

FREE

Teen Editon

Plain Press

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Cleveland's Near Westside Newspaper

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Teens Finding Fame and Fortune in Dance



The dance group, Spectro, practices at the West Side Boys and Girls Club. From left to right: Celinesse Matos, 16, James F. Rhodes Student, Tri C Student, David Duranger, 19, Julian Rodriguez, 12, and Israel Perales, 20. PHOTO BY JESSICA EWEROKE

By Jessica Eweroke

The Boys and Girls Club is a place where teens can find fame and fortune through dance. And that's what six west side students did this summer.

The students created a group called Spectro, a name selected almost by chance when one of the youth spotted the name on a shoebox. The group consists of six dancers, three girls and three boys ranging in ages from 14 to 20.

The manager of Spectro is Margretta Matos, who is also the mother of two of the dancers, Elizabeth Matos, 15, and Celinesse, 16, both of whom attend James Ford Rhodes High School. Elizabeth said, "It's cool to dance with my sister."

Another member of the group, Christopher Durand, 19, attends Bowling Green University, and generally does hip hop and breakdancing.

A fourth member, Julian Rodriguez 12, is a b-boy in Spectro, handling all the tricks.

A former member, Bobby West, 20, was a b-boy in the group last year.

A fifth member of the group, David Darranger 19, is a b-boy and also does other styles of dancing.

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PRAISING COFFEE ON FULTON

By Denaria Craig

My City Coffee, a new coffee shop, plans to open up late summer or early fall at 3389 Fulton Road. My City Coffee will be located in the former Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, which has been closed since 2009.

Christine Dunson, who has lived in the neighborhood for the past 6 years, was looking to find a new way to improve the community. She partnered with Family Ministries and the Cleveland Courage Fund in order to locate My City Coffee in the former Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. She decided building a coffee shop would help make the community better.

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Annual Jazz Festival takes over Riverside Cemetery

By Destiny Evans

On Sunday, July 21, 2013 the 3RD annual Jazz Festival took place on Pearl Rd at Riverside Cemetery. It was a beautiful scene; the sun shining with a warm breeze and the smell of fresh cooked food that was coming from the food carts. Over 400 people of all ages attended and there were three great performances throughout the time of the festival 1pm to 4pm.

One of the performers Mary Beth Ions, a local Cleveland Violinist who has been playing for about 40 years now, performed first. While Mary Beth Ions was performing, it was very quiet. It seemed like everyone in the audience was in deep thought. When interviewed, Ions thought having the festival in the cemetery was a wonderful idea. She said the cemetery is beautiful and great location for all people on the east and west sides of Cleveland. She loves Jazz in addition to classical music. She said Jazz musicians color outside the box and that Jazz makes things different in the musical world. "Jazz is a true musical art," Ions said.

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Three jazz acts performed in front of Riverside Chapel at the Riverside Cemetery Jazz Festival on Sunday July 21st. This year's festival drew over 400 people. PHOTO BY DESTINY EVANS

Cleveland RBI Softball Team sweeps competition at regional tournament

By Markishia Thomas

For the third year in a row, Cleveland hosted the East Regional Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) Tournament. Teams from Indiana, Detroit and Cincinnati traveled to Cleveland to compete for the title of the East Regional Champs and for a shot at the RBI World Series. Even our very own Cleveland RBI Baseball and softball teams competed in the tournament.

RBI is a program that provides youth with a positive team-oriented activity that keeps its participants off the street and challenges them

both academically and physically. There aren't that many programs around today that give teens the opportunity to travel and experience different parts of the world while doing what they love, free of charge.

The Cleveland RBI program is completely funded by the Cleveland Indians. The Indians provide the teams with uniforms and equipment. They also pay for the travel and hotel expenses. A major league baseball team is at the heart of every RBI team.

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Maha's Approaches 4th Anniversary on W. 25th St.

By Casey Eweroke

Maha's Cafe, a popular Mediterranean restaurant, looks forward to its fourth anniversary on W. 25th Street, next to MetroHealth.

Maha's Cafe is owned by Sam Zayed, and his wife Maha. They opened its doors on Oct. 27, 2009.

The place was named after Maha, who also works at the restaurant and cooks the food. Sam said that his wife Maha enjoys cooking and has always been a good cook. Sam and Maha co-own the restaurant.

The family already had a falafel stand at the West Side Market, where they've been serving customers for 27 years, Zayed

said. The stands, G-13 and H-13, are located in the northeast corner of the West Side Market.

The stand was rated Best Falafel Stand in Cleveland by Cleveland Magazine, and it has been featured on Rachael Ray's \$40 A Day show on the Food Network.

Zayed said he and his wife had always wanted to open their own cafe.

