

# the Bulletin

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## ‘Kind of empowering’: How the American Rescue Plan changed the course of the URA

By Rich Lord *PublicSource*

Pittsburgh - One month into the pandemic, Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto said the city’s Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) couldn’t depend on city help and would have to become “self-sufficient.”

Eighteen months in, his administration wrote the URA a figurative check for \$74.9 million. That sudden change of fortune for the city’s 75-year-old development agency was driven primarily by the federal American Rescue Plan Act [ARPA], which is the source of the city’s infusion to the URA.

“The truth of the matter is that the stimulus dollars that are being talked about both through the American Rescue Plan and what the federal government is working on now are just really, really big numbers

See **URA** | page 2



**ABOVE:** BGC Board President Jarnele Fairclough (right, wearing “Candy Bandit” costume) joins her granddaughter Myla (wearing “Candy Fairy” costume) for the Penn Ave.-A-BOO-Looza festivities on Saturday, Oct. 16. See more of the action on page 7. Photo by John Colombo.



**ABOVE:** Julia Beadnell (right), youth program coordinator for the BGC, briefs local students on the College & Career Readiness Program on Monday, Oct. 18. Photo by Lauren Lubarski.

## Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy reflects on decades of service in East Liberty

By Elizabeth Sensky *East Liberty Development, Inc.*

East Liberty - Over the past 20 years, East Liberty has undergone a drastic transformation. After years of disinvestment, the neighborhood shows signs of growth: a mixed-income housing market, new businesses, and plenty of public amenities.

These changes are the result of neighborhood organizations and individuals coming together to advocate on behalf of the East Liberty community. Reverend Patrice Fowler-Searcy played a significant role in this work.

Searcy is the associate pastor for Mission

Ministries at the East Liberty Presbyterian Church (ELPC) and president of the board of East Liberty Development, Inc. (ELDI), the neighborhood’s community development corporation. She also serves on the board of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, among other roles.

Originally from Indianapolis, Indiana, the reverend has become a familiar face in East Liberty. Searcy has been passionate about seeing the local community thrive ever since she first took a role at ELPC in 1996.

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ABANDONED PROPERTIES: SECRET  
KEY TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

FOOD JUSTICE, ARTS TO  
COLLIDE IN LAWRENCEVILLE

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URA *continued from page 1*

compared to what I’ve seen in the past, in my career,” said Tom Link, the URA’s chief strategy officer and a 17-year veteran of the agency.

Here’s a map of the URA’s road to riches, and its implications for the future.

On April 3, shortly after the federal Department of the Treasury announced the ARPA funding, including \$335 million for Pittsburgh, mayoral Chief of Staff Dan Gilman emailed officials at the URA and other agencies, asking for their ideas on how to leverage the funding. URA Executive Director Greg Flisram wrote back suggesting a “moon-shot” for the Avenues of Hope initiative.

On April 23, URA Deputy Executive Director Diamonte Walker wrote to City Councilman Daniel Lavelle suggesting that \$49 million go to the URA. The agency provided Lavelle with a memo listing, as the biggest-ticket investments:

- \$8 million to back affordable housing for people who would otherwise be “next to homeless”
- \$6 million to fill financing gaps in affordable housing and mixed-use developments, and for job creation
- \$5 million for infrastructure work and pre-development activity, like architecture and engineering
- \$5 million for business incubator and accelerator programs
- \$5 million to prepare vacant land and put it into the hands of new owners
- \$4 million for deferred second mortgages to help first-time homebuyers
- \$2 million to construct or rehab houses for sale to owner-occupants
- The rest (\$14 million) for a variety of other uses, including URA administration, loans and loan forgiveness for small businesses and grants to minority developers.

In May, after the Treasury issued new guidance on ARPA spending, the administration learned that it wouldn’t be able to use the money to shore up the city’s pension fund or bolster its reserves. Council President Theresa Kail-Smith, meanwhile, urged that more

funding go toward rehabilitation of houses for owner-occupants.

What emerged was a package, approved by council last month, that sets the stage for massive URA-guided spending over three years, including:

- \$31.5 million in support for for-sale housing development and to help homeowners
- \$10 million for the Pittsburgh Land Bank, charged with transferring vacant land to new owners
- \$10 million to protect existing affordable housing or to secure affordability through community land trusts
- \$7 million for the Avenues of Hope program for seven business districts in mostly Black neighborhoods
- \$3.5 million for small business grants
- The rest (\$12.9 million) for a variety of specific development or infrastructure projects.

The ARPA money remains in the city’s coffers while lawyers for the administration and the URA negotiate a cooperation agreement on its use. City Controller Michael Lamb expects that will involve quarterly reports from the URA to the city on planned use for the money, then transfers of funds, and then verification that the spending was in line with the plan.

That’s still a huge infusion for an agency whose total budget - operating plus capital - has hovered around \$23 million in recent years. The URA is still working on its 2022 budgets, which will include ARPA money but also funding from other sources, including, preliminarily, \$9 million in additional funds from the city.

