



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON  
Friday, January 15, 2021; Boys and Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio ClubSmart Learning Center, Riverview Welcome Center, 1701 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: Boys and Girls Club Art Instructor/Tutor Nadine Ramos assists Jasmine Oliver, age 7, with her schoolwork.

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# Plain Press

Cleveland's Near Westside Newspaper

## COPING WITH COVID-19

### Isolation, lack of technology concerns for seniors during pandemic

by Brie Zeltner

Angela Smith can't access her email-- she has no computer, no tablet, no high-cost data plan, and the library's closed. Smith, 48, is taking care of her 74-year-old mother, Minnie, in the Cedar Extension High-Rise senior apartments on East 30th Street, a Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing

Authority building just down the street from Cleveland's main post office.

Angela has Type 2 diabetes, and Minnie has rheumatoid arthritis in her hands, feet and hips.

Since the pandemic began and most of the activities that used to take them out of the house-- shopping, socializing, attending senior wellness groups--

have been shut down or become too dangerous, the Smiths have become increasingly isolated at home.

Lori Smathers is battling the same isolation. Smathers, who lives with her 27-year-old daughter in a house a couple of miles away on East 49th Street in the Slavic Village neighborhood, has no computer either. She's got a cell phone but isn't comfortable using video on it.

Smathers, 59, has been in recovery from an addiction to alcohol, crack and heroin for 13 years, and is disabled due to anxiety, depression and arthritis.

She takes about ten medications to manage her conditions.

For low-income older adults and those with disabilities, who have a higher risk of death due to COVID-19, the challenges of staying healthy and avoiding isolation during the pandemic have been particularly hard.

"They can't see their family, they can't see their grandchildren, they can't do whatever, and that's led to depression, anxiety and just a lot of loneliness," said Dr. James Campbell, department chair of geriatric medicine at the MetroHealth System, who before the pandemic would make monthly visits to University Settlement to offer health assessments to clients there.

Depression and anxiety can worsen existing health conditions, Campbell said, and lead to declining health. Often, the first sign of a problem is when older adults stop eating as well or as much, he said.

"Eating is a very social event," he

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### Industry changes over time, some still survives on Madison Avenue

by Alana Whelan

Madison Avenue has largely been a hub for industry and residential housing, both dating back to the 1890s, when the National Carbon Co. office was built at W. 117th Street.

Madison Avenue stretches all the way from W. 58th Street in Cleveland,



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON  
Friday, January 15, 2021; Boys and Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio ClubSmart Learning Center, Riverview Welcome Center, 1701 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: Valeria Reyes (age 7) and Edwin Reyes (age 6) work side by side on their schoolwork.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Tuesday, January 19, 2021; Father Begin Bridge, W. 65<sup>th</sup> and Madison Avenue: This pedestrian bridge over the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and railroad tracks is named for former St. Colman Pastor Father Bob Begin. The bridge offers access to the W. 65<sup>th</sup> RTA station and pedestrian and bicycle access to the eastern residential end of Madison Avenue.

### Precinct Committee members select Martin Sweeney to represent District 3 in Cuyahoga County Council

At a January 14<sup>th</sup> virtual Candidate Forum, three candidates --Brendan Heil, Ryan Ross, and Martin Sweeney -- vied to be the representative for Cuyahoga Council District 3 for the remainder of the term of retiring County Council member Dan Brady. The term expires in 2022. The candidates were not seeking a vote of the public, but as determined by the County charter, they were seeking the votes of the Democratic party precinct committee people in each of the precincts in District Three.

Cuyahoga County District Three has the following boundaries: The city of Brooklyn and the city of Cleveland-Ward 3 (Precincts B, J, M, N, P, R, S) Ward 11 (All); Ward 12 (Precincts A, B.02); Ward 13 (Precincts A, B, C, D.01, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, P, Q); Ward 14 (All); Ward 15 (Precincts All except Q.02); Ward 16 (Precincts A; I and J) and the village of Linndale.

Sixty-four precinct committee members voted from the precincts in District Three. Ultimately Martin Sweeney won 35 out of 64 votes. (At least 33 votes were needed to

win the appointment i.e. 50% + 1). Brendon Heil came in second with 27 votes.

While there was no opportunity for the public to be involved in the selection of the new council representative because the precinct committee people voted prior to this article being published, there may be some interest in what candidates had to say.

Candidate Brendon Heil, a Detroit Shoreway Community resident who is involved in the leadership of Cuyahoga County Young Democrats, said he understands the work of County Council and promised to address public health issues. He said fighting to end the pandemic would be his number one objective if selected to fill the position. He said he would work to make sure the infrastructure was in place so residents could get the vaccine as soon as possible. Heil said he would work to make sure Cuyahoga County continued to use CARES Act funding to fight the pandemic, work for equitable development, invest-

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into Lakewood, and ends perpendicular with Rocky River Drive. The different sections of the street reflect its history as a center of industry and other activity.

Completed in 1896, the National Carbon Company office on Madison Ave. and W. 117th created jobs for new immigrants, most of whom were eastern

European and Slovak.

With many of the company employees living in Cleveland neighborhoods, it was often difficult for them to make it to work in a good amount of time, so the company bought 155 acres of land west of the factory to accommodate the

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PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON  
Friday, January 15, 2021; Theresa's Bakery, Stand D-9, West Side Market, W. 25<sup>th</sup> and Lorain Avenue: Theresa's Bakery Owner Sabrina Catlin holds up a tray of Dawg Pound Cookies made ready for the Cleveland's Browns playoff game against the Kansas City Chiefs.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Friday, January 15, 2021; rear of West Side Market, 1979 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: Plain Press Editor Debbie Sadlon purchases a Cleveland Street Chronicle from Kim Goodman, aka Super Mutt. Goodman is both a writer and a salesperson for the Cleveland Street Chronicle, the newspaper published by the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless.

**ADVOCACY**

**CLEVELANDERS FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT (CPT):** There are lots of ways to keep in touch with CPT. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Email us at [info@clefortransit.org](mailto:info@clefortransit.org) Call or text us at 216-714-2164.

**YWCA'S ACTION CENTER** is a resource for advocacy on the national level. Visit the center to learn more about YWCA's national policy stances and about more local legislation. Issue areas include economic security, immi-

gration, racial justice and more. Visit the center at: <https://ywcaquorum.us/issues>.

**ARTS**

**PIANO CLEVELAND** offers to donate pianos to piano students: To be eligible for the Piano and Keyboard Donation Program, you must be a student who is currently taking piano lessons or an institution such as a community center, school, senior living facility, or rehabilitation center. Plans are underway to expand the eligibility requirements as the program develops. For those interested in receiving or donating an instrument through the Piano and



The Plain Press Community Board is a listing of a variety of free activities and resources for neighborhoods served by the Plain Press. The printing of the Community Board is sponsored by Organize! Ohio through donations from readers and supporters.

Keyboard Donation program, please fill out the online forms on the Piano Cleveland website at [pianocleveland.org](http://pianocleveland.org) or contact Emily Shelley, Education and Outreach Coordinator, at [emily.shelley@pianocleveland.org](mailto:emily.shelley@pianocleveland.org). **CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART** has reopened. Although admission is free, due to COVID-19 precautions you must reserve a ticket to enter. To reserve a free general admission ticket, call the ticket center at 216-421-7350 on Monday thru Sunday from 10 a.m. – 5p.m. excluding holidays.

**GORDON SQUARE REVIEW:** a publication of Literary Cleveland, holds two open readings periods each year. The journal will reopen for general submissions from writers of all geographic locations on **January 15, 2021** and will remain open through **April 1, 2021**. Writers accepted for publication receive \$25 per prose piece and \$10 per poem. For more information visit: [www.gordonsquarereview.org/submit.html](http://www.gordonsquarereview.org/submit.html) **LIT CLE -CLEVELAND HUMANITIES FESTIVAL CROWDSOURCED POEM:** Literary Cleveland and the CSU Poetry Center invite writers who have a connection to Northeast Ohio to submit a poem on the theme of identity for inclusion in the 2021 Cleveland Humanities Festival. The poems will be used to create a crowdsourced, collectively written poem. Submissions are due by February 8<sup>th</sup>. For more information visit: <https://gordonsquarereview.submittable.com>

**BENEFITS**

**CUYAHOGA JOBS AND FAMILY SERVICES** notice of action letters, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) interview notices, Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards and Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) program vouchers may arrive late. This may mean that notices arrive after the date of action has already passed. To check the status of your current benefits and documents you have submitted, or for information about a past or upcoming interview call 1-844-640-OHIO (6446).

**ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER (EBT) CARD:** To check the status of your EBT Card call the Customer Service Line at: 1-866-386-3071 **MERRICK HOUSE** has Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) funding available to assist anyone with rent or utility payments. Payments are limited to \$125.00 per household and will be paid directly to the vendor. Interested parties should call Merrick House at 216-771-5077 for an application. **PREVENTION, RETENTION AND CONTINGENCY (PRC) PROGRAM:** To check the status of your voucher call the PRC Information Line at 216-987-7392.

**BLOGS**

**POINT OF VIEW:** Read Cleveland veteran pundit Roldo Bartimole's blog at: <https://havecoffeewillwrite.com/?p=79349> **EDUCATION BLOGS:** Former Plain Dealer Education Reporter Patrick O'Donnell is now writing for the 74million.org an education blog. Former United Church of Christ Minister for Public Education and Witness Ministries Jan Resseger blogs at [janresseger.wordpress.com](http://janresseger.wordpress.com)

**COVID TESTING**

**NEIGHBORHOOD FAMILY PRACTICE** offers free coronavirus testing by appointment at its W 117<sup>th</sup> Street office. To make an appointment visit: [www.nfpmcdcenter.org](http://www.nfpmcdcenter.org).

[nfpmcdcenter.org](http://nfpmcdcenter.org).

**CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE** thru a partnership with Care Alliance Health Center offers free drive through COVID-19 Testing. Testing begins at 11 a.m. Individuals seeking tests must be in line by 2 p.m. Testing will be done on a first-come, first-served basis. No appointment is necessary. The testing service is available to Tri-C students, faculty and staff, as well as community residents. The program offers testing to individuals regardless of their symptom status, insurance status or ability to pay. Individuals will not be charged for the test. A government-issued ID with name and address is required for testing. Those with health coverage are asked to bring their insurance card. Effective Feb. 1, testing will be held at the Metropolitan Campus on Mondays and Wednesdays throughout the spring semester (in addition to the weekly Thursday rotation). Metro Campus is located at 2900 Community College Ave. in Cleveland. Testing will take place in the Lot 4 underground garage off Community College Avenue. Visit [tri-c.edu/covidtest](http://tri-c.edu/covidtest) or call 216-317-1250 for more information. Testing will rotate between College sites every Thursday through April 29. Test results are communicated to individuals by phone within approximately one week. Reporting could take longer during periods of high-volume testing.

**COVID-19 VACCINE:**

**CITY OF CLEVELAND COVID-19 VACCINE CALL CENTER:** The City of Cleveland has established a call center to answer general questions pertaining to the City's vaccine distribution efforts and assist eligible individuals in scheduling an appointment to receive the vaccine. The CALL CENTER NUMBER is 216-664-2222. Hours of operation are Monday-Friday: 9 1.m.-5 p.m.

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY AND UNITED WAY OF GREATER CLEVELAND'S 211 HELPLINK'S** dedicated staff will provide Cuyahoga County residents eligible for phase 1b inoculations with the information and resources they need to identify nearby COVID-19 vaccine providers. Nearly 90 providers, including hospitals, primary care physicians and pharmacies, now offer vaccinations across Cuyahoga County to eligible individuals. 2-1-1 HelpLink is a free and confidential service available to handle calls from those who need assistance with hundreds of resources, including food and meal assistance, shelter or rental assistance, utility assistance and more. Through 2-1-1's dedicated line, COVID-19 vaccination information is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., **OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S CORONAVIRUS VACCINE WEBSITE:** <https://vaccine.coronavirus.ohio.gov> shows all hospitals, pharmacies and other sites where the vaccine is offered. You can search the site by zip code to find a location near you. The site offers phone numbers and websites for vaccine sites so you can schedule an appointment.

**VACCINE QUALIFICATION VIA DISABILITY:** Ohio's Phase BI eligibility During the initial rollout of vaccinations for the individuals with congenital, early-onset, and inherited conditions, individuals must have a developmental or intellectual disability and one of the following conditions:

Cerebral palsy, Spina bifida, Severe congenital heart disease requiring hospitalization within the past year, Severe type 1 diabetes requiring hospitalization within the past year, Inherited metabolic disorders, including phenylketonuria; Severe neurological disorders, including epilepsy, hydrocephaly, and microcephaly; Severe genetic disorders, including Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Turner syndrome and muscular dystrophy; Severe lung disease, including asthma requiring hospitalization within the past year and cystic fibrosis; Sickle cell anemia; Alpha and beta thalassemia; and Solid organ transplants. For more information visit [www.coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://www.coronavirus.ohio.gov). If you have questions about your vaccine access you can call the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities at 216-241-8230, or the Disability Rights Ohio intake department at 614-466-7264 or 1-800-282-9181.

**FOOD**

**GRAB AND GO MEALS FOR YOUTH:** Available at all Cleveland Public Library branches M-F from 3-4 p.m.

**CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT (CMSD)** is providing grab and go meals to Cleveland children ages 18 or younger. **Option One:** Grab and Go meals at all K-8 school sites on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. On Tuesdays meals may be picked up for Tuesday and Wednesday. **Option Two:** Grab and Go meals at all CMSD High Schools available for once a week pick up every Tuesday from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Students, parents or caregivers can go to the school building closest to their home.

**FIRST CALL FOR HELP:** For days, times and locations for free food distribution call 211.

**GREATER CLEVELAND FOOD BANK:** Call 216-738-7239, or visit [GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org](http://GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org) for food assistance. Apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) if you are under sixty (limits are higher for persons age 60 or older or persons receiving disability assistance) and your monthly family income is \$1,316 or less for a one-person household; \$1,784 or less for a two-person household; \$2,252 or less for a three person household; \$2,720 or less for a four person household. Add \$453 for each additional household member. For information about Food Stamps (SNAP) applications, food pantries, free produce, and hot meals text FOOD to 63566.

**GRANTS**

**CLEVELAND FOUNDATION CLEVELAND BLACK FUTURES FUND** has issued a request for proposals. The Fund has amassed more than \$4 million since its inception in late 2020 to support the capacity of Cleveland-based nonprofit organizations that are both Black-led and Black-serving. Applications must be submitted online by visiting the [Cleveland Foundation Grants Gateway](http://ClevelandFoundationGrantsGateway). If you do not have login information, complete the Grantee Login Request Form to register in the system. Applicant organizations may operate in a range of issue areas, but grants can only be made to organizations currently holding 501(c)3 tax-exempt status. Organizations that do not currently have 501(c)3 tax-exempt status are eligible to apply in partnership

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**FABULOUS FISH FRY'S**  
Baked & Fried Fish, French Fries, Pierogi, Pasta's and more...  
Beginning Ash Wednesday February 17<sup>th</sup> and Every Friday of Lent (February 19<sup>th</sup> - April 2<sup>nd</sup>)  
4pm - 8pm  
St. Rocco Church  
3205 Fulton Road  
Cleveland, OH 44109  
DRIVE THRU ONLY  
\*entrance on Fulton Road.

**Attention:**  
**Non-Profit Organizations, Government Offices and Public Officials!**

The Plain Press 50th Anniversary Community Guide will be published in our March Issue.

The guide offers free listings of names and phone numbers – additional information can be placed in the guide by purchasing a square in the guide. For more information contact Ed Tishel at [plainpressads@yahoo.com](mailto:plainpressads@yahoo.com)

**Plain Press 50th Anniversary Community Guide**  
**Be There! Buy a Square!**

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# Rights and Responsibilities

by Pat Takacs MSN, RN

In our current cultural climate, we hear a great deal about "Rights". My rights, our rights, all personal statements. But what about the rights of the "Other"?

What actually are the rights we hear touted as granted by the second amendment of the Constitution of the United States? In a quick study, the Constitution of the United States is clear about our laws, our rights, our freedoms, and our responsibility to the common good of all citizens.