Originally from Palestine, Zayed and Maha have two sons, Abraham and Sam. Abraham works at the West Side Market and their son Sam works with them at Maha's Cafe.

continued on page 10

Welcome to the Teen Edition

Dear Readers,

The Plain Press Teen Summer Program hopes you enjoy the August issue! Over the past 5 weeks, 9 high school students from 4 area high schools worked together to produce this issue.

While the students came to the program without any previous journalism experience, this summer, with support and insight from professional journalists, the teens learned about and developed skills in many facets of community journalism. From researching community happenings, interviewing neighbors, writing stories, photographing local events, making maps, and designing these pages, the students have had a chance to try their hands at a bit of it all. In doing so, the teen journalists have gained a deeper sense of how their neighborhood functions and formed stronger ties with their community.

Let us applaud the efforts of this hardworking group! I would also like to provide my sincerest gratitude to the funders, volunteer journalists, and supporters who made this program possible.

Sincerely,

Julia Van Wagenen
Plain Press Teen Summer
Program Coordinator

Plain Press

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Destiny Evans, Saint Joseph Academy, 11th Grade
Casey Eweroke, James Ford Rhodes High School, 9th Grade
Jessica Eweroke, James Ford Rhodes High School, 11th Grade
Rodericka Gilcrease, Attended Lincoln West High School
Trevon Rhodes, John Marshal High School, 12th Grade
Jazzmin Santana, James Ford Rhodes High School, 10th Grade
Minnie Terry, Lincoln West High School, 10th Grade
Markishia Thomas, Lincoln West High School, 12th Grade

Thank you!



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ARTS

Literary Lots, August 3

At Novak Park in Ohio City, 9:30- 4pm
Come help paint a literary lots mural based on the story of Stone Soup!
Bring your family and come together to create a wonderful piece of art for
the community. Remember to wear paint friendly clothes and shoes.

STEP '13 - Free theatre in city parks

STEP, Cleveland Public Theater Student Theatre Enrichment Program,
Cleveland's longest-running arts and job training program for urban
teens - returns to Cleveland City Parks this summer with an original
new play And One Night. And One Night, created and performed by the
2013 STEP ensemble, is an exciting re-imagining of Arabian Nights: One
Thousand and One Nights. Come celebrate the power and creativity of
Cleveland's youth! Bring a blanket or a lawn chair and enjoy the FREE
performance these inspiring teens have made at a park near you.

Performances:

August 8th: Mercedes Cotner Park, 12 noon & St. John's Church, 7pm
August 9th: Denison Elementary School, 7pm
August 10th: Cleveland Public Theatre, 7pm
August 11th: Fairview Park in Ohio City, 4pm

Near West Theater Auditions for A Christmas Story, The Musical

Come audition Aug. 20, 21 or 22. A big, diverse cast is sought, ages 7
through adult. St. Luke's Episcopal Church, West 78th Street and Lake
Road Cleveland. Ages 7-12: 6:00- 7:00 pm, 13- Adult: 7:30-10:00 p.m. .
For more information, contact 216-961-9750.

EDUCATION

GED Registration Deadline August 9

Cost of GED® test will triple come 2014
August 9th is the last day to register for the current test and fee.

Regional Children's Forum, August 9:

Join advocates, educators, parents, students/youth, policy makers,
physicians, child care providers, nurses, social workers, counselors,
child-serving agencies, and anyone else who cares about Ohio's
children.
-Hear updates on important and timely state issues that relate to
children.
-Share the impact of budget changes on programs in your community.
-Receive updates on federal issues impacting children.
Attendance is free. Registration is required The Voices for Ohio's
Children, www.vfc-oh.org. 1:30-4:30 p.m. at the Cleveland Foodbank
15500 South Waterloo Road, Cleveland.

Esperanza 4th Annual Back-to-School Drive, August 10th

10 am -2 pm in Esperanza's parking lot (West 25th and Clark Ave).
Seeking: Elmer's Glue sticks, rulers,pens, pencils, notebooks, filler
paper, red, blue and black Ink pens, calculators and more. You Can Also
Donate.

HEALTH

Missionary Revival and Health Fair, August 10th

US Bank Parking on the corner of West 25th St. and Clark Avenue
44109.

It is a faith based on event dedicated to help you improve the health and
spirituality balance of your family. 3:00-9:00 p.m.

Yoga Rocks The Park, August 10th, 24th

Lincoln Park. 9:30 a.m. YRP brings people together and provides a
positive environment for focus on health and wellness. There will be
live music following the practice. Kids yoga, at 11:15 is FREE. Sign up
yogarocksthepark.com/Cleveland/ for \$12.00 or at the park for \$15.00.