“It’s kind of empowering,” said Laya Mathews, a URA community development manager, “because we have a lot of different goals that we really want to achieve, but we were so limited on resources for a while that we couldn’t make progress as fast as we wanted to.”

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## BGC elects three board members

A Message from the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

*Garfield* - On Monday, Oct. 18, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) elected a new Board of Directors to one-year terms. These three individuals responded to the BGC's appeals to the larger community to help fill its vacant board seats.

**Mickey Donati (at right):** I am a professional baker on staff at Paddy Cake Bakery (4763 Liberty Ave.) in Bloomfield. I've also worked as a piano player for St. Paul Lutheran Church in Philadelphia and composed music for a social justice organization called "The Conciliation Project" in Richmond, VA.

I joined the board so that I could be more involved in my community while advocating for those impacted by gentrification.



**Sandy E. Simon (at left):** I have worked as the owner/potter/artist of Kiln-N-Time (3801 Penn Ave.) in Lawrenceville for the last 20 years. I have also worked with Lawrenceville Corporation and Lawrenceville United in the past as a board member and/or member.

In 2019, I purchased my own home in Garfield. I want to be more involved with what's going on in my community. I'm also the mother of three beautiful dogs and one studio cat - and I love to garden.



**Robert Lincoln (at right):** A lifelong Pittsburgher, I've been living in Garfield for the past three years. I'm pursuing a degree in Public Policy from Carnegie Mellon University, hoping to work in community & economic development soon.

Community groups like the BGC are an essential part of addressing the disparities in our society. I joined the board to help the BGC aid our neighbors in need and keep Garfield an affordable, welcoming, and livable community. ♦



## the Bulletin

Serving Pittsburgh's  
East End neighborhoods  
since 1975

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

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

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

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[Bloomfield-Garfield.org](http://Bloomfield-Garfield.org)

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## Rev. Patrice *continued from page 1*

“The East Liberty neighborhood was drastically and diametrically different then,” Searcy recalled. “East Liberty had kind of a funky vibe at that time because it was known as the hip-hop area of Pittsburgh. I lived in Highland Park for a period, and I came to know the people we were serving.”

From 1996 to 1998, ELDI held monthly and twice-monthly community meetings at the church, and Searcy remembers a night when hundreds of community members packed the social hall to start shaping the neighborhood’s future.

“When the community [members] started talking about what they wanted their community to become in the future, I wanted to be a part of that,” she said. “I felt like it was an opportunity for the community to continue to be what it was, but also to be

more than what it was, not only for the folks who lived here at that time - many of whom continue to live there - but also, hopefully, for the folks who would soon come.”

After joining ELDI’s board of directors in 1998, Searcy traveled with fellow board members to cities like Silver Springs, Maryland, and Oakland, California, to see how their communities had performed transformations. According to Searcy, this was when the challenging work really began in earnest.

At that time, the former Pennley Place Apartments were coming down and ELDI was working with a nonprofit real estate developer, The Community Builders, to build replacement, mixed-income housing. Next, the organization started work-



**ABOVE:** Reverend Patrice Fowler-Searcy applauds new ideas for East Liberty. Photo by Chancellor Humphrey.

ing on another ask of the community: bringing down two apartment towers on either end of the neighborhood, and replacing them with new housing.

Searcy and her fellow board members realized that ELDI was the only organization in the neighborhood that could take the risk of helping to bring the community vision to fruition.

“We recognized that for-profit developers were not going to take the risk in the beginning; neither were the banks, or even some of the foundations,” she explained. “We were the only ones that could, even though our balance sheet was terrible.”

ELDI began to talk with people like Skip Schwab [now ELDI’s deputy director] - who was program director at the southwestern Pennsylvania office of the nonprofit Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), and who believed in what the organization was trying to accomplish.

LISC gave ELDI loans, grants, and program-related investments to do some of the work that was required.

“Throughout this early period, the board was there supporting the staff, helping them stay on track in terms of the vision that had been laid out by the community and, quite frankly, risking the organization’s reputation and finances to make sure that the work was done,” Searcy noted.

ELDI started buying up residential properties in the neighborhood that were hotspots for crime, taking on significant amounts of debt in the process. The organization also engaged the city to help out

with infrastructure developments, which helped attract Whole Foods Market and Target to the neighborhood.

“One day, even before Target came into the neighborhood,” Searcy said, “I remember Maelene [Myers, ELDI’s executive director] and I were walking down the street, and we saw a white gentleman wearing an argyle sweater and khaki shorts walking his poodle. We looked at each other, laughed, and thought, ‘This neighborhood has changed.’”

While the changes might be striking, Searcy takes issue when people label such change as “gentrification.”

“For me, when we are accused of gentrifying the neighborhood, I always respond with, ‘No, we haven’t gentrified the neighborhood because gentrification implies displacement,’” she explained. “What we have done is diversified the neighborhood based on what the residents who lived here for many, many years said they wanted this neighborhood to become.”

With more than 20 years of service, Searcy still feels just as committed to realizing the initial community vision outlined by residents in ELPC’s social hall decades ago.

