



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Saturday, April 5, 2025; Walmart sponsored Easter Egg Hunt, Roberto Clemente Park, 2690 Seymour Avenue: August, age 4, is fully engaged in making bubbles.

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# Plain Press

Cleveland's Westside Newspaper

## West Side Catholic Center offers circle of care for those in need

by Edie Le Bouton

West Side Catholic Center (WSCC), 3135 Lorain Avenue, is a place where any individual can get free clothes, free shoes, free meals, day shelter and care. Open six days a week, a person can drop in and shower, use a telephone, have a mailbox, and get emergency services.

The Resource Center also provides Nurse Clinics, a Mobile Health Van and Podiatry care. The staff will help with identification and birth certificate vouchers and do addiction assessments. A Resource staff member meets with new clients to determine their needs and help them facilitate a plan to determine where West Side Catholic Center sup-

port programs can help. Not affiliated with the Catholic Diocese or Catholic Charities, West Side Catholic Center is an independent organization that provides a circle of care for those in need.

The WCSS was founded by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The building was a community center and then a bar/bowling alley. It worked well, when the Sisters of St. Joseph bought the building because the bar had a kitchen.

A clothes store in the front of WSCC lets five people in to shop at 20-minute increments for clothes and shoes, which are donated to WSCC. Clothes that are determined to be un-wearable are put into a recycle bin, from which WSCC gets a small amount of money.

WSCC provides breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday and breakfast and dinner on Saturday. They work with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, Sanson Produce and Dave's Market in Ohio City, which all support WSCC's various meals programs throughout the year, and WSCC will purchase additional items from commercial vendors like GFS.

The Food Pantry is open three times every month.

A link in the circle is The Moriah House, WSCC's twenty-seven bed emergency shelter across the street from WSCC. It houses parents with a

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## Thousands gather to say "Hands Off" to Trump and Musk

by Chuck Hoven

Two thousand protesters from throughout Greater Cleveland came to W. 25<sup>th</sup> and Lorain on April 5<sup>th</sup> to join in a national "Hands Off" protest, objecting to President Donald Trump's administration's policies and the Federal budget cuts enacted by Trump's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) led by billionaire Elon Musk.

The Greater Cleveland protesters

filled Market Square Park and the sidewalks on both sides of Lorain and W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street in the surrounding blocks. Many who came to the neighborhood had difficulty finding a parking spot nearby and were seen walking for blocks carrying their signs on their way to the protest.

The protests that took place throughout the nation on April 5<sup>th</sup> were largely organized online by the Indivisible

Project which teamed up with other progressive organizations to rally people throughout the country to participate in the protest. The Indivisible Project says it is "is a locally led, people-powered movement of thousands of local groups in red, blue, and purple states, and in urban, suburban, and rural areas."

The Indivisible Project says its mission is "to power and lift up a grassroots continued on page 3



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Saturday, April 5, 2025; "Hands Off" Protest against Trump and Musk, W. 25<sup>th</sup> and Lorain Avenue: Protesters show their concern for the future of Social Security.

## Fir Ave. residents seek removal of concrete patches and restoration of their brick street

by Chuck Hoven

Fir Avenue residents would like to see their street restored as a completely red brick street. The stretch of Fir Avenue they live on, between W. 65<sup>th</sup> and W. 69<sup>th</sup> Streets – just a few blocks south of Franklin, is a brick street that has been repeatedly patched with concrete.

Long time Fir Avenue resident Jason Hauser remembers the first concrete patch placed on Fir Avenue in 1976. He said he was 10 years old then. Over the years the City of Cleveland and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District have continued to make repairs on the street using concrete patches rather than replacing the brick.

Hauser recalls some of the times when street repairs were needed. He said one time a street cleaning machine got stuck in a hole in the street when the street caved in. Hauser knows the City of Cleveland can do the brick laying necessary to keep the street all brick. On one occasion he insisted that a hole in front of his house be patched with brick, and the City obliged.

Visiting the various patches on the street, Hauser has a story for each one. He pointed out one patch that had a plastic lining under it, because the City of Cleveland intended to come back and replace the concrete patch with bricks.

He said that never happened. Over the years residents have contacted their City Council Representatives in hopes of getting the brick street restored. Yet nothing has been done. Hauser recalls fifty or sixty residents signing a petition calling for the restoration of the brick street. He said the petition was given to Councilman Matt Zone in 2013 or 2014. Current Ward 15 Councilwoman Jenny Spencer has also been made aware of the wishes of residents of Fir Avenue to have the concrete patches on their street replaced with brick.

With some Fir Avenue residents seeing their property taxes double from the latest Cuyahoga County appraisal, they wonder what it will take for the City of Cleveland to spend some of those tax dollars on their street.

Residents have seen other brick streets in the City of Cleveland restored or repaired with bricks rather than concrete. They wonder what it takes to get on the list to have these repairs done on Fir Avenue. Phone messages from the Plain Press placed this question with the Mayor's Office of Capital Projects Director James DeRosa and Mayor Justin Bibb's Media Relations Office. The Plain Press did not receive a response prior to the publication of this issue.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Sunday, April 13, 2025; Fir Avenue between W. 65<sup>th</sup> and W. 69<sup>th</sup> Street, Fir Avenue: Resident Jason Hauser stands by some of the concrete patches used by the City of Cleveland to repair the brick street. Hauser says residents want the concrete patches removed and replaced with bricks. Fir residents would like a completely brick street as it was before the first concrete patch was placed on the street in 1976.





PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Saturday, April 5, 2025; “Hands Off” Protest against Trump and Musk, W. 25<sup>th</sup> and Lorain Avenue: Residents rally against the Trump Regime. Two thousand protesters filled Market Square Park and the surrounding sidewalks on Lorain and W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street to protest the policies of President Donald Trump, and federal budget and staffing cuts initiated by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

**ARTS**  
**ART HOUSE URBAN BRIGHT ANNUAL STUDENT EXHIBITION** will be held at Art House, 3119 Denison Avenue, on May 2<sup>nd</sup> with an Ice Cream Social from 4-5:30 p.m. and an Opening Reception from 6-8p.m.  
**ART HOUSE COMMUNITY CULTURE NIGHT** featuring artists Michelle Smith and Ray McNiece will be held on May 15 from 7-8:30 p.m. at Art House, 3119 Denison Avenue. Free and open to the public. Refreshments provided. Keep a lookout for future Community Culture Nights. Supported by the Robert H. Reakirt Foundation.  
**FRIENDS AND FAMILY OPEN STUDIO:** Art House Inc. (3119 Denison Ave.) offers a family-friendly, pay-what-you-can art workshop on the third Saturday of each month from 1 pm-3 pm. This month’s Friends and Family Open Studio will be on Saturday, May 17. Children are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult. Visit [arthouseinc.org](http://arthouseinc.org) to sign up or call 216-398-8556 for more information.  
**MUSICATMAIN-SUGAR MULES:** Join us for a free performance by “Cleveland’s Unexpectedly Good Bluegrass Band”, the Sugar Mules, on Saturday, May 3 from 2 pm to 3 pm on the third floor of the main branch of the Cleveland Public Library downtown (325 Superior Ave).  
**SPRING ART SHOW AND OPEN STUDIOS:** The Screw Factory (13000 Athens Ave, Lakewood) is proud to host our Spring Art Show & Open Studios, with resident artists alongside a variety of guest artists on Friday, May 2 from 6 pm to 10 pm and on Saturday, May 3 from 10 am to 3 pm.  
**URBAN BRIGHT EXHIBITION:** Art House Inc.’s annual student exhibition will take place Friday May 2 at our campus at 3119 Denison Ave. Come see all the creativity our students have put into their work and join us for an ice cream social! The ice cream social will run from 4 pm to 5:30 pm, and the opening reception will be from 6 pm to 8 pm. Admission is free. Visit [arthouseinc.org](http://arthouseinc.org) for more information.  
**WALKABOUT TREMONT:** Experience the best of Tremont’s creative, diverse and walkable neighborhood during this monthly event, the second Friday of each month at its art galleries, boutiques, bars and restaurants. Join us this month on Friday, May 9, when we’ll celebrate Spring and move the event outdoors for the first time this season. For more information, visit [walkabout-tremont.com](http://walkabout-tremont.com).  
**THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART’S COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER(CAC):** Explore community art making at the CAC at 2937 W. 25<sup>th</sup>. Open every Saturday and Sunday from

