

# OH Journal



The Newsletter for the Friends &amp; Neighbors of Observatory Hill

Spring 2018



## Neighborhood News

Phase I of the Bonvue Street Revitalization Project has come to a close and we have received raves reviews.

- 23 sold for \$200,000
- 29 under contract for \$185,000
- 34 sold for \$180,000
- 111 under contract for \$170,000
- 115 sold for \$165,000

We thank everyone who supported us as we lead the charge to reduce blight, address absentee landlord issues and to revert multifamily homes back to their original state. Phase II is now underway. We have already purchased #4, #121, #125 and #217. Abandoned for more than a decade, 123 Bonvue Street, was torn down by the city due to extensive water damage. We own the homes on both sides of this structure and hope to turn this space into a shared driveway. The architectural designs have been drafted and uploaded onto our website so hop on and take a look: [www.observatoryhill.net](http://www.observatoryhill.net).

We signed on with a new real estate agent and will now be working with Howard Hanna to market our buildings in the commercial district. We hosted a celebration to mark the

kick off of our business district improvements a few weeks ago so let the revitalization begin!

Additional trees were secured and were planted last Fall. Several tree pits were dug on Bonvue Street and in our business district on Perrysville Avenue. Thank you to Jeff Wagner for working to beautify our neighborhood!

Another grant has been received and we will add more cameras to our neighborhood and will purchase additional storage space for our current server. A portion of the grant will also cover the printing and mailing costs of our newsletter.

Animal Friends is continuing to target Observatory Hill this summer for their mass trappings of feral cats. They will be going door to door speaking with residents and looking for loose cats to humanely trap, spay/neuter, vaccinate. The cats will then be returned back to their original location - free of charge. They are asking if you have an outdoor cat to put a collar on it, or have it micro-chipped so they know it belongs to someone. Friendly cats which are determined to be strays may be put up for adoption. If a cat has a small cut out on its right ear tip, it has been taken care of. For more info, contact Kaley at 412.847.7068 or email her at [kkaczynski@thinkingoutsidethecage.org](mailto:kkaczynski@thinkingoutsidethecage.org).

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## FROM THE OFFICE OF DARLENE HARRIS



This summer is highly anticipated by all of us in the Northside. As the weather gets nicer, there are going to be plenty of outdoor events for everyone to enjoy. I'd like to mention, as well, that baseball season has officially started! Though we all love the Pirates, we do not all love the traffic that comes from their games. Please keep in mind that people from out of town will be visiting our city more frequently as Spring progresses, and it's important for everyone to follow the rules of the road!

In other news, this summer we hope to have DPW pave a few streets in the Northside. As it happens, my office will try to send out notices of street closures and detours. The summer weather brings out the animals again, so please be careful driving. Watch out for deer during the evening as they start to make their way near major roadways again, and enjoy the beautiful weather! Also, if you're looking for some after-school activities on the Northside, I encourage you to check out the Warhol and Artists Image Resource for exciting and creative weekly activities!

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.

Enjoy the warm weather! - *Darlene M. Harris, Councilwoman, District 1*

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### Neighborhood Clean Up

Join us from 10am to Noon on Saturday, June 23 as we pretty up the neighborhood in preparation for the annual house tour the following day. We will meet in the parking lot across from Schorr's Bakery and will work to pick up litter in the business district and as many side streets as time allows. Tools, bags and gloves will be provided.

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### The Latest News from the Library

*By Marta Honores, Library Service Manager*

Dear Neighbors,

We look forward to seeing you at the Woods Run Library this summer! Here are just a few highlights of what you will find.



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)

#### Annual Summer Reading Kick-Off Party

Thursday, June 14th 10:30 AM – 12 PM

Popsicles, a family-friendly music performance, and arts & crafts. Not a bad way to start off the summer! While you're here, don't forget to register for the summer reading program!

#### Green Grocer: The Mobile Farmer's Market

Tuesdays, 3 PM – 4 PM

Green Grocer is a mobile farmer's market selling fresh, healthy food at an affordable price. Every Tuesday from 3-4 pm, you will be able to stop by the library to purchase fresh produce, as well as frozen meat, eggs, rice, pasta, and beans. Everyone is welcome to shop at the market, and multiple forms of payment are accepted, including cash, credit card, and SNAP/EBT.