“My motivation has always been to make sure that the least of these are cared for. And now that the community has changed, my motivation remains the same: to make sure that the least of these are cared for and benefit from the changes that have taken place,” Searcy said.

Visit [eastliberty.org/about-east-liberty/](http://eastliberty.org/about-east-liberty/) to learn more about Searcy and her work. ♦



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## In conversation with Mike Onofray, co-owner of Two Frays Brewery

By Pamela Schön Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

*Garfield* - Since opening its doors to beer *connoisseurs* on Jun. 17, Two Frays Brewery has been making quite a splash at 5113 Penn Ave. Co-owners Jen & Mike Onofray, along with their trusty bulldogs, Zeus and Iris, were not easily discouraged from trying to open a new business during a pandemic.

In short time, the Onofrays have managed to delight the neighborhood with their beer, as well as their commitment to the community, residents, and fellow business owners. Although Two Frays does not serve food, Jen & Mike encourage their customers to visit Penn Ave. eateries and bring food back with them for a beer or two. We caught up with Mike to learn about what motivated two engineers to open a brewery on Penn Ave.

**BELOW:** Jen & Mike Onofray welcome customers, and dogs, to Two Frays Brewery (5113 Penn Ave.) in Garfield. Photo courtesy of Mike Onofray.



### EAST LIBERTY

#### HAPPENINGS

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**Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC):** Who are the “Two Frays”? Please tell us about yourselves.

**Mike Onofray:** “The ‘Two Frays’ are Jen and Mike Onofray. We’re a married couple of 16.5 years living in Bloomfield. We’re both engineers who love beer, and meeting new friends over a beer.”

**BGC:** What inspired you to start brewing beer at 5113 Penn Ave?

**Onofray:** “The Garfield neighborhood is what really inspired us. We set out to create a small, neighborhood-focused brewery, in a walkable area, with an outdoor space. We also wanted to be in a diverse neighborhood. Garfield was the perfect fit for us, and luckily we were able to find the perfect building, too!”

**BGC:** We’ve admired your local collaborations with BOOM Concepts and Spak Bros. Pizza. Are you planning to work with other Garfield businesses in the near future? How could the BGC support this work?

**Onofray:** “Yes. 200%. We love our neighbors - they all make really great food, art, and fun. Working together has been really enjoyable. We’ve made some new friends and created some really cool pairings as well. We aren’t just about being a beer company; we want to be a part of the community in as many ways as possible. Partnering with other small businesses to create some really fun products and events is just one way to bring more positive attention to Penn Ave. The BGC can help us with networking and introductions to even more of our neighbors and potential collaborators.”

**BGC:** Opening during the height of the pandemic had to be difficult. How has your business been impacted by COVID-19?

**Onofray:** “COVID was not kind to us during our startup. Our plans for a quick construction phase and opening were delayed and slowed tremendously. However, we feel fortunate that all of our immediate friends and family were not harmed by the virus – as too many others cannot say the same. Business is good because we have a great staff and some great beers! But we’re still taking the virus very seriously. We want to provide a safe space at Two Frays Brewery for many reasons, including the health of our staff and customers. Our entire staff is vaccinated and will wear a mask when customers are in our space. This protects us and our customers as much as possible, while also allowing for some fun enjoying the tasty beverages. You’ll have to trust us that we are smiling at you under the masks!”

Two Frays Brewery is open Tuesday through Sunday. Visit [twofraysbrewery.com](http://twofraysbrewery.com) for more details and hours of operation. ♦



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## Meet Morgan Rothacker, new support coordinator for Penn Ave. small biz

By Morgan Rothacker Pittsburgh Business District Cohort

*Penn Ave.* – Hi, I'm Morgan, and I serve the community as the new Small Business Support Coordinator for the Pittsburgh Business District Cohort.

This partnership - formed by the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, the Lawrenceville Corporation, and Bloomfield

Development Corporation – works to help small businesses create connections and foster success across several city neighborhoods.

I've lived in Pittsburgh for the last nine years, receiving my undergraduate degree in Communications & English Writing from the University of Pittsburgh in 2015. I have experience working with the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh and, in my free time, I skate with a local women's roller derby league; I also serve on the league's board of directors.

After residing in Oakland, Lawrenceville, and Wilkinsburg, I moved to Garfield with my partner and our pets in the spring of 2020.

One of my favorite things about living in Garfield is that there are so many great local shops, restaurants, and art spaces close to home. I'm very excited to help support the neighborhood's business district in this new role.

If you have questions about events, community programs, or anything Penn Avenue-related, please get in touch with me at [pennave1@bloomfield-garfield.org](mailto:pennave1@bloomfield-garfield.org). ♦



**ABOVE:** Morgan Rothacker, the new small business support coordinator for Penn Ave. Photo courtesy of Morgan Rothacker.

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## Garfield hosts 'Penn-Ave-A-BOO-Looza'

10/16/21 - Photos by John Colombo

**BELOW:** A young reveler (dressed as Venom, Spider-Man's archenemy) takes a swing at a candy-filled piñata on N. Winebiddle St.