## COMMENTARY

First, only a few rights are unalienable (can't be taken away under any circumstances as they are part of being human). These include the right to work and enjoy the fruits of our labor, the right to act in self-defense, and to worship within a freely chosen religion, or not.

Second, to be "free" means: "...to be able to do the doable without being subject to unjust constraints. It doesn't mean that any of us can trample on the rights of others, though we're still struggling to understand and institute the latter" (Leah Curtin, RN, ScD(h), FAAN, November, 2020).

Third, along with personal rights comes the requisite responsibility to maintain them for self and others. Therefore, we don't have the freedom to infect, beat or kill others. Why? Because that violates other people's unalienable rights.

The right of individual freedoms includes legal limits, especially individual acts that harm, or can potentially cause harm, to others. The illness we see is: "Toxic Individualism" (ibid, November 2020). We have seen much of this in the past few months. I am struck by how well other countries have risen to the occasion of quelling this pandemic's spread to put aside their individualism and seek the common good. They choose between rights and responsibilities, between freedom and law. Yet we continue to say good-bye to too many good and great people, stretching our hospitals' resources to the breaking point, and closing our schools, to say nothing of devastating our economy. And now we have acts of sedition and insurrection against our very Democracy.

It is time for all of us to stand back from "self" and look at "other", which has been shown by many citizens in our own cities and counties in Ohio. We especially have seen this in our children. They have risen up to raise money for the food banks, make masks, and other very generous acts of selfless "other". Let the little children lead us into becoming "other oriented" in this new year. Continue to wear masks, social distance, and receive the COVID vaccination. Let us again be: "One Nation Under God". Future generations will thank us.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Friday, January 15, 2021; Grab and Go Meals, Scranton School, 1991 Barber Avenue: Scranton School staff members (L-R) Jessica Irizarry, Laurie McCulloch and Kenetta Crider pose with their sign. The sign at the rear of the building lets children, parents and guardians know where they can pick up lunches. Cleveland Metropolitan School District K-8 schools offer free lunches to all children ages 18 and under on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

## "Defund the Police" Is A Misleading, Irresponsible Slogan

To the Editor:

### LETTER

As Cleveland, Ohio embarks on a new election season, I'm concerned about the growing narrative pitting communities of color against police officers. I support the principles embodied in most versions of Defund the Police legislation. But citizens rarely hear these principles. Instead, we repeatedly hear the misleading and irresponsible Defund the Police slogan; a slogan that will undoubtedly derail this much needed police reform legislation.

## Reader seeks answers about purpose of surveillance camera

To the editor:

Dear Members of the Cleveland City Council Safety Committee,

My name is Paula Miller and I live on the near west side of Cleveland near Fulton and Lorain. I noticed there is a surveillance camera located in the parking lot of McCafferty Health Clinic on Lorain Avenue. The camera is about 2 stories high and is an independent camera on a moveable trailer. It has a Cuyahoga County government logo and the Federal agency - The Department of Homeland Security stamped on the side. This camera has been up for awhile and I am writing to ask you why it is there. I am assuming that since it is on City property that you had to approve the placement of this camera.

### LETTER

Are we under a security threat on Lorain Avenue that we need to be made aware of? If that is the case we should know about it in order to protect ourselves. If not then I can only surmise that the camera on Lorain is meant to intimidate poor people of color in our neighborhood and make visitors to the neighborhood feel safer. The presence of a surveillance camera does not make all our neighbors "feel safe" only watched by an unknown entity. As a resident in the neighborhood I would like to know who is watching

The slogan will also overshadow other important police reform initiatives, such as demanding that mayors, police chiefs and county prosecutors enforce the Ohio Peace Officers Training Academy's certification laws. The Defund the Police slogan threatens to deepen the wedge between minority communities and police officers; making it more difficult to implement community policing.

Jeff Mixon, President  
**BLACK LIVES MATTER** in  
Cuyahoga County

the footage from this camera? What is being done with the footage? How long will it be there? Why is it there to begin with?

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and I look forward to your responses to my questions.  
Paula Miller  
Resident near Fulton and Lorain  
Ward 3

## CareSource invests \$5 million in fund to make Cleveland homes lead safe

CareSource, the state's largest Medicaid managed care organization, will invest \$5 million to help Cleveland families and property owners protect children from lead hazards in their homes.

The commitment, which the Dayton-based nonprofit called "unprecedented," recognizes the profound effect that housing has on health, CareSource officials said.

Exposure to the brain-damaging environmental toxin has persisted among young children in Cleveland at nearly four times the national average, especially in neighborhoods like Glenville and Clark-Fulton with older housing stocks and a high number of children of color.

The pandemic has exacerbated concerns about lead poisoning as children are spending more time at home and less time in schools and daycares. Children in Cleveland are most often exposed to dust created from deteriorating lead-based paint in their homes and yards. Even at low levels, lead can harm a child's developing brain and cause lifelong health problems and education and behavior challenges.

"Ensuring the homes of our most vulnerable neighbors are lead safe

demonstrates our commitment to creating a culture of health for our members," Steve Ringel, CareSource Ohio Market President said Tuesday in a joint release with the [Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition \(LSCC\)](#).

The money bolsters the Lead Safe Home Fund to \$25 million, or about a quarter of the way to its 5-year fundraising goal of \$99.4 million.

In December, working with [CHN Housing Partners](#), the coalition fund started to offer grants, loans and incentives designed to support property owners, particularly landlords who will have to comply with a new requirement that rental units built before 1978 be inspected for lead hazards and certified as lead-safe starting in March.

The fund also supports the Lead Safe Resource Center, which operates a hotline to answer questions about lead

poisoning and connects families and landlords with information and services. The center is also training workers to inspect homes and safely remove lead hazards.

The coalition estimates that in its first five years the efforts will reach 90,000 families – half of Cleveland's households – remediate 25,000 homes and train 1,000 workers.

To find information on loans and grants look to articles from this series in the archives for the January 2021 issue of the Plain Press on our website at <http://plainpress.blog>.

CareSource's investment will be included in the pool of money for loans for landlords, with CHN managing the construction process and measuring the results of the effort, which will "show other communities across the nation the

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**SUNDAY SERVICES:**  
German service..... 9:00 am  
English service.....10:30 am  
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**Come worship with us!**  
Mass schedule:  
Weekdays Mon-Fri: 6:45am, 8:45am & 6:30pm  
Saturdays: 6:45am, 8:45am & 4:00pm  
Sundays: 7:30am, 9:30am  
Traditional High Mass in Latin 12pm every Sunday  
Italian/English Mass at 9:30am every third Sunday of the Month.  
Confessions: Saturday 3:00-4:00PM & Sundays before the 9:30am & 12:00pm  
Eucharistic Adoration, Tuesdays 9:00am-6:30pm

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**Saint Ignatius Of Antioch Church**  
10205 Lorain Avenue (at West Boulevard)  
216-251-0300 • [SIOA.WECONNECT.COM](http://SIOA.WECONNECT.COM)  
Rev. Kevin Estabrook, M.Div., M.A. - Pastor

**Mass Times:**  
WEEKDAYS: MTWTF 9:00AM  
SATURDAY EVENING VIGIL: 5PM  
SUNDAY: 9AM AND 11AM  
TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS ON MONDAYS AT 5:30PM  
**Confession:**  
SATURDAY: 3:00PM-4:00PM ON THE FRONT STEPS OF THE CHURCH (AND BY APPOINTMENT);  
SUNDAY 9:45AM-10:45AM, AND BY APPOINTMENT  
ANONING OF THE SICK AND LAST RITES: AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST  
INQUIRIES INTO BECOMING CATHOLIC: CALL CHURCH OFFICE

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Tuesday, January 19, 2021; Miriam Ortiz-Rush Park, Madison Avenue at W. 75<sup>th</sup>: The community celebrated the ribbon cutting for this park on October 12, 2019. The event was featured in the November 2019 Plain Press.

## COUNTY COUNCIL

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ment in neighborhoods, and work to get micro grants for businesses.

Heil said he would fight for equality, working to get County investment in areas left behind and assuring that members of minority groups have equal access to County resources. He pledged to work for diversity and anti-discrimination policies. Heil called for more investment in housing that is affordable. Heil also called for crafting a policy that would use best practices for running the County jail and for the use of diversion programs.