#### Lunch Break at the Library

Monday – Friday, 11:30 AM – 1 PM

Stop by the Library every weekday for hands-on activities, crafts and games with friends! A hot lunch will be provided during this program while supplies last each day. Lunch and activities are for youth ages 18 and younger, and for persons with disabilities up to age 21.

#### National Night Out

Tuesday, August 7th, 4 PM – 7:30 PM

Join your neighbors for National Night Out! Festivities will begin at Providence Family Support Center at 4:00, followed by a parade at 5:15 to the Library. We will be outside on the lawn with family-friendly activities and refreshments, along with community friends.

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*Register for Summer Reading from home and stop in for prizes! Beginning June 11, everyone can register at: [carnegielibrary.org/summer](http://carnegielibrary.org/summer).*

## A WORD FROM THE MAYOR

Summer has (finally) arrived in Pittsburgh! As we excitedly look towards warmer weather and outdoor fun, the Office of Mayor William Peduto would like to share some exciting news from the first few months of 2018 with our friends in Observatory Hill.

First, we'd like to take a moment to congratulate Observatory Hill, Inc. on the completion of Phase 1 of the Bonvue Street Revitalization Project. This was a unique collaboration among many vital community partners including the URA, SSB Bank, the Northside Leadership Conference, the Northside Community Development Fund, and the Rivers Casino. This initiative to revitalize Bonvue Street while keeping in mind concerns like maintaining affordability and the historical character of the neighborhood is not only beneficial to Observatory Hill but an excellent example for the rest of the city. Mayor Peduto and the City of Pittsburgh look forward to the next phases of the Bonvue Street Revitalization Project and continued involvement and support for the neighborhood!

In February, Governor Tom Wolf, Mayor William Peduto and Secretary of the Department of Community Development Dennis Davin signed documents officially taking the City of Pittsburgh out of Act 47 distressed municipality status. The City agreed to Act 47 oversight – which led to controls on spending, increased taxes and adoption of fiscal reforms – in 2004. It renewed that status in 2009 and again in 2014. In his budget address in November of last year, Mayor Peduto announced that the time was right to end the state oversight and introduced legislation to Council to cement that fiscal discipline by adopting caps on pension enhancements and standards regarding debt service; retiring unspent capital funds, and maintaining a healthy fund balance.

In April, Mayor William Peduto and the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) finalized the list of 2018 street resurfacing projects, totaling nearly 55 miles of paving this year – the most since 2003. The paving list was planned by DOMI and finalized this week after discussions with members of Pittsburgh City Council on street paving needs in their districts. The city's overall street resurfacing budget for 2018 is nearly \$17 million. The Peduto Administration introduced legislation in February adding \$800,000 to that budget. Observatory Hill streets of Bonvue Street, Delaware Street, Richard Way, and Chemung Street will all be included as part of paving this year. A full list and weekly schedule of paving work are available at the DOMI website: <http://pittsburghpa.gov/domi/>. There is also a searchable map available on the online site Burgh's Eye View.

The City of Pittsburgh Office of Management and Budget has officially launched “Balancing Act,” an online public engagement tool that allows you to be in charge of the city budget through three components. The goal of this tool is to allow OMB to engage more people and collect more feedback. Currently, they host two public meetings yearly to gather input on the capital budget. This tool not only aims to broaden the way OMB receives feedback but also allows greater transparency and access to a better understanding of the process. Through the Balancing Act interactive tool, you will be able to set your priorities and preferences for the city's budget. You also can see an estimated receipt of how your tax dollars are being spent on the budget. The tool is made up of three parts: tax receipt, capital budget simulator, and operating budget simulator.

