



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Wednesday, August 20, 2014; Mac's Backs Coventry Bookstore, Cleveland Heights: Bill Arthrell, a retired Cleveland History teacher, who taught at both Rhodes and John Marshall high schools, shares his thoughts on the revolution in the Ukraine. Arthrell observed history in the making in the Ukraine where he served as an international Election Observer this past May. See related story on page 6.

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# Plain Press

Cleveland's Near Westside Newspaper

## PRE4CLE sets goals to expand quality preschool offerings in city of Cleveland

by Chuck Hoven

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District hopes that in the near future a higher percentage of Cleveland children will be able to enroll in high quality preschool programs.

On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, the first day of

preschool at Tremont Montessori School, parents shared their thoughts about the value of preschool. CMSD Chief Executive Officer Eric Gordon and Katie Kelly, the newly appointed executive director of PRE4CLE, gave an update on efforts to expand the number of high

quality preschool slots available in Cleveland. PRE4CLE, an early learning compact among many community partners, is charged with working to increase the number of quality preschool slots available to Cleveland children.

### Parents praise pre-school

Pierre Sain and Javin Polk, parents of three children that have participated in the preschool program at Tremont Montessori School, testified as to the quality of the program, and the difference it has made for their children.

### NEWS ANALYSIS

Sain said their daughter Kaylissa, who is now in third grade, learned to read and write full sentences while in preschool. Polk added, that by the end of first grade, "She was reading to us."

Sain said, their son, Pierre, who is now in the first grade, is ahead of all his peers in vocabulary and is reading at a third grade level.

JáVierre, now age four, is the third child of Sain and Polk to participate in the preschool program at Tremont Montessori. JáVierre started in the preschool program at age 3, so he is now entering his second year in preschool. Sain and Polk said prior to going to preschool JáVierre was "unfocused and not enthusiastic about learning." Sain and Polk

continued on page 4



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Friday, August 22, 2014; First day of preschool, Tremont Montessori Elementary School, 2409 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street: Cleveland Metropolitan School District Chief Executive Officer Eric Gordon offers an update on PRE4CLE, a plan to expand the number of high quality preschool openings available for children in the Cleveland School District.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Sunday, August 3, 2014; Westown Community Development Corporation Swinging Summer Concerts at Halloran Park: Kayla Readinger, age 6, visits with Frank Sinatra (Damion Fontaine) as the Rat Pack entertains the crowd. Readinger came up to the area in front of the gazebo to dance with Fontaine.

## Madison's Pathway Garden of All Seasons brightens corner of W. 105<sup>th</sup> and Madison Ave.

Neighborhood residents have transformed the corner of West 105 and Madison into the Madison's Pathway Garden of All Seasons.

The effort to change a vacant lot into a flower garden began in 2010 when W. 105<sup>th</sup> Street resident Clarissa Thompson approached Cudell Improvement Executive Director Anita Brindza to seek permission to plant flower seeds on the lot. Cudell Improvement owns the lot.

Once permission was granted, Thompson and neighbor Carla Buchanan began planting flower seeds in the lot. Thompson says about ten neighborhood residents, including her sons, have been involved with planting and making improvements to the flower garden. She often transplants flowers from her yard to the garden.

Thompson says the garden is a perennial flowering garden with plants that come up on their own each year.

Each year the neighbors have made improvements to the garden.

This year with the help of a Neighborhood Connections grant of \$1,500 the group was able to add mulch paths to the garden and create a sign with the name of the garden. Area residents have also collected aluminum cans to raise enough money to buy three trees to plant in the garden.

Another effort underway is to name the flowers in the garden and post signs by each type of flower. Neighborhood resident Jim Westler is researching the names of the flowers, while Jan Westler, his wife, is designing the signs. Anita Brindza of Cudell Improvement is in contact with a scout troop to help burn the names into wood signs.

Goals for the future of the garden include picnic tables, benches and birdhouses. Thompson hopes to apply for another grant to help with additional improvements.

Besides serving to beautify the neighborhood, weather permitting, the garden also serves as a meeting place for the monthly meetings of the Madison's Pathway Block Club.

by Chuck Hoven

Welcome House, which purchased the Cuyahoga County Archives buildings at W. 29<sup>th</sup> and Franklin, hopes to use the main building, the Rhodes House, to provide housing and support services for twenty-four developmentally disabled young

adults who are aging out of foster care.

