

## the SHAD Connection

WINTER 2021-2022

Vol. 44 No. 2 FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE, WORK AND SHOP IN THE SHAKER SQUARE AREA

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### Larchmere Holiday Stroll Friday, Nov. 26 – Saturday, Nov. 27

This annual holiday weekend tradition is back with all of its usual favorites: carriage rides, hot chocolate, store specials and more. Check out page 10, Larchmere's Facebook page and larchmere.com for more details. Select stores will be open Sunday for holiday shopping.



### Small Business Saturday Saturday, Nov. 27

Small businesses are still reeling from the effects of the pandemic. So, make sure to shop local this holiday season. Whether it's a specialty shop or a restaurant, buying local not only ensures that your local favorites stay in business, it's also an investment in your community. More information at: [americanexpress.com/us/small-business/shop-small](https://americanexpress.com/us/small-business/shop-small).

### Farmers Market Winter Hours Jan. 8 – Mar. 26, 2022 Saturdays, 9 a.m. – Noon

After the New Year, North Union Farmers Market will head down the road to Van Aken Market Hall in Shaker Heights (3441 Tuttle Road). More than 30 farms, bakers and artists will take part in the market.



## BBC, CNP Partner to Buy Shaker Square

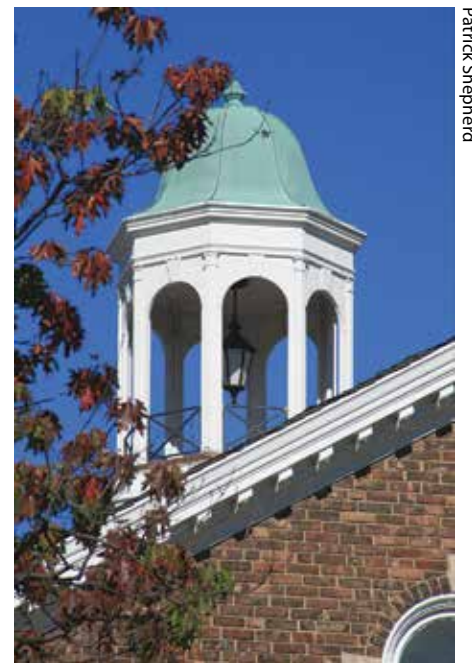
by Kristen Romito

Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc. (BBC) and Cleveland Neighborhood Progress (CNP) have joined forces to put together a proposal to purchase Shaker Square, promising to address maintenance concerns and long-term development plans that have plagued the property for years.

In its announcement on October 21, BBC, CNP and its real estate subsidiary New Village Corporation (NVC) said they have put together the necessary financing to purchase the shopping plaza, which is in foreclosure and facing sheriff's sale. The organizations also announced that they've hired Terri Hamilton Brown, a well-respected community development professional, as a project consultant to assist with oversight of Shaker Square.

The proposal also ensures that ownership of Shaker Square is kept local. Concern that an out-of-town buyer with no knowledge and connection to the property was expressed by many in the community, and so much that a petition was circulated to help prevent that scenario from playing out.

"The proposed collaboration among the City of Cleveland, CNP and BBC offers hope that Shaker Square will receive the maintenance and improvements it sorely needs. I'm hopeful that it will inspire additional investment in and around the Square, and that it will attract a beneficial owner who will maintain the property at a level it deserves as a destination location. The right owner, in turn, can attract good businesses and both local and visiting clientele," said Mary Ann Kovach, president of Shaker



Patrick Shephard

Square Area Development Corp. (SHAD).

The non-profit organizations' ability to finance the project was largely made possible by

City of Cleveland's ability to utilize federal American Rescue

See *BBC, CNP Partner to Buy Shaker Square*, page 2

## Greater Buckeye Planning Almost Complete

by Kristen Romito

When Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc. (BBC) took over as the community development corporation (CDC) for the Buckeye-Shaker neighborhood in 2019, the CDC knew it had its work cut out. Efforts were made by various stakeholders to unify the greater Buckeye neighborhood prior to BBC's takeover, but differences in opinion on how to do so hindered any plans. COVID also threw a wrench in BBC's timeline to set forth a plan for unification and development.

"Now that BBC is serving the entire Buckeye-Woodhill & Buckeye-Shaker areas, it's important to create a blueprint or guide of next steps to ensure the work of BBC is moving in the right direction and is in sync with the needs and wants of the community," said Dawn Mayes, director of neighborhood planning and engagement.

Last year, under the direction of Mayes, BBC finally kickstarted the process to create a neighborhood master plan by issuing a request for proposal (RFP) in April 2021. Three consulting firms submitted their

RFPS, and City Plus was chosen by the steering committee. City Plus consists of City Architecture plus Seventh Hill, Urban Partners and designExplorr, which make up the team of consultants guiding the neighborhood planning process. City Architecture was also the firm that oversaw the planning design for the Buckeye Road Refresh project.

"City Plus was chosen because the steering committee felt that they had the most experience working in the Buckeye neighborhood. The key players they brought to the table each addressed their specialty that would enhance the plan, and the presentation was very thorough and well thought out," stated Mayes and added, "They were very clear on their intention to imbed anti-gentrification strategies to ensure the rehabilitation of the neighborhood, while still assisting existing residents, businesses, and stakeholders to remain in their community."

Per the RFP, City Plus is tasked with creating a neighborhood plan that addresses the development of green spaces, infill housing, businesses, and design guidelines created by the community.

Mayes stated that an implementation

plan is also one of the deliverables that will give BBC a clear path in knowing which initiatives should be addressed based off of short- and long-term goals. To give clear direction, a market study will be conducted to shed light on which community assets will draw more investment into the neighborhood. The anticipated completion date is by December 31, 2021.

To help rally the community behind the planning process, BBC along with City Plus planning partners Seventh Hill, Urban Partners and designExplorr named the initiative We Are Buckeye. October 13 was the kickoff meeting and first engagement event to gather community feedback, but the neighborhood survey and subsequent meetings will certainly influence City Plus's final recommendations.