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. to help families and individuals of all ages connect to art and expression. We invite you to drop in during our open hours or join us for a special workshop led by a professional artist! View our gallery exhibition, *Parade the Circle: Celebrating 30 Years of Art and Community*, to see puppets and costumes from prior events. Expose yourself to new materials and different perspectives. Visit [clevelandart.org/cac](http://clevelandart.org/cac) for more information.  
**COMMUNITY ARAB AMERICANS OF CLEVELAND:** Calling all Northeast Ohio Arabs! Your voice matters. Help shape and identify business opportunities, grants, scholarships, workforce programs, healthcare access, and advocacy programs for our community by becoming involved with the Arab Americans of Cleveland (AAC) Young Professionals Network. Visit [arabamericanscle.com](http://arabamericanscle.com) to learn more.  
**BILINGUAL IMMIGRATION AND WAGE THEFT CLINIC:** Do you need legal advice or assistance? We’re here to help! Join the Northeast Ohio Worker Center and attorney José Juárez for a free legal clinic for workers and immigrants in our community. Clinics are held monthly, either virtually or in person (Cleveland, Ohio). Our next two sessions will be on Saturday, May 3 and Saturday, June 7. Register now at [tinyurl.com/NEOworkerCenter](http://tinyurl.com/NEOworkerCenter) and we will contact you to schedule your appointment.  
**COLLECTIVE THOUGHTS:** A news discussion group that meets on the second and fourth Sunday of every month from 9 am to 10 am at Harbor and Bridge at 4321 Bridge Ave. The next two meetings will be on Sunday, May 11 and Sunday, May 25. The meetings are a chance to read, reflect, and respond to difficult and divisive issues. We often talk about local issues (housing, policing, politics, gentrification, etc.), and sometimes talk about more broad ones. Email Matt at [mattw@harborandbridge.com](mailto:mattw@harborandbridge.com) for a copy of the article we’ll be discussing at the next meeting.  
**GIRLS EMPOWERMENT:** Teens ages 12 to 18 are welcome to join us every Thursday from 4:15 pm to 5:15 pm at the Lorain Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (8216 Lorain Ave) for this free empowerment group, where girls come together in a safe space to help build confidence, resilience and self-esteem. Activities include team building exercises, goal-setting, vision boards and art projects.  
**OLD BROOKLYN CRIME WATCH:** Join us the third Monday of every month at 7 pm at St. James Lutheran Church (4771 Broadview Rd). This is an opportunity to hear from the 2nd District Police, the fire department, and



the county prosecutor’s office. There are also occasional opportunities to meet candidates for council, candidates for judge, and candidates for state government. This month’s meeting will be on Monday, May 19.  
**“reNOUNce deNOUNce” GANG INTERVENTION (RDGI)** is a program dedicated to empowering and transforming the lives of at-risk/high-risk youth and young adults in gang activities. RDGI’s mission extends beyond intervention, serving as a proactive deterrent against youth involvement in gangs. If you or someone you know could benefit from our programs, visit [renouncedenouncegangprogram.org](http://renouncedenouncegangprogram.org) or call us at 440-723-8190.  
**EDUCATION ASPIRE GREATER CLEVELAND** offers free GED, HiSET, and adult literacy classes to people 16 years of age and older, both online and in person, including at West Side Community House (9300 Lorain Ave). If interested, call 216-770-6814 and ask for Doug, or visit [www.gcnc.org/aspire](http://www.gcnc.org/aspire) and complete the interest form, and Doug will call you with next steps.  
**FREE BOOKS for kids ages 0-5:** Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library of Ohio mails kids one free book each month until their 5th birthday. Any child in Ohio between birth and age 5 is eligible for the program. To sign up, visit: [OhioimaginationLibrary.org](http://OhioimaginationLibrary.org).  
**FREE SEWING CLASSES:** Esperanza Threads (1370 W 69 St.) offers free intensive training in industrial sewing throughout the year for both hobbyists and people looking to learn a marketable skill to improve their job prospects. We require 100% participation and offer a stipend program for low-income individuals. We offer a 4-week and 8-week course. For more information or to sign up for a course, visit [esperanzathreads.org/sewing-classes](http://esperanzathreads.org/sewing-classes).  
**SPARK OHIO** is a FREE kindergarten readiness program for three and four year olds and their parents. You are your child’s first teacher, and we want to help you be the best you can be. You and your child will receive in-home education enhancement with a parent partner to work on skills important for kindergar-

## Step Forward encourages county residents to make use of year-round energy assistance

As uncertainty continues to ripple through communities affected by federal layoffs and economic instability, Step Forward is urging Northeast Ohio residents to recognize the vital role of energy assistance programs like the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) in keeping families safe, healthy, and housed.  
This past Winter Crisis Season alone, Step Forward provided more than \$586,000 in utility assistance to help over 1,700 individuals and families across Cuyahoga County stay warm and avoid shut-offs, many of whom were facing job loss, medical emergencies, or other financial challenges.”  
While the Winter Crisis Program has ended for the season, Step Forward reminds residents that help doesn’t stop there. The Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus (PIPP+) is available year-round and designed to offer long-term stability for income-eligible households. By paying a fixed percentage of their monthly income toward gas and electric bills, customers enrolled in PIPP+ can avoid spikes in utility costs. And when payments are made on time and in full, any remaining balance may

be forgiven.  
“It is true that Ohio’s emergency winter assistance program is now closed, but annual benefits for HEAP are still being processed,” said Jackie Boehnlein, Step Forward’s Vice President of Community Services. “The people we help, largely, are working in low-wage jobs. Many, especially now, are finding themselves unexpectedly laid off. What are you supposed to do when you are working or cannot find work and the cost of everyday living keeps spiraling higher?”  
To qualify for PIPP+, households must be at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (for example, \$52,500 annually for a family of four) and receive service from a regulated electric or natural gas provider in Ohio. Applications for PIPP+ — and other energy assistance programs — can be submitted online at [energyhelp.ohio.gov](http://energyhelp.ohio.gov), or by mailing a completed application to Energy Assistance Programs, P.O. Box 1240, Columbus, OH 43216.  
For more information about available energy assistance programs, visit [stepforwardtoday.org](http://stepforwardtoday.org) or call (216) 350-8008.  
for the Healthy Urban Tree Canopy (HUTC) program. The program supports planning, planting, and maintenance of thousands of trees across the County. The application portal is now live, and applications are due June 6, at 4:00pm. Those interested are encouraged to register for the virtual applicant webinar on Wednesday, May 14, at 10:00am. All HUTC application materials and resources can be found on the Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District website at [www.cuyahogaswcd.org/HUTC](http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/HUTC).  
**EVENTS**  
**THE CLEVELAND ASIAN FESTIVAL,** a celebration of Northeast Ohio’s diverse and rich Asian culture, will take place again in Cleveland’s AsiaTown neighborhood on Saturday, May 17 and Sunday, May 18. The event features live entertainment including cultural performances and demonstrations on our two outdoor stages, a World Marketplace of 100+ vendors and exhibitors, 30 local restaurants and food trucks, free health screenings at our Health Pavilion, free activities, free games, an Asian Pop Dance Cover competition, a trivia challenge, and awesome mascots. Visit [clevelandasianfestival.org/2025/](http://clevelandasianfestival.org/2025/) for more information.  
**CLEVELAND MARATHON:** This annual event returns to downtown Cleveland and the near westside on Saturday, May 17 and Sunday, May 18. The 5k, 10k, and kids run will be on Saturday, followed by the full and half marathons on Sunday. To register for the races, learn how to get involved,

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“HANDS OFF” PROTEST

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movement of local groups to defeat the Trump agenda, elect progressive leaders, and realize bold progressive policies.” The group says its largest source of funding is through grassroots donations.