When public money is committed to deals like the refurbishing of the Quicken Loans Arena, Heil said those getting the public dollars need to be held accountable to the community. The deals need to be structured with a commitment to transparency so County Council can make sure taxpayers are getting a good return on their investment.

Heil said he is a volunteer mentor at College Now. He also said as a County Council member he would work to register voters and talk to voters year-round.

Candidate Ryan Ross said he is a lifelong Cleveland resident and involved in True West Homes, a group

that helps people experiencing housing insecurity especially youth aging out of foster care by providing housing they can afford. He is also a member of the Cleveland Community Collaborative and a mentor of Cleveland State University students.

Ross said he would use the position of County Council Representative to be an advocate for social justice for those that are marginalized. Ross said he would work to bring government and private sector stakeholders together to collaborate on solving problems. He mentioned affordable housing, criminal justice reform, and expanding diversion programs as important issues. He said he would work to make sure all districts in the County were viable.

Ross said if he had been on County Council when the Quicken Loans deal was brought up, he would have voted against giving \$140 million in public dollars to the project. He said instead of giving money to billionaires, Cuyahoga County should have used the money for a rainy-day fund. He said such a fund would be useful now in helping residents and businesses to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Ross said if he was outvoted on the issue by other Council members, he would advocate that the project hire individuals from the community as much as possible and offer them decent pay.

Ross stressed that he was not beholden to anyone and "will always be

for the smaller person that doesn't have a voice."

Martin Sweeney said he represented 25,000 people as a member of Cleveland City Council, 125,000 people as a State Representative and now hopes to represent 150,000 people as a member of the County Council. Sweeney said he has a passion for public service and has the time to invest and be focused on being a County Council person.

Sweeney expressed concern that so many people have died of COVID-19 in Cuyahoga County. He called for getting the data and letting people know how bad it is. He said the majority of the Cuyahoga County budget is for social services – so we need to make it work – identify the needs and take care of families.

Sweeney called for criminal justice reform that is "fair and equitable." He noted the need for a new Justice Center and the job as a County Council member to provide oversight to that process. As a Council member Sweeney said he would ask his fellow council members about their priorities for their districts. He would also get to know each of the Cuyahoga County Departments and gain an understanding of how they work.

Sweeney said that Cuyahoga County needs to work to improve mental health and diversion programs and make sure the county's disabled population gets the resources they are entitled to receive.

As to the Community Benefits agreement that Greater Cleveland Congregations tried to get on the ballot to require developers to provide funds for mental health and diversion programs in exchange for public dollars going to the Quicken Loan Arena, Sweeney said that when a group collects 22,000 signatures, the issue "needs to be on the ballot." Sweeney added that diversion programs are "incredibly important because our jails are filled up."

The Candidate Forum was sponsored by Cuyahoga County Young Democrats, Cleveland Stonewall Democrats, and the Ward 14 Democratic Club with technical support from Our Revolution Ohio.

Cuyahoga County Council has 11 members. The new president of County Council is District 8 Representative Pernel Jones Jr.. The new Vice President is District 10 Representative Cheryl L. Stephens.

## Unofficial Public Comments site seeks to bring public comment period to Cleveland City Council meetings

A new online page called "Unofficial Public Comments at Cleveland City Council" started by Cleveland residents with the help of a group called "Our Revolution" hopes to convince Cleveland City Council to create a public comment period at their future City Council Meetings. The page can be found on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/unofficialpubliccomments>.

The page live streams following the City Council meetings and holds a discussion monitored by community activist Yvonka Hall. Residents can submit questions and comments about concerns they have and get copies of the Cleveland City Council legislation being discussed. To submit comments for future Cleveland City Council meetings to "Unofficial Public Comments" go to: <https://forms.gle/9XwTXexMP-38D8PH18>

The first meeting covered by the group was the January 6<sup>th</sup> Cleveland City Council meeting. Moderator Yvonka Hall spoke through a live stream on Facebook of the goals of Unofficial Public Comments at Cleveland City

Council. She said, "This unofficial public comment period should not be necessary because we should have an opportunity have public comment. What we want people to do is we want them to come on. We want them to voice their concerns. We want them to talk about the things they don't get to talk about during Council meetings. We want them to talk about the things that are going on in their communities. We want them to talk about the things that are going on every single day. We want them to talk about the things they would talk about if Cleveland City Council was not blocking the voice of the community."

The February virtual meetings of the "Unofficial Public Comments" group will be from 1-1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays February 3, February 10, February 17 and February 24. To sign up for a meeting send an email to [unofficialpubliccomments@gmail.com](mailto:unofficialpubliccomments@gmail.com), or visit <https://www.mobilize.us/ourrevolution/event/368383/> at [unofficialpubliccomments@gmail.com](mailto:unofficialpubliccomments@gmail.com).

## Cleveland City Council Health and Services Committee to meet weekly and welcomes public comments and questions

Cleveland City Council will begin to hold weekly hearings to update the community on COVID-19, the vaccine rollout and other issues affecting residents, Councilman Kerry McCormack, chair of the committee announced in the following statement released by Cleveland City Council on January 21st.

*New information about COVID-19 and the vaccine rollout is coming out every day from the federal, state and local government. This information is not only evolving, but also confusing for many. Residents need and deserve to have clear and timely updates provided to them. The Health and Human Services Committee of Cleveland City Council will enact its oversight role in achieving that.*

*Starting on Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> the Health and Human Services Committee of Cleveland City Council will double its hearing schedule from every other Monday morning at 9:30 am, to every single Monday at 9:30 am. This increase will allow the committee*

*to hold weekly public hearings with the goal of providing regular and transparent oversight and updates on COVID-19 and the vaccine rollout to the community.*

*These hearings will not replace public information coming from the federal, state and local government, rather they will serve as a regular check in on current data and information. In addition to council member engagement, Councilman McCormack also welcomes questions and feedback from the community.*

*If you have a question or comment that you would like to submit to the committee, please fill out this form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc0YneY\\_H-FaOCPpE8wTUxe7UZdMdBRAzmvvOjR2flpX-8wJw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc0YneY_H-FaOCPpE8wTUxe7UZdMdBRAzmvvOjR2flpX-8wJw/viewform).*

*You can watch these hearings live or after the fact here: <https://youtube.com/user/ClevelandCityCouncil> and also live on TV20 at [www.tv20cleveland.com/watch-now/](http://www.tv20cleveland.com/watch-now/)*

## City of Cleveland opens COVID-19 Vaccine Call Center

The City of Cleveland has established a call center that is currently available to answer general questions pertaining to the City's vaccine distribution efforts and assist eligible individuals in scheduling an appointment to receive the vaccine. **Call Center Number: (216) 664-2222 Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday; 9 a.m.-5 p.m.**

Only individuals who meet the Ohio Department of Health's criteria are eligible to receive the vaccine at this time. Due to limited supply, it will take time for eligible individuals to receive the vaccine. The City of Cleveland asks for your patience. As the city receives additional supply, it will be opening up additional vaccination sites and scheduling appointments for eligible individuals to receive the vaccine.

While Phase 1A focuses primarily on protecting healthcare providers, the focus of Phase 1B is to vaccinate those at high risk and have K-12 students back in the classroom by March. Individuals who are eligible for the vaccine in **Phase 1B** include: •Cleveland residents, age 65 and up; •Individuals with severe congenital, developmental, or early-onset medical disorders that make them particularly vulnerable; and •Adults/employees in K-12 schools that want to go back to, or to remain with, in-person or hybrid learning models.

Beginning Monday, Jan. 25, 2021, Cleveland residents 75 years of age and older, those with severe congenital, developmental, or certain early-onset medical disorders will become eligible to receive the vaccine. By the week of February 8<sup>th</sup> individuals age 65 and up will be eligible to make an appointment to receive a vaccine.

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# MADISON AVE.

continued from page one

workers and their families.

As the National Carbon Company grew, the neighborhood grew along with it and by 1910 there were 2,200 people living in the area where Lakewood meets Cleveland, which soon became known as Birdtown, according to an article titled *Birdtown* by the Cleveland Historical team (clevelandhistorical.org).

Businesses built up around the neighborhood, and today the Lakewood end of Madison is alive with restaurants and bars seven days a week. However, the Cleveland end of Madison still retains an industrial flavor that was prominent in the late 19th century.

