

The Parkside Journal

Volume 4, Issue 7

Winter Edition 2021 Giving Back To The Parkside Community

IN THIS ISSUE



Pedestrian Improvements Coming to Parkside Page 1



JASGP explores the shared connections between African American and Japanese American communities page 3



West Park Cultural Center Update page 4



State Senator Vincent Hughes Hosts a Community Shredding Event page 5

Pedestrian Safety Improvements Planned for Parkside

by Melissa Romero



Above is a visual rendering of the plaza, landscaping, and seating for the area between East and West Montgomery Drives, with Parkside Avenue to the south and S. Concourse Drive to the north.

Starting in winter 2021, construction work will begin in an area of West Fairmount Park to make access to the park and the surrounding streets safer for pedestrians.

The non-profit organization Fairmount Park Conservancy, which recently moved its headquarters to the historic Ohio House on Belmont and Montgomery Aves., is leading the project, which includes roundabouts, crosswalks, a pedestrian-activated signal, landscaping, and restriped bike lanes. The project boundaries are Avenue of the Republic to the north in front of the Please Touch Museum, East and West Montgomery Drives, and Parkside Avenue to the south.

The first phase of the project, scheduled to begin in December 2021, will include new landscaping with plantings, a small plaza, and seating at Parkside Ave. between East and West Montgomery. This phase will also include the construction of a crosswalk with a pedestrian-activated signal across S. Concourse Dr. to the Welsh Fountain. The crosswalk connecting Welsh Fountain to the Please Touch Museum will also be refurbished. In addition, bike lanes will be striped and traffic circles will be constructed at East and West Montgomery Drives.

A later phase of the project in late summer-fall 2022 will activate the space in front of the Welsh Fountain between East and West Montgomery Drives, bringing temporary programming and events to the space.

The Parkside Pedestrian Improvement project is a continuation of the Parkside Edge project, which was completed in 2018. Parkside Edge includes a series of rain gardens, swing benches, landscaping, and community gathering spaces along Parkside Avenue from 41st St. to Belmont Ave. Over the years, it has been home to a range of community events, including farmers markets, movie nights, West Park Arts Fest, community meetings, book clubs, and more.

“Following the opening of Parkside Edge, we continued to hear from the East Parkside community that even with Fairmount Park being in their front yard, the simple act of crossing the street felt unsafe, or even impossible,” said Maura McCarthy, Executive Director of Fairmount Park Conservancy. “Closing this gap and bringing these much-needed pedestrian improvements to the area is the next necessary step to ensuring that everyone can safely access and be welcomed into the park.”

continued on page 2

Pedestrian Safety Improvements Planned for Parkside

by Melissa Romero
continued from page 1



The picture above is the current state of the site of the Pedestrian Improvements Project.

This particular section of the park, specifically South Concourse Drive, was recently added to Philadelphia's Vision Zero High-Injury Network. The High-Injury Network makes up 12 percent of all of the city's streets, but accounts for 80 percent of traffic deaths and serious injuries. Since 2014, three people have been killed in a crash and nine have been seriously injured around South Concourse Dr. and Parkside Ave.

At a virtual open house held in mid-October, community members described the experience of attempting to cross these streets into the park as "a nightmare."

At a recent East Parkside Farmers Market, Fairmount Park Conservancy hosted a "Walk and Talk" with residents, encouraging them to learn more about the Pedestrian Safety Improvement Project and visit the site where the improvements are taking place. The Conservancy heard from more than a dozen people who shared their experiences trying to access this part of the park, whether it was by foot or by wheels.

The project has gone to bid for construction, which is scheduled to begin in January 2022 and continue through spring 2022.

The Parkside Pedestrian Improvements Project is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources, the William Penn Foundation, and The McLean Contributionship.

To learn more about the pedestrian improvements and to receive project updates, please visit bit.ly/parksideimprovements.



Editor's Corner

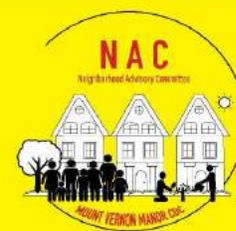
by Juanita Alexander
Co-Editor Parkside Journal

From time to time, I like to share my feelings on certain subjects that have been on my mind and this is one of them. Our readers are always encouraged to respond to what they see in this editor's corner because the Journal strongly believes that communication with our public is a two way street.

My first comment concerns the recent (October) incident on a SEPTA subway train where a woman was brutally attacked/raped. This was a HORRIBLE and APPALLING tragedy on SO many levels. I have several theories about the possible reasons for the 'inaction' of passengers on that same subway car and none of them say anything good about our human race. Was it because of the 'looks', ethnic background, or age of the victim who was mercilessly attacked, or is it simply a reflection of the fact that too many people simply don't give a damn about their fellow or sister human beings anymore? People on that train could not find time to dial 911 but DID take time to use their phones to 'record' the horrific event while it was taking place in REAL time to a REAL human being!!!! Unfortunately, I do NOT think this is an isolated event. I do not know what else to say; maybe our Parkside readers can help me make sense of all of this.