The online message sent out said the group is committed to non-violence and urged protesters to be peaceful. A statement by the organizers said: “Americans are fed up with the Musk-Trump power grab and want an end to the lawless raiding of our government. ‘Hands off!’ is a simple rallying cry against an administration that’s dangerously overreaching and throwing our democracy, our economy, and for many -- our private lives -- into chaos.”

The group offered items for supporters to say “hands off” to and urged protesters to bring additional concerns to the rallies as well. Here are some of the concerns the Indivisible Team expressed in their email sent to supporters: “Hands off our Medicaid. Hands off our Social Security. Hands off our public lands. Hands off our jobs. Hands off public education. Hands off veterans’ benefits. Hands off our undocumented neighbors. Hands off our trans siblings. Hands of Ukraine aid. Hands off our diversity programs. Hands off Canada, Hands off our reproductive rights. Hands off our democracy.”

The “Hands Off” protesters at W. 25<sup>th</sup> and Lorain Avenue held signs that listed many of their concerns. The wide variety of mostly homemade signs contained messages such as: “Hands off Social Security”; “Dump DOGE, Resist Oligarchy, Save America”; “A

Women’s Place Is In the Revolution”; “Hands Off Our Democracy”; “Hands Off Our Constitution”; “No Kings”; “We Are a Country, Not Your Corporation”; and “Wanting a Child Born is Pro-Birth, Wanting a Child Fed, Housed and Educated to Parents who make a Living Wage is Pro Life.”

Some of the signs included graphics. One protester had a graphic of a “baby Trump” in a diaper on a sign saying, “Not voting is the #1 cause of unwanted presidencies.” Another sign was filled with handprints with a large OFF in red letters in the middle of the sign. A sign featured orange hair on top with “He doesn’t care about you” underneath. The founding fathers of the United States of America were on a sign with the message “They warned us about him!” Another message on a sign featuring a picture of Trump said, “This Boy Ain’t Right”. A sign with the message “Keep pressure on the Oppressor” featured a boot pressing down on the word “oppressor”.

Protesters raising concerns about specific programs that they want to protect from funding cuts had signs such as: “Hands off Social Security, Medicaid, FDA, CDC, NIH – Science Matters!”; “Fund Schools, Not Billionaires”; “Hands off the VA”; “Hands off National Parks & Women’s Rights”; “Hands Off My Social Security”; “Hands Off LGBTQ Rights, my marriage, Veteran Rights & human rights”; “Entitled to what I paid for, Medicare, Social Security & Medicaid”; “Education is the Real National Emergency”; “Defund Billionaires, Not Schools”; and “Being Against Genocide is a Jewish Value, Free Palestine”.

Some protesters sent the message that there were so many areas of concern that they couldn’t fit them all on a sign. Examples of this include: “So much Wrong, Not Enough Cardboard”; “So Many Issues, So Little Poster Board”; “Hands Off! Douch Bag Oligarchs Gutting Everything”; “UGH – Where do I Even Start?” and “Hands off everything- Climate, Books, Science”.

Messages directly aimed at those wielding power included: “Where Law Ends, Tyranny Begins”; “Now You’ve Gone and Pissed Off Grand Ma!”; “I’m a Vet, I’m Pissed”; “We the People Are Pissed!!!”; “Stop Trump”; “Overthrow the Oligarchs”; “Trump Regime Must Go”; “Tax Elon, Impeach Trump, Lock Him Up”; “Putin Owns Donny”; “Hands Off Musk Rats”; “Hands Off Our Democracy”; “Hey, No, No, Trump and Musk have to go”; “Trump Musk Machine Kills Democracy”; “Get your tiny hands off the Bill of Rights”; “Can’t Comb Over Lies”; “Government for the People, Not Billionaires”; “Stop Felon Elon” and “They’re Eating the Checks, They’re Eating the Balances”.

Several signs included the number “8647” which means get rid of the 47<sup>th</sup> President – Donald Trump.

Signs aiming to send a message to fellow Americans included: “Make America Think Again”; “Rage Against the Machine”; “Tariffs are taxes on us”; “Never Give Up, Never Surrender”; “Real Americans Fight Fascism”; “Only You Can Prevent Fascism”; “Defend Democracy”; “We the People, Say No”; “Democracy Dies in Silence”; “It is Not Left vs. Right, It is Right vs. Wrong”; “Wake Up and Smell the Fascism”; “Honk If You Love Democracy”; “Stand

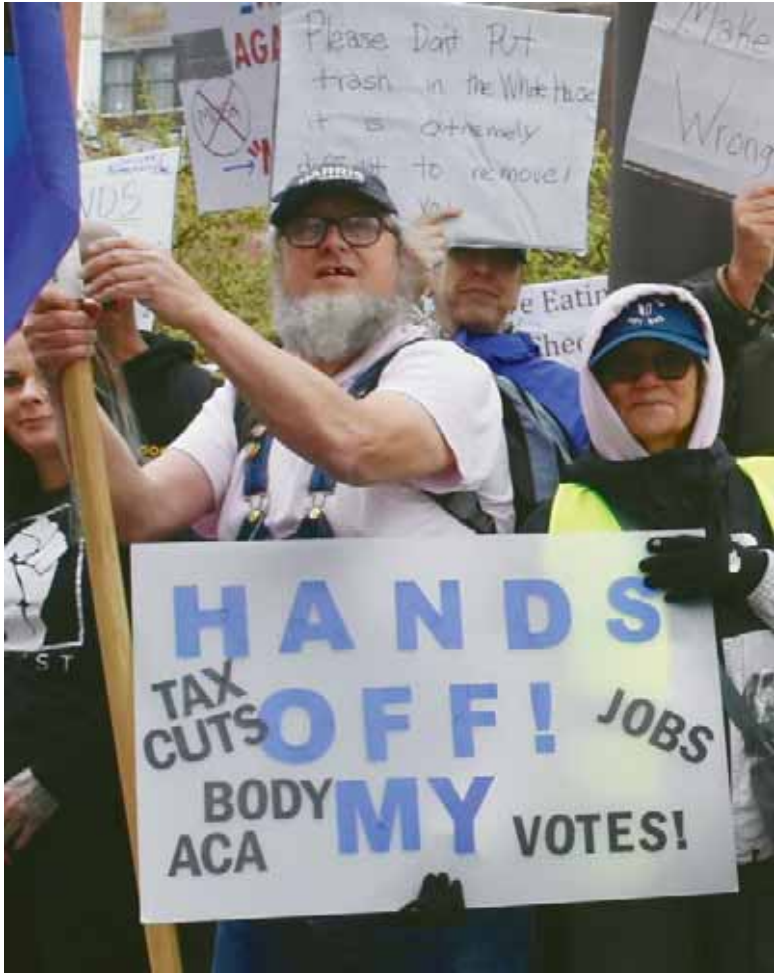


PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Saturday, April 5, 2025; “Hands Off” Protest against Trump and Musk, W. 25<sup>th</sup> and Lorain Avenue: Protester’s sign lists a variety of concerns.

up for Honesty, Integrity...”; “Resist Brolriarchy”; “Save Democracy”; “We are the Final Check and Balance”; “Jesus had two dads, and they loved everyone equally”; “We the People, VETO Project 2025”; and “The Secret

of Joy is Resistance.”  
One sign included a quote from Senator Cory Booker that said, “The Power of the People Is Greater Than the People in Power.”

