

# OHI Journal

Observatory Hill Incorporated



The Newsletter for the Friends & Neighbors of Observatory Hill

Fall 2018



## Neighborhood News

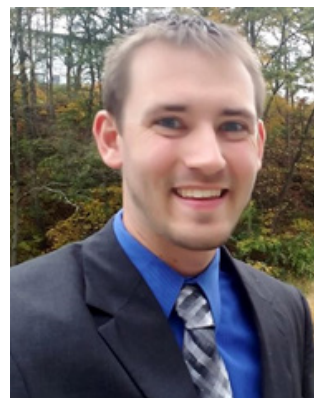
All homes from Phase I of the Bonvue Street Revitalization Project are off the books and all homeowners have moved in. We welcome them to the neighborhood and congratulate them on their new home purchase. We thank everyone who helped and contributed to this revitalization project which injected more than \$1.1 million dollars into Bonvue Street. Our neighborhood has not seen this amount of investment in many years and this is an extraordinary accomplishment for our small nonprofit. This project will make a lasting impact on our neighborhood. We are underway with Phase II and have already purchased another five houses.

Our camera grant was blocked by the city before we received any funding in order to allocate those funds to the new ShotSpotter program. As a result, we were not able to purchase the cameras or upgrade our server with additional storage space which we announced in our last newsletter. Zone One police are working to get the new ShotSpotter equipment installed on the north side. They are having issues finding willing property owners who will allow sensors to be installed on their buildings. These sensors detect gun shots and then alert the police.

We thank the many volunteers, business sponsors, docents and homeowners who stepped up to participate in our annual house event. We got rave reviews and our house tour committee did an outstanding job.

Animal Friends is hosting another Free Vaccine Clinic for the residents of the 15212 and 15214 zip codes. Please leash your dogs and place your cats in a carrier when you arrive. This event will be held on Saturday, October 13 from 10am to 2pm at Fowler Park, 2801 North Charles Street – across from The Pittsburgh Project. Contact Kaley at 412.865.9560 for more information.

## OHI Welcomes New Board Member



Please join us in welcoming Jim Washabaugh to our board. Jim is an architect and is president of Engine 30 Architecture & Construction. He purchased a home in Observatory Hill just a block away from his alma mater, Perry Traditional Academy. Jim holds a M.S. Architecture, Engineering, & Construction Management and a Bachelor

of Architecture degree from Carnegie Mellon University. He is excited to add his skills and expertise to our Business District and our Neighborhood Improvements committees.

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## FROM THE OFFICE OF DARLENE HARRIS



As September rolls around, summer is quickly coming to an end and fall is on its way! The children are making the schools lively again while the adults are still hard at work. The hot summer weather will shortly change with the cool autumn breeze. Please be sure to be aware of people on the sidewalks and follow the rules of the road. Children are still outside enjoying their final moments before the cold winter arrives, especially on Halloween! No road rage please.

We are still working hard here in Council to get the City to pave our roads in the North Side to improve the drive as much as possible. Also, be on the lookout for a meeting to be scheduled to discuss the reallocation of our funding from many of our North Side neighborhoods. It is important to attend to determine what we still need and want in each of our communities. I will post the information on social media about these two topics, so check in with our page! Check with your local neighborhood organization for any additional information.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at: [darlene.harris@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:darlene.harris@pittsburghpa.gov) or 412-255-2135.

*I am here to serve. Be safe, Darlene M. Harris, Councilwoman, District 1*

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## The Latest News from the Library

*By Marta Honores, Library Service Manager*

Dear Neighbors,

With free summer lunches, thousands of books read in the Summer Reading Program, and awesome parties like National Night Out, it was a busy, vibrant season. Thank you for spending the summer with us at the library! As things wind down and students return to school, here's a taste of what you'll experience at the Woods Run Library this September.



CLP-Woods Run

Address: 1201 Woods Run Ave,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Phone: 412-761-3730

Email: [woodsrun@carnegielibrary.org](mailto:woodsrun@carnegielibrary.org)

Website: [www.carnegielibrary.org/clp\\_location/woods-run](http://www.carnegielibrary.org/clp_location/woods-run)

### FOR ADULTS:

#### Free Yoga Classes

Saturday, September 29th and October 27th | 10-11 AM

Yoga is a mind-body practice that combines physical poses, controlled breathing, and meditation or relaxation. This all-levels yoga class will focus on building strength in the basic yoga postures and creating mobility in the joints. Modifications will be given for all poses, making this class suitable for all levels and ages. Please bring your own mat, if you have one.

#### Knits and Knots: A Fiber Arts Club

First Tuesday of every month | 3 - 4 PM

Saturday, September 29th and October 27th | 10-11 AM

Join us for this monthly fiber arts meet-up, featuring skill sharing, lively conversation, and light refreshments. Bring your own project or use some of our supplies to get started. Yarn, needles/hooks, and patterns will be available. Experienced knitters/crocheters and absolute beginners are welcome.

### For Teens:

#### Get Help Applying for Scholarships & Grants for High School Seniors and College Students

By Appointment Only. Give us a call and ask for Ro at 412-761-3730.