Welcome House Executive Director Tony Thomas explains the need for such a place for young people with developmental disabilities aging out of foster care. Thomas says when these young

people reach age 19 "the County Board of Developmental Disabilities struggles to find placement for them, many don't end up in the right situation."

Thomas says the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental continued on page 6



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MIDWEST SAFETY TEAM

Summer 2014, Madison's Pathway Garden of All Seasons, W. 105<sup>th</sup> and Madison: Residents of the Madison's Pathway Block Club enjoy a picnic in the garden.



Sunday, July 13, 2014; Fr. Petru Stanea's 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration, St. Helena Romanian Byzantine Catholic Church, 1367 W. 65<sup>th</sup> Street: Fabian Barbolovici, President St. Helena Church Council, Cleveland Diocesan Bishop Gries, Fr. Petru Stanea, New Rector at St. Helena, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Rector Fr. Richard Rasch, Jack Craciun III, Executive Chair, St. Helena Property and Dev. Committee, Father Justin of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (OLMC). Bishop Gries and priests from Our Lady of Mount Carmel participating in the annual procession through the neighborhood during the OLMC festival, stop to greet those celebrating Fr. Stanea's birthday at St. Helena's.



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# Juveniles break into bicycle shop, while owner volunteers at the Taste of Tremont festival

by Chuck Hoven

A dozen new and used bicycles were stolen from Shaker Cycle at W. 5<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson in the Tremont neighborhood. Shaker Cycle’s owner, Mitch Paul, says the theft occurred on July 20<sup>th</sup> while he was helping out at Taste of Tremont offering a secure location for guests to park their bicycles and doing some bicycle repairs. Paul, a Tremont neighborhood resident, moved his bicycle shop to the corner 15 years ago in anticipation of the Canal Corridor Towpath Trail coming through the Tremont neighborhood.

Paul says he discovered the theft the day after the Taste of Tremont when apparently the perpetrators came back to steal more bicycles. He noticed three bicycles parked outside his store on the Jefferson side of the building with the door open. He apprehended two of three youths inside the building pulling more bicycles out of the store. The third youth fled the scene. Paul says when police arrived they found the two youths pockets were filled with bike accessories from his shop. The two youths were arrested for breaking and entering.

Paul, who has no insurance

to cover the theft, estimates the value of the dozen new and used bicycles stolen at \$4,000. He says some of the bicycles were those of customers that were in for repairs.

Paul says in the fifteen years he has been at W. 5<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson, this is the worst incident, crime-wise, that he has experienced. He says prior to this, his experience at the location has been relatively crime free.

Tremont West Development Corporation (TWDC), the area’s development corporation, and also the host of Taste of Tremont, is aware of the thefts. Executive Director Cory Riordan notes Mitch Paul was “generous in offering to man the bike parking corral” at Taste of Tremont. When asked about a possible fundraiser to help Mitch Paul recover from the theft, Riordan says TWDC generally doesn’t host such events, but would be willing to serve as a fiscal agent and help promote an event if someone in the community initiated the fundraiser.

Riordan suspects the breaking and entering that occurred during the festival was random “crime of opportunity” done by “kids that knew his schedule.”

Riordan says that TWDC tracks patterns of crimes and has not detected any pattern of break-ins along Jefferson. The TWDC Safety Committee works to keep

residents aware when there is a pattern of crime in an area and help to keep these types of things from happening, he said.

Riordan says TWDC will follow

up with police on the case. TWDC has a court watch, said Riordan, but he suspects in this case, because juveniles are involved, will either be pleaded out or go to juvenile court.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON  
August 22, 2014; Shaker Cycle, 2389 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street: Mitch Paul outside his bicycle shop.

## W. 25th Street resurfacing from I-71 to Detroit set to begin in mid September & finish in August of 2015

Plans for road resurfacing on W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street were revealed at a public meeting at Applewood Center, 3518 W. 25<sup>th</sup>, on August 25<sup>th</sup>. The resurfacing of W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street between I-71 and Detroit Avenue is expected to begin in mid September and be completed by August of 2015.