As Madison Avenue moves east from Lakewood into Cleveland, it crosses more industrial history before moving into residential neighborhoods. The Glidden Co. operations ran along the New York Central Railroad tracks that today are followed by RTA, and as Madison crosses Berea Road, the Midland Steel Products Co. occupied a large section of land between Madison, W. 110<sup>th</sup> and W. 106<sup>th</sup> Streets. The former site of the Midland Steel Products Company where in its heyday over 1,500 people were employed, is now Madison Industrial Park. Signs on the property indicate it will soon open as an Amazon Last Mile Facility and will be teeming with trucks coming and going to make deliveries in the neighborhood.

Further east on Madison's northern side Lamson & Sessions and Cleveland Steel Products had operations that began in the 1920's and 1930's. Lamson and Sessions was another especially large employer of residents of the neighborhood in its nuts-and-bolts operation. The former Lamson and Session's factory along the tracks just north of Madison at W. 85<sup>th</sup> no longer exists. The crumbling structure was torn down a few years ago.

However, the industrial roots of Madison Avenue still remain evident today.

One of the most successful companies that has come out of the area is the Advance Manufacturing Corporation, 6800 Madison, which began as a tiny tool and die shop and have now expanded into a huge manufacturing company that works with the aerospace industries and auto manufacturing sector, said Matt Zone, former Cleveland City Council representative of Ward 15.

"[Advance Manufacturing Corporation] have been a staple of our community for over seventy years and employ quite a number of people who live in our community," said Zone. "They have machinery and an amazing workforce that can adapt to change."

Though the National Carbon Company office building was demolished in 1992, Advance Manufacturing Corporation and other companies such as Meriam Process Technologies, NPA Coatings, Kelly Plating Co. and the Cleveland Lumber Co. fill up the area.

The Cleveland Lumber Co. is in a building that once was the Madison Theater. In 1907, the theater was built in the space currently occupied by Belinda's Nightclub, but it moved to where the Cleveland Lumber Co. is today in 1949, until the theater closed in the early 1980s. The Cleveland Lumber Co. refurbished the former theater where it has been operating a lumber and hardware company for over 30 years. To this day, the building is non-combustible, except for some wood paneling on the walls, according to Joe Ryan, a Cleveland Lumber Co. employee.

According to an article published in the *Plain Dealer* on Nov. 24, 1920, the theater would be opening that night with a showing of a film called, "In the Heart of a Fool" by Allan Dwan. The article highlighted the new remodels that the theater had undergone, such as the fireproof walls that were being installed on three sides.

The nature of the theater's structure was a blessing to some who were living in the area when a tornado came through Cleveland in June of 1953.

"The storm came right through here, and these people didn't realize that

there was a storm until they got out and noticed that the houses were torn down and the electricity went out," said Ryan.

Just to the east of the Cleveland Lumber Co., an old house built in 1889—referred to as the "Twin Peaks" house—remains.

"Architecturally, the house is really crazy," said Ryan "When you walk in, there are some doors you can barely walk through, some you have to duck your head to go through." Ryan said that the former owner of the building spent a lot of money rehabbing the house, ran it all on his credit card, then lost the house to the bank.

Villa Y Zapata, an authentic Mexican restaurant, is open on the southwest corner of Madison and W. 85th Street, adorned on the outside with the colors of the Mexican flag, and on the inside with balloons and photographs of loyal customers who have come in to celebrate their birthdays.

"A lot of our customers are regulars and they've been coming here for years and years, and they come from different areas mostly," said Leslie Bolanos, daughter of owner, Howell Bolanos. "But recently—now, with the windows and fixing up the outside of the buildings, we've been getting more local people."

Villa Y Zapata has been around since 1974, but the Bolanos family did not take ownership of the restaurant until 2004. In the years they have owned the restaurant, Bolanos said that she has not seen much change in the neighborhood.

"I know the restaurant has a lot of potential—a lot more than it could be doing right now. Just the area is kind of slow," Bolanos said. "There's not much around us. We don't advertise or anything like that. We don't do anything—it's just word of mouth from our customers because our reputation is so good—people like the food and everything."

Potentially benefiting Villa Y Zapata, the city is slowly making improvements to the street, which might help attract more people to the area.

Once the center of Irish American activity, Madison was home to the West Side Irish American Club at 9613 Madison Avenue (an early home of the Madison Theater and now Belinda's Night Club). The West Side Irish Amer-



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Tuesday, January 19, 2021; Cleveland Lumber, 9410 Madison Avenue: Cleveland Lumber Company uses the former Madison Theatre building to sell home repair products, tools, hardware and lumber.

ican Club closed its Madison Avenue location in 1987 and moved to a new facility in Olmsted Twp. The annual St. Patrick's Day parade was held in part along Madison Avenue into the 1970s—beginning after a Mass at St. Colman Church on W. 65<sup>th</sup> and Madison. Later it moved downtown. In the same area of the street were two Chinese restaurants, with the Ho Wood restaurant at 9605 Madison Ave. until it closed. The location now is home to the Madison Grille.

"Five years ago, I was able to convince the city administration to make a major investment in Madison Avenue and rebuild its infrastructure," said Matt Zone.

The street has gone through several phases of reconstruction, the first of which was from W. 65th Street to West Boulevard. Improvements included the planting of trees, creation of tree lawns, the paving of roadways, and trying to make it as hospitable as possible for those who live and work in the area,

said Matt Zone.

Recently, Madison Avenue underwent construction from W. Boulevard to W. 117<sup>th</sup>. The reconstructed part of Madison Avenue is nearly completed now, with new pavement, drainage, asphalt resurfacing, ramps, curbs, bike lanes and pedestrian crossing sign updates in line with the Americans with Disabilities Act. In this area of the refurbished street, a new business, Washville Laundromat, recently opened at 105<sup>th</sup> and Madison.

"Development is always evolving, changing communities are always evolving," said Zone. "And the biggest challenge for city leaders and community folks is—how can we reposition the assets that we have and put them to the best use and attract and maintain vibrant communities? And Madison is on its way to becoming one of the great

commercial quarters of Cleveland." **Editor's Note:** This article is part of a series of articles written by students in a Cleveland State University Communications class taught by Plain Press Board of Trustees member Leo Jeffres. The articles on main streets in the Plain Press service area are being published as part of the celebration of the Plain Press' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The Plain Press published its first edition in March of 1971.

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PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Friday, January 15, 2021; Mavrek Development and Schiff Capital Group propose building a 171-unit apartment building called TREO on this site just north of Potter Court on the east side of W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street and stretching to W. 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Buildings currently on the site include Sass Automotive and Wrecking building and some residential houses.

## Mavrik Development to build TREO Apartments on Southwest Corner of 25th St & Swift Avenue

by Bruce Checefsky

Lincoln Heights Block Club Chairperson Henry Senyak had an idea. He wanted to ask developers in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood to provide a levy benefit to longtime residents in the form of a fund based, in part, on the size of the new project anywhere from a single unit townhouse to multi resident complex. The levy would be issued against new development projects that receive a 15-year tax abatement from the City of Cleveland.

Senyak petitioned Councilman McCormack who, in turn, supported his idea and brought the conversation to the Reaching Lincoln Heights Land Use Study. David Jurca, former associate director at Kent State University's Cleveland Urban Design Collective (CUDC), and founder/principal at Seventh Hill urban design firm was hired by Tremont West Development Corporation to conduct the study. Working closely with Senyak, a draft of the plan was presented to the Lincoln Heights Block Club last February 2020, just weeks before the COVID-19 outbreak.

"Many Block Club members feel the clear definition of the yearly contributions into the Lincoln Developers Fund can mend several of the burnt bridges between our Membership, Property Owners, Developers, and TWDC," Senyak said last year.

The developers fund is not meant to pay in full for projects but rather augment any costs associated with home maintenance. Fees would include \$1,500 for single unit town homes, new single or multifamily homes along with several options for apartment complexes including a \$1,000.00 per floor of the project for a period of 10 years or based on number on units versus floors of the project for a period of 10 years. For example, apartment buildings with units 1 thru 20 would pay \$1,000.00 per year for a period of 10 years; units 1 thru 40 at \$2,000.00 per year for a period of 10 years; units 1 thru 60 – \$3,000.00 per year for a period of 10 years; units 1 thru 80 – \$4,000.00 per year for a period of 10

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## Slavic Village effort takes HIV prevention to the neighborhood level in hopes of reversing trend

by Rachel Dissell

On a crisp fall day, a small group of masked community researchers fanned out on the streets of Slavic Village to ask residents a few questions about their sex lives.