"Although we cannot address every issue that may arise, we want to use this platform to really highlight what residents are speaking about and to create a plan or guidelines to make sure that the redevelopment process in the neighborhood has those issues or goals embedded in the process. The

See *Greater Buckeye Planning* page 2



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Free 30-minute lifestyle development coaching session or mental wellness consultation by Lawna Gamble, owner.

# BBC, CNP Partner to Buy Shaker Square

Continued from page 1

Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which have been granted to the city to support businesses and residents impacted by the COVID pandemic. The proposal went to City Council for approval on the day of the announcement, and if approved, the completion of the sales transaction could be by year end, said Tania Menesse, CEO and president of CNP.

According to Tania Menesse, the ARPA funds would help bring the mortgage debt in line with operating revenues. "We are committed to finally getting the ownership equation right for the benefit of tenants and the community alike," she said. When asked whether the redesign plans for the Square will be revived by CNP, Menesse stated,

## Greater Buckeye Planning

Continued from page 1

neighborhood plan is an opportunity for the community to be proactive about what they want to see and create design guidelines that will be implemented to make sure those issues or goals are addressed," Mayes said. "Neighborhood planning is also a time to think about our important neighborhood staples such as Shaker Square, our parks and other green spaces, and current projects such as Woodhill Homes and how we want to leverage these assets for the future of our entire community," said Bianca Butts, neighborhood services coordinator for Shaker Square and Larchmere.

Mayes added, "Although the Greater Buckeye Neighborhood has colorful nodes throughout the entire footprint, we are still one neighborhood, one community. This neighborhood plan will be designed to re-connect and re-engage the various nodes of the community that have been

operating in silos for many years. What we have learned at BBC is that what happens in one part of the neighborhood impacts the other; therefore, we should want all areas to thrive, not just some parts. BBC's goal is to assist with creating this plan with the community to begin to unify the disconnected parts of the Buckeye neighborhood. We can do so much more together than when we operate in silos."

The next community event will be held virtually on Tuesday, Nov. 30. Visit [wearebuckeye.com](http://wearebuckeye.com), [bbdevelopment.org](http://bbdevelopment.org) or search Facebook and Instagram for the link to tune into the meeting and for other timely updates.



**SHAD MISSION STATEMENT**  
To provide the Shaker Square area with the leadership needed to re-imagine and foster well-maintained, diverse and vibrant neighborhoods.

NEIGHBORHOODS	COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS
• Apartment Corridor	• Shaker Square
• CHALK	• Larchmere Blvd.
• Drexmore/Chadbourne	• Van Aken Plaza
• Historic Shaker Square	• Shaker Boulevard West
• Larchmere	
• Ludlow	

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**Reserve ad space for the Apartment Hunter's List in the Spring issue by Monday, December 20. Ad artwork is due no later than: Friday, January 14 for Apartment Listings.**  
**Reserve ad space for the SHAD Connection Spring issue (covering Mar. Apr, May) by Monday, December 27.**  
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# LAND studio lands to ‘Elevate the East,’ including Woodhill Estates transformation

By Thomas Jewell

A coveted \$100,000 the National Endowment for Arts (NEA) grant awarded to Land studio will augment the major public housing revitalization underway in the Woodhill Estates.

"The timing of the NEA grant award could not have been better, given the recent announcement of the \$35 million grant award to the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) and the City of Cleveland for the transformation of the Woodhill Estates," City Planning Director Freddy L. Collier, Jr. noted in a press release.

This latest addition to the palette came through the "Elevate the East" community-led public art initiative focusing on Woodland Hills and other east side neighborhoods such as Buckeye and Kinsman, over the next five years.

The NEA's "Our Town" grant provides \$100,000 for the plan that was undertaken in the spring of 2019, presented as "50 Actions to Elevate the East: A Guide for Connecting Art & People."

The proposal submitted by LAND featured a partnership between the City of Cleveland and Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc. (BBC) that commissioned the Elevate the East plan.

"Public art is a key component of our efforts and will be integrated into many aspects of the initiative," Collier added, thanking BBC, CMHA, LAND studio and Cleveland Ward 6 Councilman Blaine Griffin.

Griffin noted earlier that the recommendations for public art shown in the initial Elevate the East report were coordinated with the Woodhill Community Homes plans.

"Proposed public art locations identified within the Woodhill Homes area will remain undisturbed during site construction," Griffin stated. "And residents may see other public art investments take shape in the meantime."

"Woodhill Station West," consists of 120 apartments slated for the site



Courtesy of Eric Benson

of the former Buckeye Woodland Elementary School across from the GCRTA station at the intersection of Buckeye and Woodhill roads. Work on the project is set to begin in 2022.

Former Cleveland congresswoman and current HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge gave the keynote address at the Oct. 29 groundbreaking on the first phase of the project. In all, the Buckeye-Woodhill Choice Neighborhood Transformation project will bring in more than 500 new, affordable residential units for a range of incomes, senior housing, new parks and recreation, and early childhood education center and retail stores.

Hosting the groundbreaking were CMHA, The Community Builders, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing and Marous Brothers Construction.

"The (Elevate the East) initiative is one component in a larger transformation strategy to benefit all people living in the area," explained Joy Johnson, BBC's

Executive Director noted in the press release. "This will add greatly to the health and vitality of our communities' public spaces where residents gather and share cultural expression."

Part of a growing movement that celebrates cultural identity and pride within Cleveland's east side neighborhoods through community empowerment and equitable investments in the local arts, the NEA grant will commission local artists on murals, sculptures, gateways to greenspaces or commercial corridors, as well as neighborhood wayfinding and signage.

"We're pleased to help secure this corresponding funding to help celebrate these unique neighborhoods through Elevate the East," LAND studio Executive Director Greg Peckham added in the press release. "We're excited to help empower residents to shape their own neighborhoods."