On a more positive note, my second comment is about the great Kindergarten Readiness program that is being sponsored by the Please Touch Museum. I was so encouraged and thrilled to learn about this wonderful undertaking and what it can mean for our Parkside community. As a retired Philadelphia public school teacher who has just completed a long term substitute assignment working with four and five year olds, I know first hand what a positive difference such programs can have on our youngest and most impressionable learners.

continued on page 11



Mount Vernon Manor CDC/Neighborhood Advisory Committee

Nominees for Neighborhood Advisory Sub-Committee



Mt. Vernon Manor CDC/NAC are looking for residents to join our team as Neighborhood Advisory Sub-Committee. The Neighborhood Advisory Sub-Committee is a group of neighborhood volunteers who work closely with the NAC Coordinator to support and guide the focus of the program's activities. The committee will help create initiatives and events designed to foster community and work in conjunction with residents to address pressing neighborhood concerns and issues. We are taking nominee names from 11/1/21 to 12/1/21

The NAS committee will meet once a month or at least 10 times per year via ZOOM or in person. Please submit your nominee name and for more information contact Lorraine Gomez @ 215-475-9492

Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia: Shared Spaces

by Rob Buscher



Interior of store in Little Tokyo circa 1946

This is the first of several articles about the many shared connections among the African American and Japanese American communities that are being explored through Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia's Reimagining Recovery Project. Over the next few issues of the Parkside Journal we will share details of the long and surprisingly interconnected histories of these communities, and the work that is being done by the staff of Shofuso Japanese house and garden to expand their own relationships with Parkside neighborhood residents.

Growing up on the East Coast as a mixed-race Japanese American I didn't learn much about the historical relationships among the African American and Japanese American communities. Only after I became involved with the civil rights group Japanese American Citizens League in my early 20s amidst the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement did I start to understand the extent of the overlap in our experiences. Over the past decade working in the racial justice space I have come to realize just how much the Japanese American community owes to the Black activists, community organizers, cultural producers, and legislators who paved the way for our own civil rights movement to take place during the late 1960s to late 1980s.

While there was some limited contact among our communities during the early 20th century, large-scale interactions began with two parallel migrations that took place during the early 1940s: the forced removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast who were then mass incarcerated in US Concentration Camps in the interior, and the Second Great Migration of African Americans moving to West Coast cities from the Deep South. Both occurred as a result of the Second World War.

After the Empire of Japan staged its December 7, 1941 Attack on Pearl Harbor – approximately 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent were systematically evicted from their West Coast homes and businesses, rounded up, and forced into prison camps under armed guard of the US Army Military Police. More than two-thirds of them were US Citizens and over half were children under the age of eighteen. Those who were immigrants had lived in this country for close to two decades since 1924 when the US closed their borders to all Asian immigration under the racially restrictive Immigration Act.

While the government propaganda narrative stated that persons of Japanese ancestry might pose some threat to US security interests in the event of an Imperial Japanese invasion of the US mainland, not a single case of espionage or sabotage was ever discovered.

What ensued was a wholesale landgrab by white nationalists in the West Coast agriculture industry who took this opportunity to deprive the Japanese American community of their valuable farmlands and eliminate the competition. Since 1913 when California passed its Alien Land Law prohibiting Asian immigrants from purchasing land, the vast majority of Japanese Americans were tenant farmers with no legal rights to the land they occupied beyond the terms of their lease. Even the lucky few who had purchased land before the law passed had their lands confiscated and were uncompensated as the government reallocated their property to white farmers. The same was true for many of the business owners and residents of West Coast Japantowns, who had no legal recourse against the white landlords and building owners they rented from in the urban Japanese communities that existed up and down the coast.

The African American community enters this story with the Emergency Shipbuilding Program, an initiative that the US government commenced in January 1941 – almost a full year before entering WWII. This program aimed to produce enough ships to keep America's overseas territorial possessions (read colonies) safe amidst the growing conflict of WWII, while also assisting the United Kingdom in non-combat roles through its merchant navy. In May 1941 Terminal Island in South LA became home to the California Shipbuilding Corporation, also known as CalShip.

After the Attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the US shipbuilding industry was at an all-time high as defense contractors worked in a mad rush to replace the damaged ships of the United States Pacific Fleet. With a majority of the service-aged men in LA choosing to join up after Pearl Harbor, the resulting labor shortage opened up a slew of new opportunities for African Americans looking to migrate West, away from the Jim Crow South. By 1944 over 7,000 African Americans were employed by CalShip alone.