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pitfalls and find limitations while having fun on the trail. Body position,
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each class. Ages 14 and older with participating adult. Registration and
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West 65th and Clinton (1 Block South of Detroit Avenue)

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

ACLU brown bag lunch series, August 7

Max Wohl Civil liberties center, 4506 Chester Avenue, 12 pm.
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Q & A

Dr. Michelle Pierre-Farid

An interview with The Cleveland Metropolitan School District's Chief Academic Officer

By Minnie Terry
Lincoln West, 10th Grade

Lincoln West High School is one of thirteen schools chosen by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District as an "Investment School." According to information provided on the CMSD website (clevelandmetroschools.org/Page/2189) Investment Schools are low performing schools that are targeted for "immediate and dramatic action" as part of the Cleveland Plan. The focus at Lincoln West as an Investment School will be on "Readiness to Act."

In the article below, Minnie Terry, a student entering the 10th grade at Lincoln West High School and a participant in the Plain Press Summer Program, interviews Chief Academic Officer of Cleveland Metropolitan School District Dr. Michelle Pierre-Farid about the changes at Lincoln West High School that will affect students, teachers, and the community in the coming years.

For the past several years Lincoln West was divided up into three small schools. As an investment school, Lincoln West will be turned back into one school. Why is this?

One piece that we received feedback on is that one part of the building is more organized than another. Depending what floor you're on, you might get this type of treatment and that's not fair that a kid on the third floor doesn't get the same treatment as a child on the second floor, or a child on the first floor has to do things that a child on another floor doesn't. You're all Lincoln West; you're all scholars of Lincoln West so you all should be treated like scholars of Lincoln West that's why we're going back to one main building.

"The message is we can't do this alone..."

What is the main thing you would say needs changing at Lincoln West?

We need to change the culture and expect all students to succeed at a high level. We want to make sure our students are exposed to regular curriculum, to deeper level thinking, activities in the classroom and more engagement in their classrooms.

What do you think will be the biggest challenge in preparing for the changes at Lincoln West?

Principal Dr. Javier has been working really hard to get new staff and I think that's really a transition. The other transition is that kids that have been there for about two or three years have an expectation for certain things that will or will not happen at Lincoln West. It is going to be an adjustment for them to hear this is what you're going to have to do now, or this is what we expect at Lincoln West. What we are hoping for are some great changes for the kids and that they see themselves as academically ready to move on to whatever they want to do in their life.

How are you going to get parents and community members involved in the school?

The message is we can't do this alone and we need every one to make sure that we are preparing our kids for college and career. Everyone needs to be committed to making sure that every child is being successful in Cleveland.

**Dr. Michelle Pierre-Farid
Chief Academic Officer
Cleveland Metropolitan
School District**

What is the solution to increasing parent and community involvement?

The solution is that we have more meetings with the community. How do we really hear their concerns and they hear our concerns? How do we identify what people's strengths are? We want the kids to feel like this is a real life learning experience.

If you had all the money and resources you could ever need, what would Lincoln West look like?

I would probably update Lincoln West. I would really try to revitalize the look of the building into something to just add the feeling of our other high schools so that would be one key component. I would want every child to be able to have some type of one-to-one device -- meaning either an ipad or a laptop. I would want every single classroom to have the technology in it. All that will teach the children to be interactive with their teachers. I would want children to feel apart of learning.

Are you a teen interested in getting involved with the Plain Press?

If so, contact Charles Hoven at plainpress@gmail.com or 216-621-3060

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99 Years and Counting

St. Rocco Church prepares for Annual Labor Day Festival

By Trevon Rhodes

A holiday tradition continues in Cleveland on Labor Day weekend. The 99th annual St. Rocco's Festival is set to begin Friday, August 30th on Fulton Road. The festival, which is a celebration of Italian culture, will consist of rides; games, food and grease -- yes grease. The festival is a fundraiser for the church.

The most popular part of the festival is the grease pole challenge held on Labor Day. In this challenge teams must try to climb grease covered pole at the top win 1,000 dollars. The grease pole challenge is about endurance not strength. It is more about the bragging rights than the money. St. Rocco's Secretary Michelle Buhaley said the participants

"sling the grease on the crowd and they just love it".

With a large crowd expected, preparations are already being made so guest can enjoy classic favorites like zeppole and Italian sausage sandwiches. Sausages are made in basement along with the meatballs. Zeppole is an Italian pastry consisting of a deep-fried dough ball.

There will also be a pasta dinner at the Diner in St. Rocco Hall the meatballs at the festival are handmade. This year there will be an astounding 8,000-9,000 meatballs. New this year will be meatball subs and cavatelli. Cavatellis are a type of pasta and the term cavatelli has two meanings: the most common

meaning is small pasta shells that look like miniature hot dog buns.

Pat O'Malley, who is in his second year running the festival and sixth year helping out with the festival, said the biggest challenge is to make sure you have everything. For example, securing the ingredients to make 60 pans of lasagna. The lasagna will be made August 15-16th.

"The event brings the parish together" O'Malley said, and added "Seeing the families" is his favorite part of the festival.

