

# the Bulletin

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

## As water bills rise, PWSA ramps up efforts to help low- income customers

By Oliver Morrison *PublicSource*

Pittsburgh - Elizabeth Weatherspoon raises two children on a fixed income in the East Hills neighborhood of Pittsburgh.

She receives around \$800 per month in disability benefits for herself, another \$800 for one of her children and \$300 in supplemental nutrition assistance. This puts her just below the federal poverty line.

Any costs that go up by more than inflation can make her even poorer. In recent years, water bills have been going up by almost three times the rate of inflation across the country.

And in Pittsburgh, the water and sewage rates have been increasing even faster, about four times faster than inflation since 2017.

See **PWSA** | page 2



**ABOVE:** BGC youth program coordinator Judy Lubarski (left) lets loose with high school graduate Lanell Brooks, Jr., at the College & Career Readiness Program's closing ceremony on Thursday, Jun. 17. Catch more of the action on page 10. Photo by Lauren Lubarski.



**ABOVE:** Yinz Coffee draws a crowd during its Jul. 22 opening in Bloomfield. The new coffee shop pays homage to once-and-future legends like Victor Navarro, Jr., who made a habit of welcoming everyone to kill time at 4525 Liberty Ave. Photo by Andrew McKeon.

## 'Secured for good': Kincaid St. Community Garden gains long-term protection

By Elizabeth Sensky *East Liberty Development, Inc.*

Garfield – Now that summer is in full swing at Kincaid Street Community Garden, the raspberries are ripening beautifully and the flowers are in full bloom.

The approximately 4,800 sq. ft. of community green space comes alive this time of year as local residents harvest the vegetables, fruits, and flowers they planted across more than 35 garden plots.

Flash back to 2011 and the garden was nothing more than a few empty lots in the surrounds of 5414 Kincaid St. At the prompting of local community members,

East Liberty Development, Inc. (ELDI), purchased one of the four lots at a foreclosure.

Shortly following the sale, fellows from the Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience (PULSE) came up with the idea of converting the land into a community garden.

The hope was that the property - located right behind the PULSE Graham House - would serve as an opportunity for local residents to cultivate a shared sense of

See **Kincaid St. Garden** | page 4

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*BLACK DOULA LOOKS TO  
SERVE GARFIELD FAMILIES*

*NEIGHBORS RESUME TALKS  
ON ROSETTA ST. PROJECT*

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## PWSA *continued from page 1*

The average customer in the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority [PWSA] service area spent about 2.7% of their income on water and sewage. The Environmental Protection Agency considers water and sewage bills above 4.5% to be unaffordable.

But in a third of the city's neighborhoods, at least one in every five customers was spending 10% or more of their income on water and sewage, according to PWSA's own affordability study in 2019.

Since then, PWSA's rates have continued to increase, making the bills even less affordable for low-income residents.

Weatherspoon recently had to spend a month in the hospital and fell behind on her water and sewage bill. She found herself more than \$700 in debt, so she called

up PWSA in March to figure out what she could do.

It's lucky she called when she did.

PWSA's moratorium on water shutoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic has come to an end after more than a year, and the agency has already sent initial shutoff notices to 20% of the 7,787 customers who fell behind on their bills. More than twice as many customers are at risk of a shutoff as in a typical year.

Weatherspoon was referred to PWSA's customer assistance programs, which are available to anyone who earns 150% or less than the federal poverty level. That's \$32,940 for a family of three, and she was \$13,000 below that.

She's eligible for up to \$300 in immediate

assistance from PWSA and \$36 off her monthly bill going forward. And she can pay off the money she's fallen behind on slowly, over years. As long as she is making payments, PWSA is now also forgiving an additional \$15 of her bill for every payment she makes.

Money has been so tight, Weatherspoon said, that she hasn't been able to take her 4-year-old to the kinds of theme parks that she took her 14-year-old to. "It's sad. My son is 4 years old and never been to Kenywood, never been to Sandcastle, never been to Disney World."

Weatherspoon has been eligible for these discounts since her son was born four years ago. But she only learned about it when she fell behind over the winter.

She is not alone. PWSA has signed up 4,565 customers but estimates there are more than 21,000 additional customers who are eligible for the program but haven't signed up yet.

### - A crushing burden -

Water utilities across the country have struggled to give discounts to low-income customers.

One problem, according to Marcela Gonzalez Rivas, an assistant professor who studies water policy at the University of Pittsburgh, is that there isn't a national standard. Many water utilities don't provide any customer assistance at all, including some of the country's largest in Miami, Charlotte and Salt Lake City. And those that do are left to their own devices about how to implement them, Rivas said.

Federal programs to help low-income customers pay their gas and electric bills have existed for decades but the federal government only recently funded two temporary programs to help water customers hurt during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Utilities often don't say how many customers are signed up, so it's difficult to compare, but they typically only sign up between 10% and 15% of their eligible customers, according to Sri Vedachalam, the lead author of a May Environmental Policy Institute study of 20 large water assistance programs.

He understands why water utilities don't publicize their numbers. "Who would? It's nothing to boast of," he said. "You're spending a lot of effort, asking...for budget support and then ending with somewhat

dismal numbers."

PWSA's signup rate appears to be on the higher end, according to the study. But what counts as good isn't great: Only 18% of PWSA customers who are likely eligible for the assistance have signed up.

State Rep. Ed Gainey, the victor of the Democratic primary for mayor in Pittsburgh, told PublicSource before his victory that he opposed further rate increases at PWSA that put an undue burden on low-income customers.

"We can't talk about how do we protect the most vulnerable but we still continue to do rate hikes, knowing that that's the negative on them," Gainey said.

The next mayor will have the power to nominate new members to the PWSA board, which would have the power to limit future rate increases.