#### Life After High School

Every Monday | 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Thinking about where you will be and what you want to do after graduation? Workshops will range from scholarship applications to quick and easy cooking tips to financial literacy and more. CLP is here to get you ready for whatever the future has in store.

For a complete schedule of all events, please see our online calendar: [https://www.carnegielibrary.org/clp\\_location/woods-run/](https://www.carnegielibrary.org/clp_location/woods-run/)

## A WORD FROM MAYOR PEDUTO

Summer is drawing to a close and what a summer it has been for Pittsburgh! As we look forward to the fall, here is some news the news that the Office of Mayor William Peduto would like to share with our friends in Observatory Hill.

At the end of May, Mayor Peduto in conjunction with the city's Construction Industry Task Force, signed two Executive Orders supporting growth of the construction industry and access to family-supporting union jobs for city residents. The Orders relate to project labor agreements (PLAs) and workforce partnerships. PLAs are employment agreements between contractors and labor organizations on construction projects. They provide access to a reliable supply of well-trained, highly-skilled workers and help projects get completed on-time and on-budget. In Pittsburgh they would apply to city-managed projects of \$500,000 or more and be subject to oversight by a Project Labor Agreement Review Committee. Minority workers would comprise at least 12% on the workforce on such projects, and the projects would continue to be held to the city's minority and women-owned contracting goals of 18% and 7% respectively. The workforce partnership order recognizes that minorities and women are underrepresented in the construction industry, and more efforts are needed to boost construction career opportunities in a time when the industry is in need of well-trained workers. The Construction Industry Task Force is already working on initiatives to bring more minorities and women into the apprenticeship and work site pipeline, and the Order commits \$350,000 for a Workforce Development Fund to support outreach and recruitment efforts including a pre-apprenticeship bridge program, online applications, website portals, and data sharing to track the initiative. The Pittsburgh Regional Building Trades Council has committed \$100,000 and the City of Pittsburgh \$250,000.

This summer marked the fourth year of the Learn & Earn summer youth employment program. Operated through a partnership between the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, and Partner4Work, Learn & Earn annually connects nearly 2,000 underserved Allegheny County and Pittsburgh residents, ages 14 through 21, with 6-week summer jobs in high-demand sectors. This year, 26 Learn & Earn providers paired young people with summer jobs at several hundred sites, where they explored career options, developed valuable skills and gained work experience. Participants also received 12 hours of work-readiness training, covering topics such as productivity, accountability, problem-solving and collaboration.

For more information on what's happening in the City and the Office of the Mayor, feel free to visit: <http://pittsburghpa.gov/mayor/mayor.html>, follow @CityPGH on Twitter, or subscribe to <https://nextdoor.com/agency/community-affairs/> on Nextdoor.

**Wishing you and your families a lovely fall season!**

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## Board Elections Held This Fall

We are collecting applications for those interested in being on the board of OHI. This is a two-year term which involves: attending the monthly board meetings held the 3rd Wednesday of the month (no meeting is held in December); helping with the annual house tour and/or the annual Heritage Festival and also participating in one of the various committees which make up the board. We are looking for specific skill sets in the area of website maintenance and marketing and we can always use real estate attorneys. If you have the drive to make a difference in your neighborhood and can make this time commitment, please consider serving with us. Contact us at 412.736.2489 for an application or send an email to: [ohipgh@gmail.com](mailto:ohipgh@gmail.com) and an application will be emailed to you. Deadline for submissions is October 31st. Voting on new board members takes place at the November board meeting.



## Observatory Hill House Tour

*By Bonny Kwolek and Jeff Wagner*

The 2018 House Tour was a great success with well over 500 people participating in a self-guided walking tour of homes and gardens on Judges' Row (Perrysville Avenue), Delaware Street, Orleans Street and Watson Boulevard. People from all over the area came to see unique homes, taste craft beer and spirits, choose from a variety of food trucks and see local artists displaying and selling their wares.

The theme for this year's tour was "The Ins and Outs of Observatory Hill. As in all the past years, there were spectacular homes, but this year several beautiful and colorful gardens were highlighted as well. It was apparent that all the homeowners worked very hard and were proud of their homes and the neighborhood.

Repeated from last year was the attraction of local craft beer and spirit tastings offered in relaxed outdoor settings. Participating establishments were Allegheny City Brewery, Aurochs Brewing Company, Grist House Brewery, Helicon Brewing, Lincoln Avenue Brewery, Penn Brewery, Southern Tier, Threadbare Cider and Wigle Whiskey.

A new feature this year was the participation of invited craft artists. Craft and musical artists presented their work in select houses or gardens and added color and interest to the general festivities. Many of the artists featured are from our Observatory Hill neighborhood, such as Michael Schiavone, Morgan Gilbreath, Wendy Kramer, Robert Strovers, Paz and Ukulele Eddie and the OHM Project. Other artists participating were Jen Joyce, Laura Sapet, Steven Dray, Erin Piotrowski, Jesse Lowry, Jay Michaels, Brad Yoder, Thomas Boyce and Plan B. Ron Donoughe created a plein air painting during the tour for all to watch. He made his 90 Neighborhoods of Pittsburgh book available nearby. After all, the front cover of the book was painted here in Observatory Hill!