Legal Aid: Having a reentry plan can help released individuals after incarceration

by Tonya Sams

After time served in prison, an individual who has been incarcerated hopes to get a fresh start, but many challenges may cause this new chapter to be a difficult one. Hurdles such as limited access to employment opportunities, housing, and other necessities can make it extremely hard for someone to get reestablished in society. But there are some things that can be done prior to release to help get someone prepared for life outside of prison.

“The individual should create a reentry plan,” said Maria Smith, Supervising Attorney at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland. “They should be working on this plan with somebody while they’re incarcerated.”

A reentry plan helps individuals make the transition from incarceration to reentering society. This includes determining where they will live, how they will find a job, training, and other resources. A reentry advisory committee, made up of those who have experienced being incarcerated and have reentered society, could help with a reentry plan. Prison officials and families should also help to create this plan.

“For the family of the person incarcerated, they should think about how to best prepare for this person coming out of prison,” said Smith. “If this is a person, they want to be a member of their household, they need to find out if there are any obstacles to them joining the household and try to navigate them beforehand.”

People living in federally subsidized housing sometimes assume that a person recently released cannot live with them. But there are only two absolute bans from federal housing: a conviction for producing methamphetamine on federally subsidized property or if they are required to register as a lifetime sex offender. Other than those two exceptions, housing authorities and other landlords should abide by HUD Guidance issued in 2016 that every person applying for a rental should have an opportunity for an individualized assessment.

If the individual desires to get a place of their own, they should research where they would like to live, what the rent amount would be, and if there are any programs for recently released

individuals that offer rent assistance. They should also find out if they have an eviction record.

“When people are in jail without bail, they sometimes end up getting evicted because they haven’t had a chance to return to their home and move out and return the keys,” Maria said. “They need to determine if they had a landlord

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Tuesday, April 15, 2025; Board of Education Work Session, Garrett Morgan High School, 4600 Detroit Avenue: Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) Board of Education President Sara Elaquad shares her thoughts prior to the vote on the closure of Newton D. Baker School. She said, “Closing a school is a significant decision, which the Board does not take lightly.”

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# HUD cuts will make it harder for city’s CDCs to stay open

by Bruce Checefsky

Cleveland City Council introduced measures to overhaul funding for Community Development Corporations (CDCs) in January of this year. Ordinance No. 113-2025 would change how neighborhood development corporations get money by creating a Neighborhood Development Sub-fund. The program will provide grants to expand economic opportunities for low- to moderate-income residents.

In Cleveland, CDCs apply for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funds through the Department of Community Development, which manages the annual CDBG application process. Cleveland receives roughly \$30 million annually from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to support its Department of Community Development program. In 2024-2025, the program earmarked \$1.5 million to demolish or board up vacant homes, \$623,454 to assist homeless Clevelanders, and \$284,393 to provide medical aid to those with AIDS.

Under the proposed legislation, the City would create an annual application for CDCs with five eligible activity categories, including Community Engagement, Neighborhood Development, Neighborhood Planning, Marketing, and Partnerships, according to Josh Jones Forbes, Marketing & Communications Director for Cleveland Neighborhood Progress. CDCs would have to meet a standard of three to eight required activities per category within a range of eighty-nine eligible activities. City Council would then divide its funds equally between all council members.

CDCs must show how they will accomplish a minimum number of neighborhood development activities in each category and subcategory for that year; the Law Department must approve all development activities as being a proper public purpose.

Among the eligible categories are communication strategies to reach residents, businesses, and others to share

news, opportunities, events, etc., and resources available to them from the City; support for physical conditions of housing and real estate in a neighborhood; neighborhood planning support to improve a neighborhood’s physical, economic and social conditions; marketing and promotion of a neighborhood which would include campaigns to attract residents, housing market analysis and consumer research, or experiential event marketing for resident attraction and business attraction, and neighborhood branding management and partnerships with anchor institutions and attractions; and partnerships/collaboration between organizations and stakeholders, with faith-based community engagement, recreation programs, arts and culture programming, education and out-of-school time programming, volunteer management, and community health access.

The City Council would also establish a Review Committee to review and update the list of twenty organizations defined as CDCs after the first three years and then every five years. These currently include: West Park and Kamms Dev. Corp., Jefferson Puritas West Park Dev. Corp., Westown CDC, Northwest Neighborhoods CDC, Metro West Community Dev. Organization, Tremont West Dev. Corp., Ohio City Inc., Old Brooklyn CDC, Slavic Village Dev., St. Clair Superior Dev. Corp., Midtown Inc., Famicos Foundation, Fairfax Renaissance Dev. Corp., Greater Collinwood Dev. Corp., NuPoint Community Dev. Corp., Burten, Bell, Carr Dev. Corp., Harvard Community Services Center, Little Italy Dev. Corp., University Circle, Inc., and Campus District.

Ward 3 Councilman Kerry McCormack, who introduced the legislation along with Councilmen Danny Kelly and Anthony Hairston, and is not seeking reelection in November, said the new policy changes give CDCs a funding opportunity that provides greater transparency throughout the neighborhood development system.

McCormack said that the progress around Cleveland would not have been

possible without the CDCs. If passed, the measure would go into effect as part of the 2026 Cleveland fiscal budget, but critical Trump Administration cuts to HUD funding could change the entire funding system.

In March, Congress reduced HUD’s Community Development Fund by \$3.29 billion as part of a six-month stopgap measure that will fund government programs through September 30; President Trump signed the bill. The Trump Administration, including Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), has taken steps to undermine policies to help people afford needed housing by cutting HUD staff.

Expected cuts to staff that administer vouchers, public housing, and Native American housing programs by as much as 50% will negatively impact the project-based rental programs. Homelessness aid and grants that help communities build affordable housing and recover from disasters will experience significant reductions. The department responsible for enforcing fair housing laws expects a 75% reduction in staff.

In response to the threats, HUD officials plan to publish a rule rolling back on non-discrimination protections that guarantee access to safe shelter and housing assistance for transgender and nonbinary people, who experience disproportionately high rates of homelessness, says a report published by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. According to the report, fewer people who struggle to keep a roof over their heads will get the help they need.

City Council President Blaine Griffin said that most of the 80-plus jobs in the Department of Community Development get paid with CDBG funds, meaning layoffs and cuts would be in store in the worst-case scenario.

“I’ll be honest with you guys, there’s a lot of uncertainty around this,” Griffin said to cleveland.com. “It’s even as severe as they may wake up one day and have to lay off that entire department.”

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## Newton D. Baker school to close at the end of this school year

by Chuck Hoven

The Cleveland Board of Education voted 7-0 at its April 15<sup>th</sup> Work Session to close Newton D. Baker School at the end of this school year. According to Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) administrative staff, the building at 3690 W. 159<sup>th</sup> Street in the West Park neighborhood is in a state of disrepair. The building’s roof is leaking, and this winter a fifty-foot crack added to the problem of water leaking inside the building. Mold spores discovered in the building resulted in the building being closed for safety reasons for a few days in March.

Cleveland Metropolitan School Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Warren Morgan said the vote to close the school was held at the Board’s Work Session rather than the Board’s Business Meeting on April 29<sup>th</sup> to give the faculty and staff at Newton D. Baker an opportunity to apply for open positions at other schools. CEO Morgan said that the period for staff members to apply for available positions is from April 16<sup>th</sup> to May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Teachers, staff, and parents from the Newton D. Baker community attended the meeting with hopes of keeping their school community together. Unlike the regular Board Business Meeting, the Work Session does not allow a Public Comment period, so the Board of Education did not hear their concerns at the meeting.

CEO Morgan did address some of the issues of concern and administration officials met early in April with the school staff and school community.

Without the eighth-grade graduates,

and with no new kindergarten students, Morgan said 286 Newton D. Baker students will need to go to a new school next school year. He said no school has enough empty seats to accommodate the entire school body. With open enrollment, students can choose to apply to any school. There also will be guaranteed enrollment at either Wilbur Wright (11005 Parkhurst Drive), which has 143 open seats, or at Clara E. Westropp (19101 Puritas Avenue), which has 104 open seats.

