



PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG

Saturday, November 1, 2025; Día De Muertos (Day of the Dead) 2025 celebration presented by Cleveland Public Theatre with Teatro Público de Cleveland and Día de Muertos Ohio; Cleveland Public Theatre Church Parish Hall, 6205 Detroit Avenue and surrounding area.

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Plain Press

Cleveland's Westside Newspaper

Cleveland Metropolitan School District presents plan for school mergers and school closings

by Chuck Hoven

On November 5th, Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) Chief Executive Officer Doctor Warren Morgan submitted to the Cleveland Board of Education his administration's recommendations for the Building Brighter Futures plan for the future of the school district.

Upon receiving the plan CMSD

Board of Education Chair Sara Elaqad said that the Board of Education wants to hear input from members of the public as to their concerns about the plan. Elaqad noted, "These proposed recommendations include school mergers, moves, and consolidations; significant changes that have the potential to impact families, educators, and

neighborhoods."

Elaqad said, "The Board has now received these recommendations, and our responsibility is to review them carefully, analyze the data, and make the best decision possible – one that ensures that every scholar in CMSD receives the high-quality education and opportunities they deserve. Doing nothing is not an option. The time to act is now, and we want to do it thoughtfully and with your continued input."

In order to hear the concerns of Clevelanders, Elaqad said that for the next three Board of Education meetings, the number of public comment slots available to the public would be increased from the normal 10 slots to 20 slots at the upcoming Board Business meetings, and the Board of Education will also allow twenty public comment slots at the Board Work Session, which usually does not allow any public comment.

At the time of Elaqad's announcement, the next three meetings for the Board of Education scheduled were: November 19th at Max Hayes High School, December 2nd at the Arnold R. Pinkney East Professional Center, and December 9th at Max

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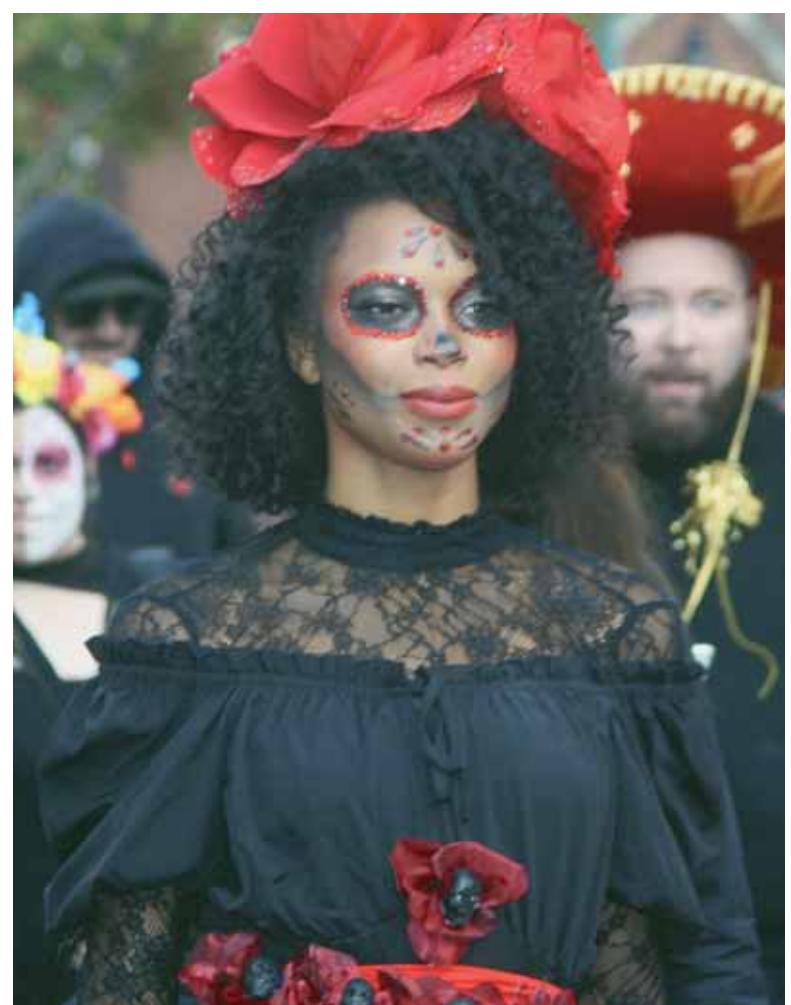


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Community members weigh in on CMSD's Building Brighter Futures plan

by Chuck Hoven

Over 150 community members gathered at Max Hayes High School on November 19th for the first of three Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) Board of Education meetings where the members of the public would have a chance to offer input into the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's Building Brighter Futures plan.

At the start of the meeting Cleveland Board of Education Chair Sara Elaqad spoke of the role of the Board of Education in directing the administration to embark on creating the plan.

Chair Elaqad said, "Last year, with the community's input, the Board created District goals and guardrails for the first time in the District's history to ensure that our District delivers to its students the education that they deserve, and that we monitor our progress towards that goal in a transparent and effective way. Earlier this year, we shifted our meeting structure, so we spend less

time reading out resolution titles, and more time actually monitoring whether our district is succeeding in its primary business – educating the children of Cleveland. This structure functions to hold our Chief Executive Officer (CEO) accountable as well to transparently monitoring in public meetings his progress towards the goals and guardrails we have set – an approach that he has wholeheartedly embraced – rather than picking information about what we want to share with the public on a given day."

Elaqad went on, "At times that has meant the Board and District having to face some unfortunate realities about how we are not delivering for our students. At the same time, it has given us the opportunity to set up the work to do better. We cannot change what we do not face."

Elaqad said, "In order to achieve our goals that we set for the district, it was clear to the Board that our building footprint would need to

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Board of Education and citizens tasked with reviewing plan calling for massive change in the school system

by Chuck Hoven

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) Board of Education and the citizens of Cleveland are tasked with reviewing a plan for the future of the school district that will have a profound impact on the future of the City of Cleveland. The plan is titled *Building Brighter Futures: A Pathway to Sustainable Student Success*. The task in reviewing the plan over the next few weeks is to determine if the theory

behind the plan is sound and if the CMSD has the personnel and resources to implement the plan and sustain it over time.

NEWS ANALYSIS

In addition to the long-term facilities planning involved in the *Building Brighter Futures* plan submitted to the Board of Education by Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Doctor Warren Morgan promises "a pathway to sustainable student

success."

The CMSD's most recent five-year financial plan projected a \$150 negative fund balance in the fifth year – calling for finding a way to reduce expenditures or increase income by \$30 million per year. The *Building Brighter Futures* plan to merge schools and close buildings estimates that it will reach that goal and reduce expenditures by \$30 million per year.

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ARTS

CLIENT ARTWORK DISPLAY PROGRAM:

The Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board is now accepting applications for our 2026 Client Artwork Display Program. This inspiring initiative showcases client art, highlights our provider agencies, recognizes the benefits of art therapy and celebrates recovery. It is open to Cuyahoga County residents receiving mental health and/or addiction recovery support services. A minimum of five pieces of artwork must be displayed to be eligible, but more is encouraged! Selected artwork is displayed at the ADAMHS Board office and in our website art gallery for one month. Art is also featured in our newsletter and social media channels. Client artists displaying individually (not with an agency) receive a gift card for participating. Apply now at: <https://tinyurl.com/ADAMHSart>. Spots are limited. Applications are accepted until December 5, 2025 or until all spots are filled. Please contact Joicelyn Weems, at 216-241-3400 x708, if you have any questions.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY OPEN STUDIO: Arthouse Inc. (3119 Denison Ave.) offers a free family-friendly workshop one Saturday a month, from 1 pm-3 pm. This month's Friends and Family Open Studio, "Wonderful Winter Ornaments," led by Jan McAndrew, will be held on Saturday, December 13. Children are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult. Donations are appreciated. Visit arthouseinc.org to sign up

or call 216-398-8556 for more information.