**ABOVE:** D.S. Kinsel, co-founder of BOOM Concepts in Garfield, addresses the 'Penn-Ave.-A-BOO-Looza' crowd on Saturday, Oct. 16.

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# Neighborhood FOCUS

## From abandoned properties to affordable housing in Garfield

By Joe Reuben *Bulletin contributor*

*Perspective/Garfield* - It is perfectly reasonable to wonder why more of the city's abandoned houses are not being turned into affordably-priced housing. The truth is that, in most cases, many hurdles stand in the way.

First and foremost is finding a way to move the property out of the hands of the present owner, which can often include the city, and into the hands of someone who will not carve a handsome profit for themselves when they sell or lease the renovated property. This might even require convincing a state judge that the property is truly "abandoned."

"The Garfield neighborhood is at a crossroads," Kendall Pelling explained recently. Pelling, a Garfield resident, is also executive director of a newly formed nonprofit, Rising Tide Partners, Inc. (RTP), which specializes in assembling vacant and abandoned properties for future development as affordable housing.

"If no one does anything with the inventory of vacant homes that exists," he said, "they will eventually find their way into the hands of developers who will want to maximize the profit they can earn by renovating and then re-selling or renting them out on the open market."

Not all private developers fit this profile, however, as a recently-executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Rising Tide, the Bloomfield-Garfield

**BELOW:** A vacant property (4807 Dearborn St.) stays fallow in Garfield. Photo by Andrew McKeon.



*'We already have a committee of community residents who've been working with us on a plan to prioritize the properties' re-use as affordable housing.'*

- Kendall Pelling, Rising Tide Partners, Inc.

Corporation (BGC), and a developer named Aaron Chaney, would seem to indicate. Chaney's company, Community Reinvestment Partners (CRP), has filed 32 petitions on residential properties in Garfield. These petitions, filed with Allegheny County Common Pleas Court, contend that the properties qualify as "abandoned" by their owners. Chaney is essentially asking the court to appoint CRP as a conservator for these properties, which consist mostly of vacant houses along with a handful of vacant lots.

The appointment of CRP, or any entity, as a conservator can be the first step in the process whereby the properties could be acquired through a court-directed sale, assuming their current owners fail to step forward and agree to take measures to return the properties to habitable condition. If the court finds that the owners of record have failed to respond within a year's time, the properties could then be sold to the petitioner for their appraised value, which is almost always at a vastly reduced price - because of the neglect the properties have endured over the years.

In an interesting turn of events, nine months of discussions between Rising Tide, two community groups, and CRP have led to the creation of an MOU. The memorandum will allow nearly half of the petitions that Chaney's company has filed to be turned over to RTP by the end of this year; it would lay the groundwork for Rising Tide to take over the conservatorship actions filed by CRP that, if successful, could lead to the court agreeing to sell the properties in question [to RTP] in late 2022, or early 2023.

"What's unique about Rising Tide is that we will take these properties in a different direction," Pelling related. "We already have a committee of community residents who've been working with us on a plan to prioritize the properties' re-use as affordable housing."

- continued on next page -



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Nine are owned by the three taxing bodies (city, county, and school district), which means RTP would need agreement from the city, as the trustee for the other two bodies, not to contest the conservatorship petitions that have been filed against those properties. According to Pelling, “the next major hurdle in reclaiming these properties, assuming we are able to acquire them, is to stabilize their condition so that they can still be rehabbed in the future without someone having to spend \$250,000 or more to do so. Rising Tide Partners would work to secure them from the elements, and from unlawful entry. We owe that to the neighbors, who are rightly concerned about their worsening condition.”

“In the end,” he added, “RTP would transfer the properties, with oversight from the committee, to organizations or individuals who have demonstrated the capacity to perform the necessary renovations to the homes and return them to the market, hopefully as affordably-priced housing.”

Pelling maintained that any properties requiring over \$250,000 or more in work would likely have to be redone as market-rate housing, or else they could fall victim to demolition. Apparently, the MOU would not be the end of the dialogue taking place between the community and Chaney’s firm.

“From what Aaron has told us,” Pelling revealed, “he intends to renovate some of the properties that CRP acquires through the conservatorship process, but not all as market-rate units. CRP might do some as affordable housing.”

All parties involved understand how such collaboration would be unusual for a neighborhood like Garfield, given the history of exploitation that struggling neighborhoods have historically endured. Pelling acknowledged that Chaney admitted how, in order to accomplish his goal, CRP would probably need some help from outside sources, much as any nonprofit developer would.

The board of directors of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation approved the execution of the MOU between the three parties at its Oct. 18 board meeting.

Pelling said RTP has already begun discussions with the city’s Urban Redevelopment Authority about providing loans and grant funds to help cover the expenses associated with its conservatorship filings; these monies could also fund the immediate repairs that most of the properties would need, if the court allows for their sale to RTP to happen.