The effort was one part of a plan to understand why the Cleveland neighborhood has seen higher levels of new HIV cases diagnosed over the past five years, despite an overall downward trend in Cuyahoga County. The clipboard-toting volunteers also popped into local stores to record condom prices and availability.

The Slavic Village ZIP code, which also includes the Union-Miles neighborhood, was one of two in the county to report 50 or more new HIV diagnoses between 2015 and 2019, according to the most recent Ohio's HIV Surveillance program. (The other ZIP code, 44102, includes the Detroit Shoreway and Edgewater neighborhoods.)

Slavic Village's hyper-local response to the rise in cases, aided by a \$25,000 AIDS Funding Collaborative grant, mirrors a national trend in prevention and treatment efforts, which until recently were orchestrated at the city or metro level.

It also means combatting two viruses at once: HIV, which has lingered stubbornly for decades, and the coronavirus that has ripped through a neighborhood already exhausted from efforts to tackle cycles of generational poverty, food insecurity and low literacy.

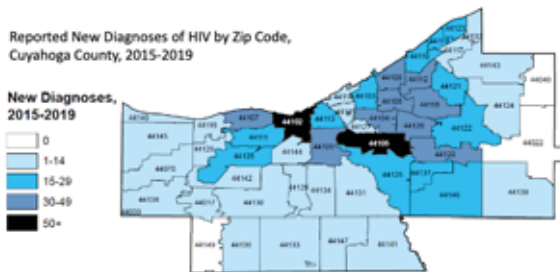
Viruses don't respect neighborhood boundaries, but learning more about how HIV is being transmitted in Slavic Village is key to tailoring a prevention strategy, said Bob Eckhart, a public health practitioner who has worked on HIV prevention and treatment and AIDS services since the 1980s, when he helped catalyze the local and national response.

**Hearing from the community**  
Though it can be awkward to ask questions about a person's sex life or what protection they use, hearing directly from residents helps to avoid assumptions, said Autumn Franz, a recent John Carroll University graduate who helped to organize the community "research mob" and collect surveys from about 50 residents to learn more about how often they use protection during sex.

It's particularly important in Black communities, where it can be harder to come out as gay or bisexual, or where transgender women of color are not always part of the conversation, Franz said.

Another challenge is figuring out who can help pay for and deliver prevention messages and services to the neighborhood's 22,000 or so residents, many of whom are low income.

## Two Cleveland ZIP codes (44102 and 44105) have the most newly reported diagnoses of HIV between 2015 and 2019. Ohio Department of Health HIV Surveillance program



can help pay for and deliver prevention messages and services to the neighborhood's 22,000 or so residents, many of whom are low income.

When Eckhart started reaching out to interview community leaders, most were surprised to hear HIV infections were on the rise.

"People haven't thought about AIDS and HIV in a long time," he said. What he heard was "we just didn't know."

One thing, though, was clear: Residents don't want people to come in from outside the neighborhood to address the issue.

That makes sense to Gary Scofinsky, who has called Slavic Village home since 1995. Despite all of its pressing problems, it's a place that has a strong

network of neighbors who take care of their own, he said.

Scofinsky is known for his massive garden operation, which provides vegetables like kohlrabi and eggplant for neighbors, and jalapenos for employees at the nearby Dollar General, where he often shops.

The 54-year-old, who has lived with HIV for more than two decades, believes one way to raise awareness might be to use neighbor networks to pass out literature and condoms, particularly to younger residents who might be harder to reach or who aren't openly gay or bisexual and have concerns about people passing judgment on them.

Scofinsky also thinks there should be more outreach at local drug rehabilita-

In 2019, Cuyahoga County reported 158 new HIV diagnoses. The new diagnoses were overwhelmingly among men who had sex with men and who were Black and under the age of 35.

- 86% male (sex at birth)
- 67% identified as Black
- 63% under 35

Sign up on this website to get free condoms mailed to your home. <https://ohiv.org/positive/free-condoms/>

tion centers. Often, he said, people are careful about needle sharing but not as cautious about unprotected sex when drinking and using drugs.

Scofinsky, who is partially paralyzed due to a violent physical attack decades ago, says he has mostly stayed inside during the pandemic. But once it is safe, he'd volunteer to hand out condoms or answer questions at community events.

"There's a lot of people who know me," he said. "They might hear it coming from me."

### Local voices key

Information gleaned from community research can be invaluable, said John Barnes, executive director of Funders Concerned About AIDS.

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## SENIORS

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said. "We've had people losing weight, getting malnourished... it becomes a cascade."

Many of the most vulnerable in the community, who before the pandemic were already relying on the help of non-profit, government and social service agencies to get by, are now even more dependent on these organizations to help them stay both mentally and physically healthy.

For Smathers and the Smith family, University Settlement's Adult Wellness program has been that lifeline. Before the pandemic, they'd visit the non-profit on Broadway Avenue in person, where from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. five days a week they could get two meals and a snack per day, participate in games and activities, receive health checks and information from local university nursing and medical students, and get help with everything from utility issues to doctor's appointments. About 80 older adults and adults with disabilities, most living on a low income, took advantage of the free services last year, said Allison Woods, manager of the program.

Since the pandemic began and the Settlement's Adult Wellness program

could no longer offer on-site services, the program-- like most other social service organizations-- has shifted to virtual and delivery, Woods said. About 55 people in the neighborhood now receive a weekly grocery and hot meal delivery as well as periodic visits to drop off activities.

It's a neighborhood-scale effort being duplicated by dozens of organizations across the region, including local hospitals, which are providing technology and medical supplies to help manage chronic conditions from home, as well as community centers, food banks, and mental healthcare providers.

The University Settlement deliveries, and the visits, have been a "godsend" for Angela Smith and her mother, she said, because they bring not only food, but also necessities like dish soap, bleach and other household items. Minnie Smith also relies on Meals on Wheels to deliver a meal once a week.

"The need is still huge... The need for food is just incredible at this point," Woods said. Across the country, there's been a 60% increase in the number of people seeking help from food banks, according to Feeding America. The Greater Cleveland Food Bank, which has seen high turnout for supplies since the beginning of the pandemic, has served 375,000 families through

December, with one-third of those being first-time clients. For four out of five Meals on Wheels programs across the country, demand for services has at least doubled, according to the organization.

The Settlement's three weekly visits from its adult wellness program, even though they're only five to ten minutes long, allow the Smiths a chance to interact with someone outside their household, and get help troubleshooting problems with doctor's appointments, medications, and technology.

### Lack of technology a challenge

In low-wealth communities, the lack of internet connections, computers and the high-cost data plans needed for smartphones have made it far more difficult for people, especially older adults, to remain connected to the resources and services they need.

"It's a population that's not electronically sophisticated," said Campbell. "We're often doing phone calls instead of Zoom, or WebEX, or visual images, which, again, makes it a little more challenging."

Recently, Woods helped Angela Smith respond to an important email, as she had no way to access her account after both the library and Cuyahoga Community College had to shut down access to public computers.

"I talked to a lady at Tri-C who said,

'you could go to a coffee house,' and I'm like yes, if I had a laptop or computer or something like that, but nobody has that."

Since the pandemic began, Smathers hasn't attended any 12-step meetings, which are mostly being offered online via Zoom and other video services. But, she said, she still talks over the phone to many other people in recovery and is not worried about relapse.

University Settlement has helped Smathers with faxing required forms to receive welfare, she said, as well as just about anything else she needs and can't access online.

The lack of technology is a big problem, Woods said, and some clients don't even have a telephone. University Settlement received some money from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to help increase access to the internet and plans to distribute computers and tablets to clients soon.

### Staying healthy, avoiding isolation

For now, both Smathers and the Smiths say they're doing well. For the foreseeable future, they know they'll have to remain hunkered down at home in order to stay safe.

They attend most of their doctor's appointments over the phone, and are

fending off boredom and isolation with books, games, jigsaw puzzles and other activities.