The Pennsylvania Utilities Commission held public hearings in July about PWSA's latest proposed rate increase of 19% over two years. During three afternoon sessions, the 18 people who testified were almost unanimous that the city's water infrastructure needed improvements, including to prepare for flooding from climate change. But they almost all testified that the utility needed to do more to protect the city's most vulnerable residents.

State Rep. Emily Kinkead, D-North Side, testified that the average customer's bill would have increased 130% between 2016 and 2023, if the latest increases are implemented. (PWSA says its average customer's bill increased 47% between 2017 and 2021). She said any rate increases should be put on hold until the agency signs up more low-income customers for its assistance program. "History has demonstrated that PWSA has not adequately made information about this program available to those in need," she said.

Will Pickering, who just finished his first full year as executive director at PWSA in June, told PublicSource that one of the lessons he learned when working at the water utility in Washington D.C., was that PWSA needed to get in front of the inevitable hardship low-income customers would face as rates rose.

PWSA has been signing up customers faster than other Pittsburgh-area water and sewage utilities over the last two years, such as ALCOSAN and Pennsylvania

- story continues on page 14 -



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## Readers respond: where to allocate American Rescue funds in PGH

A Message from The Bulletin

*Pittsburgh* - Thanks to input from loyal *Bulletin* readers [like you], our public survey garnered a number of responses about how the City of Pittsburgh should spend \$335 Million of federal funds (allocated by the American Rescue Plan Act).

Some readers checked every box where they thought funds should be allocated, while others highlighted only their main concerns. Read on to learn more, anecdotally speaking, about your neighbors' priorities for City spending.

When *The Bulletin* finished crunching the numbers, two priorities became boldface: **loans/grants for construction or renovation of affordable housing units**; and also **establishment of an infrastructure fund to support affordable housing development**.

Among the respondents' near-consensus points: landslide remediation and demolition of vacant housing; investment in a land bank to expedite the sale of vacant, city-owned properties; and loans to private landlords for major repairs/improvements to housing units dedicated to low-income families.

Although only a few pollees indicated priorities "other than above" on last month's survey, those who did illustrated some entertaining ideas for City spending, all of which are unfit to print.

We encourage readers to respond to any/all *Bulletin* stories, courtesy be damned, because we love hearing from you. ♦

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## the Bulletin

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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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## Thank You!

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## Meet the BGC: Board Member Lillian Sogga



**ABOVE:** BGC Board Member Lillian Sogga, a Penn Ave. business owner, also works as a financial educator. Photo courtesy of Nina Gibbs.

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# Kincaid St. Garden *continued from page 1*



**ABOVE:** The Kincaid Street Community Garden is now protected by a nonprofit land trust, and may keep growing in perpetuity. Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Sensky.

community by growing their own food together.

In late 2012, PULSE began collaborating with the Garfield Community Action Team and, later, Grow Pittsburgh, a nonprofit that supports urban agriculture projects, on developing the garden with Garfield residents.

"It started with a few garden plots in a backyard and grew to four vacant lots over the next decade," Lydia Yoder, a longtime volunteer at the garden, said.

Garfield residents can sign up to become a member of Kincaid Street Community Garden; around 25 new members sign up each year. Members can help care for perennial crops in the collective garden plots, or adopt their own plot and maintain it independently.

The garden also provides neighborhood kids with a beautiful green space for daily recreation. According to Yoder, the space has become a real community fixture in Garfield.

"We love working together on the challenges and joys of building community,

and a garden," she said. "We love sharing food around our picnic table together (in non-COVID times), and we love playing in the dirt."

In order to ensure that neighbors will be able to continue playing in the dirt well into the future, ELDI recently sold its garden lot to the Allegheny Land Trust (ALT), a local nonprofit specializing in land conservation. As part of the sales agreement, ELDI stipulated that the land must be maintained as a community garden space in perpetuity.

As such, the garden now falls under ALT and Grow Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Agricultural Land Initiative (TRALI), which aims to protect existing community gardens and urban farms throughout the Pittsburgh region. ALT will own the land, and Grow Pittsburgh will continue supporting the community garden with mentorship and resources. Garden volunteers are also working with the TRALI program to eventually preserve all four lots on which the garden sits.

With more and more development happening in the East End, Shivam Mathur,

ELDI's real estate development project manager, said the sale aligns perfectly with his organization's mission to bring about a positive change in the local community.

"It's important that we save our community assets," he noted.

For the garden's members, most of whom are Garfield residents living within five blocks of the site, it comes as a huge relief that the property is now secured for good.

"Over the years, we feared that the lots could be taken out from under us, as has happened to other community gardens in Pittsburgh. That fear prevented us from making long-term investments in the garden," Yoder explained. "We can now plan a long future for the garden!"

To learn more, visit [growpittsburgh.org](http://growpittsburgh.org). ♦

**BELOW:** Raspberries ripen at 5414 Kincaid St. in Garfield. Photo courtesy of Kincaid Street Community Garden.



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**ABOVE:** East End residents shoot the breeze during "Community Day" festivities on Jul. 18. Photo courtesy of Gary Cirrincione.

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## BGC Now Hiring: Greenzone Coordinator

A Message from the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation



*Garfield Greenzone & Service Project Coordinator*

**Hours:** 30-35 hours per week

**Compensation:** \$20.00 per hour with benefits

The Garfield GreenZone and Service Project is intended to bring area residents into greater contact with their environment and natural spaces. Through various projects and programming, neighbors can enjoy new walking trails, plant gardens, participate in organized or informal recreation, and preserve green space throughout Garfield for future generations to use. The initiative also provides a pathway for non-violent offenders to avoid incarceration by diverting offenders into community service projects and enabling them to receive training in landscaping skills that could lead to actual jobs.

#### Job Description:

The Bloomfield Garfield Corporation (BGC) is seeking a qualified and experienced person to help coordinate and carry out a number of projects and programs in the Garfield GreenZone and Penn Avenue corridor. This person reports to the BGC's Chief Operations Officer, and works collaboratively with the Community Engagement and Planning Specialist to plan and organize events and meetings. This staff person also assists the community engagement and planning specialist with related public safety issues. These include working with the district magistrate system to identify individuals whom the court assigns to the BGC to perform community service projects rather than pay fines or receive jail time.

