

# OHI Journal

Observatory Hill, Incorporated



The Newsletter for the Friends & Neighbors of Observatory Hill

June 2015

## LOOKING UP DURING OBSERVATORY HILL HOUSE TOUR SUNDAY JUNE 7TH by Jane Sestric

Located on the Pittsburgh's northern edge between Riverview Park and the East Street Valley, Observatory Hill features large, stately homes on Perrysville and equally charming modest homes that border the park and wind between Perrysville and Marshall Avenues. Neighbors will swing their doors open as visitors step from the Molly's Trolleys that stop at convenient intersections. Guests will see that this green and friendly community is on the move with homes, parks and community assets that reward visitors who make the trip up to the Observatory Hill House Tour on Sunday, June 7. Don't miss the architectural details that will have you 'looking up' for color and inspiration all afternoon.

Tickets are available for \$12.00 in advance if ordered by June 3 or \$15.00 at the registration table at Riverview United Presbyterian Church at 3505 Perrysville Avenue. Please visit [www.observatoryhill.net](http://www.observatoryhill.net) for more details.



## GTECH RECLAIM NORTHSIDE AMBASSADORS submitted by Lydia Yoder

Last October, 14 Northside residents gathered bimonthly for classes focused on giving them the resources and skills to reclaim vacant lots in their neighborhoods. The program they are part of is called ReClaim Northside and is a project of GTECH Strategies.

In April, these residents, called ReClaim Northside Ambassadors, held a presentation at the Pittsburgh Project to share their ideas with the community. These nine Northside residents will transform vacant lots near their homes into green community spaces throughout this summer with the support of volunteers and GTECH staff. The spaces they plan to create range from small parks to trails to native flower gardens.

Ambassadors and Observatory Hill residents Doug Deckert, Cynthia Levy-Mendoza and their Mentor, Dorrie Smith of OHI and past ReClaim Ambassador, have begun to work on two vacant lots in the neighborhood.

Doug Deckert plans to transform a lot on Baytree Street, which is currently full of invasive plants and rubble, into a lively community space complete with raised garden beds, lawn games and a campfire pit. He imagines a space where neighbors can come together for food and fun. He plans to call the site "Baytree Street Community Garden".

Cynthia is working on a vacant lot at the intersection of Perryview St. and Perrysville Ave, which has sat vacant for many years. In its current state it an eyesore for those waiting at the bus stop and passersby getting their first glimpse of Pittsburgh as they drive through. Cynthia calls the space "A Place for Moms: Welcome Corner". She runs an organization, Brown Mamas, which assists African-American mothers in enjoying their motherhood journey by providing information, tools and social support. Cynthia will be working alongside Brown Mamas to create a welcoming corner lot with benches for those waiting for the bus, a Little Free Library and beautiful flower gardens.

If you're interested in volunteering for either of these projects, please contact Lydia Yoder at GTECH by emailing [l.yoder@gtechstrategies.org](mailto:l.yoder@gtechstrategies.org) or calling 412.361.2099 x3.

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## From Councilwoman Harris' Desk



### Strengthening Neighborhoods through Community Action

This spring I co-sponsored legislation that creates an incentive program for local small businesses to raise their pay above the minimum wage. For businesses that raise their wages to the federally recommended \$10.10/hour,

the city will offer free advertising on bus shelters. The program is designed to bring more middle class, family sustaining jobs to Pittsburgh.

Did you know that the Urban Redevelopment Authority offers 0% interest loans to city residents for home improvements? The program is only offered to household that meet the income requirements. Find more information here: [www.ura.org/pittsburgh\\_residents/home\\_improvement\\_loans.php](http://www.ura.org/pittsburgh_residents/home_improvement_loans.php) or by calling **412.255.6600**

Having worked as a community activist on the North Side for nearly forty years, I have always believed that grassroots, community action is the best way to strengthen neighborhoods and make our city a more livable place. To support communities throughout District 1, I have recently made numerous allocations through the city's Neighborhood Needs program, to help fund neighborhood projects, build organizational capacity, including \$5,500 to Observatory Hill, Inc. to install public safety security cameras.

Please contact my office if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at **412.255.2135** or online at [www.pittsburghpa.gov/district1/feedback](http://www.pittsburghpa.gov/district1/feedback).

Darlene M. Harris  
Councilwoman

## CINEMA IN THE PARK

Join us each Saturday at dusk for a free movie at Riverview Park sponsored by Dollar Bank.