Shelly Company was awarded the work on the maintenance project after submitting the minimum bid of \$2.98 million. City of Cleveland Project Manager and Design Engineer Ron Mason said 80% of the cost of the project would be paid for by the State of Ohio through the Urban Repairs Project Fund. The City of Cleveland will contribute the other 20% of the funding. The project involves resurfacing the existing roadway and upgrading the American Disability Act (ADA) ramps at street corners.

The first phase of the project will focus on W. 25<sup>th</sup> between I-71 and I-90. A spokesperson for Shelly Company said they hope to complete the area in front of MetroHealth Medical Center before winter sets in.

During project construction traffic will be limited to two lanes, one lane in each direction for northbound and

southbound traffic from I-71 to I-90. During construction there will be no parking allowed. Cars parking in the area will be towed.

Residents from the streets surrounding MetroHealth expressed some concern that their streets will be inundated with cars from Metro patients trying to avoid parking fees. Project Manager Mason said a meeting with MetroHealth was scheduled to try to address some of the issues surrounding the upcoming project.

Bicycle advocates attending the meeting asked if the street would be striped for bicycle lanes after it is repaved. Mason explained the rules governing the State of Ohio’s Urban Repair funds only allowed the road to be resurfaced and lanes marked exactly as they were prior to resurfacing. However, the funds can’t be used to restripe the street for bicycle lanes. Mason said they could ask that the restriping be done with paint that can easily be removed and once ODOT is done with the project the city can put in its own lane markers.

Jim Sheehan of Ohio City Bicycle Coop asked that all the striping along the W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street corridor be done with paint that can be easily

removed. Representatives of Shelly Corporation said that because of the weather, temporary paint will be put on this year. They suggested that decision to use paint or the harder to remove thermoplastic for the lane markers can be made in the spring.

Mason noted that the reason bicycle lanes have become an issue and a need is because of changing demographics. He said younger people used to rush to get a drivers license at age 16, now many “prefer to go by bicycle.”

Ward 14 Councilman Brian Cummins noted the high percentage of City of Cleveland residents that don’t have cars. He urged residents to get involved in upcoming transportation planning meetings for the W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor from Brooklyn Centre to Detroit and an upcoming Clark Avenue Transit Study.

In response to another question, Mason said no rerouting of RTA buses is expected to be necessary for this project.

Mason said that residents with questions or concerns about the construction project should call him at 216-664-2381.

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**Friday, August 22, 2014; Tremont Montessori Elementary School, 2409 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street: Preschool teacher Ms. Susan Conrad reads to children on their first day of preschool.**

“There’s a lot of excitement now,” he said. “We want to be that 21st Century learning environment where students are learning but also applying what they have learned.”

*We are committed to improving the quality of life  
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## QUALITY PRESCHOOL OFFERINGS

continued from page 4

each community.” 750 quality spots for four year olds are expected to come through existing preschool programs that are preparing for State of Ohio Step Up to Quality ratings or waiting for results of those ratings.

If the effort is successful, this will mean over 6,000 children ages 3-5 years enrolled in quality preschool classes by the end of 2016. With roughly 16,500 children ages 3-5 currently in Cleveland that would mean serving about just over 36% of Cleveland 3-5 year olds by 2016.

Kelly says, “while the ultimate goal of PRE4CLE is to make high-quality preschool available to every preschool-aged child in Cleveland, but we anticipate, based on research from other similar programs the ‘take-up rate will be 70%.” She says currently serving 70% of all preschool age children in the city of Cleveland would mean serving 11,447 children ages 3-5 years.

### Funding

Kelly said the Cleveland has one of the most developed plans to expand and improve preschool in the state of Ohio. She said CMSD is currently using federal Race to the Top Challenge grant dollars to upgrade the quality of its preschool curriculum. In addition, as the CEO mentioned, the Cuyahoga County Universal Prekindergarten program provides PRE4CLE with funding to expand high-quality spaces in existing UPK classrooms and also expand half-day preschool into full-day preschool.

A CMSD News Bureau press release indicates that the school district has committed \$2.5 million

to the PRE4CLE effort this year and Cuyahoga County has committed an additional \$1 million this year.