**Tax Receipt Tool:** Allows you to see an estimate of what you contribute to the city.

**Capital Budget Simulator:** Explore the capital budget, make your blueprint for city spending.

**Operating Budget Simulator:** Test your ability to manage city books and balance the city budget.

Feedback collected online via this tool and during capital budget meetings is submitted and considered during the budget creation process. You can find the tool here: [pittsburgh-tr.abalancingact.com/taxreceipt/](http://pittsburgh-tr.abalancingact.com/taxreceipt/)

In April, BigBurgh.com, a collaborative effort of several local service agencies recently taken over by the City of Pittsburgh, was honored by the Allegheny County Children Roundtable with the “Champion for Children” award. BigBurgh.com is an online application that directs youth and adults experiencing homelessness, or anyone in need, to free, low-barrier services in the City of Pittsburgh and greater Allegheny County. Designed for quick-and-easy use on your cell phone, BigBurgh has become an invaluable resource for police, teachers, clergy, medical and social services professionals, parents, and ordinary citizens alike. BigBurgh lists essential everyday needs, such as meals, shelter, clinics, showers and laundry, clothing and diapers, and expert help with financial, legal and employment matters, as well as essential emergency hotlines. List are shown based on the user's location, and services are described in concise, jargon-free terms.

For continued updates regarding the City and to address neighborhood-specific concerns, feel free to reach out to the Office of Community Affairs at (412)-255-4773 or via their social media channels on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ocapgh/>), Twitter (@OCAPGH), and Nextdoor ([www.nextdoor.com/agency/community-affairs](http://www.nextdoor.com/agency/community-affairs)).

We wish you and your families a beautiful summer filled with warm weather and warmer memories!

## Bonvue Street Celebrates with Ribbon Cutting

By Leslee Schaffer



On a windy day in May, OHI board members joined Bonvue residents and invited guests to both celebrate the completion of Phase I of the revitalization project and to welcome our new homeowners who have already moved in. They were presented with welcome baskets of bread from our very own Schorr Bakery, salt, wine and a DVD. The morning was filled with gratitude as we thanked all those who had a hand in this project. It would not have been possible without our funders: the URA, the Northside Community Development Fund, Rivers Casino and SSB Bank. We thank the Northside Leadership Conference and our project managers, Jon Huck and Judy Melvin for keeping this project on track. We thank VAF Architecture and Team Inc. for their contributions, expertise and for five beautiful homes. We thank Christa Ross of RE/MAX

for helping us with the home sales. We thank our local branch of First National Bank on Perrysville Avenue who have supported us, met with us and have made donations which help to keep us going. We thank the board of OHI for taking a leap of faith and for diving into the unknown to support this venture on behalf of the Bonvue homeowners. We could not have done it without you. Now let's do it all over again for Phase II – places everyone places!

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## Helping Our Neighbors in Need

By Leslee Schaffer

As you may be aware, our neighbors, the Portuguese Family, are dealing with issues related to a landslide in their Observatory Hill home. Homeowner insurance does not cover this damage and they were given little notice to evacuate. A one-week hotel stay was provided by the Red Cross and then they were on their own to find affordable housing. We have worked to help with basic needs, purchased a microwave and school clothes and the Riverview Church Thrift Store gave them a credit so they could purchase additional clothes and housewares free of charge. We are awaiting the results of geotesting which was done around the house and the engineers will then be able to determine if the house can be salvaged or if demolition is required. Since the family is looking at long term displacement, we have started a GoFundMe page to help them with their expenses. We also hosted a spaghetti dinner fundraiser and received a generous donation from Oxford Solutions. We thank everyone who has stepped up and offered assistance and their spare rooms, offered to cook them meals and made monetary donations. They have used the first payment of donations for a security deposit and the first month's rent on a two-bedroom apartment. We are still collecting donations and checks may also be mailed to us but please note it is for the landslide fund. The Portuguese family has asked to pass on their thanks and gratitude to everyone who has helped them in their time of emergency. They were so touched to see those who attended, volunteered and supported their spaghetti dinner.





## Observatory Hill House Tour scheduled for June 24

Tour focuses on the Ins and Outs of Observatory Hill



On Sunday, June 24 from Noon to 5:00 pm, Observatory Hill will be bustling with visitors from all over the region touring the “Ins and Outs” of this Northside neighborhood. This year’s tour will include homes with unique original detail, welcoming porches, and colorful gardens. As an added attraction, some of the homes, gardens and porches will be used to showcase local artists’ talents – both craft and performance.

“Living in Observatory Hill, we’ve come to realize that not only do we have a fantastic and unique housing stock much appreciated by our homeowners, but we also have so many talented artists and gardeners and that’s what we want to showcase”, says Jeff Wagner, House Tour Committee Chair.