FOOD

GREATER CLEVELAND FOOD BANK offers an interactive map on their website that can help you find food pantries and hot meals in your area, giving you access to their network of over a thousand partner organizations. Visit greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/ Map and enter your location to get started, or call their help center at 216-738-2067.

UNITED WAY 2-1-1 FOOD FINDER: Because of the increased need, United Way has launched a free food finder on its website. If you're in need of food or other kinds of assistance – such as housing, clothes, utility bills and more – visit 211oh.org or call 2-1-1.

KIDS' CAFE AFTERSCHOOL MEALS: The Kids' Café program provides free, nutritious afterschool meals for children and teens, Monday thru Friday, at select branches of the Cleveland Public Library, including: the Carnegie West Branch (1900 Fulton Rd., 216-623-6927), the Eastman Branch (11602 Lorain Ave., 216-623-6955), the Fulton Branch (3545 Fulton Rd., 216-623-6969), the Jefferson Branch (850 Jefferson Ave., 216-623-7004), the South Branch (3096 Scranton Rd., 216-623-7060), and the South Brooklyn Branch (4303 Pearl Rd., 216-623-7067). No registration is required. For specific dates and times, call your local branch.

ST. AUGUSTINE HUNGER CENTER (1400 Howard Ave., in the Tremont neighborhood) offers FREE hot meals daily. sealed boxes; there may be a minimal selection of perishable foods. Clients must provide photo ID and household composition along with proof of address. For information or to volunteer, contact Sandie at 440-364-2602.

Lunch: Monday - Sunday, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, and Dinner: Monday - Friday, 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm. We also offer a food pantry and clothing distribution at the St. Augustine Community Cupboard and Closet, every Saturday from 11 am to 3 pm. For more information, call 216-415-5101.

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH (10205 Lorain Ave.) offers a free hot meal at its

Community Share-a-Meal event, on the first and third Wednesdays of every month. All are welcome. Join us in the cafeteria and enter through the rear door. Doors open at 4:30 pm for coffee, appetizers, and catching up with friends. Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm. We also offer a food pantry on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 3:30 pm. (Picture ID and proof of residency in zip code 44111 or 44102 are required for the pantry – but not for the Community Share-a-Meal).

ST. PAT'S HUNGER CENTER (3606 Bridge Ave.) offers free hot meals on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5 pm to 6 pm. We also offer a food pantry, offering basic non-perishable and some perishable grocery items on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays of every month, from 9:30 am to noon. Non-perishable items are distributed in pre-selected

sealed boxes; there may be a minimal selection of perishable foods. Clients must provide photo ID and household composition along with proof of address. For information or to volunteer, contact Sandie at 440-364-2602.

METROHEALTH MEDICAL CENTER, in partnership with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, holds a free fresh produce distribution on the third Thursday of each month, 9:30 am to 11:30 am at 2500 MetroHealth Drive, in the Outpatient Plaza.

HALLE SCHOOL PRODUCE MARKET: Halle School (7901 Halle Ave.) hosts a free drive-thru produce distribution on the fourth Wednesday of every month, unless otherwise noted. This month, it will be held a week early, on Wednesday, December 18, due to Christmas. The giveaway will take place in our east parking lot. Patrons must stay in their vehicles and open their trunks when it's their turn. Food will be pre-bagged.

MAY DUGAN CENTER (4115 Bridge Ave.) offers free food distribution every week on Wednesdays from 11:30am-6 pm and Fridays from 11:30am-3:30pm. You will only be able to pick up once a week. Each time you will receive pantry bags, produce and meat (when available). You must take the whole bag of food with you. Walk-ins

November 4, 2025 Unofficial Election Results

(Official results will not be available until November 25th at www.boe.cuyahogacounty.gov)

(Post Election Vote by Mail, Provisional and Post Election Day – not yet recorded by the Plain Press publication date)
(Also see close election in Cleveland Ward 12 – if a recount is requested official results may be delayed)

Cleveland Municipal Court
(Full Term commencing 1/1/2026)

Percent and # of Votes

In Son J. Loving
61.59% 24,149
Heather McCollough
38.41% 15,062

Housing Division

(Full term commencing 1-2-2026)

Cheryl M. Wiltshire
51% 19,255
W. Mona Scott
49% 18,498

(Full term commencing 1/3/2026)

Khalilah Lawson
51.47% 20,327
TJ Dow
48.53% 19,169

(Unexpired term ending 1/1/2028)

Brett Earle Horton
37.86% 14,880
Nikki McGowan
29.68% 11,662
Joseph Russo
23.9% 9,394
Christopher Woodworth
8.56% 3,392

Mayor, City of Cleveland

Justin Bibb
73.85% 31,446
Laverne Gore
25.10% 10,686

Write-in

1.05% 449

Cleveland City Council

Ward 4
Kris Harsh
70.55% 2,309

Rehan Waheed
28.78% 942
Write-in
.67% 3

Ward 7

Austin Davis
58.87% 2,536
Mohammad Faraj
41.13% 1,772

Ward 11

Nikki Hudson
100% 1,650

Ward 12

Tanmay Shah
50.12% 1,463
Danny Kelly
49.88% 1,456

Ward 13

Brian Kazy
93.63% 2,057
Write-in
6.37% 140

Ward 14

Jasmin Santana
100% 1,073

are accepted until food runs out. You can also make an appointment. To learn more, visit maydugancenter.org/food.

HEALTH

CENTERING PREGNANCY, a group prenatal care program that combines individual medical check-ups with group sessions for education, support, and community building, is available through Neighborhood Family Practice. Learn from our midwives and other pregnant patients to empower you for your birthing experience. Every session begins and ends on time, and food is provided. For more information, email centering@nfpmedcenter.org.

DEPRESSION AND SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD):

If you or someone you love is struggling with depression and/or thinking about suicide, get help now. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 988, is a free resource, available 24 hours a day for anyone who is in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT ends on Sunday, December 7. Get free help now from the Aging and Disability Resource Center at the City of Cleveland's Department of Aging (75 Erieview Plaza Suite 201). Schedule an appointment today to receive one-on-one counseling from a trained volunteer who can help you enroll in Medicare, Medicare Advantage, and Part D. Call 215-664-4383 to get started.

HOLIDAY EVENTS

CLEVELAND BAZAAR HOLIDAY MARKET: Cleveland's longest-running indie craft fair returns for its 21st year at 78th Street Studios (1305 W. 80th St.). Come check out crafts and goods for sale from over 125 Bazaar artists, resident artist studios, food trucks and so much more. Saturday, December 13 from 10 am to 9 pm and Sunday, December 14 from 10 am to 4 pm.

MAY DUGAN TREE LIGHTING: Join us for our 16th annual tree lighting ceremony on Thursday, December 4, 5:30 pm-7:30 pm, at the May Dugan Center (4115 Bridge Ave.). Enjoy hot cocoa and cookies, ice sculpting, continued on page 7

Celebrate the Season

WITH PILGRIM CHURCH

Friday, December 12

UNSILENT NIGHT

- 6:30 pm Lincoln Park Gazebo
- 7:30 pm Hot Cocoa and Warm Up at Pilgrim

Join us for Cleveland's performance of Phil Kline's Unsilent Night. Bring your smartphone and Bluetooth speaker for a 45-minute walk where you will be both the audience and a performer. Music available for stream/download at unsilentnight.com/participate or through the Unsilent Night app on iOS & Android.

Friday, December 19

AN ARTFUL CHRISTMAS
with Burning River Brass

- 7:00 pm at Pilgrim

Celebrating the return of Arts Renaissance Tremont to Pilgrim Church! Freewill offering.

TO FIND OUT MORE, VISIT PILGRIMALIVE.ORG



2592 W. 14th St.,
Cleveland, OH 44113

Wednesday, December 24

CHRISTMAS EVE
AT PILGRIM

- 7:00 pm Concert
- 7:30 pm Service

Pre-service concert featuring Organ, Instruments, and Voices. Service with candle lighting at 7:30 pm.