Since 2014, LAND studio has received eight NEA awards, securing nearly \$465,000 in funding

*A groundbreaking ceremony for Woodhill Homes took place on Friday, October 29.*  
*Present for the ribbon cutting included CMHA Jeffrey Patterson, Ward 6 Councilman Blaine Griffin, HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge along with U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown, Adelbert Marous, and Freddie L. Collier, Jr.*

for public art and programming in Cleveland, including the neighborhoods of downtown, Midtown, Buckeye, and Clark-Fulton.

"As the country and the arts sector begin to imagine returning to a post-pandemic world, the NEA is proud to announce funding that will help arts organizations re-engage fully with partners and audiences," NEA Acting Chairman Ann Eilers said in the press release introducing 63 grants nationwide.

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Heard Around the Square

by Margaret Simon

*To serve and protect.* The Rotary Club of the Heights of Greater Cleveland honored its 2019 and 2020 Firefighters and Police Officers of the Year at a Breakfast Reception last Oct. 27. Rotary President **Adam Davis** and Rotarian **John Sobotincic** presented the awards to **Sergeant Laura A. Clague** and **Lieutenant Timothy J. Kohanski** (police); and firefighters **Timothy Haas** and **Scott Zenz**. Honorees received a commemorative plaque and a check for their service. Kudos to all who serve.

Congratulations to **Aliki** and **Peter Rzepka**, who will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award and to the **Saltzman family**, who will receive the Generation Award at the seventh annual *Cleveland Jewish News* 18 Difference Makers reception and awards ceremony on Dec. 9. Others to be honored are **Edna Talmor Akrish**, **Sam Chestnut**, **Loren Chylla**, **Beth Nusbaum Curtiss**, **Ronald Gross**, **Maya Holtz Groys**, **Adam G. Jacobs**, **Amy R. Kaplan**, **Donald H. Messinger**, **Sally Messinger**, **James Pasch**, **Susan Ratner**, **Carrie Rosenfelt**, **Stephen L. Rudolph**, **Jeffrey D. Schwartz**, **Patricia A. Shlonsky**, **Mark Stovsky**, **Tom Sudow**, and **Muriel Weber**.

Shaker Library received a grant from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), supported through the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and administered by the State Library of Ohio, to create three workshops for young adults, ages 15 to 24. The program, called **Arts for Resilience in Our Community (AROC)** is designed to connect youth with professional artists to foster confidence, build resilience, and increase social and community connectedness in response to the impact COVID-19 has had on them. Applications for the AROC workshops Theatre Arts: November 2021 – January 2022, Musical Arts: Feb. 2022 – Apr. 2022 and Visual Arts: May 2022 – July 2022 are online at [shakerlibrary.org/AROC](http://shakerlibrary.org/AROC). Participants must commit to attend all five workshops in their chosen field of art and will have an opportunity to work closely with a professional artist.

For the past three years, the City of Shaker Heights, the Shaker Heights City School District, and the Shaker Heights Public Library have partnered in a unique initiative called **Forward Together**. (Sign up for updates at [forwardtogethershaker.com](http://forwardtogethershaker.com) and be in the know.) Shaker Schools Executive Director of Communications and Engagement **Scott Stephens** wanted to share this successful partnership with other school boards across the state. He organized and moderated a panel entitled “Rebuilding Our Community Together” featuring **Mayor David Weiss**, Superintendent **Dr. David Glasner**, Shaker Schools Chief Operating Officer **Jeffrey Grosse**, and Library Director **Amy Switzer**. The group presented at the Ohio School Boards

Association Capital Conference and Trade Show in Columbus last Nov. 8. **Drew** and **Mac Anderson** and **Luke Visnic** have rebranded their **Cleveland Kraut to Cleveland Kitchen** and are currently the fastest-selling fermented foods brand. In addition to their crunchy and tasty sauerkraut, they now offer a line of marinades and salad dressings crafted with fermented vegetables that offer great flavor and gut-health benefits. They’re the fastest-selling fermented foods brand. Try their Veggie Caesar, Sweet Beet, Garlic Italian, Backyard Ranch, and Miso Jalapeno, and they are vegan and gluten free.

**Clark Pope**, founder and president at Pope’s Cocktails, wants to put you in the holiday “spirits.” His ready-to-drink alcoholic pouches are the perfect Hanukkah gift or stocking stuffer for your favorite adult.

Last September the East 128th Street Block Club Association dedicated the mural **The History of African Americans East 128th Street Mural Project** at Amos Norwood Mini Park in the Shaker Square/Buckeye Road Neighborhood. The mural project by artist **Anna Arnold** is designed to educate, illuminate, inspire, and demonstrate the depth, breadth, length and scope of the contributions that African Americans have made beginning with their presence in Africa through their journey to the Americas, over 400 years to the present day. Anna received her BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art and is the Director of the Florence O’Donnell Wasmer Gallery at Ursuline College. Local artists will also remember her as the juror for Shaker Library’s 2019 Barbara Luton Art Show.

See more of Arnold’s talents her exhibit, “ReFuge: The Last Days of Wonder,” an interactive, immersive art experience around the theme of refuge. Conceived and curated by Wasmer Gallery Director, Anna Arnold, ReFuge invites visitors to explore gallery space that has been transformed into a surreal fantasy forest created by four invited installation and mixed-media artists from Cuyahoga County who will use recycled materials. There will be a companion exhibit, featuring two-dimensional work by artists who use recycled and mixed media materials at the Nature Center through Sunday, Jan. 16, 2022.