During the 1940s, Los Angeles real estate was governed by segregated housing covenants that prohibited the incoming African Americans from moving into white neighborhoods. Thus, the recently vacated Little Tokyo already coded as a non-white neighborhood, was identified by city planners as a settlement site for the community. Soon after relocating, the new residents renamed their neighborhood "Bronzeville" after the celebrated African American business district in the South side of Chicago.

For the next four years Bronzeville would become a vibrant working-class neighborhood home to overcrowded workers' quarters, jazz clubs, and a number of African American owned businesses. The nightlife was particularly notable for its many "breakfast clubs" consequently named because they stayed open until the next morning.

As WWII came to an end, labor needs shifted to other industries and many African Americans moved out of the neighborhood. Once Japanese American families began returning from camp, many of the white property owners either canceled or refused to renew the leases held with their remaining African American tenants. Although Japanese and African Americans cohabitated this space for several years through the end of the decade, Bronzeville and its African American residents soon became a footnote in the history of the neighborhood.

However, many of the friendships established during this era would continue for decades to come. Japanese American musicians and audiences frequented the African American owned jazz clubs throughout LA. African American customers would patronize the many sukiyaki restaurants and Japanese American businesses in Little Tokyo and elsewhere. It was a time of great cultural exchange that left a permanent impact on both communities.

continued on page 5



We're hiring an Equitable Development Project Manager

The Centennial Parkside Community Development Corporation has a mission to preserve, promote and revitalize East Parkside through partnerships with businesses and institutions and programs that engage residents, increase opportunity, and grow a diverse, thriving community.

The Project Manager Position will support the Executive Director and Real Estate Committee in managing the real estate projects and programs related to CPCDC's Equitable Development Strategy.

Position is part-time & located in the 19104 district.

For more information and to apply go to:
<https://centennialparkside.org/news-events/>

Parkside Boy Scout Update

by Michael Burch



Here's an update on our nascent Boy Scout program. I've written about the upcoming Scout program in previous issues of the Parkside Journal, but now we have more news to share. To recap, the Boy Scouts of today is designed to give boys and girls the skills they need to unlock their full potential and to learn to love and appreciate living in harmony with nature.

That's right; I said boys AND girls. The modern Boy Scouts of America is for boys and girls. At present however, the current curriculum at Centennial Parkside CDC is not ready to bring girls into the program. The organization needs more women scoutmasters. For programs like this to succeed, it requires a major buy-in from parents, kids, the community, and a sponsoring organization, as well as dedicated adults who are willing to volunteer their time and energies to work for the futures of our community's children.

The governing organization for the Boy Scouts in our community is the Centennial Parkside CDC. The CDC sets up the meeting with the Boy Scouts of America Inc., donates space for meetings, and facilitates fundraising activities on behalf of the scouting program.

continued on page 11

West Park Cultural Center: WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

by Kennedy McAlister



West Park Cultural Center summer students at Camp Ginkgo

West Park Cultural Center (WPCC) celebrates its 20th season this year, but what have we been up to? The organization has been providing summer camp, after school and Saturday programs, West Park Arts Fest, and more programs in the many years since its Executive Director, Betty Lindley, founded it in 2001. This year, we are back in full swing in the post-quarantine era.

July brought 20 campers in-person to the summer camp, Camp Ginkgo. This 4-week arts and nature program located at the Fairmount Park Horticulture Center, serves children ages 5-12. Though it was a scaled-back version due to the pandemic, WPCC was thrilled to offer it to the community again after having to cancel it completely in 2020. Campers explored ceramics, guitar, and filmography throughout their month-long tenure, and enjoyed special field trips to the Shofuso House and Philadelphia Zoo.

"Once camp concluded this year, we hit the ground running for our Fall programs," explained Kennedy McAlister, WPCC's Program Manager and Camp Ginkgo Director. This fall, over 25 students gathered for WPCC's fall youth programs from "Design Your Own Anime Character" and "Arts and Activism: Climate Change" to their ongoing program, "danceLogic".

WPCC did return to some in-person programming but made sure to keep an online option available. "We've realized that online programming is sometimes the more accessible option, especially for families who can't necessarily make it to a site for whatever reason," said McAlister. "We plan to keep online and hybrid options for the foreseeable future."

The online program this fall was "Design Your Own Anime Character" with teaching artist Janice Merendino. Merendino led the students, ages 9-18, through a four-week virtual drawing class. "Though I think they are beneficial, I sometimes worry about the online programs," Kennedy McAlister admitted. "I know the students are learning a new skill, but I wonder if they are getting enough community out of it. Luckily, I don't have to worry about that with Janice teaching."

continued on page 10

Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia: Shared Spaces

continued from page 3
by Rob Buscher

Longtime resident of Little Tokyo and racial justice activist Abraham Ferrer writes, “this intersection of Japanese American and African American communities would play itself out for decades after WWII, when these communities established homes in the nearby Seinan District (what we know as Crenshaw, at the foot of Baldwin Hills). During the 1940s Bronzeville would become known as a second hub of African American culture and society, rivalled only by Central Avenue in South Central LA.”