The Dough Droppers had been helping out the event for the longest, as long as 50-60 years. They are the people who drop the dough in grease for the zeppoles. Michelle said, "They always come

fighting back".

Michelle says some of the kids who went to the St. Rocco's school behind the church are now helping their families with stand.

Father Mike Contardi who has been a priest for 51 years also runs the festival and said his favorite part about the festival is the procession. He said that he wants to perform a miracle or heal children.

Fr. Mike also said the festival helps pay for a lot of bills for the 7 buildings the church owns. Father Mike said. Attendance is free but you must pay for food.

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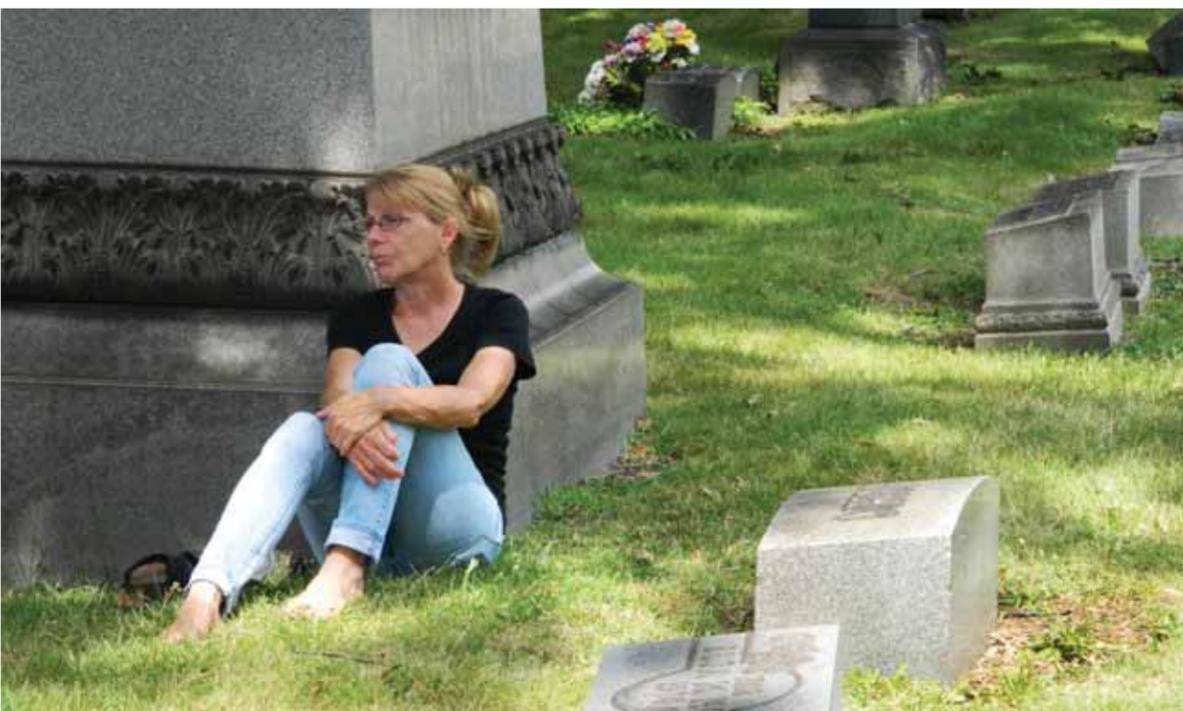
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Annual Jazz Festival takes over Riverside Cemetery



Mary Beth Ions who has been playing the violin for about 40 years, plays a song for two boys who attended the 3rd Annual Jazz Festival at Riverside Cemetery on Sunday, July 21. PHOTO BY DESTINY EVANS



Audrey M. listens to jazz while sitting beside a gravestone. She enjoyed the festival, and also said the cemetery itself was beautiful but visiting Baby Land, where all the babies are buried, was sad. PHOTO BY DESTINY EVANS

Continued from page 1

This year was the third year of the festival. The festival has grown in attendance, and population over the three years. The event has been expanded from 2 hours to 3 hours because of the great progression that it has made over the years. Riverside Cemetery has many cultural highlights and for this event it was centered around the Greats of Jazz -- musicians Roberto Ocasico, Robert Lockwood Jr, and Robert "Skeets" Ross all found a final resting place at Riverside Cemetery.

In addition to Mary Beth, the J Blues Quartet, led by Joe Bonsignore and Joe Miller, a jazz trumpeter, performed at the festival. At one point they played together. As Joe Miller and J Blues Quartet were performing there was a lot of head nodding and feet tapping throughout the crowd. While both jazz performances were going on, you could feel the bass on the music through your body. People even began to get up on their feet and dance. You could hear comments coming from the crowd like "they are really good", "This is wonderful", "I'm glad we came", and "I like this music".