Rick Swartz, the BGC’s executive director, said the process of filing for conservatorship is not without its problems. “The legal fees usually tally somewhere around \$7,500 per property, with some attorneys charging as much as \$15,000 before it’s all said and done. That’s not something a nonprofit organization can routinely afford to pay,” he said. “The court system is clogged with hundreds of these filings at the moment, some sitting there for a year or longer before a hearing is actually held on the petition. Does that make this any more efficient than the city itself trying to wrest vacant houses or lots away from negligent owners? We’ll have to see.”

Any Garfield resident who would like to join the committee, which RTP will allow to oversee this initiative, may email RickS@bloomfield-garfield.org. ♦



### Sponsor the 17th Annual BGC Awards & Luncheon

**“Women of Strength During Uncertain Times”**

**Friday, Nov. 12, 2021**  
**Omni William Penn Hotel**  
**Hybrid in-person/virtual event**  
**Lunch: 11:30 am - 12:45 pm**  
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Join us in-person, or virtually, to recognize these resilient women in our communities:



**Tammy Thompson**, Executive Director of Catapult Greater Pittsburgh, works to connect people across socioeconomic lines in an effort to move people and families out of poverty. Catapult has assisted approximately 1,200 people during the pandemic by delivering basic needs to families, waiving rent, and giving small grants to businesses.



**Natalie DeiCas**, chef/owner of Everyday’s a Sunday Cafe, provides free food to approximately 80 families every day. Drawing on donations from 412 Food Rescue and various local donors, as well as her own personal funds, Natalie ensures that anyone who walks in her door is fed, regardless of their ability to pay.



**Dr. Staci Ford** founded Kyle’s Hope in 2005, in honor of her son who was born with a terminal disease, to support local families’ medical and mental health needs. Working with the BGC, Laurentian Hall Apts., Zone 5 Police, Garfield Jubilee, and Garfield Commons, Dr. Ford has delivered free food to hundreds of families every week during the pandemic.



**Linda Fulmer**, a professional in the field of affordable housing for nearly 20 years, works tirelessly to enhance the quality of life for residents of Laurentian Hall Apts. and Garfield Glen 1 & 2. Partnering with 412 Food Rescue during the pandemic, she’s helped deliver thousands of pounds of food to East End residents.

Contact Nina Gibbs (nina@bloomfield-garfield.org or 412.441.6950) for more information.



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# Coming soon: Garfield trail system

A Message from the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

*Garfield* – Designed earlier this year, the Urban Trail Plan is a fairly unique project for Garfield. Trails will interconnect throughout the neighborhood, creating green-ways and new corridors for non-vehicular transportation. The trail plan will not solve every infrastructure problem, but it provides a starting point in enhancing the care and access to Garfield’s public amenities and spaces.

The project will begin along Hillcrest Street, with a small trail on a portion of property known previously as Healcrest Farm. While some of the specifics are still being worked out, project leaders at Penn Trails, the organization assisting the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation with design and construction, are optimistic that work can begin before the end of the year; trail construction is estimated to take five to ten days to complete, from start-to-finish.

Down the line, community members will have the opportunity to decide what kinds of activities might suit this space. For now, though, project partners remain focused on trail construction and improving access to the green space. As Garfield’s vision for green space is a bit different than the plans from other city neighborhoods, residents may now look to natural amenities, like the Greenzone, for creative solutions to neighborhood issues.

Want to get involved in the trail plan? Email Madeline Weiss, the Garfield Greenzone Coordinator, at [Madeline@bloomfield-garfield.org](mailto:Madeline@bloomfield-garfield.org). ♦



## The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation has a monthly email newsletter!

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## Tim Cimino wins BGC 'Fact or Fiction' quiz

Garfield resident Tim Cimino scored a perfect 10/10 on the BGC's "Fact or Fiction" quiz, earning him a \$100 ALDI gift card. See Cimino's answers below. Congrats, Tim!

	Fact	Fiction
1) The BGC routinely rents 3-bedroom houses in Garfield for more than \$1000/month.	_____	_____X
2) The BGC has no 2-bedroom apartments or houses in Garfield that rent for more than \$850/month.	_____X	_____
3) The BGC has no 1-bedroom apartments in Garfield or Friendship that rent for more than \$700/month.	_____X	_____
4) The BGC has sold houses it's renovated or built brand new to its employees or their family members.	_____	_____X
5) The BGC's executive director is paid a salary that is in the neighborhood of what a city public school teacher earns.	_____X	_____
6) The BGC has a program that provides grants to an individual or family in a crisis or hardship situation.	_____X	_____
7) The BGC has a program that places unemployed people in jobs that pay a living wage.	_____X	_____
8) The BGC has no program that helps disadvantaged high school students move on to college or careers.	_____	_____X
9) The BGC has filed an eviction action against at least one of its tenant in each of the past six years.	_____	_____X
10) The BGC never advocated to reduce the penalty for possession of small amounts of marijuana to a summary offense.	_____	_____X ♦

## Holiday gift cards boost buying power for small biz customers

### A Message from Explore BGL

*Bloomfield/Garfield/Lawrenceville* - A collaboration between Bloomfield Development Corporation, the Lawrenceville Corporation, and the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, "Explore BGL," aims to support local shopping this holiday season.