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Trip to Montgomery commemorates Cleveland man murdered in 1911 over a handful of cherries

by Randy Cunningham

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, a project of the Equal Justice Institute in Montgomery, Alabama is a complex of sites dedicated to commemorating the black experience in America from slavery and segregation, up to today's New Jim Crow of mass incarceration. I think it is only equaled in power by the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC. Both will shake you to your core and if they don't then there is something seriously wrong with you.

OPINION

My wife, Tris Roberts, and I were guests of the Equal Justice Institute and the Black Environmental Leaders Association, with the mission of commemorating the murder of John Jordan in 1911 by an armed mob for the unpardonable crime of picking cherries from an orchard that was originally at the corner of West Boulevard and Clinton Avenue, not far from our house. Our mission was to take a jar of soil, collected at the site where the incident began, to Montgomery to be placed in a commemorative wall of other jars gathered from other lynching sites around the country.

Our trip started at the Legacy Museum that commemorates the holocaust of slavery, the oppression of segregation, and the violence that continues with today's mass incarceration. It is common now to just brush off this history, and file it away as if it was something bad that happened a long time ago that has no relevance to today. But slavery laid the economic and social foundations of our society, and most of the other societies of the Americas. The colonists who landed on the shores of the new world had a problem. They needed cheap – free labor – to generate the wealth that

made American capitalism possible. That cheap labor came from the transatlantic slave trade.

What was the key to prosperity for some was the front door of hell for others. The legacy museum is a self-guided tour through that hell, with powerful exhibits made up of statuary, testimonials, art and photography. If there are any young people who are considering a career in the science of museums, they must go to the Legacy Museum to see how it is done. It is a masterpiece that will grab you and not let you go.

Probably the greatest challenge faced by the enslavers was how to rationalize behavior that in the words of Frederick Douglas, "would disgrace a nation of savages." It is reasonable to expect that those involved in the slavery industry must have shown some morality in the rest of their lives. They were affectionate and faithful spouses, good friends, kind and loving parents, responsible members of their societies, and faithful church members. Then they could turn right around and practice the most savage brutality to those they owned.

We have seen this schizoid personality before, when one of the most civilized and cultured countries in Europe followed Hitler into war and genocide. "Good" people cooperated with him, enabled him, and then excused themselves from responsibility after the war.

With Gaza we see the same behavior from the civilized and cultured citizenry of Israel. The answer to how good people can behave like demons is that they come to look upon others as not human, not as human as they are. In the case of the United States the challenge of making $2 + 2 = 7$ was solved by that venerable old ideology called white

supremacy. It is the ideology that explains why others are not your equal and thus do not deserve what you deserve.

These are questions that hit Tris and I close to home. We are both descended from Confederate Army officers and slave owners. We both had up close and personal experiences with racism in our families and the communities we were part of. Racism was up close and personal. Or, as my mother rationalized the racism, she grew up with in small town Missouri in the 1930s, "It was just the way things were."

In my view, second only to the power of the Legacy Museum was the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, which is an outdoor exhibit in Montgomery that is most famous for the metal tablets organized by state and county, with the names of victims and the date of the lynchings, cut into the face of each tablet. They are mounted to the floors and hung from the ceilings of the structure that shelters them. This exhibit is powerful to walk through and read the accounts of what was at one time "just the way things were."

The impact was almost unbearable. For those who traced their roots to slavery, and whose ancestors were lucky enough to flee Jim Crow, it was stunning. This was their story cut into rusted tablets of history.

A hired hand confronted three black men, John Jordan and two of his friends, about picking cherries from his bosses' orchard. An argument ensued, pistols were drawn, and the chase was on between Jordan and a mob of hundreds who chased Jordan through the neighborhood, while exchanging shots. There were calls for him to

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Clevelanders for Public Transit speaks out on proposed RTA service cuts

On Tuesday, November 18, during a presentation to the Board of Trustees on its 2026 operating budget, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) announced its plans to reduce bus service in 2026.

Service cuts are a life-threatening blow to a transit agency already struggling for relevance. People have fled public transit because it is usually less convenient than driving, and service cuts will only accelerate the death spiral. RTA can't cut its way out of this. New revenue generation is the only way. In terms of what that new revenue generation is whatever works. There are multiple revenue sources that could be tapped.

COMMENTARY

Clevelanders for Public Transit (CPT) has spent years shouting warnings of impending financial doom coming to RTA. Yet, the RTA Board of Trustees has done nothing to prepare for where we find ourselves now.

RTA's financial health has been on life support since 2017 when the State of Ohio narrowed the state sales tax base by removing Medicaid managed care organizations from its coverage. That resulted in a \$20 million blow to RTA's operating budget. Service cuts and fare hikes likely would have occurred then if it weren't for the pandemic-era Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). These two federal laws provided hundreds of millions of dollars to RTA, which have been keeping the transit agency's books balanced since then.

Yesterday, RTA presented its 2026 operating budget in which it predicts it will run out of its rainy-day fund (where CARES Act and ARPA funds were placed) in 2027. Yet prior to spending that rainy day fund down entirely, RTA is planning to cut bus service because of

the agency says, quickly rising health-care costs.

As a short-term solution for 2026, instead of cutting service, RTA should plan to spend down its rainy-day fund entirely. It must also find new, local sources of revenue. While the Trump administration proposes gutting the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund, we know we can't count on the current federal government. Nor can we count on the State of Ohio, with its Republican supermajority, to properly fund public transit. We must act locally.

Thankfully, there are several possible sources of revenue that local leaders could provide to RTA. Most importantly, the RTA Board of Trustees has the power to place on a countywide ballot the question of either a property tax levy or a sales tax levy. A .5% increase in the county sales tax would plug RTA's budget holes and allow the agency to expand service – something CPT has been demanding of the RTA Board of Trustees for years. (On the flip side, to cut expenses, RTA should also slash spending on its \$19 million police department.) Generating around \$14 million each year, there's also Cleveland parking tax money that is currently pegged toward maintenance at Browns Stadium but could be redirected to RTA operations. Another possible source of revenue for RTA is Cleveland's smart parking meter revenue, which Mayor Bibb promised to public transit during his first mayoral campaign. The City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, or any of the 58 suburban municipalities in the county also could directly transfer funds from their coffers to RTA. Major employers could provide funding directly to RTA. Community Benefits Agreements could mandate fees be paid by developers to fund transit. It is the belief of Clevelanders for Public Transit that only a sales tax increase will be sufficient to prevent future service cuts, but all sources of revenue should be on the table.

Service cuts will devastate lives. Quite the opposite of RTA's mission to connect the community, the transit agency is preparing to disconnect people from access to jobs, education, healthcare, family, and friends. In Cleveland, more than 20% of households have no access to a car. These folks will be hit hardest. Yet,



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Wednesday, October 29, 2025; Groundbreaking ceremony for Walton Apartments, just west of Fulton between Clark Avenue and Walton Avenue: Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb and Metro West Community Development Organization Executive Director Emily Lee joined about a dozen partners participating in the groundbreaking ceremony for Walton Apartments. The plans call for 52 apartments for senior citizens age 55 and older.

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MONTGOMERY TRIP

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be "strung up." Jordan's two companions escaped. The mob finally cornered Jordan and ended the

confrontation with a shot gun blast. Jordan was loaded into an ambulance, and he died on the way to the hospital. A police lieutenant said that the incident could not be helped, or as the usual line goes, "Move along."

Nothing more to see." There was no investigation, no one was charged, and mob action and violence over a handful of cherries was forgotten.

Given the history of racist violence in this country, stealing a handful of cherries looks like a major felony. The methodology of lynching varied. Some victims were hung. Some were burned alive. Some were shot. It all resulted in the same outcome. A lawless mob used violence to kill someone to achieve their idea of justice. After all, if Jordan got away with stealing cherries, who knows where it would end? Sometimes blacks were lynched simply for talking back to or merely disagreeing with a white person. Any old excuse was good enough to teach a lesson on who was on top and who was on the bottom of the hierarchy of power.