Greg Kapcar said, "I am absolutely passionate about Jazz music." Greg was excited to see all musicians perform. He was very honored this year to see the J Blues lead by Joe Bonsignore, a local guy that has produced and recorded many albums. He says, "Joe is just phenomenal".

The cemetery was founded 1876 and restored in the 1890's and has about 55,000 people buried around the cemetery and there is much more space for many more great souls to join. The cemetery is unique in many different ways. They provide a number of options of burial. Also they accept all faiths, nationality, and also have tradition sections. The cemetery is about 93 acres of beauty filled with all sorts of family tributes. Greg Kapcar, the general manager at Riverside Cemetery and an event organizer of the Jazz festival, says when you're going through you can feel the richness of the cemetery. He also says, "It feels like you're driving through the countryside through the valley".

The Riverside cemetery collaborates with many other organizations such as the Brooklyn Center National, The second district police, The Community of Old Brooklyn, and The Stockyard, Clark, and Fulton community. The cemetery also partnered with the local music fund to celebrate the accomplishments of the musicians to help make this event an exciting and successful one. "The cemetery is unique and interesting, why not use it and spread music throughout the beautiful place?" said Mary Beth Ions.



A magician entertains attendees as they wait for horse drawn wagon tours of the 93-acre cemetery. PHOTO BY DESTINY EVANS



Anthony Coyne, 17, is spending summer working at Rooted, a new stand at the West Side Market that sells fresh local produce. PHOTO BY JESSICA EWEROKE

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Teens Finding Fame and Fortune in Dance



The dance group, Spectro, practices at the West Side Boys and Girls Club on Trowbridge Avenue. PHOTO BY JESSICA EWEROKE



Spectro dance practices some break dancing. PHOTO BY JESSICA EWEROKE

Continued from page 1

A sixth member, Israel Perales 20, is Spectro's choreographer and DJ.

The dance group portrays many styles of dance, including hip hop, salsa, Meringue, ballet, African styles, breakdancing, robotic movements and ballroom dance. Most of Spectro's dancing is inspired by Latin beats. Spectro practices about two to five hours a day, Monday through Thursday.

The dancers in Spectro danced in another group until two years ago, when they left and started

Spectro. Since then, that decision has changed their lives for the better.

Spectro has performed at many venues ranging from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the IX Center, and the Puerto Rican Parade. Spectro will also perform in Chicago and repeat their performance during the Puerto Rican Parade this August.

Programs like Spectro help keep the youth off of the streets and in a safe, fun environment, said Tiara Mitchell, who often

watches the dance group at the Boys and Girls Club. A Boys and Girls Club member, Mitchell says watching Spectro is a very enjoyable experience.

Celinesse Matos said that dancing is her passion. "I have been dancing since I was a little girl," she said. Jennifer Lopez, a popular Latin singer and dancer, is a role model for her. Celinesse expresses how she looks at Jennifer Lopez as a motivation because they both express the love of Latin beats in their dancing.

Another dancer, Elizabeth Matos, has been dancing since she was four years old. Dancing is very important to this group, and they aspire to be professional dancers when they get older. Alisyanna, four, said, "It's fun to see the dancing."

Spectro is an entertaining group. Many audience members think that this group is fun to watch and exciting. The dramatic movements in each dancer are so fierce. Every dancer has their own personality that is displayed throughout their dances.



Spectro members demonstrate their dance skills. PHOTO BY JESSICA EWEROKE

Cleveland RBI Softball Team sweeps competition at regional tournament

Continued from page 1

On July 12, 2013, the RBI teams checked into the Marriot on Cleveland's Westside, where they would stay for the whole tournament. That night all the RBI teams attended the Cleveland Indians game where they enjoyed an all you can eat buffet, provided by the Tribe. The tournament officially began on Saturday, July 13, 2013.

I got the chance to interview Cleveland RBI's 2-year player Nashea Tompkins who stated that RBI opened her up to new people. "I'm not a people person, but being part of a team opened my eyes," she said.

Tompkins also explained how

different the RBI team is from the other teams she played on. "My other teams weren't dedicated, with RBI we travel together and we interact like sisters. We're just one big happy family -- all fighting for one thing we love, softball".

"We may come from different backgrounds and believe in different things, but when it comes to softball we put everything aside and we work together," stated Tompkins.

Before hurrying off to rock the red and blue uniforms with her team, Tompkins said she believes her team will do fine. "I have a lot of faith in us, plus we play a solid defense together".

During the tournament the Cleveland RBI Softball Team went 3-0 throughout the tournament, shutting out Detroit 5-0, Cincinnati 1-0, and Indiana 15-0 before advancing to the East Regional Championship game.

At the East Regional Championship game on Monday, July 15, the Cleveland RBI Softball Team played against the Cincinnati RBI softball team for the second year in a row.

With the support of family members and the Cleveland RBI Baseball team there to keep the girls fired up, the girls came out on top. They won a 14 inning, 3 hours and two minute long championship

game, with the final score being only 3-2.