Little Tokyo was not the only case in which African Americans began inhabiting Japantowns during WWII. Similar communities were established in San Francisco, Oakland, and many of the smaller cities where war production factories were located on the West Coast. Unfortunately, by the wars end this made already tenuous neighborhoods visible targets of racist city planners who were looking to permanently disperse non-white enclaves from prime urban real estate.

In the SF Japantown context, the intersectional histories of Japanese Americans and African Americans remain an important part of the neighborhood’s history as both communities rallied together to oppose urban renewal in the postwar era. Developers eventually succeeded in physically dividing SF Japantown from the predominantly African American Fillmore District through the construction of an eight-lane expressway that resulted in largescale displacement for both communities. However, the shared issues between Black and Japanese activists would help drive Bay Area racial discourse in a more progressive direction and lay a foundation for the multiracial civil rights movement of the West Coast that we will be covering in a future article.

In our own city, several thousand Japanese Americans were resettled by way of West Philadelphia’s Black Bottom neighborhood. Although few would permanently settle in the neighborhood, many of them would spend their first months as civilians living in the Philadelphia Hostel, a Quaker-run halfway house for Japanese Americans who were reentering society after their wartime incarceration ordeal. Located at 3228 Chestnut Street, the hostel residents became acclimated to their Philadelphia surroundings in part thanks to the friendships they developed with their predominantly African American neighbors. Like so much of the area, the original site of the hostel was destroyed when urban renewal devastated the neighborhood and few physical traces remain of the once vibrant Japanese American community who resided there.



The California State Division of Immigration and Housing minces no words in their racially biased 1943-1944 Biennial Report, “Negroes are moving into the deserted Japtown districts of our metropolitan centers in vast numbers, and conditions of sanitation are generally poor, and overcrowding is a major difficulty.... We have succeeded in cleaning out several of the smaller abandoned Japtown districts throughout California, and through abatement and misdemeanor prosecutions, we have had a large number of old dilapidated frame shacks razed to make way for new buildings.”

A combination of institutional racism in government policy and gross neglect by a majority of white Japantown property owners led to a culling of California’s many Japantowns from a pre-war record of nearly four dozen to just three; Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Jose. In subsequent decades Japanese Americans have undertaken tremendous advocacy efforts to preserve and maintain the legacy of these last surviving Japantowns, persevering against identity erasure and gentrification in all three cities.

Numbering around 3,000 persons, Philadelphia’s Japanese American population is one of the smallest Asian ethnic groups in the city (compared to nearly 40,000 Chinese Americans). We have no neighborhood or business district, and are dispersed throughout the region. Given these facts it is no wonder that the shared histories among African Americans and Japanese Americans are not better-known locally.

Through the Reimagining Recovery Project, Japanese Americans have been invited by Shofuso Japanese house and garden to reengage with their site as a physical community space. On behalf of the Japanese American community, I sincerely hope that Shofuso can become a place where we continue building friendships and solidarity among new generations of our respective communities in the years to come.

To get a REAL ID in Pennsylvania

You Will Need:

Choose 1 Proof of Identity:

- Certificate of Birth
- Valid Passport



+ Your Social Security Card



+ Choose 2 Acceptable Proofs of PA Residency:

- Current PA Driver's License/ID Card
- Current PA Vehicle Registration
- Proof of Insurance
- Bank Statement (no more than 90 days old)
- W-2 Form or Pay Stub
- Tax Records
- Lease Agreement or Mortgage Documents

AND Proof of all Legal Name Changes (if applicable)

- Certified Marriage Certificate
- Court Order



Learn more at PennDOT.gov/REALID

Parkside Journal Staff

Publisher/Editor
Michael Burch

Co/Editor
Juanita Alexander

Team Correspondents
Jasmine Bullock
Lauren Roberts

Research
Donna Collins

Contributing Writers
Jim Brown

Marketing & Distribution
C. Fox Collins

Accounting
Yvette Burch

Contact us
Parkside Journal
#284
45 E. City Line Ave.
Bala Cynwyd, Pa. 19004
parksidejournal@yahoo.com

Ribbon Cutting for Restored Pavilion in Parkside

by Michael Burch



Pictured above is Senator Vincent Hughes at ribbon cutting with Marjorie Ogilvie, Miller Parker, Dennis Lee, and other members of BAWP

As the story goes almost 70 years ago back in the Fall of 1953, an odd occurrence occurred near 51st and Parkside Avenue in Fairmount Park. Apparently, three young girls, on their way home from St. Gregory's Catholic school which was located near 52nd and Lancaster Avenue, saw an apparition or holy image. Back in the '50s, there was a sizable Catholic population living in Parkside. Over the years, the Catholic population in the area has declined and Catholic schools in the region have closed. The girls all 14 at the time said they had seen a vision of the Virgin Mary standing near a bush in the Park. According to them, the vision of Mary wore a blue veil and a white gown.