At least in this case the victim had a name. It was common that no name or names were remembered. It was even common for the alleged offender to escape, and the mob would just grab and lynch whoever happened to be the wrong color at the wrong place. Things have not changed all that much, when Tamir Rice was shot and killed by police for playing with a toy gun, the police who shot him did not face any legal penalties. Move along. Nothing more to see.

What I felt going through these exhibits was a feeling of being in the presence of pure evil. I have felt that before. In 1991 I visited the

site of the massacred village of El Mozote in El Salvador. The United States backed Atlacatl Battalion of the Salvadoran Army, destroyed El Mozote in 1981, levelled the village and killed over eight hundred inhabitants. It was just to prove to the guerrillas of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) that there was nothing the army wouldn't do to guarantee that those who had always ruled El Salvador would continue to do so. The same lesson that white lynch mobs taught to those who did not grovel before the god of white supremacy. The battalion did not waste bullets, or the swing of a machete, on the children. Instead, they hung the children from the trees. The massacre of El Mozote was a lynching.

I have always relied on reason to help me understand the world. But when it comes to the history of lynching in the United States, and what happened at El Mozote, the language of reason is useless. On a mountain top in El Salvador and at the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, what I encountered was evil in its pure hellishness and arrogance. Evil that chased me down, cornered me like the mob cornered Jordan, and forced me to admit to its existence.

Evil rides on the back of impunity — the belief that you can do anything you want to whoever you want, just by the right of who you are. We are seeing a lot of that around the world and at home. Impunity is flourishing

in the White House. It has given its marching orders to its functionaries who are doing everything they can to restore the rule of white, Christian men over everyone else in the United States. Impunity wears tactical uniforms, and face masks, and drives Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) with no plates, to snatch people off the streets. People who speak another language. People who are not whiter than white. People who are kidnapped because of who they are and what they represent. It is a logic that any participant of a lynch mob understood perfectly. The goal is to spread fear. Fear of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Fear of deportation to God only knows where. Fear to intimidate not only the target of the body snatchers, but fear to silence those who are protesting the reign of impunity or resisting impunity in the streets. Fear to make sure everyone in the United States understands who counts and who doesn't.

The Legacy Museum complex is a repudiation of everything Trump and Make America Great Again (MAGA) stand for. It is also an antidote to fear, because if anyone knew fear it was the slaves and their descendants. But still they resisted and continue to resist, and so can the rest of us. Evil and impunity need not win. [Editor's Note: For more information on The Legacy Museum, contact legacysites.eji.org/.]

May Dugan Center offers caring assistance to neighbors in need

by Edie Le Bouton

The May Dugan Center, 4115 Bridge Ave, was named in honor of the memory of May Dugan, a neighborhood lady who was a one-person advocate for her neighbors in need.

Today, the Center is a lovely building that was designed and constructed in 1974 and the organization occupying it was incorporated before that as a 501C (3) on July 30, 1969. For over 55 years, it has committed to a comprehensive and caring approach which has been found to be an effective way to help people overcome socio-economic disadvantages and become self-sufficient, contributing members of their communities.

Andy Tares, Executive Director of the Center said, "May Dugan Center is able to service over 25,000 clients per year, with critical assistance such as food, education, behavioral health services and so much more. None of this impact would be possible without the support of the community of neighbors and volunteers."

The Center also has a program called Seniors on the Move. It is designed to help seniors stay ac-

tive, which keeps them healthy and provides contact with other people. Begun in 2015, seniors take field trips and are taught about technology, among other things.

It provides GED preparation, classes for immigrants and refugees to improve English speaking, reading, writing and listening skills, financial coaching, parenting classes, and more.

The mental health and recovery services include anger management classes and Ryan White Mental Health Services, which counsels people living with HIV. The Trauma Recovery Center provides up to 16 weeks of support after a recent violent crime, such as assault, domestic violence or a shooting. The crime must be reported to the police before a person can begin trauma recovery.

Volunteers make the Center tick. The biggest need is for volunteers to help packing food bags. The need is greater now to help those who have lost Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Tares, the Executive Director, has come up through the ranks to reach this position. A graduate of



PHOTO BY EDIE LE BOUTON

Wednesday, November 5, 2025; May Dugan Center, 4115 Bridge Avenue: May Dugan Executive Director Andy Tares.

John Carroll University, he majored in sociology and got his master's

degree in Non-Profit Administration. He joined May Dugan in 2011 and

worked as a receptionist, executive assistant, deputy director and became executive director on January 1, 2025.

Said Tares, "I wanted to do something to give back," to the community.

He pointed out that Cleveland is the second poorest large city, Detroit having the number one distinction, in the United States.

On December 4, 2025, the Center is having a tree-lighting party from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm. The big evergreen tree on the property is lighted and hot cocoa and cookies will be served. Choirs from the senior program and the Urban Community School will entertain.

The May Dugan Center is funded through Cleveland individuals and companies, grants from private foundations, funding from government entities and in-kind donations. Food, clothing, furniture and household items are donated by individuals.

The biggest need, Tares said, is the need for volunteers.

Online screening and referrals are found on the Center's website <https://www.maydugancenter.org/>

Ribbon cut for Art House's Creative Garden and artist Brinsley Tyrrell's Tableau – Art in Action

by Greg Cznadel

On the morning of October 23rd, 2025 in the midst of nearly ten days of rain, it was 48 degrees in Brooklyn Centre as people gathered inside the The Art House, a steel arched Quonset hut, for the ribbon cutting ceremony of the Creative Garden and Brinsley Tyrrell's Tableau – Art in Action.

Prior to the ribbon cutting William Busta, founder of the William Busta Gallery, gave an inspiring talk on his friend, Tyrrell.

Tyrrell was born in Surrey, England, and began sculpting as a child. He moved to the Cleveland area and became a faculty member at Kent State University.

Though he considers himself primarily a sculptor who works in clay, bronze, and other media, Tyrrell's portfolio also includes stunning enamel paintings. He is responsible for several large public art projects in the Cleveland area, such as wrought

iron sculptures and gates created with blacksmith Steve Jordan. He also completed an enamel commission for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority's W. 117th Street station.

The next speakers, Jessica Cotton and Chris Hartman from the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD), spoke about the water retention process, and the plan for Green Infrastructure. The gardens were landscaped to take rainfall from the parking lot and roof of the Art House building and channel them into a large bioswale that were planted with native plants designed to absorb the water, preventing it from going into our combined sewer system and then to Lake Erie. This Green Infrastructure project was funded by NEORSD. Thanks were given to Art House for maintaining the water retention project.

As introductions continued and it was time to go outside with umbrel-

las in hand for the ribbon cutting, Art House Executive Director Laila Voss said, "This is a perfect day," to which we laughed.

The space for the Green Infrastructure project was from the space where an old 1850s house had stood. The Wirth house belonged to the last postmaster general in Brooklyn Center. In 2013 an effort was made to save it, but its condition didn't warrant it. However, per Laila "There was so much stuff that was salvaged from the house itself. Much of it went into the oldest house on this side of town, like the flooring, baseboards, etc."

The Green Infrastructure project is phase one of realizing the full vision for the Creative Garden. Art House is in the process of completing Phase two that includes a robust outdoor classroom and a beautiful park-like space for the neighborhood to enjoy. They are working to raise funds for benches that convert to

tables and other artistic elements, such as a mural along east side fence, a small stage from the repurposed foundation stones from house that previously stood on the lot, and more public artworks.

We then lined up along Brinsley's Art in Action tableau, a steel sculpture that runs along Denison Avenue with scissors in hands to cut the ribbon.

After the cutting we all walked slowly back on the little bridge that goes over the bioswale, admiring the plants as they soaked up the rain. Looking to the east along the walk curving toward the entrance of the Art House were a series of sculptures that incorporated symbols from ancient cultures around the world. The 'narrative' included symbols with meanings such as: Returning Home, Harmony, Fortune, Success.