Friends of the Shaker Library fund-raising chairs **Julie Mizener** and **Tamar Calland** are at it again. The dynamic duo are selling raffle tickets for a Solo Stove Fire Pit, which is practically smokeless so you can snuggle around the campfire sustainably. Also included in the raffle is a 20-ounce Yeti mug, the makings of s’mores, bundles of wood, two books to read by the fire and a \$50 gift certificate from Gali’s Garden Center. Tickets are \$10 each or 3 for \$25 and are available until Nov. 20 at <https://fosl-106462.square.site/>

Congratulations to *Crain’s* 2021 Notable Residential Real Estate

Agents **Tim Ali**, **Craig Cantrall**, **Matt Chase**, **Jenny Chung Chin**, **Lincoln Coverdale**, **Candice Eberhardt**, **Sonya Edwards**, **Mike Ferrante**, **Pete Formica**, **Mary Hromyko**, **Rudolph Jones III**, **Amber Lewis**, **Lauren Mastracco**, **Sally Messinger**, **Inna Muravin**, **Lydia Pope**, **Joe Rath**, **Holly Ritchie**, **Joseph Seifert**, **Ryan Shaffer**, **Susan Smith**, **Henry Stoudermire Jr.**, **Kathleen Visconsi**, **Cheryl Wiegand Schroer**, and **Ryan Young**. The best thing about this list is not only their talents in finding folks a home, and their professional achievements, but they are all involved in philanthropic activities, mentoring programs, or diversity and inclusion initiatives.

In April 2020, **Berenice Kleiman** found herself dealing with the loss of her spouse and suddenly discovered that her income sources had frozen, including bank accounts. She decided to share her lessons learned with others and published the book “Widowhood 101 Next Steps.”

Meet her and get her advice when she speaks at Shaker Library’s Bertram Woods Branch at 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 22.

In five years the book lovers and movers at Cleveland Kids’ Book Bank have truly amped up the vision of co-founders **Judy Payne** and **Judi Kovach**. Current Executive Director **Thea DeRosa Cerra** has announced their new truck and delivery program. Need books? Contact Thea at 216.417.1803 or email her at [thea@kidsbookbank.org](mailto:thea@kidsbookbank.org).

*And in rootin’ tootin’ Shaker Library renovation news.* The wait is over on December 1 when the library re-opens its doors to a newly renovated library. Grand Re-opening Renovation Festivities will be held from Monday, Dec. 13 through Saturday, Dec. 18. Stop in and take a selfie by the monumental stairway, or take a librarian-led tour and watch a



*Since the Shaker Square Concert Series is no longer (maybe temporarily), Edwins Too (13220 Shaker Square), the culinary incubator, community kitchen and event space, is bringing back live music back to Shaker Square with its Saturday Sessions. Reservations for each Saturday Sessions event are available in two options – “Dinner and a Show” or “Just the Show” – and may be booked online at [edwinsrestaurant.org](http://edwinsrestaurant.org). After 10:30 p.m., there will be no cover charge at the door.*

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robotics demonstration. Try out the Cricut Machine and design a mug to take home, or make a magnetic button to stick on your locker or fridge. Enjoy musical performances and poetry and fiction readings. Learn how to scan your old photos and transfer your VHS tapes to DVDs. And be sure to step into the Sound Booth and make a short recording. Look for the complete schedule of events at [shakerlibrary.org](http://shakerlibrary.org).

Want to help keep our young neighbors warm this winter? Join Library staff and members of the library’s Knit Night group and participate in their annual **Caps for Kids** project. Volunteers can knit or crochet hats to be donated to area groups including the Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s Project ACT, serving children experiencing homelessness. Use a favorite pattern or find one in a library book! Please bring finished products to either library by Saturday, Dec. 4.

And the votes are in. **Anne Walton Keller** was elected Shaker Heights Municipal Court Judge. **Lora Cover** and **Heather Weingart** were elected to the Shaker Heights School Board, and **Ifelolu A.C. Clayton**, **Tres Roeder**, and **Anne Williams** were elected to Shaker Heights City Council. **Deborah Gray** was elected to the Cleveland City Council representing Ward 4. And **Justin Bibb** was elected Mayor of Cleveland. Did you know that the second youngest mayor elect honed his political chops down the street from the Square at Woodbury Elementary School?

May you all elect to enjoy the holidays with your loved ones. . . and keep your ears open for me.

[heardaroundthesquare@gmail.com](mailto:heardaroundthesquare@gmail.com)



Courtesy of Pete Cardello



5K Grind

*On October 17, 172 runners and 87 walkers participated in the EDWINS Leadership and Restaurant Institute 2021 EDWINS 5K GRIND. The race started and ended on Shaker Square, taking runners and walkers through a challenging course of woods and water, off road and uphill. Daniel Lausin was the 1st place finisher of the 5k.*

*The race raised \$25,000, which goes directly towards supporting EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute’s mission.*



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Balaton Expands



Michael Ann Johnson



*Through the pandemic, Balaton struggled to stay open, but with support from the community and its customers, it stayed open and now it’s thriving. In fact, the Hungarian restaurant expanded its space to include two private party rooms. Pictured is the owner’s daughter Vivian.*

Lucy’s Sweet Surrender



*It’s a bittersweet ending for Mike and Marika Feigenbaum, owners of Lucy’s Sweet Surrender. The bakery, known for old-world style of Hungarian and European baking, closed its doors after 64 years. The couple have enthusiastically supported the Shaker Square-Buckeye Road and Van Aken communities. We will certainly miss them and wish them the best. Thank you for all the memories and sweet treats – the fabulous strudel, danishes, breads and exquisite tortes and your support of the neighborhood! Viszontlátásra!*

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for older adults

Anxiety, depression and other mental health issues can be heightened in these uncertain times.