#### Experience or Education:

Associate's or B. A. degree in a field of related interest, and/or five years' experience working for a community-based organization, or a nonprofit whose mission relies upon empowering and engaging residents of low-income communities.

*Before applying, please review the Roles & Responsibilities at [bloomfield-garfield.org/green-initiatives/hiring-greenzone-coordinator](http://bloomfield-garfield.org/green-initiatives/hiring-greenzone-coordinator). Résumé and cover letter should be emailed to [pam@bloomfield-garfield.org](mailto:pam@bloomfield-garfield.org). References should be furnished upon request. The BGC is an Equal Opportunity Employer. ♦*

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## 'We are the Global Majority' art exhibition sparks introspection

A Message from BOOM Concepts



**ABOVE:** Artwork on display at Space Gallery's 'We are the Global Majority' exhibition in downtown Pittsburgh. Photo courtesy of BOOM Concepts.

*Garfield* - Although BOOM Concepts has not opened its doors to the public for exhibitions and general attendees since early 2020, the BOOM team has been safely supporting other arts experiences around the city.

We were excited to attend the June opening of "We Are the Global Majority," an exhibition by the #notwhitecollective at Space Gallery in downtown Pittsburgh's cultural district. Here is a brief recap and reflection on the exhibition by our new BOOM Studio member, Lee Owens:

Looking at works by so many artists of color, and meeting them, gave me a bit of motivation; I just wish that I had the time to create again. The lack of traditional methods, like oil paints and such, on display was very interesting. I find myself grappling a lot with how I feel about modern art (sometimes I think, "anyone could do that"), but this show made me look at things differently.

I thought about how contemporary art is a form of protest rather than a shot in the dark. It's a protest against Western ideas of beauty and art, and it can serve as reclamation of culture and [statement against] forces that have been used to oppress. I had good conversations about healing, femininity, and Blackness at Space Gallery.

A few pieces, in particular, stood out to me: the sketches of people who don't fit Western beauty standards, and also the chairs. Much of this show was about racial trauma; it was really healing and enlightening for me.

I love being in art spaces with other artists because it's something that I don't get at school - where everyone is busy *learning* instead of just being their best. For me, learning from art means failure after failure, and it's really easy for me to get discouraged.

This art show helped remind me that, eventually, I'll figure out how to use everything that I've learned, and also that "art" can be whatever I want it to be. It doesn't have to be a photorealistic painting or a novel; I can just sketch something on a sheet of paper, write three lines, and have a finished piece. I realized that, when I create, I'm not bound by Western standards and expectation. I'm bound only by myself. ♦

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## In conversation with Kieashia Edwell, Elephant Song Doula Services

By Pamela Schön Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

**BELOW:** Kieashia Edwell looks forward to the Sept. 13 opening of Elephant Song Doula Services (5423 Penn Ave.) in Garfield. Photo courtesy of Pamela Schön.



*Perspective/Garfield* - Penn Avenue seems to be attracting new and exciting entrepreneurs on a daily basis. On Sept. 13, one of Garfield's own, Kieashia Edwell, will open the doors to Elephant Song Doula Services (5423 Penn Ave.). Offering comprehensive support for new moms, Edwell and her team are excited to uplift the Garfield community with helpful, yet underappreciated, services for local families.

**BGC:** Could you please describe your background?

**Edwell:** "I was born in Pittsburgh, but spent the first 19 years of my life in Columbus, Ohio. I returned to Pittsburgh, when I was 19, with my one-month-old daughter. My professional background is in the nursing field and early childhood development, but my passion for birthing support was born from assisting my mother in the births of my siblings. In high school, I was blessed to support a few of my friends during the births of their children. Because of the things I learned from my mother, I was able to guide my friends on their breastfeeding journey - and I'm still a part of their lives to this day."

**BGC:** Could you please explain your job to any readers unfamiliar with "Doulas"?

**Edwell:** "A Doula is a companion trained to offer emotional, mental, physical, informational, and educational support to birthing people and their families. We become a part of your village, and work to help the family adjust to the addition of a new member."

**BGC:** What brought you to Penn Avenue?

**Edwell:** "Not only do I live in Garfield - I love Garfield. Our neighbors are awesome, so it was easy math for me. Families in Garfield, and the surrounding neighborhoods of Bloomfield and Friendship, deserve to have a place providing compassionate support for pregnancy, birthing, and parenting. Plus, there are some dope businesses - unique

markets, a thriving art community, and great Black-owned businesses along Penn Ave."

**BGC:** How did you get into this field, and what is the importance of Black Doulas?

**Edwell:** "The importance of Black Doulas and other Black birth professionals became especially evident to me as I reflected on my own traumatic birth experience. I was 19 [years old] when I gave birth, alone, and although I knew a little more than most teenage moms, I was still clueless in the grand scheme of things. I lacked reliable support, and suffered from postpartum depression and postpartum anxiety. If I had a Black Doula back then, I would've had the language to express what I was experiencing emotionally and mentally, or at least a listening ear...I would've learned the importance of using my voice to advocate for myself and my baby while navigating a system that has a long history of mistreating people who look like me. My birth experience would likely have been very different if I had the support of a Doula who could relate to me. Now, I am able to offer other expectant mothers the very care and support they deserve."

**BGC:** What services do you offer to local residents?

**Edwell:** "Our current services include birth planning sessions, private and group "Birth Basics" childbirth preparation classes, virtual and in-person support through pregnancy and birth, postpartum Doula support (in-person following birth), and private & group lactation support. We have many more upcoming services, so keep a lookout for what's to come. Some of our [programming] will include prenatal and postpartum yoga, as well as a bi-weekly breastfeeding support group. We also welcome event rentals, and the opportunity to host local baby showers, at our space [5423 Penn Ave.]. There's so much more I want to do, and this is just the beginning."