Towards the back of the Art House campus, we saw Héctor Castellanos Lara's "Gateway". His piece was

gifted through the Creative Fusion project through the Cleveland Foundation, and a couple of construction and landscaping firms that donated their time, equipment and material to install it.

The Art House is host to the Artist Inventory Challenge, Community Culture Nights, the Urban Bright Exhibition, and the Chili Cook Off.

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MASSIVE CHANGE

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CEO Warren Morgan's *Building Brighter Futures* plan says it will also provide students with more academic, career development, and extracurricular choices. The larger school populations projected for next school year, will allow schools to not only offer a more diverse curriculum, but also to have more support staff available in each building. The plan calls for a full-time nurse in every building and a full-time counselor in each high school.

The merged high schools, with larger student bodies and more teaching staff, will allow for more choices for high school students in terms of career pathways, college credit courses, electives, honors courses and sports. Each school will have more choices available for students than the individual schools that merged to form the new high school.

The plan promises that all K-8 schools will offer options for students beyond art, music, and physical education. The plan calls for all students to be in upgraded buildings. This includes the eventual opening of three new school buildings – Marion Seltzer K-8, a new east side high school to house the combined Glenville and Collinwood high schools, and a new building for Lincoln West High School.

Implementation Questions

The theory behind the consolidations appears to be sound. Larger student populations allow for more faculty and more curriculum, services, and extracurricular activities. However, a number of assumptions in the design and implementation of the plan deserve careful examination by the Board of Education and the public.

The plan projects a declining birthrate in Cleveland and says the student body has declined from 70,000 students in 2004 to 34,000 students today. While the district has lost 36,000 students in the past 20 years – all that decline in the number of students is not due to population decline. *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* says that in 2002, Cleveland had 16 charter schools with approximately 3,000 students. Today, according to the Thomas

Fordham Institute, Cleveland now has 66 charter schools with 17,984 students. In addition to students choosing to go to charter schools, some families choose voucher or private schools and others leave the City of Cleveland when their children reach school age.

How will school closings impact the choices that families make as to where to send their children? Will families choose to go to a closer charter or voucher school? Will families move to be closer to the CMSD school building that their children's school is now housed? Will the greater offerings of curriculum and extracurricular activities help CMSD schools attract students now attending charter or voucher schools?

What will happen to neighborhoods where schools have closed? Will they see an exodus of families with children? How does the closing of K-8 schools jive with Mayor Justin Bibb's promise of a 15-minute city? How will parents of young children react when the K-8 CMSD school is moved farther than a 15-minute walk from their home?

Another concern revolves around the size of the schools. Some teachers in smaller schools say the size of their school isn't related to the level of student achievement. There are also benefits of smaller student bodies in terms of faculty, students, parents and administrators having a better chance of developing a community where "everyone knows your name."

Another concern involves the transition from small student bodies to larger student bodies. Will high school principals that now administer a school with three hundred to five hundred students, be able to handle the transition to administering a school with over a one thousand students?

How will CMSD handle the mergers of existing high schools that have uniquely different curriculum offerings? Will the principals of each high school involved in the merger be retained as an assistant principal? Or will one principal of the merged schools be expected to take on the responsibility for maintaining the quality of all the curriculum offerings? It is especially concerning when the curriculum of each of the merged schools involves cultivating and maintaining relationships with

the community outside of the school. For example, how will CMSD assure the continuation of the quality of its exceptional schools such as the Cleveland School of Science and Medicine in a post-merger world when one principal will be charged with four merged schools in the John Hay building?

Sustainable Future

In recent decades Cleveland residents have voted for property tax levies to support the school system. However, the City of Cleveland's Mayors and City Councils have continued a policy of 15-year tax abatements for all new construction of housing in the community. Instead of compensating the CMSD for the revenue that registered voters in the community decided it should receive from all property in the city, the City has decided it should keep the additional revenue from payroll taxes generated by new residents. When those 15 years of property tax abatement are up, experience shows that the pattern has been that the new revenue from the houses coming off tax abatement does not equal the loss of property tax from abandoned, foreclosed, and depreciated housing that has occurred over the 15 years of abatement. Thus, the CMSD has no significant local growth in its revenue. In a time when state and federal dollars cannot be counted upon for revenue growth, the school system is stuck in a continuing cycle where it is forced to make budget cuts every few years or ask for a new levy to pay for increase in expenditures that are not matched by any increase in revenue.

Schools are labor intensive. Teachers and school staff expect periodic raises to keep up with inflation. While cutting the number of buildings and the maintenance costs may temporarily balance the budget, the balanced budget will not be sustainable without a source of revenue growth.

Under the current taxation system, this revenue growth must come from property tax revenue growth. If the City of Cleveland continues to abate the property taxes on new development without compensating the school system for the lost revenue, there will be no growth in the



PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG

Saturday, November 1, 2025; Día De Muertos (Day of the Dead) 2025 celebration presented by Cleveland Public Theatre with Teatro Púlico de Cleveland and Día de Muertos Ohio; Cleveland Public Theatre Church Parish Hall, 6205 Detroit Avenue and surrounding area.

budget for the school district. The promise of sustainable increases in curriculum offerings, staffing, and extracurricular activities will not be sustainable.

City Council members looking for someone to blame for school closings in their neighborhoods, should look in the mirror. Giving away property tax that is due to the schools without compensating the school system for that loss of revenue will make the *Building Brighter Futures: Pathway to Sustainable Student Success* a temporary solution that is unsustainable over the long run.

The City of Cleveland and Cleveland City Council need to start reimbursing the school system for

any tax abatements they grant. Otherwise, we will in just a few years be facing cuts in the increased offerings that *Building Brighter Futures* has promised. While other communities have chosen to attract new residents by offering high quality schools, Cleveland has been doing the opposite for years. The City of Cleveland offers new residents the money that should be going to its schools and then lets the schools find a way to cope with the loss of revenue. This has not been working. If we want to retain our families with children and give them the best education possible, we must provide a regular local source of growth in the school budget.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

continued from page one

change if we were to deliver the math, literacy, and post-secondary outcomes that we are aiming for over the next several years. For that reason, in January of this year the Board directed Dr. Morgan to embark on a long-term facilities planning process that included significant community engagement. The initial result of that process was the *Building Brighter Futures* recommendation that the CEO presented to the Board and community two weeks ago."

Board Chair Elaqad said, "Now, it is up to the Board of Education to exercise its statutory role as the governing board of our school district and to review, discuss, and listen to additional community input on the proposed recommendations before making the final decision on consolidation of our footprint. Regarding input, as many of you know, we have doubled the number of public comment slots during our meetings. I challenge anyone to find a public body in this city that is willing to adopt its standard operating procedures in that way to allow for more public input. Regarding input, I do want to say, we are looking to make changes with as much care and thought as we possibly can. However, input is not going to mean that everyone gets to choose what they do and do not want."

Following Board of Education Chair Elaqad's comments members of the public were invited to make comments of up to three minutes each during the public comment period. While the maximum of twenty people signed up to speak, there were not twenty public comments. Six of those who signed up online to speak did not show up at the meeting, so only 14 people participated in the public comment session.

Four community members gave mov-

ing testimony about the benefits children receive from attending small schools that are slated to move to other buildings. Three people spoke on behalf of Louisa May Alcott on Baltic Road, and one parent spoke on behalf of Valley View Boys Leadership Academy in the West Park neighborhood.

One, a parent of a first-grade student from Louisa May Alcott, said, "I am here tonight because this school has made a life changing difference for my child and so many others, and it deserves to remain open." She said that when her family moved to Cleveland from Texas last school year, they were worried about how their son would adjust to a new school. She said on her child's first day at Louisa May Alcott "the teachers, staff, and students welcomed us with a level of warmth and care that makes us feel right at home immediately and comfortable with our decision to attend a public school in an unfamiliar city. That kind of warmth cannot be measured in enrollment numbers. Because Alcott is a smaller Kindergarten thru Grade 5 school, teachers truly get to know their students."