Plans are now underway for the 2019 tour. Next year's focus will be on the Acorn Hill area of the neighborhood. The date of the tour will most likely return to its usual time of the first Sunday in June (June 2, 2019) but that is yet to be determined. Being on the house tour is a wonderful way to get long overdue projects done (slightly stressful but extremely effective) and more importantly there are many opportunities to get to know your neighbors better and create a stronger community. If you are a homeowner in the Acorn Hill area and have questions as to what is involved in participating on the tour, please contact Bonny Kwolek ([bonnyk6@gmail.com](mailto:bonnyk6@gmail.com)).

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## Observatory Hill Development Awarded Grant

As our development company works to revitalize our commercial district, we have had a funding shortage we have been trying to fill. We were one of 14 groups who applied for the much coveted CITF Grant which provides loans and grants to qualified groups for revitalization projects like ours. We are happy to announce that we were chosen as the recipient of this year's grant for \$175,000. We thank the many people who met with us, advised us, wrote support letters and spoke on our behalf. This award would not have been possible without the help of Mayor Bill Peduto, State Senator Wayne Fontana, Councilwoman Darlene Harris, Denise Ranalli Russell, State Representative Adam Ravenstahl, Vince Pallus, the Northside Leadership Conference and Mark Masterson. We thank all of you for helping to support this vital project.





## 2nd Annual Light Up Night in Observatory Hill

Friday, December 7th from 6pm – 8pm

What better way of bringing the community together during the holiday season. Join us as we celebrate the holidays with you in our business district, now branded as “The 5 Corners of Observatory Hill” where Baytree, East, Mairdale Streets and Perrysville Ave come together. The evening will be filled with holiday cheer, music and caroling, refreshments, crafts and children’s activities, raffles and food. Santa will join us again since he had such a great time last year so be sure to get your Christmas list ready. Members of the FivePoints Business District committee have been working hard to make this another memorable event that you will not want to miss so mark your calendars.



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## Neighbor of the Year Honors Bonita Kwolek *by Jeff Wagner*



Bonny and her husband, Jeff, while looking for a house in the city, became interested in Observatory Hill after attending several house tours in the neighborhood. Even before they found their current house, she served on the House Tour committee, attending meetings while still living in the South Hills. Interest in the House Tour had waned a few years until a small

group of enthusiastic neighbors reorganized the tour in 2012.

Bonny was thrilled when they asked her to put her newly acquired house to be on the tour. After having such a fulfilling experience and getting to know more of her neighbors, she rejoined the committee and has been very active since. She realizes how important the event is for the neighborhood as it not only brings awareness to its assets to many people outside of the community, but it also helps to build a strong community by having neighbors get to know each other better.

In 2016 she and Jeff hosted a party to recruit homeowners for the 2017 House Tour. She got a record 13 houses to participate, including her own. She was the liaison between the tour organizers and the homeowners and took care of their needs and questions regarding the tour. Determined to get as many sponsorships as possible, she mailed and then visited many businesses and organizations around the Northside, getting them to buy an ad in the program booklet. That year, the tour logged a record number of sponsors including 10 full-page advertisers. The tour was a huge success not only in the record attendance but in the interest that it attracted.

Bonny is a diehard promoter of the Northside and likes to visit and support all of its 18 neighborhoods. She has a special affinity for the house tours and usually attends each one each year, looking for new ideas and approaches. She also simply likes to see the architecture and understand the journeys that each homeowner made. Bonny continues to volunteer her time to the OHI House Tour and gives the committee the extra oomph it needs to plan these big events.

OHI is proud to have selected Bonita Kwolek as its Neighbor of the Year.

## STATE GRANT RECEIVED

We would like to thank Senator Wayne Fontana and State Representative Adam Ravenstahl for the assistance they provided on our behalf in support of a state grant for \$75,0000. In addition to us, only one other community development corporation was selected to receive this grant award. This money will go towards our \$1.7 million dollar business district revitalization project and this officially closes our funding gap. Thank you to the Northside Leadership Conference for their assistance.



## THE OHI BOARD

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*President*

**Leslee Schaffer**  
*Treasurer*

**Marlee Gallagher**  
*Vice President*

**Jeff Wagner**  
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**OCTOBER 17:** Board Meeting at 7pm at the Byzantine Seminary,  
3605 Perrysville Ave.

**OCTOBER 31:** Deadline to submit OHI board member application.

**NOVEMBER 21:** Board Meeting at 7pm at the Byzantine Seminary,  
3605 Perrysville Ave

**DECEMBER 7:** Observatory Hill Light Up Night from 6pm-8pm.  
Join us on Perrysville Avenue in our commercial  
district for an evening of fun, food and festivities.  
Bring your family, friends and neighbors. As with  
last year, Santa will be there!

No OHI Board meeting in December. Happy Holidays!