**BGC:** When will Elephant Song open its doors at 5423 Penn Ave.?

**Edwell:** "We currently offer virtual services by appointment only; in-person appointments and office hours (Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) will begin on Sept. 13. We hope to serve the families of Bloomfield and Garfield for years to come." ♦

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# Neighborhood FOCUS

## Zoning tool might help Bloomfield, Polish Hill stay affordable

By Sam Spearing Bloomfield Development Corporation

**Bloomfield & Polish Hill** - Thanks to recent legislation adopted by Pittsburgh City Council, an affordable housing tool that is being utilized in Lawrenceville could ultimately be expanded to Bloomfield and Polish Hill.

The tool, known as “inclusionary zoning,” aims to address the lack of affordable units in neighborhoods where housing costs are rising dramatically. By mandating that affordable units be included in new developments [20 units in size or larger], inclusionary zoning can help neighborhoods create more balanced development and promote continued economic diversity.

In 2019, Councilwoman Gross introduced legislation to create an Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD) for Lawrenceville to test-pilot. Over the next two years, this IPOD created forty new units of affordable housing in the neighborhood. In the spring of 2021, following robust advocacy from neighbors and community groups, inclusionary zoning became a fact of life in Lawrenceville.

Councilwoman Gross is now working to expand inclusionary zoning to include the Bloomfield and Polish Hill neighborhoods as well. Bloomfield and Polish Hill residents have expressed interest in the policy ever since it was first adopted in Lawrenceville in 2019.

When [local developer] Milhaus presented its proposal for the Bloomfield ShurSave site in 2018, one concern raised by neighbors of the site was the lack of affordable housing included in the project; Milhaus eventually walked away from the project.

The following year, Bloomfield Development Corporation (BDC) held a series of workshops as part of the process to create the Bloomfield Central Gateway Development Guidelines. One of the clear-cut priorities discovered during that process was that Bloomfield has a need for more affordable housing, and its residents want to see a balanced approach to new development in the neighborhood.

In both Bloomfield and Polish Hill, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that housing costs are increasing and becoming unsustainable for many residents. Approx-

*‘...inclusionary zoning can help neighborhoods create more balanced development and promote continued economic diversity.’*

**BELOW:** Bloomfield residents’ collaborative vision for the “Gateway Guidelines” of Liberty Ave. incorporates mixed-income housing. Photo courtesy of Sam Spearing.



imately 41% of renters in Bloomfield are cost-burdened, which is double the city-wide rate of roughly 20%. Polish Hill Civic Association reports that, from 2015 to 2018, the median home sale price more than tripled (from \$67,500 to \$217,500) in Polish Hill.

Throughout these historically working class neighborhoods, the increase in housing prices makes it hard to maintain the economic diversity that has grown and nurtured their communities for decades. Real estate developers are increasingly interested in Bloomfield and Polish Hill, and their plans could eventually reshape the social composition of both neighborhoods.

Following a Jul. 21 meeting, the legislation to expand inclusionary zoning into Bloomfield and Polish Hill is now referred to the Planning Commission, which will conduct its own public hearing before providing Council with its recommendation on the expansion.

Residents living in the affected areas will soon receive mailings from the City Planning Department that notify them of the public hearing, and also explain how to register their feedback. BDC invites neighbors to join in supporting the expansion of inclusionary zoning to give Bloomfield and Polish Hill an opportunity to create new affordable housing. ♦



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**ABOVE:** A goat (right) takes a break from doing lawncare in Garfield. Allegheny GoatScape provided animals, including a donkey who keeps the goats in check, to help mitigate overgrowth in the neighborhood's green spaces this summer. Photo courtesy of Irene Sparks.

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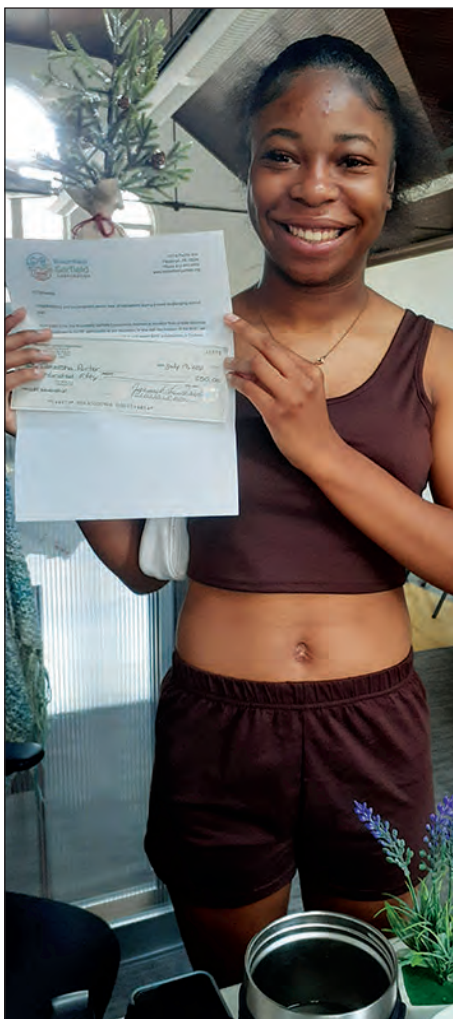


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[nina@bloomfield-garfield.org](mailto:nina@bloomfield-garfield.org)  
412-441-6950 x 117



## BGC rewards local students' graduation, college prep success



**ABOVE:** Recent graduate Damesha Porter displays her scholarship from the BGC's College & Career Readiness Program (CCRP). Photo by Judy Lubarski.

**BELOW:** Garfield resident and high school graduate Kevin Martin collects scholarship money upon completing his CCRP requirements. Photo by Judy Lubarski.