Explore BGL will sell gift cards to local businesses and, thanks to grant funding, be able to offer a matching 25% [on purchases of up to \$100] of purchasing power at some of Bloomfield, Garfield, and Lawrenceville's favorite shops and restaurants.

These "Lovin' Local" cards will be made available at ExploreBGL.com, beginning on Small Business Saturday (Nov. 27) and running throughout the holiday season; all proceeds will go directly to the small business owners. Modeled after Downtown Pittsburgh Partnership's "Gift Card, Give Back" program, the initiative aims to spur sales growth for small businesses that have faced great difficulties over the past two years.

With many dedicated business owners in Bloomfield, Garfield, and Lawrenceville still struggling to keep the lights on, the "Lovin' Local" program allows loyal customers to spread their ongoing support in a very rewarding way. And considering the unique variety of small businesses participating in the program, there is a gift card for everyone.

Business owners who would like to sign up for the program are encouraged to reach out to Morgan Rothacker (morgan@explorebgl.com) for more information. ♦

# They were missed then. They're missed now.



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## PGH-based study could shed light on Lyme disease, how to prevent long-term impacts

By Sonu Babu & Ashlee Green *The Northside Chronicle*

**Pittsburgh** - This year more than ever, Lyme disease has skyrocketed, and Pittsburgh is a hot spot for it. A new technology from Adaptive Biotechnologies, though, brings hope for early detection.

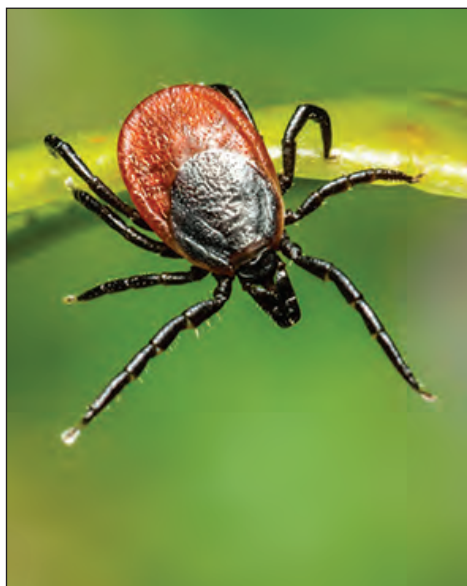
According to an article in *The Frederick News-Post*, a survey of more than 5,000 adult blacklegged ticks statewide indicated that 58 percent were carrying Lyme disease. By mid-July of this year, WTAE reported that more than 40 children had been treated for severe and acute symptoms of Lyme at the UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh alone.

Dr. Shari Rozen, a doctor at Preferred Primary Care Physicians of Pittsburgh, is working with Adaptive Biotechnologies\* on an investigational test taking place in the city as part of the ImmuneSense™ Lyme Study.

The key to detecting Lyme disease is understanding the immune system's "first responders," which are T-cells. T-cells can detect any virus. The investigational test aims to measure the body's natural T-cell response to the bacteria that causes Lyme disease from a sample of blood. Starting earlier this year, T-cell tests have already been used as an alternative to an-

tibody tests to detect past infections from COVID-19. According to STAT News, T-cells "help the body remember what its viral enemies look like."

This new technology is exciting: According to a press release, existing lab tests only pinpoint about 20-40% of people experiencing early acute Lyme infections. Additionally, as Rozen explained, anti-



**ABOVE:** Area tick waits for its next target, spreads Lyme disease with ease. Photo courtesy of Erik Karits via Pexels.

body tests are the current norm for detecting Lyme, but "antibodies don't develop instantaneously, so there can be a delay in diagnosis..."

The T-cell tests, on the other hand, could potentially work faster to improve the speed of diagnosis, thereby decreasing long-term health consequences, such as arthritis, facial palsy, and irregularities in heart rhythm. Early detection can help prevent more serious symptoms, which can happen easily if people miss a rash, or do not notice a tick because it is too small.

Lyme is a tick-borne disease; its classic symptom is a bullseye rash. It can be benign or cause more severe symptoms, but according to Rozen, it should always be taken seriously. While most patients who contract Lyme are successfully treated with antibiotics and feel completely better within weeks to months, Rozen said about one in 20 still experiences pain, fatigue, or difficulty thinking that lasts more than six months after finishing treatment.

"The best thing you can do is find the tick and remove it. Because if the tick is removed within the first couple of days before it becomes engorged, you don't even have to treat [the malady]," said Rozen.

To date, the ImmuneSense™ Lyme Study has enrolled over 700 participants from across the nation. Patients who have a bullseye rash and would like to participate can directly reach out to the testing site at 412-650-6155. Learn more at ImmuneSenseStudy.com.