Cleveland RBI's softball head coach Katherine Bzdafka stated that her girls showed a lot of heart and guts all weekend. "They were composed and resilient, which allowed them to control the controllables, and do the little things right. We made adjustments quickly and were able to execute in clutch situations."

The five-year East Regional Softball Champions, Cleveland RBI will advance to the RBI World Series held in Minnesota on August 9, 2013 where they'll compete against teams from all over the world. Bzdafka

believes her team will be solid defensively and will do well at the World Series if they can execute successfully on offense. "We always do very well and suspect this year will be no different."

5th year player Kiomara Biascochea believes her team will do just fine. "There is a lot stronger competition coming at us, but if we work together we'll have a great chance of winning."

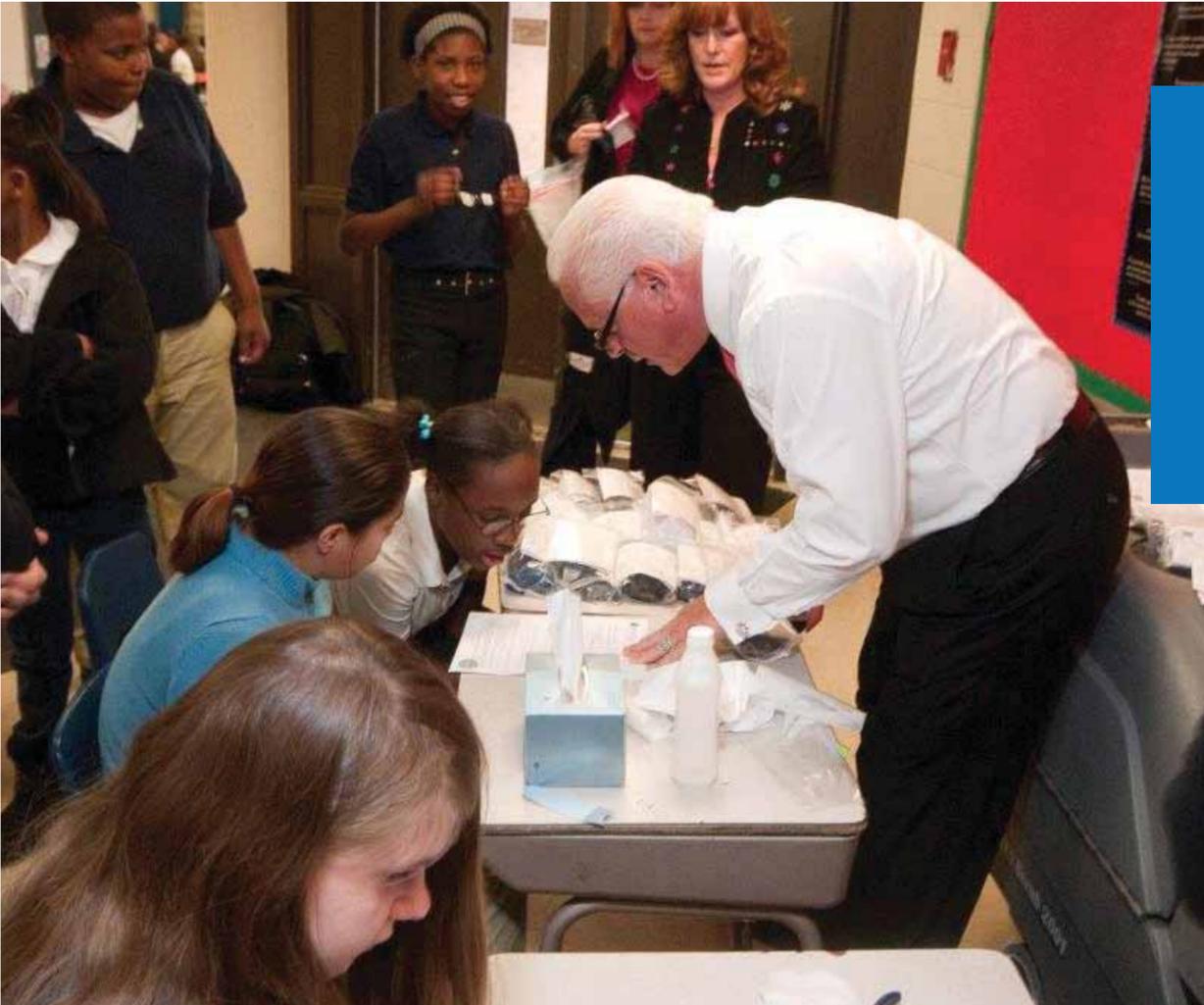
Biascochea is looking forward to all the different culture and competition at the World Series and also making friends around the world. Good luck to our Cleveland RBI Softball team. Make our city proud.