The parent said that within just weeks of her son arriving at the school, teachers "identified areas where he needed extra support. Needs his previous much larger school never recognized. With the focused attention he receives at Alcott, that personal investment is shaping his confidence, his new love of learning, and his future. That is the power of a smaller community school. And it is exactly why a Kindergarten thru grade 5 environment like ours must be protected. I see this impact every time I volunteer. The classrooms are joyful and engaging, the building is well maintained, and the teachers and staff are deeply invested in every child's success."

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Thursday, November 6, 2025; Institute for Supply Management (ISM) and the Operations and Supply Chain Management (OSM) Artificial Intelligence (AI) Seminar at Monte Ahuja College of Business at Cleveland State University (CSU): Amazon Web Services expert Dan Dugan explained how Artificial Intelligence and robots are already a major part of how Amazon gets products to consumers in a timely fashion. He urged Cleveland State students to become involved in "inventing or designing the process" and "not in doing the process." He says robots will replace workers involved in "doing the process".

SCHOOL MERGERS

continued from page one

Hayes High School. She said the Board of Education would vote on the Building Brighter Futures Plan at the December 9th meeting.

Each meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. To speak, you must sign up at the CMSD website prior to the meeting. The website is: <https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/Building-Brighter-Futures>.

Elaqad said, "We encourage educators, families, staff and community members to share their thoughts and perspectives with us. Your in-

put will help guide us as we make this critical decision and implement changes."

The Building Brighter Futures plan submitted by Dr. Morgan includes academic goals as well as plans to reduce the number of facilities and in doing so, reducing the number of school administrators.

In its latest five year plan the CMSD projected a future negative fund balance of \$150 million. Thus, either significant budget cuts or significant increases in revenue are needed to have a positive fund balance as required by law.

PreK-8 Schools

The plan proposes a significant reduction in the number of school buildings, mergers of schools, and consolidation of educational programs. The Building Brighter Futures plan calls for reducing the number of Prekindergarten thru Grade 8 (PreK-8) schools from 61 this school year to 45 next school year.

In the proposed plan, sixteen K-8 schools are to each move and merge with existing K-8 schools. Four K-8 specialty schools are each slated to move from their current location to other buildings.

On the West Side of Cleveland four K-8 schools and one K-5 school are moving and merging with an existing school.

The plan calls for Mary Church Terrell at 3595 Bosworth Road to close and merge with Wilbur Wright at 11005 Parkhurst Drive. The new school would be called Wilbur Wright School of the Arts.

Another proposal is for Waverly School at 1805 W. 57th and Louisa May Alcott School, a Kindergarten through Grade 5 school at 10308 Baltic Road, to merge into Joseph Gallagher School at W. 65th and Franklin Boulevard. The plan calls for the Louisa May Alcott School building to close and the Waverly School building to be used for the Montessori school now housed at Tremont Montessori School (see Specialty K-8 Schools below for more information).

The plan calls for Charles Mooney School at 3213 Montclair Avenue in the Old Brooklyn neighborhood to close and merge with Denison School at 3799 W. 33rd Street in the Brooklyn Centre neighborhood.

Valleyview Boys Leadership Academy at 17200 Valleyview Avenue in the Kamms-Corner neighborhood is to close and merge with Kenneth Clement Boy's Leadership Academy at 14311 Woodworth Avenue in the Collinwood, Nottingham & Euclid Green cluster on the East Side of Cleveland. The plan calls for the merged school to occupy the current Mary M. Buthune building at 11815 Moulton Avenue in the Glenville neighborhood. (see specialty schools below for more information).

Specialty K-8 Schools

In the proposed plan, four school buildings--from which K-8 schools have moved to merge with other schools, will house Specialty K-8 Schools.

The plan calls for the merged Valleyview Boys Leadership Academy and Kenneth Clement Boy's Leadership Academy to be housed in the Mary M. Buthune building in the Glenville neighborhood. The new school will be named the Kenneth Clement Boys' Leadership Academy.

The proposed plan calls for Tremont Montessori School building at 2409 W. 10th in the Tremont neighborhood to close and the students to move to the Waverly building at 1805 W. 57th Street in the Detroit Shoreway neighborhood. The plan calls for the new school to be named Waverly Montessori.

The Stonebrook-White Montessori School, currently at 1000 E. 92nd in the Glenville neighborhood, is also slated to receive a new home. The proposed location is in the current Stephanie Tubbs Jones building at 11901 Durant Avenue, also in the Glenville neighborhood. The plan calls for the new school to be called Michael R. White Montessori.

The Dike School of the Arts, currently at 2561 E. 61st Street in the Central neighborhood, is proposed to move to the Mound School building at 5935 Ackley Road in the Broadway/Slavic Village neighborhood. The school building will be renamed Dike School of the Arts.

High Schools

The plan calls for reducing the number of high schools from 27 schools in 23 locations to 14 schools.

According to the plan, this includes the mergers of "14 high schools currently on co-located campuses to merge within their 6 respective campuses."

The Building Brighter Futures plan proposes that three schools on the John Hay Campus in the University Circle neighborhood -- Cleveland School of Science and Medicine, Cleveland School of Architecture and Design, and the Cleveland Early College High School -- merge to become John Hay High School.

It calls for the two schools in the Lakeside Campus -- Davis Aerospace and Maritime High School and Cleveland High School for the Digital Arts -- merge to become the Benjamin O. Davis High School.

It proposes that the three high schools in the John Marshall building -- the John Marshall School of Civic and Business Leadership, John Marshall School of Engineering, and John Marshall School of Information Technology -- merge to

become Marshall High School.

The plan proposes that the two schools on the Lincoln West Campus -- Lincoln West School of Global Studies and Lincoln West School of Science and Health -- merge to become Lincoln West High School.

At the James Ford Rhodes Campus the plan calls for the merger of the two high schools in the building -- James Ford Rhodes College and Career Academy and James Ford Rhodes School of Environmental Studies -- to form James Ford Rhodes High School.

The plan proposes that the two schools at the Garrett Morgan Campus -- Garrett Morgan School of Engineering and Innovation and Garrett Morgan School of Leadership and Innovation -- merge to become Garrett Morgan High School.

The plan calls for five high schools to vacate their current location, move to another building and merge with the school in that building.

Collinwood High School at 15210 St. Clair is slated to move into Glenville High School at 650 E. 113th Street.

The proposal calls for Campus International High School, meant to be a continuation of the K-8 Campus International School on the Cleveland State Campus, to move from 3100 Chester Avenue to become part of the John Hay Campus in University Circle. This would mean four existing high schools merging at the John Hay Campus.

The MC2STEM High School, which currently has classes at the Great Lakes Science Center, Tri-C, and Cleveland State University, is slated to merge to become part of East Technical High School at 2439 E. 55th Street.

The plan calls for two more high schools to be closed and merged to become part of Rhodes High School. The two high schools are: New Technology West High School at 11801 Worthington Avenue and Facing History High School in the Charles Mooney building at 3213 Montclair Avenue. This means that the plan calls for four existing high schools to be merged to form Rhodes High School.

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All storefronts in Greenline Buildings at Memphis and Pearl are empty

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF OLD BROOKLYN MUSEUM AND MARIA THE BARBERETTE WERE EVICTED LAST MONTH

by Lynette Filips

In the article about the Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation's (OBCDC's) Memphis Pearl project in the April 2025, issue of the *Plain Press*, I wrote some commentary about Ward 13 Councilman Kris Harsh's visit to the Historical Society of Old Brooklyn's (HSOB) March 14th meeting. It included the following two paragraphs:

"The most reassuring statement was that even though tenants of the Greenline Building(s) had been visited by the relocation specialist and required to sign letters about having to vacate in 90 days, that would not actually be the time frame. Equally assuring was that NO building demolitions would occur until all required parking and financing for the project was in place..."