Morgan suggested that students interested in the arts go to Wilbur Wright. He said Wilbur Wright has an auditorium like the one at Newton D. Baker. He said a new dance studio will be added, and the music and arts rooms will be refreshed.

Morgan said the Special Needs students will be moved to Clara Westropp, which already has ten classrooms for Special Needs students and well equipped and well-trained teachers and principal to support the students.

Morgan also promised that siblings could go to the same school.

Morgan promised that all Newton D. Baker staff will have positions in the CMSD in the 2025-2026 school year. He noted there are some openings available in both Wilbur Wright (one assistant principal and eleven teachers) and Clara Westropp (1 assistant principal, 4 teachers, 4 paraprofessionals, and one school secretary).

Morgan said the cost to keep or rebuild Newton D. Baker would be prohibitive. He said to renovate and repair the Newton D. Baker school building

would be \$30 million, and the cost to build a new building on the site would be \$45 million.

Morgan said the bond issue just passed by voters will provide \$100 million over the next 35 years. However, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) will not fund any new elementary schools beyond the three already planned or underway (Gallagher, Clark, and Seltzer). The OFCC provides a 2 to 1 match of local bond dollars to OFCC approved construction projects.

The CMSD had 70,000 students in 2004 and has 34,000 students now, said Morgan. He noted that the district’s buildings have capacity for 50,000 students. He said the CMSD high schools are at 50% of capacity and the elementary schools are at 67% of capacity.

Morgan said that since 2001, fifty-two school buildings have been rebuilt or renovated. Currently, 70% of CMSD students are in new or upgraded buildings.

School Board Member Jerry Bil-lups inquired about the conditions of CMSD’s school buildings. He asked what could be done to prevent any building from getting to a point where it would have to be closed.

CEO Morgan responded that about 30% of CMSD’s buildings have not been upgraded. He said they range from being ok to being on life support.

Morgan also referenced meetings now underway for the CMSD’s Building Brighter Futures planning that call for addressing the overcapacity of school buildings. He said the planning will require decisions across the school



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Tuesday, April 15, 2025; Board of Education Work Session, Garrett Morgan High School, 4600 Detroit Avenue: CMSD Board of Education Member Caroline Peak asks, if Newton D. Baker closes, will the school be able to “carry its legacy to a new location.”

district, like this one to close Newton D. Baker.

School Board President Sara Elaquad said decisions to close schools can’t be based on hope. They need to be based on real solid data, said Elaquad. She

asked how often schools are inspected. Administration officials said custodians and school principals do a walk through each year.

## Menlo Park Academy receives Auditor of State Award for financial reporting

Menlo Park Academy has been honored with the prestigious Auditor of State Award for achieving a “clean” audit report, recognizing its commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparent financial practices. The school, located at 2149 W. 53<sup>rd</sup> in the former Joseph & Feiss Building, is Ohio’s only tuition free public school exclusively serving gifted children in grades Kindergarten through eight.

The award is granted to eligible entities that meet a stringent set of criteria, demonstrating outstanding compliance with financial reporting standards.

To qualify for the Auditor of State Award, entities must submit their financial reports to the Auditor of State’s Office on time. Menlo Park Academy has successfully met these requirements and maintained the highest level of financial integrity, with no findings for recovery, material citations, weaknesses,

deficiencies, or questioned costs.

This recognition highlights Menlo Park Academy’s dedication to transparency, accountability, and excellence in financial management. The Auditor of State Award is a testament to the Menlo Park Academy’s robust internal controls and its adherence to regulatory standards.

The Auditor of State Award serves as a mark of excellence for local governments and other public entities, affirming their commitment to financial transparency and accountability to the public.

Menlo Park Academy Admissions and Communications Manager Natasha Didytch says, “This distinction is a significant milestone for our school community.”

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## LEGAL AID: REENTRY

continued from page 3

before they were incarcerated that will give them a positive reference. Is there someone who can step up and verify that they were a good tenant? They should think about what programs they have completed, what certificates they have earned while incarcerated that could demonstrate that they are ready to do what’s required of a tenant.”

Individuals should also get a new state identification card as soon as they are released, enroll in Medicare if they are or will be 65 years old after release, and research their conviction record.

Most importantly, when they get settled in, individuals should find reentry groups to connect with.

Resources for those reentering are available at North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center: [northstarreentry.org/services.php](http://northstarreentry.org/services.php).

For Cuyahoga County Reentry Awareness Month events go to [lasclev.org/reentryweek2025/](http://lasclev.org/reentryweek2025/).

If you need assistance with a civil legal issue, call Legal Aid at 888-817-3777, or complete an online intake at [lasclev.org/apply](http://lasclev.org/apply).

*Tonya Sams is a Development & Communications Manager at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.*

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Tuesday, April 15, 2025; Board of Education Work Session, Garrett Morgan High School, 4600 Detroit Avenue: Prior to the vote to close Newton D. Baker School, CMSD Board of Education Member Jerry Billups asks about the levels of support that will be available to families moving to new schools.

## West Side Market transformation project reaches funding goal

Cleveland Development Advisors (CDA) and Cleveland Public Market Corporation closed on a \$28 million investment package on behalf of West Side Market's transformation project. The package, the largest ever issued by CDA, secures the remaining necessary funding for the Market to proceed with the \$53 million first stage of the project. This package includes a combination of New Market Tax Credits (NMTC), Historic Tax Credits, and funding through the Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Healthy Food Financing Initiative.

PNC Bank, National Association is the NMTC investor with PPG Industries, Inc. serving as the historic tax credit equity investor. The remaining phase one financing comes from a coalition of government, corporate, and foundation partners, including \$23 million from the City of Cleveland.

"We are incredibly grateful and thrilled that the Market is receiving the largest investment financing package that CDA has made," said Rosemary Mudry, executive director of Cleveland Public Market Corporation (CPMC), the nonprofit that operates West Side Market. "Working with our government,

corporate, investment, and philanthropic partners, we have been able to leverage a complex set of funding tools to take our first steps in bringing this ambitious vision to life. It's a testament to the time, energy, and passion that so many in this community want to invest in the Market and its future."

Yvette Ittu, President and CEO of CDA, said: "This is more than a financing deal: It's a statement of purpose. The West Side Market is one of the few places where Cleveland's history, culture, neighborhoods and economy come together. Our largest investment to date is in a public market that nourishes our people, supports small businesses, and connects communities. That's the kind of future we're proud to build."

"There is no West Side Market project without New Markets Tax Credits," said Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb. "These credits unlock investment in communities that traditional markets have long overlooked. They don't just help projects happen — they help communities rise."

CDA's commitment includes managing \$28 million in financing to fund the first phase of the project,

structured through a powerful mix of tools: \$20 million state & federal New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) allocation; \$6 million loan to bridge Historic Tax Credit equity; and a \$2 million loan through the Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Healthy Food Financing Initiative

New Market Tax Credits incentivize community development and economic growth through the use of tax credits that permit individual and corporate investors to receive a tax credit against their federal income tax in exchange for making equity investments in Community Development Entities such as CDA. The credits are designed to attract private investment to distressed communities.

### First Stage

The first stage of the Market's transformation project will renovate the East Arcade, which will be home to the Market's produce vendors and feature improved, modern systems including the addition of HVAC and direct access to basement cooler storage from the Arcade. In addition, the \$53 million first stage will overhaul critical infrastructure of the whole Market, including the

## Save Medicaid Expansion in Ohio

by Che Gadison

Health care coverage is in jeopardy for low-income adults in Ohio

Medicaid Expansion provides healthcare to adults between the ages 19-64 with incomes below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level or \$21,597 for a single individual. The federal government currently picks up 90% of the cost while the state of Ohio pays for the other 10%. These programs make Medicaid more accessible to low-income adults who are excluded from traditional Medicaid programs. There are currently 771,000 adults receiving health care through Medicaid Expansion in Ohio.