The goal is to raise \$35 million over the next two years from public and private sources. Kelly expects part of that to come from Federal Preschool Development funds. She says Ohio applied for \$80 million in federal funding to expand preschool programs. Kelly says nationally less than a third of children are in high quality preschool programs. PRE4CLE estimates implementing the preschool expansion will cost \$15 million the first year and \$20 million the second year.

### Pre-school providers

While preschool providers are not required to participate in PRE4CLE, the program says it will offer those that do participate: “financial support for expansion; potential tuition assistance for eligible families; access to professional development for staff; marketing and outreach for their programs; connections to other supports and partnerships; and supports for helping ensure each child’s successful transition to kindergarten.”

Preschool providers interested in submitting an application to be accepted as a high-quality provider can contact the CMSD Office of Early Childhood Education for more information at 216-838-0231 or download the full report on PRE4CLE at [www.clevelandmetroschools.org/pre4cle](http://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/pre4cle).

While the CMSD preschool slots are free to children living in the Cleveland school district, PRE4CLE says funding it receives will provide tuition assistance for quality private preschool slots.

When funding is available, the program also plans to provide assistance with transportation for preschool students.

In addition to providing transportation assistance, PRE4CLE has promised to provide additional preschool classrooms in underserved neighborhoods. The West Boulevard neighborhood and the Brooklyn Centre neighborhood are among the neighborhoods listed as being close to capacity in filling available preschool slots, while the Ohio City neighborhood is listed as a neighborhood with unused capacity. West Boulevard, Central, Glenville, Old Brooklyn, Broadway-Slavic Village and Kamms’ Corners are listed as having the city’s highest populations of children ages 3-5, totaling 39% of the city’s total.

### Parents

For information about enrolling in a CMSD preschool parents and guardians can contact CMSD’s Office of Early Childhood Education at 216-838-0231 or visit the website at [www.clevelandmetroschools.org/pre4cle](http://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/pre4cle). For information on the private pre-K openings available, parents or guardians should contact Starting Point at 216-575-0061.

**Editor’s Note:** According to the CMSD News Bureau, The Cleveland Early Childhood Compact picked Starting Point, a referral agency for early childcare in Northeast Ohio, and the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County to manage PRE4CLE. Newly hired PRE4CLE Executive Director Katie Kelly is described as a lifelong Cleveland, and former Executive Director of groundWork, a statewide group that advocates for quality early-childhood education.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Friday, August 22, 2014; Tremont Montessori Elementary School, 2409 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street: Katie Kelly, PRE4CLE’s Director, talks about PRE4CLE’s goal to eventually provide high quality preschool seats to 70% of the preschool age children in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

## Students from local high schools win CMSD scholarships

Two Lincoln West students and one Max Hayes student were among 13 Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) students awarded scholarships at the Army of Believers luncheon on August 1<sup>st</sup>. Students from citywide magnet schools were awarded the remainder of the scholarships.

Yu “Mike” Zhang of Lincoln West High School was awarded a \$10,000 scholarship by CMSD Board Chair Denise Link. The scholarship went along with the 2013 Urban Educator of the Year honor Link won at the Council of Great City Schools’ annual conference. Zhang, who will study chemical engineering at Ohio State-Mansfield, also received a \$5,000 scholarship from the CMSD’s Army of Believers.

Guadeloupe Rogel, also of Lincoln West High School, was awarded a \$5,000 Army of Believers Scholarship. Rogel plans to major in sociology at Columbia University.

Nicholas James Gehler of Max Hayes, who will study mechanical engineering at Cleveland State University, received a 2014 Eaton Scholarship.

Four students from Cleveland Early College at John Hay received Army of Believer scholarships: Jamekia Nicole Nelson who will major in engineering at Ohio State University-Mansfield; Jennifer Tan Nguyen of who will major in business at John Carroll University; Meilenys Idbel Peraza who will major in Japanese at Ohio State; and Toneisha Decarla Stubbs who will major in pre-Med at Kenyon College.

Four students from MC2STEM High received 2014 Eaton Scholarships: Precious Nishea Moore, who will study biology at Hampton University; Brittany Shanee Murphy, who will study mechanical engineering at the University of Akron; Austin Lee Pope, who will study marketing at Bowling Green State University; and Joshua David White, who will study

international business at Hawaii Pacific University.