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Photo Illustration BY DESTINY EVANS

Bullying in Cleveland Schools

My bullying experience is not rare.

In middle school the bathroom was my safe haven.

Like many teens I was bullied.

I always got in trouble in school for asking to use the bathroom because that's where I went to hide when I was being bullied in class.

Eventually people caught on. When I asked to use the bathroom they would make fun of me because they knew I was hiding.

I was never safe in school and I hated it.

I never wanted to go but my parents told me I had no other choice.

My attendance in school started to suffer because I would fake being sick to avoid school and getting tortured.

They criticized me for my looks and weight. They called me names that made me feel worthless.

My parents felt bad for me and eventually took me out of school, picking up my work so I could do it at home.

That helped but when I returned the next week the bullying continued.

My mom arranged for me to see a therapist and I finally felt comfortable to talk to someone.

The students who bullied me eventually apologized but I didn't feel they were sincere so I ignored them and moved on. Talk to someone, never give up there's always hope. There was hope for me.

Here's some personal advice from my experience.

If you ever hear or see someone getting bullied don't laugh or sit back and watch it happen. Stand up and tell an adult.

Be a leader, not a follower. Being a follower can get you in even more trouble but if you are a leader I am sure the person who is being bullied will thank you a lot for your help.

Don't wait too long to stand up and tell someone because it may be too late. Don't be afraid of being the bully's next target because they are doing it just because you did something good for someone else.

By a local student who experienced bullying and wanted to speak out.

Bullying Statistics

Bullying Statistics website offers a wealth of information on bullying and can be accessed at: www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/bullying-statistics-2010.html

About half of all students have witnessed a bullying crime take place while at school.

A reported 15 percent of all students who don't show up for school report it to being out of fear of being bullied.

Some of the top years for bullying include 4th through 8th graders in which 90 percent were reported as victims.

54 percent of students reported that witnessing physical abuse at home can lead to violence.

Suicide continues to be one of the leading causes of death among children under the age of 14.

More sources are bullyingfacts.info/bullying-statistics/

90% of victims admitted that they suffered negative side effects.

Among them are:

- **Significant drop in grades**
- **Increase in anxiety**
- **Loss of friends**
- **Loss of social life**
- **77% of students are being bullied whether physically, mentally, or verbally.**

www.stompoutbullying.org/aboutbullying_theissue.php

8% of students stay home on any given day because they're afraid of being bullied.

1 out of 5 kids admits to being a bully, or doing some "bullying."

43% fear harassment in the bathroom at school.

80% of the time, an argument with a bully will end up in a physical fight.

Importance of Education and Dreams Stressed by a Teen Mom

Even if you're a single parent, you can finish high school and get an education that will allow you to fulfill your dreams.

By Rodericka Gilcrease

Even if you're a single parent, you can finish high school and get an education that will allow you to fulfill your dreams.

My daughter is now 6 months old, and I think that all the good things I want in life are starting to fall in place. I want to be a positive role model for my daughter as she grows up. I want her to finish high school and go to college, so I'm going back to high school for my diploma while working two jobs.

Things were not always this clear to me, or as optimistic as I was growing up.

As a child I dreamed of becoming a judge or going to school for cosmetology, two very different things. I wanted to become a judge because I used to watch TV shows like "Judge Judy" and "Judge Joe Brown." I also thought they make good money.

I also thought about attending school for cosmetology because I know how to do hair, and I thought I could have my own shop,



Rodericka Gilcrease stands outside of Lincoln West High School, the school she attended prior to the birth of her daughter, Ariyonna Bailey. She is dressed ready for work at Save-a-Lot, which she will go to after work at the Plain Press Teen Summer Program. PHOTO BY JESSICA EWEROKE

become an entrepreneur. I started learning how to do hair when I was 6.

As I matured, my goals have changed, because I love helping people and believe the medical field provides such a great opportunity. Now, I want to become a medical assistant and work in a hospital. I've also thought about becoming a home health aide and attending a nursing program, such as the STNA (State Tested Nursing Assistant) School.

Everything happens for a reason and I've learned from my mistakes.

People make suggestions and try to tell you what you should do, but mistakes are probably the best teacher since I've become a teen. I always try to fix things. For various reasons, I never finished high school, but I'm now returning because education is so important to me.

My Auntie Quisha, my grandmother, my mother Jeanna, and Mother-in-Law Carmen have been supportive.

I always strive for excellence and try to be myself, not what others want me to be.

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MAHA'S APPROACHES 4TH ANNIVERSARY ON W. 25TH STREET



Maha's staff left to right: Maha Zayed, cook and co-owner at Maha's, Sam Zayed Jr., son of owners, Kenny McKibben, employee, Amanda Finkel, employee, Sam Zayed Sr., co-owner of the restaurant. PHOTO BY CASEY EWEROKE

Continued from page 1

Located across the street from MetroHealth Hospital, Maha's Cafe has become a favorite lunch place for MetroHealth's doctors and nurses. The doctors and MetroHealth staff sometimes find their lunch interrupted when they get paged and have to take their food back to the hospital.