DATE	MOVIE
June 13	Million Dollar Arm (PG)
June 20	The Refugees of Shangri-La (NR)
June 27	The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (PG-13)
July 4	Holiday – No Movie Scheduled
July 11	Cesar Chavez (PG-13)
July 18	X-Men: Days of Future Past (PG-13)
July 25	Godzilla (PG-13)
August 1	The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1 (PG-13)
August 8	Interstellar (PG-13)
August 15	Selma (PG-13)
August 22	Captain America: The Winter Soldier (PG-13)
August 29	Guardians of the Galaxy (PG-13)

## DEAR NEIGHBORS

The Board of Directors of Observatory Hill Inc. (OHI) takes great pleasure in serving our neighborhood. It has been a busy and a productive year so far, and I would like to share with you some of our accomplishments, current projects, and upcoming events:

OHI was able to purchase three vacant buildings in our commercial district and are working on securing appropriate businesses to fill them. (Spoiler alert – look for a new restaurant in the neighborhood!) They will be fully rehabbed, and we will offer residential space on the second floor of the buildings. We have also purchased several vacant homes on a nearby street and are rehabbing those to improve the quality of the neighborhood. Our architect is busy drafting upgrades to make these homes and businesses much more attractive. It is our hope to continue this process on other streets.

We hosted the Mayor's Night Out where Mayor Bill Peduto brought his staff to meet the community to answer our questions and to address issues. We made much needed connections and are working to partner with these leaders for future improvements. Among these improvements are the long awaited opening of our new soccer field and the anticipated improvements to the Riverview Park Playground.

OHI is working with GTech Strategies to plant a community garden on a vacant lot on Baytree Street.

Street Trees were acquired through Tree Pittsburgh and Tree Vitalize and were planted in the business district.

We hosted a special meeting with City Officials and the Pittsburgh Police to address security issues in our neighborhood.

OHI regularly represents our community to City government and other Authorities on matters of safety, economic development, education, zoning issues, and public services.

On June 7, we will host our annual Observatory Hill House Tour from 1–5pm. Join us to tour various historic homes and businesses in the neighborhood. See our website to purchase tickets online or buy them the day of the tour. [www.observatoryhill.net](http://www.observatoryhill.net)

On June 12 we will host co-host the Riverview Park 5K Race and Fitness Walk which begins at 7pm. You can register the night of the race beginning at 5pm or register on line at: <http://www.riverview5k.com/>

Online registrations will close on June 9.

On June 13 we will host co-host the Riverview Park Heritage Day Festival from Noon to 4pm. An afternoon filled with a variety of activities for all ages. Many interactive booths for both adults and children and there are free refreshments.

Would you like to have a more active role in your neighborhood? We are always looking for volunteers to help with our events and projects, and we also invite you to be a part of our organization. Come to one of our monthly meetings, or check us out on our website or other social media – get involved and let's make Observatory Hill even better!

Glenn Miller, President  
Observatory Hill Inc.

## VOLUNTEERS PLANT TREES TO BEAUTIFY OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

By Jeff Wagner

Observatory Hill is one of most tree covered neighborhoods on the northside, largely because we have Riverview Park at our doorstep. Still, there are areas that lack trees and one of most obvious is our business district. We applied for trees through TreeVitalize – a statewide program which is a joint project of Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Tree Pittsburgh and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

Certain conditions must exist for trees to thrive. First, the curb and sidewalk must be separate – if poured as one piece, the cuts needed to establish tree pits can crumble the curb. Second, the area for planting must be free of utilities like water and gas. Third, and of equal importance, is the property owner must give permission to plant the tree(s).

On May 2, a group of volunteers, under the supervision of the TreeVitalize staff, planted 10 trees in the business district. After a demonstration of the proper planting techniques, the volunteers were set loose to plant the remainder of the trees. Fortunately, the pits had been dug by the city and filled with topsoil making the digging easier.

The trees look great and have weathered their first few weeks. After taking training from TreeVitalize, our neighborhood's four Tree Tenders will be responsible for watering for them. Thanks to all who participated, to Schorr's Bakery and to Mandy's Pizza for their generous food donations and to those who donated their time and supplies.



### SAVE THE DATE

OHI welcomes Jenny Kohnfelder, Consumer Programs Manager of the Urban Redevelopment Authority, to our next meeting. Since 1978, the URA has been working to help area residents to buy or to make improvements to their homes. They offer a wide variety of loans and programs to assist with emergency home repairs, façade improvement and more. Make plans to join us at 7pm on June 17 at the Byzantine Seminary, 3605 Perrysville Avenue.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**June 6 – Neighborhood Clean Up** from 10am to Noon. Meet in the parking lot across the street from Schorr's Bakery on Perrysville Avenue. Garbage bags provided to pick up litter and weed the business district and surrounding streets.

**June 7 – 2015 Observatory Hill House Tour** from 1–5pm. Annual tour which benefits and showcases our unique neighborhood.