Governor DeWine proposed, and the Ohio House of Representatives passed 'Trigger Language' for Medicaid Expansion in Ohio by which if there are any federal cuts to Medicaid Expansion resulting in the federal government paying anything less than the current 90% of the cost provided to the State Ohio, then Ohio will end the Medicaid Expansion program in its entirety.

It is important that the Ohio Senate eliminates the "trigger language" that will likely take away the health coverage for 771,000 Ohioans. There are a couple of ways that you can make your voices heard.

Send emails to Senate leaders demanding that the "Trigger Language" be eliminated so that Medicaid health coverage can continue to adults in the State of Ohio. The emails should be sent to Senate President Rob McColley at [mccolley@ohiosenate.gov](mailto:mccolley@ohiosenate.gov), and Senate Finance Chair Jerry Cirino at [cirino@ohiosenate.gov](mailto:cirino@ohiosenate.gov).

If you, a friend, or family member, are a recipient of Medicaid Expansion, please reach out to Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality (NOBLE) and share your personal story about why Medicaid Expansion coverage is important to you. NOBLE will get your story to the decision makers at the Ohio Senate. Email us at [ohiobudgetequality@gmail.com](mailto:ohiobudgetequality@gmail.com)

We need to fight to save health coverage for adult Ohioans.

## HUD CUTS, CITY'S CDCS

continued from page 4

CDBG funds historically support a third to two-thirds of the CDC budget. With the delay or reduction in CDBG funds, each CDC may have to sell off real estate, max lines of credit and endowments, scale back community programs, and reduce staff. Ordinance 113-2025, if passed, could provide some benefits that allow the CDCs to report on, receive reimbursement for, and get recognized for the full range of services they provide to city neighborhoods, said Julie Dahlhausen, Executive Director of Tremont West Development Corporation.

"CDCs get used to shoestring budgets. That is absolutely nothing new, but in the challenges ahead, to be very blunt, it could mean slow suffocation of the industry as a whole," she said.

Funding for CDCs needs to switch

installation of modern food storage coolers, expanded cleaning and cutting stations, and the addition of an onsite commercial kitchen. These first updates will enhance both the merchant and customer experience at the Market.

Later phases will reimagine the North Arcade and Courtyard into a welcoming public destination with new dining spaces, event venues, food stalls, bars and restaurant incubators. Unused spaces in the main Market Hall building will also be transformed into seating, private event, and educational areas.

The entire project is expected to retain 250 jobs, create 144 new accessible, quality jobs, and support

to non-federal funding sources like the philanthropic and foundation communities, and while some of them are fortunate enough to have a broad investment portfolio that includes real estate, vacant land, and commercial properties that could be a financial resource, albeit finite, others are not so lucky, Dahlhausen added

"You could sell your real estate holdings if necessary for an infusion of cash. But once sold, it is gone. You no longer have that vacant lot in your pocket for affordable housing, and if you are selling to make payroll, that is a desperate situation."

Although some CDCs depend on CDBG funding for only a portion of their budget, others rely heavily on federal funding for as much as 90% of their operating budget.

"That is just dead in the water," she said.

over 425 construction jobs.

"A community asset like the Market needs broad community support," said David Abbott, CPMC board president. "We are extremely grateful for the public, corporate and philanthropic investment we have received so far, and we are eager to enlist an even wider array of backers so we can finish this important job."

"West Side Market is the soul of Cleveland," said Ittu. "It's where we see the best of who we are—immigrants and entrepreneurs, families and food lovers, neighbors, and newcomers. And with this investment, it will continue to thrive for the next 100 years."

## CATHOLIC CENTER

continued from page one

child(ren), or a woman with a child(ren). Seven beds are reserved for female veterans with or without a child. The shelter provides a 30-day stay, which is getting closer to 90 days, says Michael Bernot, the Executive Director at WCSS, because of the shortage of rental units. While at the shelter, the program participants work to set a housing plan goal within the first 21 days. Subsidies and vouchers are available to help achieve the next step to housing.

Moriah House provides transitional services to assist in moving from homelessness to stable housing and employment. Residents are provided meals and basic necessities. Children and their parents work with the Family Engagement staff for assessment of mental, physical, social, and educational needs.

Each family is assigned a case manager who meets weekly to help prepare residents for permanent housing.

Another link in the circle of care is the Zacchaeus Housing Solution, which is federally funded through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Bernot is keeping close tabs on what is happening to HUD during this period of uncertainty for the department's future and funding.

A case worker from Zacchaeus Housing will go to a house and work with

homeowners. Their goal is to coach the family's communication skills, which results in family bonding.

They assist families in the shelter to find permanent housing by providing 12-months of rental assistance and teach how to be good tenants.

Every family receives aftercare and case management for emotional support, help with landlord issues, and connections to community resources.

Family Engagement care center is a part of the circle that helps family engagement by coaching to build relationships and promote family well-being. They collaborate with WSCC services to build communication skills within the family. They help with goal setting, verification and assistance with school enrollment, and social support through programs, activities, and community events.

Closing the circle is the Workplace Development team that offers employment services through a four-week job readiness program. The classes focus on goal setting, financial literacy, computer skills, communication skills, resume development, application assistance and interview practice.

After graduation, staff assist with job search and clients can choose to enter the Culinary Academy or Janitorial Program for hands-on instruction and training toward employment.

About 67 people are on the payroll at WSCC. Most of the work is done by

the 130 regular volunteers

Micheal Bernot became the Executive Director in January 2023, after serving as the interim director since 2021. The Board did a search for a new director and found the one sitting in the director's chair was the best fit.

Part of his job is raising awareness of the facilities and all they have to offer.

Bernot volunteered at the WSCC while in high school and, "lighting struck," he said. He got his experience working for seven years at Lake Catholic High School, Mentor, OH, as vice president for advancement, which included fund raising, marketing and event planning.

He was hired by WSCC in February 2018 as Director of Advancement.

Now he sits at the top and talked about the events WSCC is sponsoring. A 5K run/walk Saturday, June 7, 2025, known as the Pancake Run, is an event that winds through Ohio City and features live music.

The Junior Board is sponsoring a Beer Fest at St. Edwards High School, 13500 Detroit Ave, Lakewood, OH 44107. The Beer Fest takes place Saturday, September 6, 2025, and advance tickets can be bought for \$55.00. Day of event that ticket will cost \$65.

The gala Warm Heart Winter Nights will be held at the Marriott downtown on Saturday, November 8. Beside dinner and dancing there will be games and an auction.

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# A variety of concerns drive opposition to proposed development at Pearl & Memphis

by Lynette Filips

If one thing is certain about the Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation’s (OBCDC’s) planned redevelopment project at the corner of Pearl Rd. and Memphis Ave., it’s that not everyone has the same opinion about what should be done there. And in watching interviews on the television news and reading subsequent comments on Facebook, it’s also obvious that the reasons those opposed to the project differ from each other. Early in 2022, for instance, when the proposed

redevelopment sought to tear down everything on the corner and build a low-income apartment complex with retail space on the first floor, there were mainly three categories of negative responses: some people didn’t want an apartment building, especially a very tall apartment building, in downtown Old Brooklyn; some people didn’t want low-income housing in downtown Old Brooklyn; and/or some people didn’t want to sacrifice the historic district buildings for the redevelopment. While low-income housing is longer

an issue, some folks are still carrying on with other objections. I personally will not stop trying to preserve the “South Brooklyn Commercial District” listing on the National Register of Historic Places until the wrecking ball and bulldozers arrive. Local ‘lost’ cemeteries author William G. Krejci will not stop asserting that there are still graves in the burial ground which was on that corner. Tenants who want to remain in their storefronts in the Greenline Building(s) will not go out of their way looking for new rental spaces. Former pastors and