The following day, the word spread throughout the neighborhood about the apparition the girls claimed to have seen. The three girls returned to the bush with friends and neighbors. Some of these friends said they also saw the image of Mary in the branches of the bush. Others in the group said they also detected the smell of roses coming from the vicinity of the bush. (The scent of roses and other flowers often accompany these types of phenomena).

It was said that the apparition would return in a month and during that time 50,000+ people gathered and left rosaries, crosses, and money. The money collected was used to build the stone pavilion which still stands today.

Over the years some have credited the "Bush" with healing powers. The "miracle" is that the makeshift wooden cross and white picket fence have remained at the location and are respected by all. The pavilion has been in disrepair for years and had become a concern for the business and residential communities of West Parkside.

In late September, the Business Association of West Parkside (BAWP), in cooperation with Parks and Recreation, repaired the Pavilion. The 52nd Street Lowe's, which holds a Board seat with BAWP, donated all the supplies for the repairs.

Longtime Parkside residents probably know this urban legend better than my research. Anyone who wants to add to our knowledge please email us at parksidejournal@yahoo.com



Virgin Mary Bush as it appears today.

Season's Greeting

&

Have a Healthy, Prosperous and Safe New Year!

Tax Return Time Is Coming Soon!



Jeannette Y. Gray, M.B.A

**Federal and State Income Taxes Filed
BIR's and NPT's
Property Tax Rebates
Small Business Accounting
Deed Transfers**

Wills, Probate, Inheritance and Estate Taxes Prepared

All City, PA. State & IRS Letters Answered

Excellent Choice Tax Consultants

**Your Tax Preparer and Inheritance Tax Specialist
...for Life!!!**



We Will Come To You!!

H & R Trained With Less Fees

DISCOUNT PRICES FOR ALL

484-437-1711

SAVE THIS AD, CALL ME!



Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

**2021-22 Application Available:
dhs.pa.gov/LIHEAP**



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



SHOFUSO
JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER

Enjoy Japanese traditional New Year's decorations!
December 11-12, 10 AM - 4 PM

Regular admission applies:
\$12 adults, \$8 students, seniors, kids 5-17, \$2 ACCESS,
FREE to kids under 5, military

*Shofuso will close for the season on December 12.
Our staff wish you a very happy holidays and
we look forward to welcoming you next spring.*

JAPANPHILLY.ORG

Senator Vincent Hughes Sponsors a Free Paper Shredding Program in Parkside

by Jim Brown



Line of cars waiting to get into the shredding location

This article first appeared in the Philadelphia Sun on November 19th 2021.

On a cool Saturday in November in Parkside, with the changing of the weather, a vital resource was provided to West Philadelphia community residents and others who had heard about the service through communication efforts from State Senator Vincent J. Hughes' office and volunteers.

A portion of the Lowe's parking lot was reserved for the special event at the Parkwest Town Center at 1500 N. 50th Street in West Philadelphia. A day of free shredding was offered to our residents.

The event was scheduled to start at 10am but cars were already lined up outside and around the corner at 8am!!

We talked to Pennsylvania State Senator Hughes about why this event was needed and he responded to his constituents in a big way.

"People's identity, security and things are extremely important to them," said Senator Hughes. "We needed to make sure that we would provide a vehicle for them to properly dispose of personal papers and have confidence that is being shredded and destroyed appropriately".

"So, this is not just a West Philadelphia thing," added Senator Hughes. "This is about us helping folks. We're not turning anyone away. It is more about getting rid of those personal documents that everybody has (like) bank statements, papers with social security numbers, drivers licenses and birth certificate information and all of that kind of stuff. Folks needed a confident (and secure) way to get rid of it and we provided that today. And the turn out is huge and we had to order several shredding trucks to help get rid of everything."

There were over 400 cars that turned out for the event to shred paper and documents of value. Most of the drivers knew that it was worth the wait. The expected event was scheduled for 3 hours but continued to about 3pm. because of the big response.

Cars were constantly pulling up and dropping off bags of paper and people well received by the volunteers that were there to assist residents at the drop off area. People were using the carts from Lowe's to get some of their cluttered items to be shredded.

West Philadelphia resident Mrs. Leslie Bowen talked about why she came out to event.