"You want to feed them as fast as you can because they have a limited amount of time to eat," said Sam Zayed. "Sometimes they are still hungry and decide to come back for seconds."

That's probably the definition of good food when someone wants more. Taking care of Maha's Cafe and the falafel stand is a family affair.

"I opened a restaurant because I always wanted to open one," Zayed said. "The idea came from my head." He said the idea appealed to him because, "My wife likes to cook, and I like to eat."

In addition to the family members, three others work at Maha's Cafe, Jessie Rharb, Amanda Finkel, and Kenny McKibben. All have worked there from two to four years.

Sam hopes to pass down the restaurant to the next generation.

Sam says, "I like to feed people." He doesn't plan on expanding and isn't sure how long he'll be in business.

Maha's favorite dish is grape

leaves, and she particularly enjoys making salads. Sam helps cook sometimes.

"My favorite dish is Mujadara," he said. Mujadara consists of cooked lentils together with rice, and garnished with sautéed onions. He also has some secret ingredients that he buys from the store for his little twist on dishes.

Sam also thinks the restaurant's menu is "very inexpensive."

Some days provide surprises. The worst moment on the job was when "the power went out."

Another day when he was delivering food to MetroHealth on a rainy day, he was walking down the hall, slipped and fell, getting his pants all wet. He had to go back to work that day with wet pants.

There also are tense moments on the job, especially when they're short handed and there's a lunch rush with a limited time to serve people before they have to go back to work.

The happiest moment on the job, says Sam, "is giving the customers the food, and looking at them enjoy the food. Also the appreciation and loyalty the customers give us when they come in every time to eat our food."

And that's why all his customers are favorites. He said he really likes to see customers' faces when

they eat and enjoy the food they cook.

Most days, Sam and his wife come to work early in the morning, around 6 a.m. This means Sam and his wife are on their feet all day, producing some aching feet and serious bunions now and then.

The restaurant seats some 30 to 40 customers, and is decorated with work by local artists as well as a couple family photos. Mediterranean food lovers can check out the restaurant at 3323 West 25th St.

Maha's Café: 3323 West 25th St. (Next to MetroHealth), Cleveland, Ohio * 216-741-9810 * MahasCafe.com



Maha's Cafe, 3323 W .25th Street. PHOTO BY CASEY EWEROKE

Praising Coffee

Continued from page 1

"I hope to be a fore runner for economic revival in the neighborhood"

To Dunson, coffee shops "are little community hubs." She said the Clark Fulton currently has "limited amount of spaces to really gather and dream together to live life, to gather as friends [in an environment that is] clean, and comfortable."

My City Coffee will be a place where you can read, come be with a friend, play a game, or possibly hear some music.

In repurposing the abandoned church, she hopes "to create an atmosphere that is comfortable to people to come and rekindle a community."

She said "I moved here in hopes to encourage the community back to a place of thriving."

"I was living in the suburbs and was coming in to the city to do different non profit work and decided if that I ever wanted to make a change to the neighborhood it would have to be from the inside out. It has to be someone who came into the neighborhood, who has lived in the neighborhood and who loved the

neighborhood," Dunson said.

"I love my neighborhood. I love my neighbors. I live just three streets over from where the coffee shop will be," Dunson said.

She is planning to use a roaster called the Greater Bean, a small coffee roasting company owned by retired firefighter from Cleveland, Ohio. Greater Bean imports its coffee from several different areas around the world. They roast the coffee and all their proceeds go to help nonprofits organizations around the world.

Dunson is also working with different neighborhood bakers to have fresh baked snacks everyday.

She wants to have local artists come in and make the place more vibrant and comfortable.

She is opening up a coffee shop because she knows it will be a great place for people to hang out or catch a cup of coffee before going to work.

"I hope to be a fore runner for economic revival in the neighborhood as well."



My City Coffee, an upcoming coffee shop on 3381 Fulton Rd, is still under construction at the closed Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. PHOTO BY DENARIA CRAIG

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NHS of Greater Cleveland, 5700 Broadway Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44127 Lou Tisler, Executive Director

Burmese teen finds summer work at Ohio City Farm

Photos by Jessica Eweroke



Htut Mu, age 15, originally from Burma, is working for Refugee Response at the Ohio City Farm this summer. He works there with his mom, Whop Mu. Refugee Response is an organization that empowers refugees living in Cleveland. Food grown in the farm is sold at the farm's produce stand and also to local restaurants.



Lidia Dayru, 28, works with Refugee Response at Ohio City Farm. She holds freshly harvested kale that will be sold at the farm stand.



Ohio City Farm, off of West 25th street, sells its produce at this Farm Stand.



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