Two John Hay students received the Community Service Scholarship: Toni L. Airaksinen of the School of Architecture and Design at John Hay High, who will study urban studies at Barnard College; and Brittany Hope Kincaid of the School of Science and Medicine at John Hay, who will study psychology at John Carroll University.

The \$5,000 Army of Believer, Eaton and Community Service scholarships were awarded to students with the requirement that they be enrolled in a post-secondary

institution for the 2014-15 school year. The scholarships may be used toward expenses for tuition, books and student housing. The CMSD Scholarship Committee awarded the scholarships based on students’ academic record, future plans, goals, exemplary community service, need, a written essay and an interview. The 13 scholarship winners were chosen from 104 applicants. CMSD Chief Academic Officer Christine Fowler Mack presented the scholarships to the students at the scholarship luncheon.

### Lincoln West grad completes Navy basic training

August 20, 2014 (FHTNC)--Navy Seaman Austin M. Howells, a 2104 graduate of Lincoln West High School recently completed U.S. Navy basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Ill. Howells is the son of Darren L. Seastrand of Cleveland, Ohio.

During the eight-week program, Howells training included classroom study and practical instruction on naval customs, first aid, firefighting, water safety and survival, and shipboard and aircraft safety. An emphasis was also placed on physical fitness.

The capstone event of boot camp is “Battle Stations”. This exercise gives recruits the skills and confidence they need to succeed in the fleet. “Battle Stations” is designed to galvanize attributes of

sacrifice, dedication, teamwork and endurance in each recruit through the practical application of basic Navy skills and the core values of honor, courage and commitment. Its distinctly “Navy” flavor was designed to take into account what it means to be a sailor.

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PHOTO BY JOHN CARTWRIGHT

Thursday, August 14, 2014; Ribbon Cutting and Community Celebration of the opening of the Puritas Office of Neighborhood Family Practice, 14037 Puritas Avenue (in Puritas Park Plaza): The staff of the Puritas Office of Neighborhood Family Practice featured above are: James Diekroger, MD; Brandi Dobbs, CNP; Constance Barath, RN; John Jason, Patient Advocate & Office Manager, Faith Walsh, Medical Assistant; and Maryann Kuzila, LPCC Counselor. Not shown: Celeste Curtis, Medical Office Specialist, and Karen Acosta, Medical Assistant.

## WELCOME HOUSE PLANS FOR FRANKLIN BLVD HOME

continued from page one

Disabilities currently has “3,400 people waiting for service.” He said the 24 places Welcome House hopes to provide are a drop in the bucket compared to the need. Welcome House chose to target those aging out of foster care, because it is a group of people that “don’t have family and have no place to go.”

Welcome House, which currently runs 31 group homes for individuals with developmental disabilities, already has some clients that were referred to its facilities as young people aging out of foster care. Thomas said he knows of their special needs for counseling and mental health services. He says often the young people have been in multiple foster homes while growing up. They often haven’t been exposed to very much good

parenting during those experiences.

Thomas believes the new facility at the Rhodes House will be unique in the State of Ohio in serving only developmentally disabled young adults aging out of foster care. Referrals to the new apartments will come from the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Thomas says Welcome House will work with the County Board of Developmental Disabilities to help the young adults make the transition from the foster care system to a highly supportive apartment building. Thomas said the nice thing about working with the County Board is that Welcome House will often know a year or two ahead of time when a referral is to be made.

He says Welcome House will partner with Linking Employment Abilities and Potential (LEAP) to help the young residents secure employment. He envisions LEAP

employment counselors working with clients during the day and a Direct Support Professional from Welcome House working with clients in the evening on community living skills and support. The facility will be staffed 24 hours a day to provide a safe, secure, environment for residents.

Thomas says the length of stay of residents at Welcome House depends on the individual. Some individuals may be able to move out on their own, others may stay at Welcome House for life. Thomas says Welcome House continues to offer services to those that move out on their own, offering them a long term support system creating a community around them. Welcome House makes sure they are in a safe place, they have a good lease and sufficient income to pay their expenses.

With strong advocacy from County Council representative

## Retired Cleveland teacher speaks out about tragedy in the Ukraine

by Chuck Hoven

Retired after 31 years of teaching history in Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Bill Arthrell, finds himself once again giving lectures in front of groups of people. Arthrell, who taught high school history at both Rhodes and John Marshall high schools, has become an advocate for the Ukraine, which he describes as “a country fighting for its entire survival.”