Angela Smith, who until recently was taking a bus at 2 a.m. to pick up her medications at a 24-hour CVS pharmacy nearby in order to avoid crowds, now has both her prescriptions, and her mother's, delivered to her home.

Smathers gets out every day to walk her dog.

They're both looking forward to the day when they'll once again be able to socialize with their friends and family, attend bible study groups and reconnect with their support systems -- outside the house.

When that day comes, the community will have regained an important asset too, said Campbell.

"I always like to remind people that we've also lost a huge resource because older people are sheltering in place," he said, as so many were volunteers and primary or secondary childcare providers for family. "It's not just the older people who are suffering, it's the people who the older people were helping who have suddenly lost their support."

**Editor's Note:** This story is provided by ideastream as part of special community coverage of COVID-19 and funded by Third Federal Foundation and University Settlement.

# TREO APARTMENTS

continued from page 6

years; units 1 thru 100 – \$5,000.00 per year for a period of 10 years; and structures over 100 units would max out at \$6,500.00 per year for a period of 10 years.

All funds will be held by Tremont West Development Corporation. A committee composed of TWDC Staff, Block Club Chairperson, and a Developer’s representative will define the direction of the funds and review applications made by property owners within the Lincoln Heights Block Club for eligibility. Eligible candidates would require a financial hardship to do minor repairs or to comply with City of Cleveland Violation Notices. There will be a maximum allotment of \$7,500 each year of its existence. Applicants would receive a maximum of \$1,500.00 per property (pro-rated by the applicant’s yearly income and savings).

Cleveland City Planning Commission approved the Lincoln Developers’ Fund when they approved and supported the Reaching Lincoln Heights Land Use Study in 2020.

Josh Rosen, co-founder of Sustainable Community Associates, a community development firm responsible for Tremont’s Fairmont Creamery, Wagner Awning, Tappan and Lincoln reportedly contributed \$4,500 in Giant Eagle Gift Cards towards the fund, which Senyak has since distributed to needy residents of Lincoln Heights.

When Mavrik Developers, a Chicago based development firm, first heard of the Lincoln Developers’ Fund, they were skeptical. Co-founders Robert E. Krueger III, Peter Koch, and Adam Freidberg, all natives of Ohio, felt they were being asked to contribute to a community benefit program at the same time the City of Cleveland Planning Commission was requiring them to build additional road access to their proposed TREO Apartments project along West 25th Street.

“Mavrik Developers felt the new road construction they were being asked to do was community development,” reported Khalid Hawthorne, Housing & Economic Development Director, at a recent Tremont West Development Corporation Economic Development meeting. “They have to build a road to meet city planning requirements as part of their project that will cost them more than \$500,000.”

Negotiations continued with Mavrik Development and several days later

Adam Friedberg confirmed they would participate in the fund. Once the building is occupied, the developers will contribute \$6,500 a year for 10 years, according to Senyak.

“The developers fund will be held by Tremont West Development in a fiduciary account for the Lincoln Heights block club. It may take a few years to build up until we distribute it,” he said. “Funds could be used for a new roof or porch repair, or take care of violation notices as long as they meet the income restriction requirement. We’re looking to distribute \$7,500 a year for up to five people.”

Mavrek Development and Schiff Capital Group intend to develop an apartment building known as TREO, situated at the Northeast corner of the intersection of West 25th Street and Swift Avenue. The development is planned to have five stories of residential apartments set above a two-story parking garage, and a small retail space at the first floor located along West 25th Street. The anticipated budget for the project is approximately \$38 million.

There will be approximately 171 apartment units and on-site amenities including an in-house fitness center, a private outdoor courtyard, and ground-level retail. The owner intends to employ 10 people for operations and leasing, according to a presentation to the Cleveland Planning Commission last month.

Average unit size will be 682 square feet with rents starting around \$1,200 per month and include 33 studio, 13 one bedroom junior, 107 one bedroom, and 18 two bedroom apartments; 152 parking spaces will be provided. TREO is reportedly Mavrik Development’s first project in Cleveland. The Columbus-based Schiff Capital Group is providing financing.

Schiff Capital Group President and CEO Michael S. Schiff helped build a luxury apartment tower in downtown Columbus known as Hubbard Park Place. He’s also responsible for a Class A office building, known as the Lincoln building, in the Short North district, as well as other Columbus based projects. Schiff who had been working on multiple developments in Cincinnati with former Cincinnati Bengal Chinedum Ndukwe recently split from the football player-turned-developer. Ndukwe was at the center of a bribery scheme involving payoffs for help with city development projects when

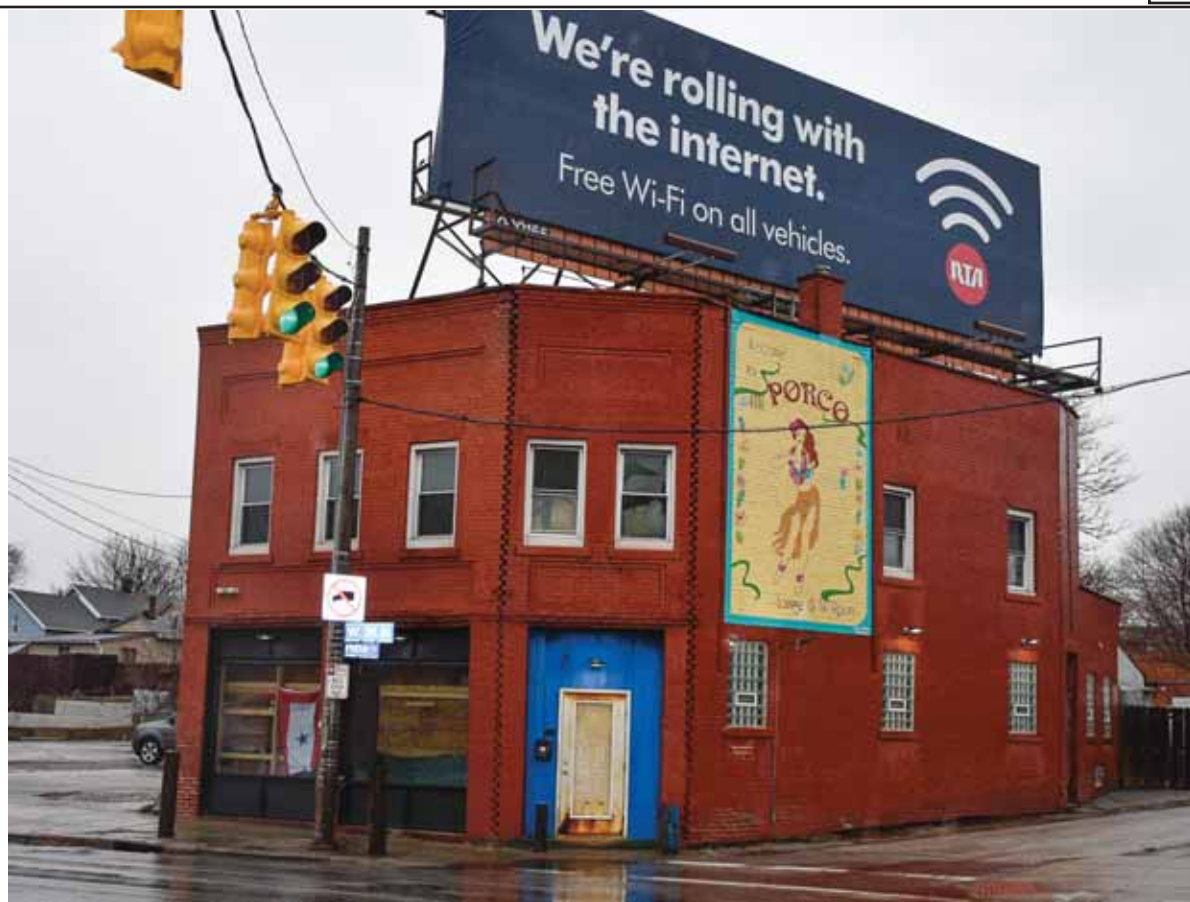


PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Friday, January 15, 2021; This mural by artist Susie Underwood welcomed guests to the Porco Lounge & Tiki Room, 2527 W. 25th Street. The building sits just south of a proposed 171-unit TREO apartment development.

he turned FBI informant. FBI agents arrested Cincinnati City Councilman Jeff Pastor, a Republican who joined council in January 2018, after he began soliciting money from developers within months of taking office and, in some instances, accepted bags of cash in return for his vote or other favorable treatment, according to reports published by Cincinnati’s *The Enquirer*.