*[This story is published in partnership with the Pittsburgh Community Newspaper Network (PCNN). It was originally printed in The Northside Chronicle, the hyperlocal community newspaper of Pittsburgh's historic Northside.] ♦*

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# LOCAL REAL ESTATE BLOTTER

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

Real Estate Sales (for the month of September 2021)

Compiled by Lillian Denhardt, Residential Realtor

*Note from our columnist: We don't think these listings represent all of the September sales that were recorded in our coverage area. According to Compass.com, during the month of September, 46 sales of listed properties [in our neighborhoods] were recorded. Additional sales - usually properties sold off-market, either between family or through other arrangements - are also mysteriously absent. For the past 2 years, this column has reported an average of 60-70 sales in September, but there are only 17 sales listed in the most recent data we received from Allegheny County.*

*We aren't sure what's happening with the County data. Are deeds taking longer to be recorded? We don't know. The County database has faced challenges when entering a new calendar year, but we have reason to believe that is not the issue here. We'll continue trying to bring you news about the sales in your neighborhoods. Until next time, here are the sales we were able to find!*

## Bloomfield

Dominic Leone to Michael J Brode at 403 Sapphire Way for \$215,000.

William D Smith III to Angeline M Walker at 4052 Mintwood St for \$224,000.

## Friendship

James M & Marta D Dalton to Yubin Kim at 362 S Graham St for \$674,750.

## Garfield

No sales to report(?)

## East Liberty

Gildatrea A Ramos to Costello Properties LLC at 5644 Stanton Ave for \$775,000.

## Lawrenceville

5515 Butler Street Development LP to Daniel Francis Jr O'Byrne at 138 56Th St for \$494,887.

5515 Butler Street Development LP to Ronak B Dunung at 134 56Th St for \$549,900.

Jamie S Pollard to Anthony Mosby at 329 37Th St for \$160,000.

Martin H Joyce to Martin Bolanos at 4232 Post St for \$170,545.

Patrick Palmer to Margaret B Smith at 173-D 45Th St for \$490,000.

Seth T & Mallory M Jarzynka to Kyle Barlow-Williams at 4210 Calvin St for \$280,500.

Sophia Archer to Taube Enterprises LLC at 299 42Nd St for \$229,600.

Thomas J Malinic to Babak Firouzi at 5101 Holmes St for \$165,000.

## Stanton Heights

Gary A Aranyos to Michael E Colon at 1120 Downlook St for \$1.

Joseph A & Patricia Orban to Anna Tang at 1352 Hawthorne St for \$188,008.

Susan & Vivek Devaraj to Joseph Riley Newell at 4602 Amsterdam Ave for \$307,500.

*This column uses data from Allegheny County that contains occasional errors. We*

*strive for accuracy every month so, if something looks off, please let us know.*

*For questions, comments, or just to chat about real estate in your neighborhood, email Lillian at [lillian@agent-lillian.com](mailto:lillian@agent-lillian.com) or call 412-335-6068. ♦*

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**BELOW:** A red-tailed hawk touches down for an afternoon snack at Allegheny Cemetery.  
Photo by John N.



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6:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 24

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## Food justice, arts intersect with Lawrenceville

By Emily Hwang *Lawrenceville Corporation*

*Lawrenceville* - The new, social justice-themed exhibit, *Food Justice: Growing a Healthier Community Through Art*, invites conversations around food justice and sovereignty at Contemporary Craft (5645 Butler St.). It looks to the arts in exploring topics like food as a basic right, and how current food systems present barriers to affordable, nutritious foods.

"With our more than 24 partner groups for this exhibition, we plan to engage the public in dialogue around activism, work with school groups in our gallery, and find ways to volunteer within our community to be a part of the solution to the injustices that exist," Rachel Saul Rearick, Contemporary Craft's executive director, said. "I personally believe that viewing art is the entry point to this work, and everything that comes after can be life-changing."

The design of Pittsburgh's food systems varies from neighborhood to neighborhood. One key factor for consistent food access is housing stability. Having stable, affordable housing means residents will have more income to spend on everyday necessities like food.

In Lower Lawrenceville, average income rose 25% and home values increased by

126% between 2000 and 2013. The Lawrenceville community has sought to mediate rising housing prices with policy actions like Inclusionary Zoning, as well as the creation of permanently affordable housing through the Community Land Trust.

Rising housing prices, coupled with a lack of disposable income, are not the only issues impacting food access in Lawrenceville. The Shop 'N Save at 56th & Butler St. is the only grocery store in the neighborhood, and it is over two miles away from Lower Lawrenceville residents, presenting additional challenges for those who cannot drive.

Lawrenceville United (LU) recognizes this challenge and works to address immediate food needs in the community. The organization hosts a Friday food distribution for Lawrenceville residents - reaching neighbors in Homestead, Garfield, Wilksburg, Mt. Oliver, and Mt. Washington in the process.

Every week, volunteers deliver 20-30 free food boxes to seniors, those living with disabilities, and families with small children. Anyone interested in receiving a free food box may contact LU at 412-802-7220 or [info@LUnited.org](mailto:info@LUnited.org); no proof of need required.