Arthrell hopes the multi-media presentation he is willing to deliver to various groups or classes of students will inspire Americans to “ask our government to do more to help the Ukraine.”

Arthrell’s presentation, titled *Ukraine 2014: Revolution, War and Putin* compares what is happening today in the Ukraine to some of the momentous moments in human history such as the American and French revolutions and the struggle of African Americans in the United States for civil rights.

At a presentation at Mac’s Backs Coventry Bookstore on August 20<sup>th</sup>, Arthrell noted some of the history of the development of Slavic culture in the Ukraine and how the Ukrainian people have been conquered and dominated by various powers over the centuries.

Arthrell talks of the vote of the Ukrainians for independence from the USSR in 1991 and the series

of pro Russian oligarchs that dominated the country until the recent revolution.

Sharing some of his own life history, Arthrell says he, sometimes feels like Forrest Gump – finding himself participating in historical events. He notes he was a student at Kent State on May 4, 1970 during the anti-war demonstration, he protested outside the White House when President Richard Nixon resigned, and participated in protests at the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968.

In October of 2013 Arthrell says he was visiting Ukraine and having a bowl of Borscht soup at the Maidan or Square in Kiev when he observed and joined a huge demonstration. The demonstrators were protesting Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich’s decision to switch sides after promising to align with the European Union, and instead aligning with Russia and Vladimir Putin.

Back in the United States after his trip to the Ukraine, Arthrell watched news accounts of the Ukraine as the demonstration he participated in turned into a revolution that ousted Yanukovich from power. On a visit to the Ukrainian Village in Parma, Ohio, Arthrell says he joined the Maidan Committee and was recruited to be

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Yvonne Conwell, late last year Cuyahoga County Council voted to approve Welcome House’s proposal for the site on Franklin Blvd. The site includes two buildings the Robert Russell Rhodes House (2905 Franklin) and the Nelson Stanford House (just east of the Rhodes House). Welcome House then purchased the site. Thomas said the County insisted those bidding on the site, bid for the entire site.

The Rhodes House, says Thomas, will work well for what Welcome House proposes. He says the front area – currently the public area for the Cuyahoga County Archives -- will serve as office space for program staff, a game room for the young adults and a meeting room, which he hopes to make available on occasion for the neighborhood

block club. The area in the rear, which now serves as storage area for the County Archives, will be converted into apartments for the young adults referred to Welcome House.

Thomas says the Rhodes House “is a well laid out building for apartments.” He noted that it is interesting that the Cuyahoga County Board of Mental Retardation (the predecessor of the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities) in the late 1960s and early 1970s used the Rhodes House as a school for youth with developmental disabilities.

The Stanford House is more suitable for office space than apartments, said Thomas. Because Welcome House already has a

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WELCOME HOUSE SEEKS FUNDING

continued from page 6

long-term lease in Westlake for its headquarters, it is looking to work with Ohio City Inc. to find suitable office tenants for the Stanford House, said Thomas.

If Welcome House is successful in securing the funding to convert the Rhodes Building into use as apartments for its clients, Thomas expects work on the building at 2905 Franklin will begin in early 2016 and the facility will be able to open in mid 2016. Thomas says Welcome House has applications pending for both Federal and State Historic Tax Credits, an application for funding from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency and an application at the Federal Home Loan Bank in Cincinnati, which uses funds from bank fees to fund affordable housing programs.

Welcome House has already received approval from the City of Cleveland for funds from its Housing Trust Fund. Thomas says when 50% of the funding has been secured, Welcome House, along with their lending partner First Merit Bank, will feel comfortable moving forward on the project.

In the meantime, the Cuyahoga County Archives must begin moving their documents to a new location. Thomas said he believes that process will take about six months and begin sometime next year. Lenay Stevers, a Cuyahoga County Archives staff member, says the tentative plan is for the archives to be moved to the former Halle Warehouse at E. 40<sup>th</sup> and Perkins. She says the public will continue to have access to the archives at the new location.