When putting out a call for artists for the event, several community artist and musicians offered to set up their wares or to perform their

music during the tour. We will have painters, glass, jewelry, and photography artists and others. Local musicians and performers will be entertaining tour-goers on various porches or in gardens.

Last year’s tour had record breaking attendance and so back by popular demand, there will also be craft beer tastings from local breweries as well as spirit and cider tastings from local distilleries. A fun variety of local favorite food trucks will also be there for folks to purchase lunch or a bite to eat.

The self-guided walking tour will begin on Riverview Avenue and head south along Perrysville Avenue to the area known as Judge’s Row. Several of these grand homes that run along the border of Riverview Park will be on the tour. From there the tour will wrap around to the quiet homes tucked away on Delaware and Orleans. The tour will conclude with a beautiful Victorian “painted lady” that sits high on the hillside of Watson Boulevard.

Tickets are \$15 in advance and are available online at: [www.observatoryhill.net](http://www.observatoryhill.net). Tickets are \$18 the day of the tour. Registration is at the corner of Perrysville and Riverview Avenues. For more information go to [www.observatoryhill.net](http://www.observatoryhill.net) or call (412) 736-2489.

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## 5K Run and Fitness Walk/Heritage Day Festival *by Dorrie Smith*

City of Pittsburgh Special Events in partnership with the Northside Leadership Conference will kick off their 12th summer season with the Riverview Park 5K Run and Fitness Walk at 7:00 pm on Friday June 8th and Heritage Day Festival Saturday, June 9th from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. in beautiful Riverview Park on the Northside. The Heritage Day Festival is the signature intro event for the Stars at Riverview Summer Concerts and Movies Series. Families can enjoy a day of frontier exploration, Native American snacks and various crafts. Returning vendors include; Bike Pittsburgh, Friends of Riverview Park, and the Northside Chronicle. Our traditional attractions include Arts in the Park, Venture Outdoors Bike Rodeo, our favorite animal pals from the Animal Rescue League, the Humane Society and more will also be on board. Stop by the Northside Leadership Conference and Observatory Hill Inc.’s booths to see what’s new and happening on the North Side and in Observatory Hill.

The Heritage Day Festival features non-profit groups providing hands-on family activities. City of Pittsburgh Public Safety Dept. features their EMS, Bomb Squad and Police K9 Unit. There will also be on-site health consultations and free tours at The Observatory from 1- 3:00 p.m. Gather 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, Heritage Day Festival, Chairperson at 412-877-4828 or email [4dsmigroup@gmail.com](mailto:4dsmigroup@gmail.com). Heritage Day is a free rain or shine event!





## We thank Oxford Solutions Inc.

for being our dinner sponsor for the Portuguese Family Landslide Fund spaghetti dinner. Because of a generous donation, all proceeds from the dinner benefitted the landslide victims. Kudos for a job well done!



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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**June 8: Riverview Park 5K Race** and Fitness Walk begins at 7pm. Registration begins at 5pm in the activities building.

**June 9: Heritage Day Festival** continues at Riverview Park from Noon to 4pm. A variety of festival activities and exhibits which include fun for all ages.

**June 9 – August 25: 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 14: Northside Leadership Annual Scholarship & Awards Dinner** held at the Grand Hall. This 35th annual dinner will honor the outstanding students, businesses and neighborhood volunteers who make our community great.

**June 20: Monthly OHI Board Meeting** at 7pm at the Byzantine Seminary 3605 Perrysville Avenue. All are welcome to attend.

**June 23: Neighborhood Clean Up:** Join us from 10am to Noon on Saturday, June 23rd to pick up trash. Meet in the parking lot across from Schorr's Bakery. Tools, gloves and bags are provided.

**June 24: Observatory Hill House Tour** from Noon to 5pm. Ticket tables are located on the lawn of the Riverview United Presbyterian Church. Annual house tour which benefits and showcases our unique neighborhood.

**July 18: Monthly OHI Board Meeting** at 7pm at the Byzantine Seminary 3605 Perrysville Avenue. All are welcome to attend.

**August 15: Monthly OHI Board Meeting** at 7pm at the Byzantine Seminary 3605 Perrysville Avenue. All are welcome to attend