**ABOVE:** CCRP student Kyrach Page (left) celebrates graduation with her sibling on Jun. 17. Photo by Lauren Lubarski.



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for the latest neighborhood information and community updates.

### 4th Annual History Event "Hospitals of Lawrenceville"

September 12, 2021~ 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Zion Ev. Lutheran Church  
237 37th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201

**1:30 p.m.** - Joann Cantrell, a human interest writer from Lawrenceville, will speak about St. Francis Hospital, founded by Dr. Philip Weisenberger and two sisters of Third Order of St. Francis in 1865.

**2:30 p.m.** - Frank Kurtick is docent and event co-ordinator at the Heinz Memorial Chapel on the University of Pittsburgh's Oakland Campus. He will discuss St. Margaret Memorial Hospital, founded in 1898 by the Shoenbergers, an iron and steel magnet who lived in Lawrenceville.

**3:30 p.m.** - Jim Wudarczyk, a local historian, author and researcher for the Lawrenceville Historical Society and the Greater Pittsburgh Civil War Round Table. He will discuss how the Marine Hospital came to Lawrenceville, its institutional life and its eventual transfer to Allegheny County. The Marine Hospital opened in 1910.

**Free to the public: Reservations required. Face Masks recommended, follow CDC guidelines. Please call: 412-621-2720 to make your reservation, please leave name and phone number.**



### Back to School... Already!

It's hard to believe that in a few weeks school will begin again. Before sending your children off, stop and read the following tips.

#### Young Students

Pedestrian injuries are the second leading cause of unintentional death among children ages 5 to 14. So make sure that children:

- Look left, right then left again before crossing the street.
- Always try to cross a street when a crossing guard is present.
- Cross in front of the bus only after the driver signals it's okay.

#### High School Students

Statistics show that teen drivers are four times more likely to be involved in fatal crashes than more experienced drivers. If your children drive to school:

- Teach them, as well as, all passengers to buckle-up.
- Remind them to obey the speed limits
- Enforce no-drinking-and-driving rules.

#### College Students

The number one crime on college campuses is theft. One-out-of-every 10 college students will be robbed while away at school.

- Remind students to always lock dormitory doors.
- Tell students not to keep large amounts of money in their rooms.
- Have students mark personal property with identifiable marks.



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## Lawrenceville sidewalk sale: pop-up event now permanent

By Emily Persico *Lawrenceville Corporation*

*Lawrenceville* - Every other Saturday, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., local makers and vintage retailers operate sidewalk sales throughout the neighborhood.

The initiative was created in the fall of 2020 by Rona Chang (of Otto Finn clothing store) to help boost local makers' holiday sales in the wake of COVID-19 and the ensuing market closures.

On specified Saturdays, makers began setting up outside of Radiant Hall (4514

Plummer St.) to sell their creations, attracting visitors from all over the city.

The initial markets were a success, helping carry many makers through the difficult winter. Due to the positive response, the event has now expanded to include Ice House Studios (100 43rd St.) and Attack Theatre (212 45th St.).

Each market boasts between 40 and 70 makers - including painters, ceramicists, jewelers, candle makers, and vintage retailers - while offering a chance to explore the neighborhood beyond Butler Street.

Attack Theatre is also hosting movement activities to spark creativity and bring even more family-friendly fun to the

bi-weekly event.

Bloomfield Saturday Market shoppers are encouraged to pop down to the Lawrenceville Pop-Up Market every other Saturday. This month's dates are Saturdays, Aug. 7 and Aug. 21, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The Aug. 21 market will host a supersized event, which will include vendors at Bay 41 and special sales along Butler Street.

For more info about the Markets, and how to participate, visit [radianthall.org](http://radianthall.org). ♦



**ABOVE:** Local patrons survey the artwork and vintage items on display at a sidewalk sale in Lawrenceville. Photo courtesy of Emily Persico.

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Source: Quantros, Inc. 2021. CareChex® Awards are powered by the Quantros Quality Outcomes Analytics Software. Quantros is a leading provider of software-based solutions and services to health care. Unlike other publicly available award rankings, CareChex awards are based on comprehensive risk-adjustment methodology and do not include any self-reported data.  
The Southwestern PA region includes the Pittsburgh-New Castle-Weirton Combined Statistical Area. ©4/21 MX602817



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Public Safety Survey



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you feel safe in your community? (on a scale of 1 being very safe and 5 being not safe at all) \_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel makes the community unsafe? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think are the biggest issues our community faces (Please only select the top 4)

- ☐ Employment/ Education Opportunities
- ☐ Housing resources/ rental
- ☐ Housing resources/home owners
- ☐ Potholes/sidewalks/vacant property
- ☐ Trash/dumping
- ☐ Violent Crime
- ☐ Non-violent crime
- ☐ Help with small business
- ☐ Clean Air

If given an opportunity to meet with Officials whose work involves our public safety, who would you most like to be able to ask questions and hear from? (Please only choose 4)

- ☐ Zone 5 Police☐ Probation☐ Vice☐ Narcotics☐ Trauma Unit☐ DA's Office☐ US Attorney General☐ City Council members☐ State Representative☐ Mayor's Office
- ☐ Magistrate☐ Permits, Licensing and inspection☐ Housing Authority of Pittsburgh☐ URA☐ Allegheny County Health Department☐ Department of Mobility & Infrastructure☐ PWSA – Lead☐ Lead Safe Allegheny☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in being part of a block watch:

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

I am interested in helping pass out fliers and volunteer at events

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

I would like to report a problem:

Is illegal dumping a problem near you?

1	2	3	4	5
No	A little bit	Moderate	Yes	Big Issue

Do you believe access to nature has a positive effect on people's well being?

1	2	3	4	5
No	Not really	Indifferent	Maybe	Yes

How often do you go for walks in Garfield (either to get to a bus/residence or for fun)?