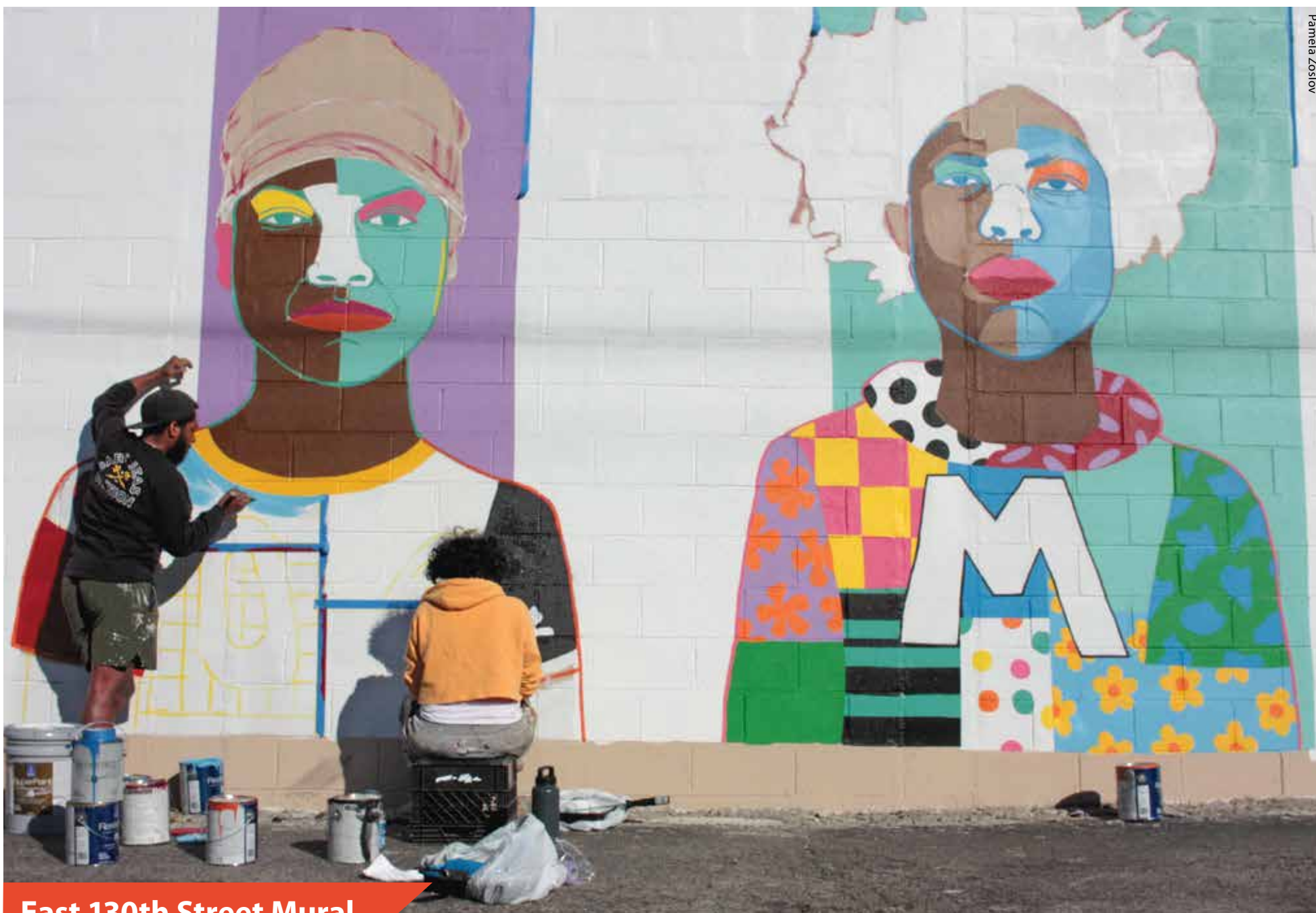
Help is available!

Our Behavioral Health Services team provides counseling and other mental health services, including telehealth groups, to adults aged 55 and older.



216.791.8000 • [benrose.org](http://benrose.org)





Pamela Zolov

## East 130th Street Mural

On October 17, muralists Brandon Graves and Lauren Pearce unveiled their mural at 2825 E 130th Street.

Above: Muralists painting.

Right: Left to right: Muralists Brandon Graves, Lauren Pearce and Shay Smith, Cleveland area business affairs manager for the owner of Shaker Square Towers, Mr. Richel Francis.

CollectivExpress, in collaboration with E. 130th Working Group and Organize! Ohio, completed the "Me and My Community" mural, one of the largest outdoor art installations in the Buckeye neighborhood.



## Take to the Lake



Courtesy of Doan Brook Watershed Partnership

The 9th Annual Take to the Lake event, presented by Doan Brook Watershed Partnership, brought 178 people along the banks of the historic Lower Shaker Lake for paddling, guided bikes, yoga, and live music.

## Labor Day Larchmere Sidewalk Sale



Some normalcy came back to Larchmere with its annual Labor Day sidewalk sale. Neighborhood businesses set up tents and tables and reconnected with customers and community members.



Courtesy of Lisa McGinty



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# New Larchmere Clothing Store Mixes New and Vintage Fashion

by Grant Segall

Three young entrepreneurs hope to help rejuvenate Larchmere. “We’re bringing a younger twist to it,” says Dee Mounthanivong, one of the partners in MsfitXchange. The partners, all in their early 30s, hope to draw young customers from far and near, including the small units at the new 121 Larchmere apartments. Adam Southivong, Dee’s cousin and business partner, says, “It’ll be a great opportunity for everyone.”

MsfitXchange’s name reflects eclectic clothes that fit well on bodies but don’t necessarily fit in with the norm. The business began online last year. In early October, it held a soft opening of a 1,200-square-foot store at 12721 Larchmere Blvd., rented from the DiVita family of the nearby Larchmere Deli & Beverage. MsfitXchange offers fashion consultations and a wide range of new and used clothes and accessories, from \$5 T-shirts to \$600 sneakers. It offers vintage furs for \$50 but no new ones. Many of the clothes are designed by Midwesterners. The partners say there’s a lot of local talent. They also buy clothes at yard sales and other boutiques. The partners says that Cleveland runs about two years behind New York in fashions. Locals want stylish



Michael Ann Johnson

clothes but also sturdy ones that stand up to Cleveland slush. The store is expected to host performances for small, invited audiences. Partner Mario Patawaran wants it to become “a hub for creatives.” The partners went to John Marshall High School together and worked in retail clothes awhile. Last year, Mounthanivong rented a three-bedroom house on Larchmere from a friend, and her partners became housemates. “We love the neighborhood,” says Mounthanivong. “I love the mom-and-pop feel. It’s not super-commercialized.”