*Food Justice: Growing a Healthier Community Through Art* seeks to open further dialogue around these issues through the arts. Visitors are encouraged to come visit the Lawrenceville exhibit, free of charge, through Mar. 19, 2022 at Contemporary Craft's 5645 Butler St. location. ♦

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### MONTHLY BLOOD DRIVE IN BLOOMFIELD

Bloomfield Development Corporation invites local residents to participate in its monthly blood drive - held every third Thursday, from 2-7 p.m. - behind the WPH Nursing School (4921 Mend Way). Visit [vitalant.org](http://vitalant.org) or call 412-209-7000 to make an appointment.



## Give Thanks

**On Thanksgiving** we are supposed to give thanks.  
**But what** does that mean?

**It means being thankful** for what you have  
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## 'We're still here': Garfield Land Trust perseveres, furthers mission

### A Message from The Garfield Land Trust

*Insight/Garfield* - Members of the Garfield Land Trust (GLT) convened on Wednesday, Oct. 13, for a fall member meeting.

The theme of the meeting, "We're still here," served as a reminder that just as our neighbors in Garfield are still here and resisting increasing rents and housing costs, the GLT is still active and focused on plans to improve access to permanently affordable housing in the neighborhood.

Board members Jeanette Coleman and Rochell Jackson, and Outreach Chair Gary Cirrincione facilitated the meeting for about 20 participating residents.

The GLT discussed its three main goals: (1) Preserve affordable rental housing in Garfield, (2) Support existing residents faced with housing challenges, and (3) Advise existing city-wide land trust efforts in creating permanent affordable pathways to home ownership.

The meeting also focused on hearing from residents about their concerns and

questions related to affordable housing. Attendees shared stories and experiences, pointing to local examples like the Montana Building, an existing 16-unit affordable apartment building on Penn Ave. that is co-owned by the GLT and the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation.

Others discussed support they had received from the GLT navigating a permitting dispute with the city. Others shared stories and housing challenges in the neighborhood, including increasing rents, absentee landlords, and the scarcity of affordable housing.

One member noted that the only way to fight the systemic forces of rising rents and predatory developers is to come together to secure permanently affordable housing for our neighborhood.

The Garfield Land Trust meets regularly on the second Wednesday of the month.

Contact [garfieldlandtrust@gmail.com](mailto:garfieldlandtrust@gmail.com) to get involved. ♦

**THANK YOU** to Princess Jafar & Friends (pictured below), who raised \$500 for the purchase of back-to-school items and coats for local kids! The school supplies were distributed to Garfield children during the neighborhood's "Penn-Ave-A-BOO-Looza" event on Saturday, Oct. 16. More than 100 winter coats will be provided to youths in Garfield during the month of December.

Want to make a difference in your community like Princess Jafar? Please contact [nina@bloomfield-garfield.org](mailto:nina@bloomfield-garfield.org) with any questions.



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## From ATL to PGH, '40412' explores notions of home

A Message from Kelly Strayhorn Theater

*East Liberty* - Kelly Strayhorn Theater (KST) is proud to present "40412," the Freshworks showing by Livefromthecity and Sheryland Neal, on Nov. 5 & 6.

Jordan Howard ["Livefromthecity"] is a hip-hop songwriter, producer, studio engineer, and part-time arts educator based in Pittsburgh. Born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, Sheryland Neal has a background in performance, theatre, and broadcast journalism.

40412 combines audio-visual elements with local stories, alternating between the perspectives of a native resident and a transplant with a vested interest in the city.

According to recent US Census data, comparing 2010 to 2020, Allegheny County has grown by 2.7%, a population increase that many are attributing to new opportunities in

the region. For the arts community, this growth has created a newfound collaboration between native Pittsburghers and new faces.

"Coming to Pittsburgh from Atlanta, at first it felt like culture shock, experiencing the differences between the Northeast and South. Our piece, 40412, explores what it means to actively create and choose your home, and what it really means to be from a place," Neal explained. "404 is the area code for Atlanta, and we all know 412 is the area code for Pittsburgh."

"As a born-and-raised Pittsburgher, I'm excited to share my city and its stories," Livefromthecity added, "but also to be honest with the realities of what Pittsburgh needs to keep improving for its residents."

Freshworks is KST's creative residency for local artists and collaborators. The program provides artists with financial resources, studio space, production staff, lighting & sound design, and professional development.

Artists cultivate their risk-taking with interdisciplinary studies of contemporary dance, theater, music, and multimedia.

40412 will be presented as a work in progress at KST's Alloy Studios (5530 Penn Ave.) on Friday, Nov. 5, and Saturday, Nov. 6; each performance is scheduled for 8 p.m.

Available for sale online, tickets may also be purchased [in person] at the event. In an effort to welcome all to enjoy the arts, the ticket cost is based on KST's "Pay What Makes You Happy" sliding scale of accessible price points. Visit [kelly-strayhorn.org](http://kelly-strayhorn.org) for season details, COVID policy updates, and ticket info. ♦



**ABOVE:** Livefromthecity (left) and Sheryland Neal inhabit different perspectives for their collaborative piece, 40412, at KST's Alloy Studios. Photo courtesy of Kelsy Black.

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