1	2	3	4	5
I don't	Not often	Sometimes	Often	All the time

How often do you use other parks in Pittsburgh? (Frick, Schenley, Arsenal, etc)

1	2	3	4	5
I don't	Not often	Sometimes	Often	All the time

Would you be willing to clean and/or mow a vacant lot near you in you owned it?

1	2	3	4	5
No	Too busy	Tell me more	Maybe	Yes

Do you think Garfield would benefit from well maintained walking paths and benches?

1	2	3	4	5
No	Not really	Indifferent	Maybe	Yes

Would you like more trees on your street/in front of your home?

No	Need more info	Yes
----	----------------	-----

Do you feel that access to fresh, nutrient dense food is accessible to most residents?

No	Sometime	Yes
----	----------	-----

Do you know the meaning of environmental justice?

No	Need more info	Yes
----	----------------	-----

Do you feel like your environment influences your health (explain)

Please mail completed surveys to: Nina Gibbs / Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation / 113 N. Pacific Ave. / PGH, PA 15224.  
Email Nina@Bloomfield-Garfield.org or call 412-441-6950 (ext. 117) with any questions.

Senior centers reopening with adjusted hours

A Message from the City of Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh - On Jul. 20, the City of Pittsburgh Department of Parks and Recreation (Citiparks) began re-opening Healthy Active Living (Senior) Centers in a phased approach.

Four “Focal Point Centers” - Homewood, Sheraden, Greenfield, and South Side Market House - reopened last month with a modified schedule. These centers are now open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; programming will be offered during these times, and program schedules are available for pickup at each center.

Frozen “grab-and-go” meal distribution will continue at all current distribution centers (including the four Focal Points) on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday - from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dine-in meals will not yet be served at open centers, but tea and coffee will be available.

Beginning Aug. 2, the following Senior centers will be opening under the same modified schedule (Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.): Glen Hazel, Hazelwood, Lawrenceville, Brighton Heights, Beechview, Mt. Washington, and West End [as of press time, the opening dates for Healthy Active Living centers in Morningside and Northview Heights are still to be determined].

In cooperation with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and Area Agency on Aging, Citiparks has developed a COVID-19 operations plan for the centers to help safeguard vulnerable, older adults. Seniors who have not been vaccinated are recommended to wear masks.

Seniors who have registered at the centers in the past will receive notification of the new schedule and COVID-19 safety information in the mail. Additional information is available on the Citiparks website (pittsburghpa.gov/citiparks/senior-centers). ♦



The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation has a monthly email newsletter!

Subscribe at [bit.ly/bgc\\_email](https://bit.ly/bgc_email) to get the latest community news delivered to your inbox every month.



ABOVE: A local student and “Learn & Earn” participant navigates the business end of a weed wacker. He and other students from the BGC’s summer youth employment program are now learning how to landscape the Garfield Greenzone. Photo by Kuwame Kinsel.



# LOCAL REAL ESTATE BLOTTER

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

Real Estate Sales (for the month of June 2021)

Compiled by Lillian Denhardt, Residential Realtor

## Bloomfield

Timothy A & Antionette M Gizzi to Joseph Rosenbloom at 335 Ella St. for \$150,000.

Susan M Runco to Arash Samadi at 445 Pearl St. for \$304,000.

Bloomfield Italian Independence Club to Sapphire Way LLC at 4615 Lorigan St. for \$75,000.

Dennis & Linda S. Adams to David R LeFevre at 37 Hemingway St. for \$332,000.

F & W Associates to Samuel E Fitzgibbon at 4042 Howley St. for \$347,500.

Carroll LLC to Debra Kay Dyer at 4635 Carroll St. for \$281,000.

Renee Buzek to Rachel L Deitz at 215 Edmond St. for \$356,023.

Bozidar & Georgette I Belobrajdic to 806-808 Green Street LLC at 325 S. Pacific Ave. for \$440,000.

Ralph J & Linda L Friedel to Prasad V Tetali at 315 S. Atlantic Ave. for \$725,000.

Mary Martha Palyo to Costello Properties LLC at 520 S. Winebiddle St. for \$265,000.

Derek & Iliyana Norris to Elizabeth Reitz at 351 S. Aiken Ave. for \$765,000.

## Friendship

No sales to report.

## Garfield

Penn Pioneer Enterprises LLC to Justin Belton at 5116 Rosetta St. for \$52,500.

William W & Elsie F Hay to Skyline Way LLC at 4913 Dearborn St. for \$5,000.

Benjamin Weaver to Elizabeth B McCarty at 5205 Penn Ave. for \$425,000.

## East Liberty

Evanscarter LLC to Wasiullah Mohamed at 500 Mellon St. for \$446,000.

Andrew M Sweet to Eric & Tenpas at 5811 Hays St. for \$392,000.

Wilmington Savings Fund Society to BGBC Realty LLC at 6117 Saint Marie St. for \$197,770.

William Morgan Jones III to Andrew J Tarbutton at 414 N. Saint Clair St. for \$110,000.

East Liberty Development Inc. to Jaih Hunter-Hill at 420 N. Euclid Ave. for \$41,500.

Montair Development LLC to 319 North Beatty LLC at 319 N. Beatty St. for \$692,055.

## Lawrenceville

David E & Sherrie Ann Baumgardner to Deborah J & Thomas Zabielski at 176 42nd St. for \$200,000.

Thomas & Doris A Schoffstall to Christopher Thompson at 231 Fisk St. for \$437,000.

Jason H & Jessica C Neiss to Cela I LLC at 385 44th St. for \$575,000.

David R Mike to Clifford & Lillian Mauroner at 352 45th St. for \$500,000.

Pino Alina M Del to Alaina G McGuire at 3721 Charlotte St. for \$308,000.

Andrew C Lathom to Brooks A English at 246 37th St. for \$515,000.

3600 Penn Associates LLC to Allison Gemza at 241 38th St. for \$360,000.

Laura Licari to Lauren Felitsky at 3636 Mintwood St. for \$299,000.