Michael Ann Johnson



(Top) Three-layer chocolate fudge cake. XoXo Hugs n’Kisses offers a variety of cupcake flavors.

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## The Edible Business Card

By Adam Zimmerman

XoXo Hugs n’Kisses Cookies is bringing sweetness to Larchmere. The sweets are in the form of custom sugar cookies and cakes. The studio, which opened in Summer 2021, represents a new local establishment to join the neighborhood’s already impressive collection of originals. The studio’s primary focus is in providing desserts in a wholesale capacity for local restaurants in the Cleveland area. A self-starter, founder Jirapan Zhang created her own learning path in becoming a business owner. In using both digital sources such as Instagram and Pinterest and traditional sources, such as pastry books, she has created her own unique style based on American and European influences and family recipes. In becoming an entrepreneur and starting a business, Zhang – who was a stay-at-home mother prior to starting her business – saw an opportunity in the dessert space, in part due to the pandemic, in which she took note of challenges that restaurants have been facing. “There are many talented chefs and restaurants in the area. If a restaurant cannot hire a full-time pastry chef, we can cater to their needs without that restaurant needing to input labor costs,” she shares. The Larchmere location (12204 Larchmere) was a natural fit for

XoXo Hugs n’Kisses Cookies. Zhang had noticed that the location used to be a bakery and had been looking for a commercial kitchen space. “The community is unique. I enjoy the smallness of the area. It’s a tightknit community, where business owners look out for each other,” she shares. Zhang points to several areas in which her studio sets itself apart from the pack, including unique flavor profiles that cut back on salt and sugar, an attention to art and intricate design, an intimate customer experience, and reasonable pricing. Because of this pricing, XoXo Hugs n’Kisses Cookies believes it can alleviate some of the stress involved in planning for special events, such as weddings, some of which have already added stress to customers as a result of rescheduling due to COVID-19. Zhang adds that in viewing the desserts as ‘edible business cards,’ they market themselves. These areas of differentiation all support XoXo Hugs n’Kisses Cookies’ ultimate desire, which is for its customers to enjoy something sweet in life. Zhang is working on a website where people can order custom foods. In the meantime, you can contact the studio at [xoxohugsnkisses@yahoo.com](mailto:xoxohugsnkisses@yahoo.com) or 330.978.5199. Their website is [xoxohugsnkissescookies.com](http://xoxohugsnkissescookies.com).



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# EDWINS Expands Housing for Culinary Students and Alumni

By Pamela Zoslov

“Nothing happens unless we first dream,” wrote the poet Carl Sandburg. Brandon Chrostowski’s acclaimed EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute started with a dream he had years ago of providing second chances to people who have been incarcerated. Following a brush with the law at age 18, Chrostowski found a path to a better life through working in the restaurant industry. He then envisioned a way to create the same opportunities for men and women returning after being incarcerated. Since EDWINS’ founding in 2013, nearly 500 students have graduated from its intensive program in the culinary arts; at least 95 percent have found employment in restaurants that meet EDWINS’ exacting standards. The Institute has grown to encompass not only the highly rated EDWINS Restaurant, but also a bakery, deli and butcher shop and a growing Life Skills Center. The latest step in the ever-expanding project is Chrostowski’s purchase this past September of 2914 South Moreland, a seven-unit apartment building, for an expansion of EDWINS’ student and alumni housing. The building stands next to 2910 South Moreland, which EDWINS acquired in 2016 and renovated into attractive student apartments.

Compared to the first building, which needed extensive renovation, Chrostowski says the 8,270-square-foot property is in fairly good condition. “We need to do exterior walls and plumbing and repainting. In the spring, we’ll redo the driveway.” As the building’s current tenants move out, EDWINS is renovating the apartments and moving students in. “Three units are already renovated, and people have moved in. Slowly but surely, it’s happening.” EDWINS students pay a low subsidized rent and have access to the many amenities of the EDWINS Second Chances Life Skills Center, which include a fitness center, library, basketball court, chicken coop and greenhouse. The apartments, within a five-minute walk of EDWINS at Shaker Square, and around the corner from EDWINS Butcher Shop, Bakery and Diner on Buckeye, provide a comfortable respite for the hard-working students, a place where they can relax and recharge. They also, Chrostowski points out, fill a basic need for people whose criminal records might otherwise be a barrier to housing. The purchase and renovation of a second apartment building on South Moreland also enhances the Buckeye neighborhood. “There’s some apartment owners who are not the best caretakers of the neighborhood, but we are good at what we do,” Chrostowski says. “It uplifts the community — that corner is solid right now.” “We’ve got six buildings now in our campus, and with all the amenities available, it’s amazing.” The expansion is made possible in part by a three-year financial commitment from KeyBank. The new housing is intended to accommodate an expected increase



Kristen Romito

EDWINS purchased its second apartment building (2914 South Moreland), right next to the first building (2910 South Moreland) it purchased in 2016. Both buildings are around the corner from its bakery and butcher shop.

in enrollment, partly due to the launch of the EDWINS curriculum in prisons nationwide. The program enables inmates across the U.S. to access the culinary program remotely, via tablets. The Cleveland Browns will pay relocation expenses for those who want, upon release, to complete the in-person program in Cleveland and live in EDWINS’ student housing. Chrostowski says the expansion is a significant development in the EDWINS mission. “It means a great deal, not just to EDWINS but to re-entry as a whole. It means that all the dreams you can have, this is a way you can accomplish them. You could be on the West Coast and have a dream, and actually have a way to accomplish that dream.”