**June 12 – Riverview Park 5K Race and Fitness Walk** begins at 7pm with the kick-off of the Heritage Festival. Register on line by June 9 or beginning at 5pm the evening of the race.  
<http://www.riverview5k.com>.

**June 13 – Heritage Day Weekend** continues at Riverview Park from Noon to 4pm. A variety of festival activities and exhibits which include fun for all ages.

**June 13 – August 29 – Stars at Riverview Jazz Series and Cinema in the Park** runs each Saturday throughout the summer. Concert begins at 7pm followed by a movie at dusk. Bring a lawn chair or a blanket and enjoy music and movies under the stars.

**June 17 – Monthly OHI Board Meeting** at 7pm at the Byzantine Seminary 3605 Perrysville Avenue. This month's guest speak is Jenny Kohnfelder of the URA.

For more information, call 412.255.2493.

# 5K Run and Fitness Walk & Heritage Day Festival

by Dorrie Smith

Citiparks, in partnership with Observatory Hill Inc., will kick off the summer season with Riverview Park's 5K Run and Fitness Walk at 7pm Friday June 12 and the Heritage Day Festival June 13 from Noon to 4pm in Riverview Park.

Heritage Day Festival begins the Stars at Riverview Summer Concerts and Movies Series. Families can enjoy a day of frontier exploration, Native American snacks, totem pole painting, and various crafts. Stop by the Observatory Hill Inc.'s booth to meet the Board of Directors and get a glimpse of what's new and happening in Observatory Hill. Want jazz in the afternoon? No need to wait for the evening – enjoy the Cool Jazz sounds of the Lee Robinson Quartet. New this year we have The Roving Art Cart and Citiparks Summer Soul Line Dancing with Roland Ford. Our traditional attractions such as Arts in the Park, Venture Outdoors Bike Rodeo, Petting Zoo, Pony Rides, our favorite animal pals from the Animal Rescue League, Humane Society and more will also be returning.

The Heritage Day Festival features more than 30 non-profit groups providing hands-on family activities. The City of Pittsburgh Public Safety Dept. features their EMS, Bomb Squad and Police K9 Unit just to name a few. Check out Allegheny General with on-site health consultations and free tours at The Observatory from 1 – 3pm. Enjoy a free Hot Dog, Baked



Bean lunch from 1:30 – 2:30pm. So pull out your chairs, bring your family and friends and join your neighbors across the Northside for a weekend of community fun for all ages inside beautiful Riverview Park in Observatory Hill.

If you would like to volunteer your services for either event, please contact Dorrie Smith OHI Board Member and Chairperson for The Heritage Day Festival at **412.877.4828** or email her **[opnthedoor@hotmail.com](mailto:opnthedoor@hotmail.com)**. Rain or Shine event!

## NEIGHBOR OF THE YEAR AWARD HONORS JANET PAZZYNSKI'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

by Leslee Schaffer

A Pittsburgh native, Janet Pazzynski has lived in Observatory Hill since 1980. She has fond memories of playing in Riverview Park as a child and even today, she can still be found there among the gardens.

One of the first women to be hired in a non-traditional job at Verizon, she worked for 30 years as a Splicing Technician. She took advantage of their continuing education program and attended CCAC to earn degrees in Liberal Arts and Sciences and in Graphic Designs. Another employee perk that she thoroughly enjoyed was tutoring children at the old Chatham Elementary School. Retiring in 2007, she has kept busy volunteering.

Janet is beginning her fifth summer as the only volunteer to weed the gardens at Riverview Park. At planting time, she uses her graphic design talents to create posters advertising the need for volunteers and then works with Citiparks and The Parks Conservancy to put in the flower beds. Throughout the summer, she keeps the gardens looking beautiful. If you are near the visitor's center, take note of the sign she designed in the knot garden explaining the various herbs planted there. Her love of gardening has opened other doors and has led to employment by the Urban Gardener. During the winter months Janet loves to volunteer at Phipps Conservatory and to design art work.

She is in her third year of picking up donated bread and delivering it to the food bank at the Riverview United Presbyterian Church. New neighbors to her street are also welcomed with a loaf of her home baked bread.

Janet and her husband are the proud parents of two children who have "received a fine education" from Perry High School with both children winning scholarships to college.

Observatory Hill is proud to have selected Janet Pazzynski as its Neighbor of the Year



Janet Pazzynski

# OBSERVATORY HILL INC. COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

PLEASE RETURN IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE

How would you like to receive OHI information?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ E-mail
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Website

In the last six (6) months, how often have you visited our website?