Daniel K Coleman to Merel Elisabeth Duursma at 322 1/2 38th St. for \$238,000.

Stephen F & Henrietta C Koch to TS Real Estate Group LLC at 3926 Mintwood St. for \$210,000.

Megan H & Philip J Crow to Meredith Kearnsan at 3815 1/2 Howley St. for \$238,500.

Smokey Joe Properties LLC to Michael Simonson at 3932 Woolslayer Way for \$575,000.

Jason W & Helen E Shaffer to Peter & Brit-

tany Nelson at 4808 Lima Way for \$226,000.

Jeremy Addison Hollis to Tyler Joseph Siminski at 5228 Harrison St. for \$465,000.

Joshua R Taylor to Michal Cieslak at 5212 Dresden Way for \$260,000.

Silver Blue Enterprises LLC to Timothy T Briercheck at 4906 Harrison St. for \$365,100.

Alexander Farah to Andrew Thomas Flowers at 5120 Dresden Way for \$330,000.

Ann M McGaffin to Leeza Caninzun at 5149 Keystone St. for \$309,000.

201712Wy-42 LLC to Randal D Cevera at 5119 Duncan St. for \$335,000.

Jamie L Accamando to 5255 Lawrenceville Lux Home LLC at 0 Wickliff St. for \$120,000.

Joseph J & Anna A Antosz to Elise J Carter at 131 45th St. for \$285,000.

Lu Bai to Malke Assad at 5534 Camelia St. for \$360,000.

Zachary Michael Barker to Patrick F Lambe at 909 McCandless Ave. for \$335,000.

5515 Butler Street Development LP to Suzanne J Templar at 5563 Berlin Way for \$665,250.

5515 Butler Street Development LP to William C & Alexandra G Selby at 5575 Berlin Way for \$594,511.

## Classifieds

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## Stanton Heights

Michael J Enscoe to Samson B & Rachel E Graham at 1123 Stanton Ter. for \$280,000.

Gary A & Teri L Lejpras to Timothy P Baxter at 1021 Fairfield St. for \$195,000.

Jing-Yi Chen to Steven W Allen at 1117 Downlook St. for \$301,500.

*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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## PWSA *continued from page 2*

American Water. And it is taking additional steps to increase participation, including hiring three staff whose primary responsibility is to help more customers sign up.

### - Drop in the ocean -

PWSA's new "PGH20 Cares" team showed up at the Spartan Community Center in Hazelwood for the monthly flea market on a Saturday in July.

The team, which was announced in February, is one of PWSA's biggest investments to date directed at helping low-income customers learn about and sign up for assistance. Its three employees have begun attending community events and have plans to start knocking on doors.

The pandemic has forced water utilities across the country to innovate. The number of water customers in Louisville, Kentucky, at risk of shutoffs increased by 900% over the pandemic and most of them were people who had never missed a bill before. The utility started a program called "Drops of Kindness."

It launched a media blitz, targeted advertising on social media, text messages to

customers and put fliers in churches and grocery stores of communities with a lot of need.

The agency has given away around \$4.5 million to more than 13,000 customers and was cited by the US Water Alliance for its innovations.

One of the biggest factors in Louisville's success PWSA has already adopted: They don't require their customers to verify their incomes. Louisville's assistance grants were designed to help any customer facing hardship from the pandemic, not just low-income customers. PWSA's policy functions more like an honor system.

"With us, you can do it in 10 minutes over the phone, and you don't have to give us anything," said Sarah Viszneki, the PGH20 Cares team coordinator. "I think that once people realize how easy it is, they'll tell their friends."

PWSA also innovated during the pandemic, reaching out to more than 9,000 customers by phone who had fallen behind on their bills. They increased the program's visibility on its website and advertised on Google, increasing the number of pageviews from virtually none to more than 10,000 since March. They added fliers to food pantry boxes.

And they have now trained their entire customer service staff about their assistance programs, said Julie Quigley, director of customer service. So when someone like Weatherspoon calls for help, "We're not missing any of those contacts anymore," she said.

Outreach by the Cares team will be focused on areas where its most vulnerable customers live. Hazelwood isn't one of the neediest areas in the city, according to PWSA's 2019 study, but about one in five residents in its census tract are spending at least 7% of their incomes on water and

sewage bills. Some census tracts in Glen Hazel, Marshall-Shadeland and the Southside Flats have more than 500 customers each who would potentially be eligible for their program.

Jennifer Kennedy, the executive director of Pittsburgh United, wants PWSA to make its assistance program more generous. Although PWSA gives a 100% discount on its service charge and first 1,000 gallons of water, the bill can still be expensive for some large families who use a lot of water, she said.

In Philadelphia, by contrast, customers are only required to pay a certain percentage of their income on water and sewage.

Philadelphia's program is the only one of its kind in the country, according to Vedachalam at the Environmental Policy Institute. Unlike elsewhere, Philadelphia's water utility collects information about the income-level of customers, he said, though that can be costly. PWSA looked into the Philadelphia model but found that it would be too expensive to administer, a spokesperson emailed in a statement.

PWSA believes its current level of assistance is generous. Compared to the 20 large utilities studied by Vedachalam, the percentage discount offered by PWSA is among the most generous, trailing only Cleveland, St. Louis, Chicago, Philadelphia and Seattle.

One of the biggest challenges is signing up renters who don't pay their own water bill because it's included in their rent. If landlords co-sign on the water bill, the renters are eligible to receive discounts that landlords could pass onto them. And in some other states, renters can even receive a credit on the electric bill if they don't pay for water, Vedachalam said.

Pennsylvania could pass a law similar to one in California that requires utilities to

share information about their customers, Pickering said. That would allow customers to sign up for assistance on their water, sewage, electric and gas bills all at once.

Gainey said he thinks these programs have to do more community outreach at events like local football games where low-income customers may be. He didn't want to give a target for what percentage of eligible customers need to be signed up for him to be more receptive to PWSA's rate increases.