members of the congregation of St. Luke’s United Church of Christ will not stop being heartbroken that a significant portion of their former building is slated to be demolished. Since last month’s *Plain Press* article was published, Historical Society of Old Brooklyn (HSOB) president Constance (Connie) Ewazen was again interviewed by a local television station. This time it was by WEWS News 5; on Thursday, March 27th, reporter Remi Murrey separately interviewed both Connie and Ward 13 Councilman Kris Harsh about the redevelopment plans. Some who viewed the (edited) interview perceived that Connie’s major concern was having to find a new storefront in which to relocate the Museum, but that is not the case. Losing the historic buildings is Connie’s major concern, especially since she once owned three of the four buildings for which OBCDC has received demolition permits. Something else of significance has also happened since last month’s article. At my request, Cuyahoga County Archives researched the old house to the rear of 3430 Memphis Ave. I must admit to having had no interest in preserving that sad-looking, aluminum-sided, one-and-a-half story little place until Connie told me that the beams in the basement were hand-hewn logs and that she’d heard it had originally belonged to the first generation of the Gates family. Hmm. The earliest (1820) known Gates home, the oldest house in Old Brooklyn, is the one built for miller Jeremiah Gates and his wife Phebe, nearby on the northwest corner of Memphis Ave. and W. 35th St. But because 3430 Memphis (rear) is a residence, not a business, its history hadn’t been researched for the South Brooklyn Commercial District application.

The Archives records don’t say exactly when the house was built. Local architectural historian and researcher Craig Bobby recently did preliminary research of the house and found information that suggested the house was likely built sometime between 1847 and 1857. He is hoping to have an answer by the next issue. It seems quite probable that the house is the second oldest house in Old Brooklyn and should not be destroyed in the redevelopment project. I had written briefly about it in a previous article in this series; some readers may recall my writing about the paranormal activity which was taking place there in previous years. And speaking of after-death topics, OBCDC has posted the findings, which they believe to be correct, of the digging which they had done in the vicinity of the former burial ground. While the company they employed did not come upon any definitive human remains, they did acknowledge that they encountered three “anomalies” within the parameters of the area they surveyed. Anyone interested in more details about the findings can access it on Old Brooklyn’s website, [www.oldbrooklyn.com](http://www.oldbrooklyn.com) and then going to Memphis Pearl, and then to History. It’s the first topic that will come up. Now continuing our monthly tour of the buildings in the South Brooklyn Commercial District, the last stop in April was the bank building at the corner of Pearl Rd. and Broadview Rd. At that time, I stated that I would turn southeast on Broadview Rd. before finishing up the east side of Pearl Rd. south of Broadview Rd. But first I need to mention a substantial red brick structure west of Pearl Rd. at 3409 (“short”) Broadview **continued on page 8**



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF OLD BROOKLYN  
The Independent Order of Odd Fellows building at 3409 “Short” Broadview Rd. was built in 1913 and owned by the Odd Fellows until 1958. Since then, ownership has passed to several different entrepreneurs. At the time that the South Brooklyn Commercial District was established with the National Register of Historic Places in 2005, Hoy’s Martial Arts was the tenant on the first floor.

## American Lung Association gives Cuyahoga County and Cleveland failing grades for air quality

The American Lung Association released its 2025 State of the Air Report Cards for cities and counties in the United States. The report looked at high ozone days, 24-hour particle pollution and annual average rates of particle pollution. Cuyahoga County and the Cleveland-Akron-Canton metropolitan area received a failing grade in all three categories. The grades of F in all three categories are based on the number of unhealthy air days for either ozone pollution or particle pollution. The data from the report is for the three-year period from 2021 to 2023.

In its report, the American Lung Association includes population statistics and the number of people in at risk groups. According to the report Cuyahoga County has a population of 1,233,088 people. At risk groups include: 250, 704 children under the age of eighteen; 247,380 adults ages 65 or older; 16,980 children with pediatric asthma; 108,355 adults with asthma; 78,178 individuals with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD); 755 people with lung cancer; 97,180 people with cardiovascular disease; 13,571 pregnant women; 193,220 peo-

ple estimated to be living in poverty; and 524,954 people of color. The American Lung Association also looked at metropolitan areas for pollution levels. The Cleveland-Akron-Canton metropolitan area ranked 50th worst for high ozone areas among 228 metropolitan areas. This ranking was based on 5.3 unhealthy days. The Cleveland-Akron-Canton metropolitan area ranked 46<sup>th</sup> worse for 24-hour particle pollution out of 225 metropolitan areas. This was based on 4.2 unhealthy days. The Cleveland-Akron-Canton metropolitan area ranked 9<sup>th</sup> worse for year-round

average particle pollution out of 208 metropolitan areas. “The air pollutants covered in this report are widespread and can impact anyone’s health. Both ozone and particle pollution can cause premature death and other serious health effects such as asthma attacks, heart attacks and strokes, preterm births, and impaired cognitive functioning later in life. Particle pollution can also cause lung cancer,” said Kezia Ofosu Atta, Advocacy Director for the Lung Association in Ohio. “Unfortunately, too many people in Cleveland are living with unhealthy levels of ozone and particle pollution. This air pollution is causing kids to have asthma attacks, making people who work outdoors sick and unable

to work, and leading to low birth weight in babies. We urge Ohio policymakers to take action to improve our air quality.” The “State of the Air” report found that 156 million people in the U.S. (46%) live in an area that received a failing grade for at least one measure of air pollution and 42.5 million people live in areas with failing grades for all three measures. The report also found that a person of color in the U.S. is more than twice as likely as a white individual to live in a community with a failing grade on all three pollution measures. Notably, Hispanic individuals are nearly three times as likely as white individuals to live in a community with three failing grades. To view the full report, visit [Lung.org/sota](http://Lung.org/sota).

## COMMUNITY BOARD

**continued from page 2**  
or see info about road closures, visit [clevelandmarathon.com](http://clevelandmarathon.com).  
**FREE COMIC BOOK DAY:** At this annual event – held on Saturday, May 3 this year – comics fans can visit a participating independent comic book store to pick up a selection of free comic books and participate in a variety of free activities. Participating nearby stores include Carol and John’s Comic Book Shop in Kamm’s Corners (17462 Lorain Ave.) and Superscript Comics and Games in Lakewood (13361 Madison). To see a list of the comics that will be available this year or to find other participating stores nearby, visit [freecomicbookday.com](http://freecomicbookday.com).

**HEALTH**  
**BED BUG ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:** The Cleveland Department of Aging has a program to help seniors and adults with disabilities, with limited incomes, with the extermination of bed bugs in their homes. To qualify, you must meet income guidelines, be at least 60 years of age or be 18-59 years old and be receiving a disability payment, and own and live in the unit to be treated. Open to Cleveland residents only! For more information and to obtain an application, call us at 216-664-2833 or email us at [aging@clevelandohio.gov](mailto:aging@clevelandohio.gov).  
**MOBILE HEALTH CLINICS,** sponsored by the Cleveland Department of Public Health, will be around town at various spots this spring and summer,

providing free screenings and referrals. Services offered include screenings for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy tests, and free contraception. All services are provided at no cost, and no appointment is needed. Visit us outside Estabrook Rec. Center (4125 Fulton Rd.) on Tuesday, May 13 or visit [clevelandhealth.org](http://clevelandhealth.org) to find out when we will next be in your neighborhood! All clinics run from noon to 3:30 pm. Questions? Call 216-664-2889.  
**MOMS QUIT FOR TWO:** If you are a pregnant or expectant mother who smokes, the Friendly Inn Settlement, Inc. wants to help you quit! For more information, contact us at 216-431-7656 or [friendlyinn@thefriendlyinn.org](mailto:friendlyinn@thefriendlyinn.org).  
**RECREATION**  
**CAMP FORBES:** Registration is now open to spend a week this summer at Cleveland’s free youth residential summer camp, Camp Forbes. Cleveland kids ages 9 to 13 are eligible. Parents or guardians can sign up their child at any of Cleveland’s recreation centers. The child’s birth certificate, shot records, and a utility bill from the last three months are required. Space is limited so sign up ASAP! For more information, call 216-263-5325.  
**BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL LEAGUES:** Registration is now open for the City of Cleveland’s baseball and softball programs. The various programs offered include senior baseball (ages 16-18), junior baseball (ages 13-15) and youth baseball (ages 9-12) as well as girls fastpitch softball. Co-ed

rec leagues for ages 8-12 and t-ball for ages 4-7 are also available. To register, visit any Cleveland recreation center.  
**SENIORS**  
**SENIOR AND CAREGIVER EXPO** will be held at the Gunning Park Recreation Center on May 8 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Discover a wide range of resources, services, and products tailored to meet the unique needs of seniors and their caregivers. Enjoy a special presentation from the presenting sponsors, the Northeast Ohio Sewer District, HearingLife, United Healthcare and Global Meals. From health and wellness to utilities, this expo has it all! Leave with Swag Bags full of Free Senior Resources and other goodies!  
**FREE PRESENTATION ON AGING:** The Cleveland Westside Village will present “Aging with a Plan: How a Little Thought Today Can Vastly Improve Your Tomorrow” by Sharona