- ☐ Very Often, at least once a day
- ☐ Often, at least a few times a week
- ☐ Sometimes, at least a couple times a month
- ☐ Rarely, at least a few times in the past
- ☐ 6 months
- ☐ Never

What information would you like to see written about in the newsletter? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Profiles on people
- ☐ Informational Pieces
- ☐ Business Profiles
- ☐ Calendar of Events
- ☐ Message from Elected Officials
- ☐ Message from OHI Board
- ☐ OHI Committee Reports
- ☐ Neighborhood News
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

What issues do you think are facing our neighborhood?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Blight/Vacant Properties
- ☐ Business District
- ☐ Litter
- ☐ Parking
- ☐ Parks
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Schools
- ☐ Teen Curfew
- ☐ Teen Curfew
- ☐ Traffic
- ☐ Zoning
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Do you favor going to a strictly online version of our newsletter in order to reduce our carbon print?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

When visiting our website in the past six (6) months, which of the following information did you seek out? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Board of Directors
- ☐ Community Events
- ☐ House Tour Information
- ☐ Neighborhood Information
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Pictures
- ☐ Public Safety Issues
- ☐ Related Links
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

What businesses would you like to see in our business district? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Bar/Microbrewery
- ☐ Boutique
- ☐ Coffeshop
- ☐ Drug Store
- ☐ Dry Cleaner
- ☐ Flower Shop
- ☐ Hardware Store
- ☐ Laundromat
- ☐ Novelty Store
- ☐ Restaurant
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please take a moment and let us know what other concerns or comments you have:

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## SIGN UP WITH US!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive the newsletter:

☐ Electronically

☐ By Mail

☐ I would like to be a Volunteer!

## OHI GOING GREEN

If anyone is interested in receiving our newsletters the OHI Journal via e-mail, please let us know. We will still be mailing out paper copies to those who choose, but in an effort to reduce costs and to go green, we will now be offering another method of keeping up to date with the latest OHI happenings. Please send an e-mail to the OHI mailbox: [ohipgh@gmail.com](mailto:ohipgh@gmail.com) if you would like to receive our newsletters as a PDF file moving forward. You may already be receiving our e-mail blasts of current events but the newsletter is a separate mailing.

## CLEAN UP DAY SCHEDULED

Join us for our first neighborhood clean-up of the year. We are prettying up before the OHI House Tour. Volunteers are needed to help pick up trash in the business district and as many side streets as time allows. Tools and trash bags will be provided. We will meet at 10am in the parking lot across from Schorr's Bakery on Perrysville Avenue and will work until Noon.

# OHI Journal

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Pittsburgh, PA 15233

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## The OHI Board

**Glenn Miller**  
**President**

412.352.7095  
[glenn.miller@stantec.com](mailto:glenn.miller@stantec.com)

**Jason Wrona**  
**Treasurer**

724.322.0198  
[jason.wrona@bipc.com](mailto:jason.wrona@bipc.com)

Stephen Connell  
*Business District*  
412.481.8204  
[soconnell@aol.com](mailto:soconnell@aol.com)

Chris Cruz  
*Communications & Marketing*  
215.431.6014  
[ultracruz@mac.com](mailto:ultracruz@mac.com)

**Walt Nalducci**  
**Vice President**

412-322-6478  
[wnalducci@msn.com](mailto:wnalducci@msn.com)  
*Northside Leadership  
Conference*

Leslee Schaffer  
*Property Concerns/  
Inspection, Heritage Day*  
412.231.1650  
[lesleek1@earthlink.net](mailto:lesleek1@earthlink.net)

Doug Deckert  
*Dinner Events*  
[doug.deckert@gmail.com](mailto:doug.deckert@gmail.com)

**Dorrie Smith**  
**Secretary**

412.877.4828  
[opnthedoor@hotmail.com](mailto:opnthedoor@hotmail.com)  
*Housing, Heritage Day  
Riverview Park, Dinners*

Jasun Stanton  
*Public Safety*  
412.323.2531  
[jasunstanton@hotmail.com](mailto:jasunstanton@hotmail.com)

Jeffrey Wagner  
*House Tour, Riverview Park*  
412.225.2298  
[jeffreywagner2@gmail.com](mailto:jeffreywagner2@gmail.com)

## Annual Registration Form for Membership to Observatory Hill Inc.

Mail to: Observatory Hill Incorporated.  
P.O. Box 100247, Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
412-736-2489

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date Paid \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Contribution: (check one)

☐ \$5 ☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ Other ☐ \$50 (Business Member)

☐ Please include me on the email list that provides information on local activities and important community notices.

☐ Do not include me on any email notifications

Make Checks Payable to: Observatory Hill Inc.

## Observatory Hill Journal Credits

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