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# Up and Down the Boulevard

Larchmere enters the winter season with a flurry of activity

by Barbara Mooney

## Holiday Stroll Is A Go

A 50-year tradition of festivities along Larchmere continues this year with the **Holiday Stroll** over the Thanksgiving weekend, Nov. 26-28. Horse-drawn carriage rides on Friday and Saturday, Christmas carolers, free hot chocolate at various shops, special sales, pop-up vendors, and giveaways will return, under the auspices of the **Larchmere Merchants Association**. Also returning this year is the holiday fundraiser sponsored by **Shaker Quality Auto Body** (2916 Larchmere, 216.229.7846) to benefit Our Lady of Peace. When customers mention the repair shop's ad, it will donate turkey dinners for Thanksgiving and ham dinners for Christmas to the church.

## Our Favorite Season

On Dec. 18, **The Polar Express** returns to **Our Favorite Things Boutique and Event Center** (2730 Larchmere, 216.400.6081). Kids are invited for gift giveaways and other fun activities. Ahead of the holiday season, owner Lisa McGuthry finished a complete renovation of the store and expanded its merchandise lines to include shoes, men's fashions and a vegan line of body care products. And after neighbor boutique The Dancing Sheep closed in September, the store picked up one of its line of handcrafted greeting cards.

Also, to benefit the neighborhood's school age children, the store in October began hosting "Story Time Thursday." Beverly Lloyd, aka "Mama Awan," president of the African American Storytellers Guild, reads stories to the kids starting at 4 p.m. and tutors them in reading comprehension.

## Lotus Position

While Larchmere lost major anchors when both Dancing Sheep and Larchmere Tavern closed in the early Fall, it has welcomed several new merchants to the mix at the same time. Labor Day weekend saw the soft opening of **Lotus Candles** (2617 Larchmere, 216.255.1701). Started four years ago as a family-owned company selling hand-poured soy-based candles, opening a brick-and-mortar store was the next logical step for the business, says owner Gwen Penn. "I'd retired after working 32 years for the state, so it was time," said Ms. Penn, who runs the business with her daughter, Clara and son, Christopher. "I always liked this neighborhood as someplace friendly, eclectic and diverse-- and up-and-coming." In addition to candles and related merchandise, the store specializes in custom-made glassware and carries product lines from 14 other local small businesses.

The store is open Tuesday-Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

## Welcome Station Six

Another Grand Opening sign adorns Larchmere in front of the new barbershop **Station Six** (2401 Larchmere, 216.307.8500), making the neighborhood even more of a hair-care Mecca. It's the first venture for owner Marcus Hunter, who envisioned a barbershop that "combines an old-school with a new-school vibe." It includes four chairs and two suites where "lockticians" offer special services, such as dreadlocks. Store hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

See stories about other new businesses that Larchmere has welcomed elsewhere in this issue.



Barbara Mooney

## The Clubs of Loganberry

After launching the Not YA Average Book Club for young adults earlier this year, **Loganberry Books** (3015 Larchmere, 216.795.9800) has added two new book clubs for customers who not only love to read but also like to discuss books. The Peculiar Book Club, which meets on various Thursday evenings, is a place for "quirky, quizzical, curious and bizarre" literature and people who love it. And on the first Wednesday evening of the month, the Berry

## The Promise of Spring

On the heels of the closing of **Larchmere Tavern** (13051 Larchmere) at the end of August came the news that a cocktail-focused establishment is in the works for the space. First-time restaurant entrepreneur Michael Paley, along with property owner Lou Jacobs, are looking forward to a spring opening -- they hope in May -- of the restaurant, whose name is still being finalized. But Mr. Paley has a firm vision of what kind of place it will be.

"We're excited to create a place that has a long history as the gateway to Larchmere. We want to live up to that for the neighborhood. This is a street that's been known for its antique and vintage stores. Our place will reflect that." The space is getting a complete overhaul, from the walls to the outside signage.

While it will be a cocktail-focused establishment, Mr. Paley emphasized that it will be a restaurant rather than just a nightclub.

"We're putting together a place where people will come for a cocktail that will also have a full kitchen and menu, in addition to small plates," he said. "We also will be able to host small parties and have some outside catering." Sunday brunch and live music is also part of the plans.

Jessica Petrone has come on board as the bar operations manager.

Good Books club meets to discuss a favorite book picked out by one of Loganberry's staff booksellers. Participation is free; registration is through LoganberryBooks.com.

## Restaurant News

Larchmere's restaurants have heightened their media profiles recently. **Hola Tacos** (2718 Larchmere, 216.938.9301), which started a Happy Hour in September, also garnered the number one ranking in the "Best Taco" category of Scene newspaper's annual Best of Cleveland issue.

The newspaper also recognized **Big Al's Diner** (2600 Larchmere, 216.791.8550) as one of the "essential delis" in Greater Cleveland. The diner's corn beef hash was called out as the "star of the show," having been featured on The Food Network's "Best Thing I Ever Ate" show by celebrity chef and Cleveland native Michael Symon.

Meanwhile, **Felice Urban Café** (2502 Larchmere, 216.791.0918) also made news in September for requiring its customers to provide proof of vaccination or having a negative COVID test within the past 72 hours. It was among the first restaurants in the area to do so.

# Morelands Group Dedicated to Improving Moreland Corridor

by Pamela Zoslov

Every other Tuesday at 9 a.m., a group of concerned citizens meets at EDWINS Bakery on Buckeye Road. Their mission: preserving, protecting and advocating for the residential Moreland corridor of the Shaker Square neighborhood.

They are the Morelands Group, whose volunteer members include residents of the Shaker Square area who, distressed by the deteriorating condition of some apartment buildings on South and North Moreland boulevards, decided to take action to ensure the enforcement of city building and housing codes.

"I have lived in the Shaker Square area most of my life," says group member Meg Weingart. "And I care about the community." She is committed to engaging tenants, owners and Morelands neighbors in bringing about improvements.