Porco Lounge and Tiki Room owner Stefan Was is excited about the project. TREO will be built right next door to his restaurant and crafted cocktails bar on West 25th Street.

“TREO will be an amazing link to the West 25th Street business district,” Was said. “This project will bring vibrancy to the neighborhood without a negative impact on the footprint.”

“Nobody knows what business will look like in a year from now,” he pointed out. “I’ve been closed since last March. Until things are safe for my guests and employees, we will remain closed but I’m very excited to have TREO in my front yard.”

The Cleveland City Planning Commission unanimously voted to support the project.

their name or phone number should call the Plain Press at 216-621-3060 or email the Plain Press at [plainpress@gmail.com](mailto:plainpress@gmail.com) to update their free listing.

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## COMMUNITY BOARD

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with a tax-exempt organization serving as a fiscal agent. For programmatic questions or information, contact: [ClevelandBlackFuturesFund@clevefdn.org](mailto:ClevelandBlackFuturesFund@clevefdn.org). For application or technical questions, contact: [grantsmgmt@clevefdn.org](mailto:grantsmgmt@clevefdn.org). For more information visit [ClevelandFoundation.org/Futures](http://ClevelandFoundation.org/Futures).

### HOTLINES

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### OHIO

**OHIO DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL** is seeking public comment on its Five Year State Plan that will take effect from 2022-2026. The DD Council is seeking public comment on proposed in the following areas: Children and Health, Community Living, Employment, Leadership Development, Outreach, Public Awareness, and Public Policy. Review the draft Five-Year Plan by reading the [Executive Summary](#) of the projects; or the entire [2022-2026 State Plan](#); or reviewing specific project(s) that are of interest found at [dcc.ohio.gov](http://dcc.ohio.gov). Individuals can submit their comments on all projects or the ones that are of interest. **The comment period will end on February 28, 2021.** For more information, please contact Fatica Ayers at [fatica.ayers@dodd.ohio.gov](mailto:fatica.ayers@dodd.ohio.gov) or call 614-466-5205 or 800-766-7426.  
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**OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOBS AND FAMILY SERVICES FRAUD LINE:** Is someone using your name to collect unemployment? Report unemployment compensation fraud at 1-800-686-1555.  
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### MEETINGS

**OUR REVOLUTION OHIO:** Monthly Meeting. Each month we will have guest speakers and highlight policy, politics and issues in our state. The meetings are every 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm est. February 23rd Monthly Meeting Special Guests: Rank the Vote Ohio - Justin Wells, Left Reckoning - David Griscom, from the Michael Brooks show now with his own: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCerkndrD3Z6rceekc4emVpA/featured>

### PLAIN PRESS

**THE PLAIN PRESS 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMUNITY GUIDE** will be published in our March issue. The guide lists the names and phone numbers of nonprofit organizations that serve the community. Nonprofit organizations that have changed

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PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Friday, January 15, 2021; Boys and Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio ClubSmart Learning Center, Riverview Welcome Center, 1701 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: Jeffrey Oliver (age 12), Jayden Oliver (age 10), Jasmine Oliver (age 7) and Jordan Oliver (age 6 – almost 7) do their schoolwork with the assistance of Boys and Girls Club Art Instructor/Tutor Nadine Ramos. The Boys and Girls Clubs ClubSmart Learning Centers offer a place with computers and internet access where children can go to access their digital classes during the school day.

## LEAD SAFE

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type of innovation that is possible when health and housing organizations work together,” Kevin J. Nowak, executive director of CHN said. “When we invest in housing, we can improve health outcomes and equity.”

CareSource covers about 1.2 million Ohioans, according to its website. The non-profit was reimbursed by the state for \$8.5 billion in care in 2020, state records show. Last year, the insurer announced that the CareSource Foundation would invest \$50 million to create affordable housing projects in five states where it insures patients, including Ohio.

Tuesday’s announcement marks the first opportunity CareSource has found to address environmental hazards in the home with a scalable model and systemic response, Amy

Riegel, director of housing for CareSource told ideastream in an email.

For years, child advocates have said that lead poisoning was a public health crisis with a housing solution. But often, the price tag for making housing safe for children seemed insurmountable.

A commitment from an insurer like CareSource underscores that “safe housing improves health outcomes,” Mark McDermott, vice president and Ohio market leader at Enterprise Community Partners, said.

McDermott, a member of the LSCC steering committee, said the investment was a “commitment to Cleveland’s future as well as an invitation to public and private investors, from all sectors, to join us in this critical effort.”

**Editor’s Note:** This story is provided by ideastream as part of special community coverage of COVID-19 and funded by Third Federal Foundation and University Settlement.

## HIV PREVENTION

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For a variety of reasons, it is harder to give federal money to small neighborhood groups. The formulas used to measure the problem and dole out the money have also disadvantaged communities with new or emerging outbreaks, he said.

In some ways, the work to eradicate HIV has been hampered by strides in treating the virus. “The success of treatments and prevention strategies have lessened the sense of urgency,” Barnes said, though the people currently at the highest risk for infection are among the most marginalized.

The grant to University Settlement was one of the first the Cleveland AIDS Funding Collaborative gave for a “neighborhood deep dive,” said Julie Patterson, director of the collaborative.

It has since awarded “catalyst” grants to several other community or neighborhood organizations that might not qualify for larger federal grants with more rules and restrictions, Patterson said.

### Brainstorming solutions

COVID-19 halted the door-to-door part of the community research as infections climbed this fall and winter, so the group went virtual, organizing a Zoom call recently with nearly a dozen residents: mothers, artists, health care workers, a young couple with a chubby-cheeked baby.

From their couches and kitchens, they brainstorm potential places where free condoms could be distributed in the community, such as the rapid transit station on E. 55th Street or a blood plasma donation center on Broadway Avenue. They also discussed how to best weave conversations about sexual health into the fabric of neighborhood events that already exist.

While most agreed free condoms should be widely available, they also thought opportunities for discreet testing would be helpful for those unwilling to get tested at a doctor’s office or at the AIDS Task Force office, which features its name on a large sign over the door.

It’s also essential to acknowledge men are in relationships with women and have sex with other men on the

“down low” because it is not culturally acceptable, said Mimi, 41, who runs a church-based group for mothers of all ages. (She asked that only her first name be used.)

The place to start, most agreed, was to raise awareness about how to prevent HIV and reduce the stigma of talking openly about it.

“People that I know have shut down and they have feared for their lives because people may get angry and treat them a certain way, and so they are scared to let people know what is going on,” Tyra Jackson, 44, told the group.

“We know everybody is not going to be accepting,” said Jackson, who last year started an outreach organization called “The Caring.”

“But if we can get more people to be a little more welcoming, she said, “maybe we can make a difference and make people feel like they can come out and say, ‘Hey, I have HIV.’”

**Editor’s Note:** This story is provided by ideastream as part of special community coverage of COVID-19 and funded by Third Federal Foundation and University Settlement.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Friday, January 15, 2021; Boys and Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio ClubSmart Learning Center, Riverview Welcome Center, 1701 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street: Jayden Oliver, age 10, tackles his schoolwork.

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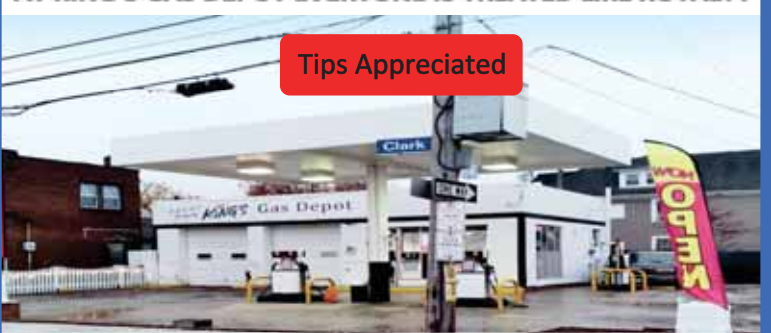
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