Welcome House thus far has been successful in gaining the support it needs to create a supportive environment for young adults with developmental disabilities aging out of the foster care system. It gained the necessary support in the Cuyahoga County Council to win approval for its proposal. It successfully navigated the Board of Zoning Appeals to gain 5-0 approval of the variances needed for the

program to locate at the site. The Franklin Clinton Block Club, the neighborhood block club, voted its support for the proposal. The Board of Ohio City Inc, the local development corporation, voted 18-1 to support the proposal.

Despite these successes obstacles still remain. Ward 3 Councilman Joe Cimperman, a strong supporter of Welcome House’s proposal, says neighborhood residents had ample opportunity for public discussion of the proposal at over a dozen community meetings. Most of those that have heard the proposal are supportive and ready to welcome Welcome House to the neighborhood, he said.

However, Cimperman is concerned that two or three individuals dissatisfied with the proposal are trying to disrupt its funding. He pointed out an anonymous email he said is filled with erroneous information that was being circulated in Ohio City. He said the same individuals have been lobbying the funding sources downstate to turn down the funding applications submitted by Welcome House.

The email circulated, for example mentions the high poverty rate in the census tract where Welcome House would be located to try to make the case that the Rhodes House would be isolating its clients in a high crime, low income neighborhood. The email makes a general reference high crime areas and the economic segregation of poor people. The email while mentioning the poverty rate in an attempt to paint the picture of economic segregation, fails to mention the economic integration of the Ohio City census tract 1036.02 where Welcome House would be located. In addition to having a good number of poor households, the census track also has a good number of households with incomes over \$100,000.

Cimperman is fearful that a proposal to serve people with “cognitive disabilities that are coming to the neighborhood because they have no place else to go”, may get shot down “because unfortunately



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Thursday, August 21, 2014; Rhodes House, currently home to the Cuyahoga County Archives, 2905 Franklin Blvd: Cuyahoga County has recently sold this building to Welcome House and plans to move the archives to an alternative location. Cuyahoga County Archives’ staff member Lenay Stevers says a tentative location proposed to house the archives is the former Halle warehouse at E. 40<sup>th</sup> and Perkins.

sometimes the negativity” is what influences the funders to say no.

Thomas said Welcome House has become aware of the opposition. He said neighborhood residents

and organizations in support of Welcome House “have sent letters out to counter this stuff.” He said he counted 17 public meetings, including meetings with Ohio City

Block Clubs, where he spoke about the project. He said when people had concerns about the project, “I thought I did a good job of changing perceptions of people.”

COMMUNITY BOARD

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PUBLIC FORUM

GORDON SQUARE ARTS DISTRICT (GSAD) is hosting another Public Forum for its Community Master Plan for the next phase of physical, economic and artistic growth of the district. All members of the community are invited, and reservations are not needed. Community participation is critical to the success of the planning effort, and feedback is important and welcome. A second public forum will be held on Wednesday, September 24, 2014 at smart Space, 78<sup>th</sup> Street Studios, 1300 W. 78<sup>th</sup> Street. Check in will be from 6 – 6:30 p.m. and the session will run from 6:30 – 8 p.m. Opportunities for community input and interaction will also be available online beginning on August 28. For more information contact Theresa Schneider at [tschneider@gordon-square.org](mailto:tschneider@gordon-square.org) or 216-961-4242 x222.

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SENIOR GUEST HOUSE is a home for persons 60+ years of age that provides a safe environment for those in crisis or unsafe conditions. Call 216-664-2833.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES W. 25<sup>TH</sup> TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS on the future of housing and transit along W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street/ Pearl Road: Tuesday, September 16, 6-8:30 p.m., St. Wendelin Catholic Church, 2281 Columbus Rd. Discussion groups will focus on components of the corridor, including commercial, education, housing, pedestrian, recreation, services, transit and workforce. Announcements will be posted to: [www.ClevelandNP.org/W25](http://www.ClevelandNP.org/W25). Need more information email: [ZMueller@ClevelandNP.org](mailto:ZMueller@ClevelandNP.org).

SIGN UP TO CONDUCT BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN COUNTS and receive a \$40 gift card to the NE Ohio bicycle shop of your choice. Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) needs volunteers to conduct bike counts throughout Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina Counties. Volunteers will be asked to count passing bicyclists for two hour periods, while sitting outside at various road and trail intersections on September 23, 24,25 and 27. For more information and to sign up, visit: <http://www.noaca.org/index.aspx?page+55>.