The Morelands Group grew out of the effort two years ago by the Shaker Square Alliance, East 130th Street Working Group and Shaker Square Area Development Corp. (SHAD) to get codes enforced in the case of the apartment building at 13000 Buckeye. The building, at the corner of Buckeye and E. 130th Street, was condemned and stood untouched for seven years.



Joanne Blanchard, Julie Donaldson, Susan Rotatori next to the plaque honoring Helen Simpson

## History of the Park

Group member Jay Westbrook, the former Cleveland city councilman, recounts the saga of 13000, which he once called "a smoldering cauldron of toxicity." After the building was condemned, the property had three different owners. "Each owner flipped the property to a new owner at a higher price," he says, "and still no action on the property. Parts of the facade began falling on the public sidewalk before the city issued violations on the property. Even while the violation was unresolved, the property was flipped to its fourth owner since condemnation."

That spurred the community to push the City of Cleveland to enforce building and housing codes and prosecute the owner, which Westbrook notes that the surrounding

cities of Shaker and Cleveland Heights would have done automatically. Group member Chip Bromley, founder of the Shaker Square Alliance, says of the code-enforcement chasm between Shaker and Cleveland, "It's a tale of two cities."

Following an 18-month campaign, including a petition drive, the 13000 property was taken through the enforcement process, including prosecution. "Today," Westbrook says, "the property is being rehabbed with a price tag in excess of \$1.5 million." A housing court ruling included a five-year period of "Community Control Sanctions" -- essentially probation -- a control mechanism that requires regular meetings with housing court to demonstrate diligent progress. The controls also prohibit continued "flipping;" any proposed sale requires court approval.



Courtesy of Meg Weingart



The group has arranged to meet with the owners and managers of the apartment buildings recently sold by Shaker Square Properties and now called Nineteen12 Living Spaces, as the buildings' maintenance and upkeep have visibly declined.

Westbrook sees the major issue affecting housing in the area as twofold: a high degree of speculative buying and flipping of multifamily units; and the need for vigorous enforcement of the building and housing codes.

## Going Forward

He explains how property flipping can lead to decline. The primary goal of flipping, he says, is to increase the value of an investment group's holdings. "This model focuses on the theoretical collection of rent times the number of units. Little or nothing is factored in for maintenance and upkeep, [and often] taxes. This private-sector activity is a short-lived predatory practice based on quick return on investment and minimal investment in care for the property."

Because code enforcement is not readily provided by the city, Westbrook says, "it is up to the community to provide the pressure to get the city to act in a powerful way that protects the value of the property, the quality of life for residents, and the requirements of the historic district."

One of the group's aims is to work directly with residents and property

owners. Some landlords have been working with the group, including the owners of the Bristol and the Sands buildings, at 2920 and 2950 South Moreland, respectively.

The Morelands Group's efforts on behalf of the neighborhood goes beyond saving the buildings. The group has also initiated efforts to upgrade South Moreland's Helen Simpson Park. One of the group's five committees is dedicated to beautifying the "pocket park" with the planting of daffodils, bushes and possibly a butterfly garden to make it a more welcoming community space. Last August, the park was the site of Moreland Summer 2021, a community picnic hosted by the Morelands Group. Weingart says they hope to make it an annual event, part of the group's commitment to engaging with local residents by "lifting them up and giving them a primary voice."

Weingart describes her involvement with the Morelands Group as "fulfilling and energizing." She declares earnestly, "It feels like important work."

For more information about Morelands Group, email morelandsgroup@gmail.com.

# BoxSpot Plays Host to Buckeye Business Pitch Competition

by Jason Novak

The BoxSpot, the much-celebrated retail development constructed from repurposed shipping containers on Kinsman Road, hosted the business Buckeye Business Pitch competition on September 15. The event, which was organized by JumpStart Inc. in coordination with Burten Bell, Carr Development, provided an opportunity for local businesses to show the community what they have to offer.

The competition was judged by local business owners Lisa McGuthry of Our Favorite Things Boutique and Brandon Chrostowski of Edwins Leadership and Restaurant Institute. Merchants were allowed four minutes to give an overview of just what their businesses had to offer and to identify what makes their story one that reflects the community, all without the use of visual aids. The merchants- Temi's African Braiding & Boutique, I Love Granny K's Soulfood, Ego's



Courtesy of Ciara Wilson

Kitchen (Som Di Mma Elegance), Classic Clippers, iSpecz Eyewear, and Kidz Style Lounge-competed for the grand prize of \$1000.

In the end, Olympia Robinson, owner of iSpecz Eyewear, took home the grand prize. iSpecz Eyewear specializes in designer prescription eyewear for men, women and children. It provides custom tints, repairs, adjustments and cleanings. Robinson has plans to move out of BoxSpot and is searching for a new

location. "We chose iSpecz because Olympia was able to answer all questions pertaining to her business and is actually operating a sustainable,

successful business in the community amid Covid," said McGuthry.

Second place went to Damon Chapman of Classic Clippers, and third place was awarded to Ego Adigwe of Ego's Kitchen. There were cash prizes for all merchants who placed.

Dozens of community members attended the event, which was catered by another BoxSpot merchant, JB's Grille. The celebration allowed locals to get to know the

faces behind the businesses in the community and gave businesses the chance to make connections.

"This event was important," said Ciara Wilson, Community Outreach Coordinator for Burten Bell Carr, "to enable start-ups and existing businesses in the Buckeye/Kinsman area to gain awareness for their product, idea, or innovation among industry leaders, investors, potential business partners, and prospective customers."

JumpStart Inc. has organized events such as this in the past, though this is the first time that Burten Bell Carr has been involved. Even though the pitch competition had to contend with the pandemic, it was considered a success. "We plan on working with JumpStart Inc. in the future to maybe host again next year," Wilson said.

The BoxSpot is located at 8005 Kinsman Road, and is the home of several merchants, including Kidz Style Lounge and JB's Grille.










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