"I don't want to say we should be at 50% or 80% capacity because, to me, that's lowering the ball," he said. "Whether it's feasible or not, we want to be at 100% of capacity."

Even for PWSA, which is signing up more customers than other local water utilities, this means they have a long way to go.

The Cares team didn't have much luck attracting people to its booth during the first couple of hours at the Hazelwood flea market. Some customers may not want to share information about their income in public, they speculated. There was a food truck nearby giving away nachos and sandwiches.

"We can't compete with the free food," said Cares team analyst Rebecca Copney.

Pickering looks forward to talking with Pittsburgh's next mayor about the need for continued rate increases to pay for infrastructure upgrades. He said it's only intuitive that more customers are going to become interested in their assistance program as their bills get larger.

"I would hold our program up to any across the country at this point," he said.

*[Quinn Glabicki contributed reporting. This story was fact-checked by Catherine Taipe. PublicSource is an independent news organization in Pittsburgh. Visit [PublicSource.org](http://PublicSource.org).]* ♦

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## Residents reconvene discussion of Garfield housing plan

By Joe Reuben *Bulletin contributor*

*Garfield* - Module Housing, an East Liberty-based developer, presented its updated plans for the construction of 10 townhomes in Garfield during a virtual meeting with local residents on Jul. 27.

This public meeting, the second one held for Module's project, did not produce a consensus either for or against the development, which would take up a large section of the 5100 block of Rosetta Street. Most of the two dozen attendees agreed that negotiations between Module and the city's Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) to reserve nine city-owned lots for the project should move forward.

"There are a number of questions about this development that still need to be resolved," said Gary Cirrincione, a Hays St. resident. "But we've heard assurances tonight from both Module and the representatives from the URA that there will be further meetings to hone the details around this project, and we appreciate that."

Reservations about the project were also heard during the meeting, as evidenced by the comments of Meg Graham, who lives a half-block from the development site. Graham expressed the view that the project "should not happen at all and they (the city) should retain the site as green space." Other neighborhood residents raised concerns about parking, the design of the homes, preservation of as much of the tree canopy on the site as possible, and which method the developers will employ to deal with an underground spring coming into the site from above on Hillcrest St.

Lu Zhu and Brian Gaudio, Module's representatives at the meeting, shared some of the changes that have been made to the project in the nine months since the first public meeting in October. One of the more significant adjustments was reducing the number of homes from 12 to 10, which will keep the project within the area on Rosetta between N. Evaline St. and N. Pacific Ave.

Module also recently brought the Pittsburgh Housing Development Corp. (PHDC) on board as a co-developer to assist with project design and financing for the units that will be built as "affordable" homes. And there could be the possibility of an accessory dwelling unit being added to one or more of the homes that would give the owners the benefit of some rental income to offset their housing costs. To accomplish this, Justin Belton, a PHDC project manager told attendees that the city "could probably be persuaded to resurrect a zoning overlay district for Garfield that would allow these units to be added by right." The zoning overlay he referenced was allowed to expire last year after a two-year trial run.

Module has also reversed plans to build two market-rate homes on lots that the city

owns in the 4900 block of Broad Street. Zhu told the audience that they have opted instead to have both homes built as affordable units, and to partner with City of Bridges Community Land Trust in realizing that goal.

Zhu said that when combined with the three homes that Module wants to designate as affordable in the Rosetta Street development, this would result in five homes [of the 12 homes overall] being targeted for purchase by households at 80% or less of the median income for the region. Zhu also promised that Garfield residents would receive some type of "early communication" as to when applications to purchase the homes would first be accepted.

Belton, the PHDC representative, said that if his nonprofit agency, which is a subsidiary of the URA, is successful in procuring the subsidies needed to make a number of the homes affordable, there could be the possibility of adding a fourth affordable home to the Rosetta St. project. He also said the URA will be offering a matching grant program for homeowners in close proximity to the site who need to do improvements to the facades of their properties. The grant may be for up to \$8,000, but must be matched dollar-for-dollar by the homeowner.

The July meeting was called in part because Module intends to make a second approach this month to the URA board of directors - seeking approval for the agency to enter into exclusive negotiations to sell the nine lots in the city's possession to Module. An initial attempt was frustrated at the agency's May board meeting, when none of the board members present agreed to second a motion to authorize those negotiations to begin.

One of those board members is State Representative Ed Gainey, the Democratic candidate for mayor in the upcoming election in November. Gainey expressed several concerns about the project at that earlier meeting, saying he is "worried about Garfield's future," and wanted to see "where the neighborhood stood on the development." Garfield lies largely within Gainey's House district. One of his staff members, Malachi Pugh, sat in on the Jul. 27 meeting, and credited both Module and the PHDC for sitting down with neighbors to address their concerns about the project.

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, which organized the meeting, closed it by asking those residents on the Zoom call to be part of a committee that will continue meeting with Module about the project in the months to come. Other residents who missed the meeting, but want to join the discussions, were asked to contact Nina Gibbs at the BGC (Nina@bloomfield-garfield.org). ♦

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**Alpha Iota Alpha Christian Sorority, Inc Presents**  
*4th Annual Fresh Start Hair Blitz*

Free hairstyles/cuts, manicures, grooming kits  
and school supplies for K-12 students

**BGC Activity Center**  
 113 N. Pacific Avenue  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15224

**August 22, 2021**

**11am-4pm**

Register your K-12 students today  
online at [www.alphaiotaalpha.org](http://www.alphaiotaalpha.org)  
 Accepting registrations until August  
 8th, 2021.

More information visit: [www.alphaiotaalpha.org](http://www.alphaiotaalpha.org)








**ABOVE:** Garfield Night Market vendors set up displays on N. Pacific Ave. Held in conjunction with Unblurred, the market made its return on Friday, Jul. 2. Photo by Beverly Beisgen.