"I received a notice in the mail," said Mrs. Bowen. "Thanks, Jesus for this, because we had less than four boxes to fill. This is a blessing. It's something that was necessary. I just retired, so I got a lot of paper work that I had to shred. I can't throw it in the trash because it (has) everything I own on there. It's got all of my personal information in there. I got to see it with my eyes; I can't leave it to chance for somebody else to get."

continued on page 8

West Park Cultural Center: WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

by Kennedy McAlister
continued from page 4

Indeed, Janice Merendino leads her class with patience and encouragement, coaxing even the shyest of participants to keep their cameras on and share their work. "I've actually really enjoyed teaching virtually!" said Merendino. "I think that drawing classes lend themselves perfectly to an online teaching format." Students received kits from WPCC with materials and worksheets required to complete the class. They took time learning each aspect of drawing the anime faces and bodies, using tracing paper to "mix and match" bodies and heads. The camaraderie really kicked in when it came to naming a character and telling the stories of their characters. Each student received a story-board worksheet where they got to create a scene using the characters they created.

Part of the in-person programming is danceLogic, WPCC's premiere program combining dance and computer coding. In its fifth year, danceLogic brought on new dance staff for its return to fully in-person activities. "By combining [dance and coding], each danceLogic student will develop self-confidence, leadership skills, and critical thinking skills. danceLogic is preparing the youth for the future," explained Kamil Simmons, one of the dance instructors.

danceLogic has been featured nationally on CBS this morning, and most recently by TOGETHXR, an LA-based company that spotlights female-led and empowering programs. We are always looking to recruit more girls to this class and building our community!

Another program brought a collaboration between WPCC, UPenn's chapter of the national organization Stemnova, and the Philadelphia Zoo. It is the first in the ongoing program series "Arts and Activism" and this particular semester focused on climate change. Students were able to gather in one of the zoo's meeting areas and participate in projects and discussions regarding climate change. Penn students Ryan, Amy, and Abbie led the students in these discussions and projects each week.

"We were excited to be able to connect with West Park Cultural Center," said Ryan, Stemnova's VP of Outreach. "Branching out more into the community is a goal of our organization, and particularly an important goal for my role in Stemnova. It's been fun to adapt our curriculum to the community's needs, and I think both we and the students have learned a lot."

The discussions garner serious questions from the students regarding climate change's effects on clean water, how it affects the soil our food grows in, and what different areas of the world's animals experience.

"The personal aspect of students having face-to-face discussions with experts who are committed to searching for answers is a huge aspect of why I wanted to create 'Arts and Activism' in the first place," said Kennedy McAlister. "The goal of the program is to get children and youth thinking about those tough questions, and then give them the tools to find solutions and do something with their knowledge."

WPCC plans to run "Arts and Activism: Climate Change" in a future program cycle but is also hoping to provide themes where other areas of arts and activism can converge, like visual and performing arts. Other programs you can look forward to seeing in the Winter/Spring include Intro to Guitar, Photography, Lego Robotics, and more!

To end the 20th season, WPCC will celebrate its 14th West Park Arts Fest in Fairmount Park on June 11. "We hope to bring it fully back as it was pre-pandemic," said Betty Lindley. Complete with vendors, live music, dance, activities, and food, the fest brings in thousands of visitors each year, even last year when it was a scaled-down version to comply with strict covid-19 policies, it brought joy and visitors from all over the community.

West Park Cultural Center and its variety of programs keep our community invested and minds engaged in the arts and education. The Winter 2022 youth programs registration opens for all programs - after school and danceLogic - on January 5th. For more information or to sign up for the WPCC newsletter, visit westparkcultural.org. You can also find us on Facebook and Instagram at [@westparkculturalcenter](https://www.instagram.com/westparkculturalcenter).

A Much-Needed Community Service: Free Paper Shredding in Parkside

by Jim Brown
continued from page 7

"The event was such a big success because volunteer organizations like WeEmbraceFatherhood, 100 Black Men, Millcreek Community Partnership and YOACAP (Youth Outreach Adolescent Program) gave great support to Senator Hughes during a 6-hour unexpected special event. One of the volunteers explained why he helped with this event.

"I'm here because pollution and clutter is a blight and there's a lot of stuff we need to get rid of," said Jerry Puryear of the Millcreek Community Partnership in West Philadelphia. "And we needed to be organized to work this type of event because it's about unity, cleanliness and helping one another out."

The event was so important to the community that at least 4 shredding trucks were needed to meet the demand from residents who waited patiently to dispose and shred documents and relieve themselves of clutter in their homes.

One resident, who was curious about the event, saw in amazement the long lines of cars and asked what was going on. When Joseph Andrews of West Philadelphia was told of the shredding event, he responded "I really see people bringing their paper to be shredded. I guess they can't shred it themselves. I was clueless to this, this is mind-blowing. I never seen nothing like this in the hood."