"For accuracy in writing the minutes, the entire HSOB business meeting, including the interaction with Councilman Harsh, was electronically recorded."

Months passed. Then came OBCDC's Board of Directors meeting on Tuesday, September 23rd. I wasn't in attendance but in the section of the online minutes titled "Memphis and Pearl Project Update" I read the following statement,

"...Jim" (i.e., Jim Ambrose, the Director of Business Development at Desmone Architects in Pittsburgh) "shared an update to the Board on M&P, focusing on the need to deploy the Brownfield Remediation dollars awarded to the project by the end of the year to ensure that the funding is not jeopardized."

Councilman Kris Harsh repeated the same message at his October 8th Ward 13 meeting at Estabrook Recreation Center. I wasn't in attendance at that meeting either, but I was told that Kris said that demolition of the buildings at Pearl and Memphis would begin in December because if they didn't start the project before the end of the year, they would lose the \$8 million in funding he had secured for it. The \$8 million is a mix

of grants from the City, County, State and Federal governments, some of which is through the American Rescue Plan Act, also known as ARPA for short.

And so, after the "Notice to Vacate" signs were posted on their doors and they didn't move out, the Historical Society of Old Brooklyn Museum and Maria the Barberette received eviction letters in the mail; court hearing dates accompanied them.

What about the promise to not begin demolition until all the funding and adequate parking were in place? Someone at City Hall had also confirmed to me that was their method of operation, even though a demolition permit had been issued early in the year.

And was it true that all the funding sources had to be tapped by the end of this month? I asked someone at the City, who is supposedly highly involved in the Memphis Pearl Project about the ARPA money, and was told that December 31st is NOT a deadline. Who to believe? What to believe or know for sure? What can I report for now—and record for posterity—about this project?

For the most part, no one at the City is interested in talking to me about the Memphis Pearl Project. If they return my calls at all they tell me to ask someone else in a different department or to request the Public Record from the City's Law Department. Trying to get the facts, the truth for these news articles is more than a little challenging.

But getting back to this Old Brooklyn epic saga, toward the end of February both the HSOB and Maria received letters from Albano Mahilaj, the relocation agent assigned to this project. The letters were to make them aware of the services included in the Uniform Relocation Act (URA). Since HUD (Housing and Urban Development) had gotten involved in the project and the URA is a HUD program, as tenants they were now entitled to its benefits/services.

(Interestingly, the official letters to the HSOB were never mailed to the correct address. The Museum was located at 3430 Memphis Ave., but all their mail related to OBCDC's Pearl Memphis Project was addressed to 3428 Memphis.)

Unfortunately, the individuals assigned to assist the HSOB and Maria came up with very little in the way of storefronts for rent in Old Brooklyn, and the ones they did come up with (on Pearl Rd.) were not acceptable for their purposes. So, the HSOB and Maria were forced to search themselves for new properties to rent. Fortunately, although searching on their own, they were still entitled to HUD's financial perks because they were forced to move because of a HUD project.

The members of the HSOB's relocation committee are Constance (Connie) Ewazen, HSOB president; John Rakauskas, HSOB vice-president; Greg Cznadel, HSOB secretary; Anna Maria Hamm, member; Mary Ellen Stasek, member; Brenda Theurer, member; and Larry Theurer, member.

Although they believe that they have found a new place for the HSOB Museum, because the legal paperwork has not been completed, they are not yet ready to publicize the location.

On Wednesday, November 12th, and Thursday, November 13th, three men from Weleski Transfer on Tiedeman Rd. (just south of Memphis Ave.) packed the contents of the HSOB Museum into

continued online (Dec 1) at:
<https://plainpress.blog>



PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG

Saturday, November 1, 2025; Día De Muertos (Day of the Dead) 2025 celebration presented by Cleveland Public Theatre with Teatro Público de Cleveland and Día de Muertos Ohio; Cleveland Public Theatre Church Parish Hall, 6205 Detroit Avenue and surrounding area.

Legal Aid may be able to help low-income entrepreneurs

by Tonya Sams

Starting a new business can be extremely challenging, especially when there seem to be large barriers to overcome. The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland may be able to help with its Legal Center for Entrepreneurs with Low-Income.

Established in 2019, The Center creates avenues out of poverty for those with low-income. The Center focuses on addressing the issues that make it difficult to achieve entrepreneurship including: providing legal check-ups and legal services to income-eligible business owners; partnering with business development incubators to connect entrepreneurs with mentoring and other supports; and providing education on common legal issues for entrepreneurs and self-employed people.

"Legal Aid's Legal Center for Entrepreneurs with Low-Income is so important because it's essential to Legal Aid's mission to work with individuals in low-income communities who are trying to build wealth in those same communities," said Michael Russell, Senior Attorney in the Community Engagement Practice Group at Legal Aid. "A good way for people to build wealth is to start a healthy business, that not only brings in income but employs others in the community."

The Center helps to remove the barriers that entrepreneurs with low incomes regularly face including access to credit, education, and legal counsel.

"Oftentimes, entrepreneurs with low incomes lack a credit history that allows them to access financing that otherwise would be available to them from traditional sources. They lack basic business education to know the ins and outs of regulatory compliance to make sure that they're following all the rules with regards to zoning, licensing and taxes," Michael said. "Legal counsel is expensive, so we want to fill that gap in services and provide basic legal counsel to businesses that are either getting started or are established and are looking to build or to overcome a crisis."

Those who are interested in starting or building their business can apply for help 24/7 at lasclv.org/apply. If the application is accepted, the applicant will be interviewed by Legal Aid staff to learn more about the business and to determine if they are ready to receive legal

services.

Legal Aid also has a few resources for business owners that may need additional help, including referrals to business development partners who will offer mentorship and help them develop a business plan. Legal Aid may also offer discreet legal representation for business owners when complex challenges arise, such as possible lawsuits.

Entrepreneurs can also attend a Legal Aid Brief Advice Clinic to sit with an attorney to obtain legal advice free of charge. To find out if a Brief Advice Clinic will be in your neighborhood, go to lasclv.org/brief-advice.

For more information on The Legal Center for Entrepreneurs with Low-Income go to lasclv.org/get-help, click "Community Initiatives" then "Legal Center for Low-Income Entrepreneurs".

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

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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.



PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG

Saturday, November 1, 2025; Día De Muertos (Day of the Dead) 2025 celebration presented by Cleveland Public Theatre with Teatro Público de Cleveland and Día de Muertos Ohio; Cleveland Public Theatre Church Parish Hall, 6205 Detroit Avenue and surrounding area.

MERRY CHRISTMAS! OUR NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCHES WELCOME YOU!

Christmas Mass Schedule
St. Patrick Parish with St. Malachi Oratory
3602 Bridge Ave. and 2459 Washington Ave.

Dec. 24 4:30 PM Vigil Mass (Both Campuses)
 9:30 PM Mass During the Night (St. Patrick)
 Preceding Carols

Dec 25 8:30 AM (St. Patrick)
 10:00 AM (St. Malachi)

Come, Join Us!