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# St. Helena baptizes first African American in 108-year history of the church

by Chuck Hoven

On August 3, 2014 Antwain Thomas became the first African American to be baptized at St. Helena Romanian Byzantine Catholic Church in the 108-year history of the church. Romanian is the language still used today to say

the Mass in the Church, which was founded by Romanian immigrants in 1905. Thomas's Godfather at the ceremony, Jack Craciun III, relates the story of how Thomas came to be baptized at St. Helena. Craciun said Thomas is interning

at his company, the ITM Group, where Craciun serves as Chairman and CEO. Craciun, who has family roots in the St. Helena Romanian Byzantine Catholic Church, was back in the neighborhood after many years overseas. Members of St. Helena,

and the parish's new priest reached out to Craciun to help out. The parish had recently experienced a crisis due to a scandal involving the former pastor and was working to recover from its aftereffects. The recruiting effort involved a Cleveland police officer, a member of the parish, pulling Craciun over as he drove through the neighborhood and telling him "Father needs you at St. Helena." Craciun and Thomas soon became involved in the formation of the Saint Helena Community and Property Development Committee (SHCPDC). Craciun is serving as the Executive Chairman of the SHCPDC and Thomas is serving as Secretary of the committee.

As they became more involved, they were invited to the ceremony of the installation of Father Petru Stanea as the new parish priest on May 18, 2014. Stana, who arrived at the parish from Romania, had written his graduate thesis on St. Helena, the first Byzantine Catholic Church in the Americas. They also attended Fr. Stanea's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. After one of the celebrations, Thomas, inspired by the beauty of the liturgy of the Mass and the hospitality of the parish as they feasted on Romanian food after the Mass, asked Craciun if he could be baptized in the church. Thomas also told Craciun, his mentor at ITM Group, that he wanted to be baptized in the same church where Craciun had been baptized. The baptismal ceremony of Antwain Thomas followed a mass in Romanian celebrated by Fr. Petru Stanea and Fr. Chuck Works.

Jack Craciun III served as Godfather, and Vicky Prior served as Godmother. Because of his age, Craciun insisted that there be an Alternate Godfather. Robert Weakley, who had recruited Thomas for the internship at the ITM Group, served as the Alternate Godfather and Lorinda Laughlin Plank, also with ITM Group served as the Alternate Godmother. Thomas also received his First Communion and Confirmation at the August 3<sup>rd</sup> ceremony. After the ceremony Fr. Stanea revealed that the baptism was his first at his new parish.

## CRISIS IN UKRAINE

continued from page 6

an international election observer during the Ukrainian Presidential Election in May of 2014. Upon his return trip to the Ukraine as an election monitor, Arthrell says he got a chance to observe first hand the estate of the former president Yankovych and the evidence of the lavish lifestyle he lived while many in the Ukraine lived in poverty. Arthrell, also a poet, shared some of his poetry during his trips and developed a relationship with the people of the Ukraine. He plans to once again return to the Ukraine in October of this year as an international election monitor for the Ukrainian parliamentary elections.

**Editor's Note:** Bill Arthrell, when not out of the country monitoring international elections, is available to talk to groups about the crisis in the Ukraine. He can be reached by phone at 216-618-3500.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Sunday, August 3, 2014; St. Helena Romanian Byzantine Catholic Church, 1367 W. 65<sup>th</sup> Street: Antwain Anthony Thomas (white robe) prior to being baptized and confirmed with the name "John". At the ceremony Thomas also received his first communion. Also pictured are: Godfather Jack Craciun III, Alternate Godmother Lorinda Laughlin Plank. Thomas is the first person to be baptized by Fr. Petru Stanea since his arrival as the new pastor at St. Helena Romanian Byzantine Catholic Church. He is also the first African American to be baptized at the 108 year old Byzantine Catholic Church.

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Sunday, August 3, 2014; St. Helena Romanian Byzantine Catholic Church, 1367 W. 65<sup>th</sup> Street: Fr. Petru Stanea Antwain confirms Anthony Thomas (white robe) while Godfather Jack Craciun III and Alternate Godfather Robert Weakley kneel at his side.

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