The constituents of State Senator Hughes' district definitely were well informed about the initiative to help them do some Saturday house cleaning with this well-organized community event. If there are any similar follow up events like this, the Parkside Journal will do its best to keep its readers informed about them.



ENJOY HOLIDAY TRADITIONS AND PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES | COVID-19 |

Accessible version: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/this-holiday-season.pdf>

The best way to keep your family and friends safe is to get vaccinated.



Wear a mask in public indoor settings if you are not fully vaccinated, have a weakened immune system, are in an area of high transmission.



Avoid crowded, poorly ventilated spaces.



If you are sick or have symptoms, don't host or attend gatherings.



Delay travel until you are fully vaccinated.



www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

Mayor Kenney and City Council President Clarke Cut the Ribbon on the East Poplar Playground Rebuild Project

Mayor's Managing Director's Office

Today, Mayor Kenney and City Council President Darrell L. Clarke (5th District) joined City officials and community members to celebrate the opening of the renovated East Poplar Playground and the completion of \$1.46 million in site updates led by the Rebuild initiative, the City's historic investment in public spaces.

Rebuild's promise to communities is to acknowledge the unique history of each site, meaningfully engage the community, and invest intentionally to create spaces that deliver what neighbors and visitors need. In the process of planning and completing these updates, Rebuild worked hand-in-hand with the surrounding East Poplar community. Neighbors, residents and members of the recreation advisory committee participated in public meetings, completed surveys, and offered critical feedback during the design process.

"Today's ribbon cutting at East Poplar Playground ushers in a new era of play here in North Philadelphia," said Mayor James Kenney. "These improvements will sustain a community landmark where future generations of Philadelphians can come together, learn, and grow in a space that reflects their vision and community."

"We're proud to be here today supporting the opening of a new playground for the East Poplar community," said Council President Darrell L. Clarke (5th District). "Every neighborhood and every child needs a safe place to play, and this playground – a product of the administration's Rebuild initiative supported by City Council – provides that safe space and play zone for the children of East Poplar. This is a very good day."

"East Poplar Playground is an excellent reflection of Rebuild's promise," said Kira Strong, Executive Director of Rebuild. "These improvements reflect the vision of local neighbors and visitors to deliver on our promise to invest intentionally to create meaningful public spaces."

Totalling \$1.46M in investment the project updates include:

- New playground
- New playground equipment
- New sprayground
- New ADA accessible seating areas
- New asphalt track looping through the playground
- New plants and trees
- New hydration fountain
- Updated walking paths throughout the playground
- New fencing

"The residents of East Poplar long deserved these improvements to their place of play," said Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner for Philadelphia Parks and Recreation. "To witness the beautiful upgrades here is to see the reflection of the vibrant East Poplar community who call it home."

REBUILD is a historic investment of hundreds of millions of dollars in neighborhood parks, recreation centers and libraries across Philadelphia. Proposed in Mayor Jim Kenney's first budget as a part of his vision for a more equitable Philadelphia, Rebuild's promise to acknowledge history, engage the community and invest intentionally seeks to uplift pivotal community spaces, empower neighborhoods, and promote economic opportunity through diversity and inclusion.

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR) advances the prosperity of the city and the progress of its people through stewardship of nearly 10,200 acres of public land and waterways, and management of 500 recreation buildings, 166 miles of trail, and 250 playgrounds.

Carousel House Update

by Michael Burch

As reported in the last issue of the Parkside Journal, due to extensive needed repairs, the decision was made to raze the building and rebuild the Carousel House from the ground up. The Carousel House was the only dedicated space for disabled individuals to participate in recreational activities in the immediate area. The good news to this is that The Carousel House Rebuild project is officially underway. Under the direction of Rebuild, the city's initiative which makes much-needed improvements to parks, libraries, recreation centers, etc., they have a successful record throughout the city and here in Parkside. The Rebuild team, working closely with Parks and Rec., along with other partners to ensure that the Carousel House will be rebuilt into a state-of-the-art multi-purpose facility on the same location it stands now.

The process is just beginning, they are in the engagement state now. By engagement, I mean reaching out to the community and learning the history of the building and its relationship to the community. Rebuild has just held a virtual meet and greet, but there will be others. At these events, the public can voice their opinions, concerns and needs.

The reconstruction process for a project of this type will take some time. From start to finish, you may be looking at a 4-year process, but at the end of that time, we could get an incredible state of the art building designed to serve people of various ages and abilities, we think it's worth the wait. The Parkside Journal will keep our readers informed of the progress of this amazing project.



**EMERGENCY
RENTAL
ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM
(ERAP)**

RENT AND UTILITY HELP IS AVAILABLE









Have you lost a job or income because of COVID-19?

Help is available if:

- You are experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19;
- You are experiencing housing instability or may lose your home;

AND

- You meet local income thresholds.