ST. JOHN CANTIUS CHURCH
906 College Avenue
216-781-9095

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve
 Sunday, December 24th
 4:00 PM (Vigil)
 10:00 PM

Christmas Day
 Monday, December 25th
 9:30 AM (Polish)
 11:30 AM (English)

IMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
2928 Scranton Rd. • 216-781-9511

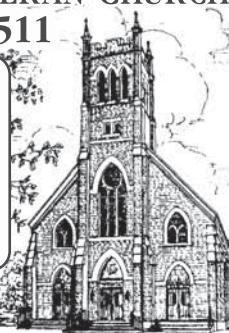
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

German service..... 3:00 pm
 English service..... 7:00 pm

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES:

English service..... 10:00 am
 Serving God's People Since 1880

REV. JERRY WITT-JABLONSKI, PASTOR
 REV. HORST HOYER, PASTOR EMERITUS



SCRANTON ROAD BIBLE CHURCH

3095 Scranton Road • 216-861-7539

Worship Service: Sundays at 10:45am

Advent Series:

Sunday, November 30 @ 10:45 am Changes Darkness to Light
 Sunday, December 7 @ 10:45 am Changes Fear to Peace
 Sunday, December 14 @ 10:45 am Changes Emptiness to Joy
 Sunday, December 21 @ 10:45 am Changes Our Waiting into Hope

Christmas Eve Service

Wednesday, December 24 @ 6:30pm Changes Our World Forever

www.scrantonroad.org

Saint Ignatius Of Antioch Church
510205 Lorain Avenue (at West Boulevard)

216-251-0300 • SIOAPARISH.ORG

Jason R. Lewis, Parish Administrator

Rev. Phill Bernier, OFM Cap., Priest Moderator

Advent

Advent Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration - Friday, Dec 6 - 7pm

Advent Taizé Prayer Service - Thursday, Dec 18 - 7pm

Immaculate Conception Masses - Monday, Dec 9 - 9am (school mass)

Christmas

Christmas Eve Masses - Dec 24 - 5pm, 12am Midnight

Christmas Day Mass - Dec 25 - 11am

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God - December 31 - 5pm

Regardless of your denomination or religious affiliation, you are invited to our prayer services and liturgies.

May Christ the Lord bless your family with His holy peace this Christmas

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

continued from page 5

She added, "We may not rely on certain support programs for our family, but we absolutely value them for our community. Programs like our Care Closet help families that need extra support and strengthen the sense of community that defines our school. I also want to briefly mention our students that receive Special Education services. Families are being told that these students may not be able to move with the rest of our building to the merged school. And that there may not be space. Your decision should be based on transparent accurate information to fully understand the impact on most of our vulnerable students. They deserve to remain with the teachers, peers, and routines that serve them best. Every child at Alcott deserves a guarantee, not just a promise of that stability. So, for families like mine, Alcott is not just a school, it is a safe nurturing place close to home where children can grow and flourish." She said closing Louisa May Alcott will not only disrupt her child's progress, "but the strong foundations being built for so many children whose journeys are just beginning and children I see every time I volunteer. I ask you to look beyond numbers and truly see the lives being shaped at Alcott. Please keep our school open."

A second parent of several boys who are students at Louisa May Alcott came to advocate on behalf of the Special Education Program and special needs students. He said, "Four years ago I moved over to The Land from New York, and my priority was to find the right school for my boys that can give me the help I need to lead them down the right path of progression. Thank God I landed with CMSD, which I am forever grateful to, and Louisa May Alcott. I didn't do this by myself. You talk about a perfect storm. CMSD created a perfect storm in Louisa May Alcott with the special people that they put in there that took care of my boys." The parent went on to name and praise of many of the teachers and staff at Louisa May Alcott.

The parent said that when his boys started at Louisa May Alcott four years ago, one of his sons was nonverbal. He says now that son can "sit down and hold a small conversation with you - back and forth." The parent said his other son started off in a self-contained class and with the help of teachers at the school he is now flourishing in a general education class.

He said of Louisa May Alcott, "It changed my life. It changed my boys'

lives. Parents know that there needs to be a plan. There needs to be change, and that is for sure. But the plan needs to get tweaked to give parents smaller school options, so that it is not all big schools. For my sons, for a lot of parents their kids excel in smaller schools. So, we need to have options like Louisa May Alcott. It works. If you want to keep what works, I am living it. My boys are living proof that it works there. So, we should keep it. It provides the excellence and inclusion that are core factors. Board, if any of you have kids. CMSD if you got kids, especially with special needs, you feel where I am coming from."

A third person speaking upon behalf of Louisa May Alcott said, "I am not against favoritism. I am against being no one's favorite. The Building Brighter Futures plan did not cut our way at Louisa May Alcott, and I could almost stomach it until we got to Special Education. We move together at Louisa May Alcott. If we are told we are all merging, we all merge. To hear our Special Education may be with us, or maybe not. We don't move like that. Our Special Education kids have never heard nothing like that."

He went on to say, "I have a recommendation that we have a Building Brighter Futures meeting specifically for Special Education before this vote. You have done a wonderful and incredible job of hearing the hard questions and hearing the hard statements. You have built the guardrails. You have built the core values. Let your hard work - work, and hear out the community of Special Education. And, if you have a problem, we will help you." He said, "We have seen a special dedication to the specialized schools, but we want to see a special dedication to Special Education."

In finishing up, the Louisa May Alcott advocate said, "We understand that you have prop points and data points and all of that. But what will it take to keep Louisa May Alcott open? This magical place - don't moth ball it and lose the magic. If the guard rails are the wall, and the core values are the line, then let Louisa May Alcott be the trampoline for Special Education, for integration, so those that go into the future are not lost, but we can propel them into the future."

A West Park neighborhood parent of a student at Valley View Boys Leadership Academy spoke of the reasons she chose to send her son to Valley View and how he has thrived there. She said she observed the principal and staff outside the school each morning greeting the students, giving them fist bumps and calling them by name.

She said her son has an Individual Education Plan and has attended the school since preschool and now is in third grade. He has thrived in the smaller school setting, she said. "We have stuck with Cleveland. Valley View was known for the extended school day, the extended school year, and after care -- all those things have stopped for us. We have navigated having grandparents pick up, with a school on the East Side of Cleveland that is not an option for my parents who are 77 years old to go and pick him up. If there is an emergency there is no one able to pick him up over an hour away. I work in Lorain County for Lorain County Children's Services. Although I want to stick with Valley View and Cleveland, I just want you to know how special it has been to be able to attend a school in our community where he can walk to school if needed. He is right there. It has been a pleasure working with Cleveland so far, and it is heartbreaking to know another school in our community will be closing."

Other speakers included those offering support for the plan as representatives of the City of Cleveland, the Cleveland Public Library, MetroHealth Hospital, and the Pre4Cle program. A local businessman and Zak Reed also voiced their support for the plan.

Cleveland Teachers Union President Shari Obrenski asked the Board of Education to use a red pen rather than a rubber stamp when reviewing the plan. She offered several examples of cases where that may be necessary.

School nurses advocated for a team nursing proposal to be adopted by the district. The president of the Cleveland Council of Administrators and Supervisors called for the district to include school administrators and supervisors in developing the process to implement the Building Brighter Futures plan. Members of the Service Employees International Union, representing 600 school employees, asked the CMSD Board and administration to engage with their members in the planning process noting the vital services they provide in food and nutrition services, secretarial staffing, and environmental support services.

ST. AUGUSTINE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Christmas Eve Mass:
 4 PM and 9 PM Mass

Christmas Day Mass:
 10 AM Christmas Mass

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
ALL LIVES HAVE DIGNITY, ALL PEOPLE ARE LOVED AND ALL ARE WELCOME.

ST. AUGUSTINE
 ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
 staugustinecleveland.org
 2486 W. 14th Street, Cleveland, OH 44113 • (216)-781-5530

HISTORIC ST. ROCCO CHURCH
 3205 Fulton Road, Cleveland OH 44109 • Ph: 216-961-8331
Come worship with us!

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve, December 24th 5pm Vigil Mass (with visit from Santa)
 8:30pm Carols & Music
 9pm Mass at Night
 *both 5pm & 9pm Candle light and procession with Bambino Gesu

Christmas Day, December 25th 9:30am & 12noon (Latin)
 New Year's Eve, December 31st 6:30pm with TeDeum
 New Year's Day, January 1st 9:30am & 12noon (Latin)

CONFSSIONS

Monday, December 22nd & 23rd 7:00pm (in Chapel)
 Tuesday, December 24th 4:30pm (Church)
 *Every Mon Thur Fri 6pm - 6:20pm (Chapel)
 *Saturdays 3:30pm - 4:30pm
 *Sundays 9am - 10:30am & 11:30am - 12:30pm

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