Hoffman, Professor of Law & Bioethics at Case Western Reserve University School of Law, on Saturday May 31, 2025 at 10:30am at the Carnegie West Library (1900 Fulton Rd). Please join us for this informative presentation.  
**MEMORY CAFÉ** is a place to explore engaging experiences in a supportive environment designed for individuals with dementia and early memory loss and their care partners. Each café has a unique focus to facilitate social connection. Light refreshments will be provided. We meet from 2 pm to 3 pm on the fourth Thursday of each month at the West Park Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (3805 W 157th St). This month’s café will be on Thursday, May 22. Please let us know if there’s anything we can do to help you participate. Register now at [cpl.libcal.com/event/13489720](http://cpl.libcal.com/event/13489720). Contact Danielle at [danielle.konkoly@cpl.org](mailto:danielle.konkoly@cpl.org) or (216) 623-

6931 with any questions or requests.  
**SENIOR DAY:** The Cleveland Department of Aging will present the 35th annual Senior Day on Wednesday, May 21 at Cleveland Public Hall (500 Lakeside Ave). Programming begins at 10 am with an information fair, followed by lunch at noon and entertainment at 12:30 pm. All seniors are invited to this free event. For more information, call 216-664-2833 or visit [clevelandohio.gov/aging](http://clevelandohio.gov/aging).

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**TENANTS AVAILABLE**  
**PROPERTY OWNERS NEEDED:** If you are a property owner with nice, clean, reasonably priced apartments, and are looking for tenants, please call Jim Schlecht of the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless at 216-357-1612.



# Old Brooklyn Tree Stewards reach out to new and longtime residents

by Greg Cznadel

This year the Old Brooklyn Tree Stewards will once again be at [Pedal for Prizes](#), [OB Streetfest](#), and the [Farmer’s Market](#). But this year we will be sharing our love of trees with the community in new ways.

Hope Fierro, Community Engagement Manager at Old Brooklyn CDC and originator of the Tree Stewards and Tree Steward Coordinator Brittney Hooper are not only working partaking in previous Old Brooklyn events but creating new ones.

Thanks to the Cleveland Tree Coalition, our new *Tree Talks* are hosted by neighborhood businesses [Six Shooter](#), the [Rebel Reserve](#), and [Apothecary Verde](#). At these events, residents can see and talk to the people who help with our free tree give-away program, some of whom they may have already met during weekly tree watering in area parks. New and long-time residents can ask questions. They also can see the trees that are being offered and sign up for one. Some stewards even bring their four-legged friends.

Stewards stand out. Barb Caldwell attended Park Pride in Atlanta this March. Having recently obtained her Master Gardener status she was excited to meet other like-minded advocates - representatives from Kamms Corner,

Slavic Village, and Tremont and bring back newly found knowledge.

Another, [Eileen Dorsey](#), is up for the “Best Of” for the Scene Magazine. Her recent exhibit at the Botanical Garden, “Neglect of Urban Canopy,” was one of her continuing displays showing her love of nature through art. Check out Dorsey’s Old Brooklyn Blooms murals in our neighborhood.

Tim Werling was recently featured in the Spring issue of the [Old Brooklyn News](#). He spends time at Loew Park with grandkids and dog Ruby. Werling loves planting trees and helping people. He is one of the original Tree Stewards.

Other first-time events this year: Arbor Day weekend Loew Park clean up and tree tagging. A chance for Stewards to work with the community in cleaning up, weeding, mulching, and tagging a tree with their name. The tags are designed to help better with their identification and explanation of the benefits we offer.

The Tree Stewards will be hosting for the first time a Tree Steward and Green Team meetup at Loew Park on June 25. Green teams from West Park Kamms, Slavic Village and more will be joining us for this meetup to get to know each other and learn about what we all do in our neighborhoods, the challenges, successes, and more. We all have lot



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN  
Saturday, April 5, 2025; Walmart sponsored Easter Egg Hunt, Roberto Clemente Park, 2690 Seymour Avenue: Quetziali, age 5 months, receives a visit from the Easter Bunny.

to learn from each other.

Also in June, the Stewards in conjunction with Old Brooklyn CDC and Huntington Bank will be having a tree care workshop as part of an Exterior Home Repair Workshop Series. There you will see examples of good and poor

mulching. You can learn about damage to trees from deer and ways to protect trees from deer. The Tree Stewards will show and explain types of tools for working around the yard including how to maintain them. Tree Stewards will demonstrate both the correct way

of pruning as well as the incorrect way. You might learn some new terminology from our Master Gardner. For more information and to sign up for Old Brooklyn CDC’s other home repair workshops, visit <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/exterior-home-repair-classes-june--2025>.

## PEARL & MEMPHIS

continued from page 7

Rd. It’s the IOOF (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) Glenn Lodge building, constructed in 1913 when the Lodge upgraded its former home which was directly on the corner of Pearl Rd. I mentioned their new place when I wrote about the Marshall Drug Company purchasing their old place at 4180 Pearl Rd. and constructing the glazed white terra cotta building which is still there today. I don’t know when the Odd Fellows moved out, but I do know that when a new group for Old Brooklyn seniors got started in the early Seventies, they met there. The hall was called Der Gros Dutchman and the Senior group was called Elder Lot. It was the original name of Senior Citizen Resources, Inc.

Here’s a list of the subsequent owners of the iconic IOOF building and the years the changes that occurred:1958 — to George and Carolyn Jinson; 1961 — to Sokol Gymnastics Union;1978 —

to Jack Amburgey; 1991 — to Sandra Kostantaras; 2019 — to Yevgen Plylpiv, Jr. (aka, Gino Demarco), who hopes to convert the high-ceiling interior into to ten, mostly one-bedroom, loft apartments.

There are five buildings within the boundaries of the South Brooklyn Commercial District on the northeast side of Broadview Rd. and all but one of them are considered “non-contributing” in

terms of the historic district. The first one is at 3326 Broadview Rd. At the time of the application, Constellation Community Schools was there. These days it’s the home of Young Achievers (childcare). Alvin Drug was in the building before that. The second one is at 3330 Broadview Rd. At the time the application was filed, it was an Arby’s restaurant. Today it’s a Guatemalan restaurant called El Rinconcito Chapin.

The third one is at 3320 Broadview Rd. It was and continues to be an auto repair garage. The fourth one is at 3316 Broadview Rd. It was and still is a self-service car wash. The one contributing building on the same side of the street is at 3312 Broadview Rd. I’ll pick

up with it next month.

In the meantime, know that you can read the past articles in this series online at the Historical Society of Old Brooklyn’s website, [www.oldbrooklynhistory.org](http://www.oldbrooklynhistory.org), or on the *Plain Press*’ website at <https://plainpress.blog>.

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Loving God, for all who feel on the margins, but who are at the center of your heart, we ask you to open our hearts. Help us to become a church and a nation where

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