Don't wait – apply today!

Emergency Rental Assistance Program
[Apply online at dhs.pa.gov/erap](https://dhs.pa.gov/erap)

Assistance is available for tenants and landlords



Editors Corner

by Juanita Alexander
continued from page 2

It is my fervent hope that Parkside families with four and five year olds will take advantage of this wonderful program. Creative prekindergarten programs like those being sponsored by the Please Touch Museum can help lay the foundation for later success in the classroom. I know. I have SEEN it happen. For further information please see the ad with bright and eager faces on page 12 of the Parkside Journal.



Parkside Boy Scout Update

by Michael Burch
continued from page 4

The person who pulls all of this together and who works directly with the children is the scoutmaster. I got a chance to talk to Mr. Julian Burnett, the new scoutmaster of Troop 0215. Mr. Burnett is not the only scoutmaster. He is assisted by three other assistant scoutmasters (Jamal Harris, Jonathon Newman, and Melvin Dixon). The Boy Scout staff is managed by a governing board made up of members of Centennial Parkside CDC members. All members of the adult staff with the Boy Scouts are going through state background checks and finishing necessary Boy Scout Training, particularly their Youth Protection Training. This is necessary and required training for anyone who works directly with children in the Boy Scouts.

Mr. Burnett is a former scout himself and is well known in the community. Mr. Burnett is involved in everything from staffing voting booths during local elections, working with the CDC on the Black Man's conference to now volunteering to be the first scoutmaster with the new troop. Mr. Burnett said, "I'm trying to help people improve their lives and I'm making an effort to make my community a better place for people who live here."

To find out more about the Boy Scout program at Centennial Parkside, reach out to them at trayon@centennialparkside.org



Scouts BSA Boy Troop 215
2021-2022 Schedule

Tuesday, December 7th. Troop Meeting
Tuesday, December 14th Troop Meeting
Tuesday, December 21st Troop Meeting
Tuesday, January 4th. Troop Meeting
Monday January 17th. (MLK Day of Service)
Tuesday, January 18th Troop Meeting
Saturday, January 29th. Troop Meeting

Contact The CDC for more dates and times!

This fall I had the opportunity to host a Journalism workshop with some talented young people here in Parkside. Below is one of their finished short articles from Dashaun Smith.

The Future of Print News

by Dashaun Smith

With the drastic growth of social media in the past 20 years, fewer people have relied on getting their news from traditional outlets (tv, radio, newspapers) and have moved to more modern mediums (websites and social media platforms). With fewer people using traditional news outlets, where do they fit in, and do they still have any relevance to the modern person?

As time moves on, the world will only become more digital, lessening the need for newspapers. And, with the increase in smartphone usage, you don't need to wait for a tv or radio broadcast. In the wake of all of this, news stations and outlets have started to transition on to the newer outlets. However, traditional news outlets have, in my opinion, held on to the spot that they have always been in. When you think of news outlets you typically think of your local news outlets first that tell you what is going on within your city along with the weather and traffic. Those types of broadcasts whether tv or radio I feel haven't been as affected by the growth of social media as they typically use it as a tool to relay information to their viewers.

Furthermore, I believe that they haven't been disturbed as much because access to social media can be limited and doesn't always reach rural areas as TVs and radios do. Although TVs and radio stations are not being as affected by social media, I feel that newspapers have been very affected. Not necessarily by social media, but because of how digitalized the world has become. Many famous newspaper outlets such as the New York Times and The Washington Post, have moved onto websites and have digitized their articles because of how much smartphones have become a necessity in this world and because you can access everything right from it, eliminating the need for a newspaper. Overall, in the age of social media, news outlets are still needed as it is a trusted way to get the information that you need reliably.

*Season's Greeting from the staff
of the Parkside Journal*

KINDERGARTEN READINESS EXPERIENCE

AT PLEASE TOUCH MUSEUM



Help prepare your child for kindergarten through a new, free program run by our Museum Learning team! Whether this is your first child entering school or not, the Kindergarten Readiness Experience will offer insights on how to make the most of this very important year in your child's development. **Participating families will receive a free year-long membership to Please Touch Museum!**

- WHO?** Children ages 4-5 from Parkside, Mantua, or Belmont, with a caregiver
- WHAT?** A 4-part series of 90-minute play-based experiences. The program runs for 2 weeks, twice a week — both weekday and weekend sessions are available now through the spring! Visit pleasetouchmuseum.org/KRE for a full list of dates.
- WHERE?** All sessions will take place at Please Touch Museum and follow current safety guidelines.



To apply, visit pleasetouchmuseum.org/KRE or scan the QR code! Contact Alyssa Liles-Amponsah at alamponsah@pleasetouchmuseum.org or 215-840-0021 with any additional questions.

