsenal Girls,” which tells the story of the 78 Arsenal girls who died in the fiery explosion at the Arsenal, 155 years ago. The concert will be a family-friendly, community event. Food trucks will begin vending at 5:30 p.m. Audience members are encouraged to bring a blanket or lawn chairs and plan for a picnic at the park. Live music begins at 6 p.m. Admission is free. Albums will be available for purchase.

**September 20 - Wednesday**

**LAURENCEVILLE**

Free History Lecture

The Lawrenceville Historical Society’s public lecture series continues on Wednesday, Sept. 20, with Marilyn Holt, Manager of the Pennsylvania Department, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, speaking on Andrew Carnegie’s devotion to books and the libraries that contain them. There are a world-wide total of 2,509 Carnegie libraries that were built between 1883 and 1929, including some belonging to public and university library systems. This free event will take place at the Carnegie Library (279 Fisk St.) at 6:30 p.m. No reservations necessary.

**September 23 - Saturday**

**CITY-WIDE**

Free Shredding Event

Rep. Dom Costa’s free shredding event will be at the Cherry City Volunteer Fire Department (309 Davis Ave.) on Saturday, Sept. 23 from 9 to 11 a.m. All paper will be shredded on-site. There will be a box (average size limit) Boxes and/or containers will be given back to the event attendees as there are currently no ways to dispose of them on-site. No business shredding will be accepted at this event. The following will also not be accepted: phone books, spiral notebooks, binders, floppy discs, CD/DVDs, bound books or magazines, steel binder clips, steel ACCO fasteners, and other hard metal or plastic materials. If it is raining on the day of the event, please call Rep. Costas office at 412-361-2040 and listen to the voicemail to see if the event will be taking place.

“Think Outside the Boss”

Why would a co-op be better than a regular job (besides co-op worker owners making about 15% more)? How is a worker-owned business run? Who works in cooperatives in Pittsburgh now? The Pittsburgh Chapter of Cooperatives’ Business workshop will answer those questions on Saturday, Sept. 23, from 10 a.m. to Noon. At the Shop at 621 N. Dallas Ave. in Homewood. More info is available at www.PittsburghChamber.coop/events.

**September 24 - Sunday**

**FRIENDSHIP**

Friendship House Tour

The neighborhood of Friendship will open its doors on Sunday, Sept. 24, for the annual House Tour, featuring some beautiful homes and company. Opportunities to participate are still available to showcase a home, volunteer for the event, and be featured as a sponsor. Please contact friendshiphousetour@gmail.com if interested.

**September 21 - Saturday**

**EAST LIBERTY**

Negley Station Meeting

Do not miss the final Negley Station planning meeting on Monday, Sept. 11 on the Carnegie Library in East Liberty’s second floor (130 S Whittier St.). There are two opportunities to share input: from 1 to 2:30 p.m. and from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Building upon input gathered from community members in April, the Port Authority of Allegheny County is inviting stakeholders to come back together to provide feedback on concepts for improvements to station access, station design, and transit-oriented development. Port Authority’s goals for this plan are to identify ways to improve the rider experience and grow ridership and other forms of revenue. Outcomes of planning are intended to be a collaboration of the agency, City, neighborhood. RSVP to karen@breanassociates.com.

**September 23 - Saturday**

**LAURENCEVILLE**

Friendship House Tour

The neighborhood of Friendship will open its doors on Sunday, Sept. 24, for the annual House Tour, featuring some beautiful homes and company. Opportunities to participate are still available to showcase a home, volunteer for the event, and be featured as a sponsor. Please contact friendshiphousetour@gmail.com if interested.

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October 1 - On-going -

CITY-WIDE

Become a Scout

Boy scouting is a program designed for boys in Grades 1-5 (Cub) and ages 11-17 (Boy) that emphasizes leadership, citizenship and personal fitness while developing character, family understanding and community service. It is camping, kayaking, archery, BB shooting, campsites, fun with friends and more. A nearby cub scout pack meets on Wednesdays at St. Raphael Parish Activity Center in Morningside at 6:30 p.m. A Boy Scout Troop meets in Lawrenceville at the VFW, Post 214 (316 52nd St.) on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. If interested in either unit, you may call Scout Master Bob McKinstry at 412-661-2963 or email Emckin1133@aol.com.

September 27 - Wednesday

EAST LIBERTY

Thriliv Festival

Celebrating its fifth year, the “Thriliv Innovation + Music Festival” brings its unique innovation-focused programming and two-day outdoor live music experience back to Pittsburgh this September 27 - 30. Thriliv Innovation will be hosted in numerous locations throughout East Liberty and Pittsburgh’s East End - including the Ace Hotel and the Kelly Strayhorn Theater. Wiz Khalifa, Logic, GRiZ, Two Door Cinema Club, and more acts will perform at Thriliv Music, hosted at the historic Carrie Furnaces in nearby Swissvale, Pennsylvania. More information and tickets are available at thrilivfestival.com. Follow Thriliv (@thrilivfestival) and contact the festival at info@ascenderpgh.com.

STANTON HEIGHTS

SHNA Monthly Meeting

Meeting from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the Sunnyside Library (4801 Stanton Ave.). Topics will include updates on community projects, including the mosaic steps and several city and local initiatives. The meeting will also feature a speaker from Flexable to speak about options for families needing flexible or last-minute child care.

Foster Parents Needed

Would you like to make a difference in the life of a child? Are you a caring, affectionate, dependable, responsible, and patient person over the age of 21? Three Rivers Youth is in search of qualified individuals to become foster parents for children and teens. Training is free and conveniently located at 6117 Broad St. in East Liberty. Call 412-441-5020 for more information.

GARFIELD

Employment Assistance

Are you looking for a job? Come on in to the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC), located at 3521 Penn Ave. in Garfield. Meet with our staff to help you get hired. We have 20+ computers for job-searching and checking emails and we host hiring events every month with employers like Allegheny Health Network, Starbucks, Chipotle, The University of Pittsburgh, & many more. We also hold information sessions with CCCA to help you find your next career path. Call us at (412) 362-8580 or visit www.enecpgh.org for more details.

Garfield Greens Guild

The Garfield Greens Guild working group will meet on the 1st Monday of the month at 7 p.m.; coordinated clean up activities will take place on the 2nd Saturday of each month at 11 a.m. for the duration of 2017. Meetings will be held at the Community Activity Center (113 N. Pacific Ave.); Saturdays will involve site-specific locations throughout the neighborhood. For more info, call 412-365-5781 or email greensguild@gmail.com.

Open Call for Artists

Assemble is now accepting proposals for its 2018 Unblurred Artist Showcase. Assemble will select 10 local artists and makers for participation in a month-long show at Assemble’s space on Penn Avenue from the months of February to November 2018. Chosen artists and makers will also have the opportunity to share their skills, incubate new and creative ideas, and facilitate community-engaged projects. For more info, please visit www.assemblepgh.org/on-view/call-karstis/

Save the Date: October

LAWRENCIVILLE

Hospitality House Tour

Lawrenceville’s Hospitality House Tour will be held on Sunday, Oct. 1, beginning at noon and ending at 5 p.m. Ten resident-owned and -occupied homes, along with two points of interest, will be featured. The tour is self-guided and begins at Allegheny Cemetery (4734 Butler St.) at noon on Oct. 1. Advance tickets ($15) will go on sale beginning September 5 at City Growers; Gallery on 4th; Wild Card, Pavement, and T’s Upholstery. Take a “historic” trolley ride on Molly’s Trolleys with the Lawrenceville Historical Society. For more information, visit www.lia15201.org.

Flea Market

The Stephen Foster Center’s first flea market is Sunday, Oct. 1, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at 286 Main St. Enjoy shopping at flea market and vendor tables and buying baked goods and other food. There is also a 50/50 raffle and face painting. It is a fundraiser for the center’s many programs, including exercise classes for active adults, the child care center, and Adult Day Services. Parking is free. For more information, call Catholic Youth Association (@cyapgh on Facebook) or email love1st@comcast.net.

Betsy A. DeChant

LCSW, BCD, FAGPA

Board Certified Diplomate in Clinical Social Work

Psychotherapy & Counseling Consultation & Training

Adult - Child - Marital - Family - Group

12 Eastern Ave., Aspinwall, PA

Tel. (724) 907-1668

betsydechant.com

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation has an email newsletter!

Subscribe at bit.ly/bgc_email to get the latest community news delivered to your inbox every month.

Classifieds
Pittsburgh - On Tuesday, Aug. 22, two local nonprofits, Grow Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Land Trust (ALT), announced that they will partner on a joint venture to protect and preserve selected urban, agricultural lands in perpetuity.

The joint venture, Three Rivers Agricultural Land Initiative, will provide long-term security for existing community gardens and urban farms, and ensure that future urban agricultural expansion will be conducted on protected land. The initiative will create the stability necessary to foster a vibrant, sustainable, and expanding urban agriculture movement by removing the threat of future sales of agricultural lands for other development purposes.

“We are thrilled to be partnering with ALT, a regional leader in conservation and green space protection, to create this innovative program,” Grow Pittsburgh Executive Director Jake Seltman said. “Increasing development pressure in many Pittsburgh neighborhoods is causing concern among gardeners, farmers, and government partners that they may lose their precious spaces to other uses. This initiative will give the community a tool to help support the long-term success of existing projects, and build the confidence necessary to develop new ones.”

This partnership leverages the two nonprofit organizations’ skill-sets and proven experience. ALT will contribute its expertise as an accredited land trust to acquire and manage lands in perpetuity, while Grow Pittsburgh will provide its leadership in operating urban farms and assisting neighborhoods in starting and sustaining community gardens.

“We can empathize with the frustration of a well-organized community group being unable to identify a place in their community where a garden will be welcomed long-term, or when a well-loved community garden is lost to an alternate land use,” Seltman said. “These projects become community anchors, playing a significant role in the social fabric of a neighborhood and providing important food resources. They need to be protected.”

Community gardens and urban farms provide environmental benefits including storm water mitigation, pollinator habitat creation, and food insecurity reduction for their neighborhoods. There are more than eighty community gardens and urban farms in Allegheny County, many of which are using land without a formal land use agreement or have only temporary permission.

“Green space is increasingly cited as a key component to the livability and sustainability of urban areas and one of the reasons for this is urban agriculture. ALT is really proud to work with Grow Pittsburgh to protect land that can be used by community members to reduce food insecurity,” Chris Beichner, ALT’s President and CEO, said. “Grow Pittsburgh and their partners have done an amazing job in fostering ‘urban ag’ in the region, and we’re happy to contribute to that momentum by providing land security.”

With this initiative, Pittsburgh will join Philadelphia, New York City, Chicago, and Providence – all cities that have created land trusts dedicated to protecting urban agriculture projects.

The Three Rivers Agricultural Land Initiative will be governed by a nine-person steering committee consisting of representatives from Grow Pittsburgh, ALT, and three representatives from local community gardening groups.

For anyone interested in serving as a community representative, applications and nominations for the three steering committee positions are open until September 8. The application form is available at both www.growpittsburgh.org and www.alleghenylandtrust.org.