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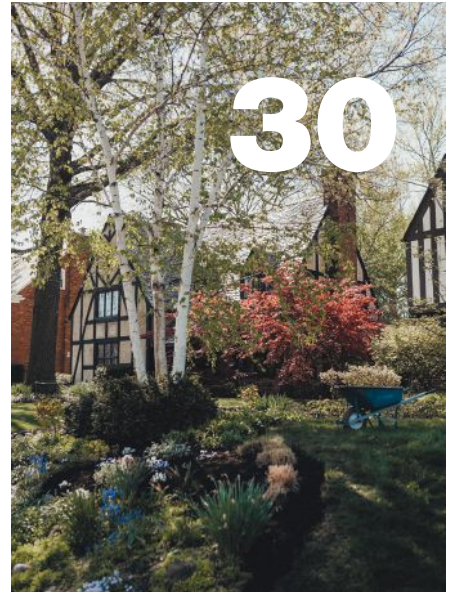
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of Excellence**

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development team, have recently expanded into new homes.



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Finding their Way Home

Two Shaker Heights High School graduates have opened new
creative businesses in town — a restaurant and a dance studio.

ON THE COVER:

Shaker Heights High School
senior Rowan Dunn gets a lesson
in construction management at
the Farnsleigh Apartments.
Photography by Gus Chan

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SHAKER LIFE

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Relax, Puppy

Two years after moving to Shaker Heights, Déja Pearson opened True Vibes Unleashed to create relaxing grooming experiences.



Two Companies; One Couple

Kathy and Ralph Dise run separate companies on opposite ends of town, both conveniently situated near their Shaker home.



Shoemaker Extraordinaire

Carlos Gomez's reputation as a skilled cobbler has brought him a long way from his hometown of Gualaceo, Ecuador.

Autumn Lawn Care, or How to Learn to Love Leaf Litter

While it's always difficult saying goodbye to summer, leaving the leaves helps the memories linger, while also benefiting the local ecosystem. Beyond providing shade and beauty, leaves can turn to work for homeowners in autumn. Here are several sustainability suggestions on managing those millions of beautiful, colorful falling leaves.

- Consider allowing fallen leaves to biodegrade on site, as they improve soil quality.

- If you must remove leaf litter, try using a rake rather than gas-powered machinery, which emits carbon monoxide.

- If you can't use a rake and must remove leaves from your lawn, use a battery-powered electric lawn mower, without the bag, to mulch the leaves.

- If you must remove leaf litter, compost leaves on a home compost pile, layering green and brown organic material.

- If you cannot do any of the above, rake leaves to the tree lawn for organic waste collection by the City, which collects loose leaves from tree lawns from October 15 until December 15 each year.

- As a last resort: Use a battery-powered electric leaf blower, hopefully charged through a 100 percent renewably sourced electric supplier, for any leaf collection activity.

Hint: By joining the City's new 100 percent renewably sourced electric aggregation program, and using only e-powered lawn care equipment, you will be doing your part to share more sustainable land management practices in our community.

For more information, go to shakeronline.com/848/Sustainable-Lawn-Care.



Passing the Leafy Baton: Longtime Nature Center Director Kay Carlson Retires, Peter Bode Succeeds

After 19 years of dedication, Kay Carlson stepped down as president and CEO of the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes earlier this year. Prior to her 15-year run as president, she served four years on the Nature Center's board.

During her tenure, Carlson provided visionary leadership, including shepherding a successful capital campaign from 2017 to 2021. The campaign raised funds for a transformative restoration of the Nature Center's trails and habitats, and new features such as the nature play area, treehouse, and meditation terrace. In 2019, Carlson was named a Notable Woman in Nonprofits by Crain's Cleveland Business.

"I am grateful for the experience and opportunity to help grow the Nature Center from a sleepy little place in the woods to a thriving nonprofit organization that serves over 13,000 students and 140,000 visitors per year," says Carlson.

"It wasn't always easy, but thanks to amazing staff, board, volunteers, and supporters, we were able to streamline operations, stabilize the Center's financial footing, increase its educational reach to underserved students, and improve the biodiversity of the site through habitat restoration."

Carlson says she will most miss "working closely with so many wonderful people who share a common interest in the environment and connecting people to nature. It has been an honor to help advance the Nature Center's mission, and with so many exciting opportunities ahead, I am confident that it will continue to thrive into the future." Her successor, Peter Bode (pictured above), started in May, allowing several weeks' overlap before Carlson's June exit.

Bode comes to the Nature Center from the Community Life Collaborative, where he served as executive director. With more than a decade of environmental nonprofit leadership, Bode has extensive experience, ranging from senior ecological project manager at West Creek Conservancy, to planning commissioner for the City of Seven Hills.

He is a graduate of Cleveland State University, where he earned a B.S. in environmental science. He is also certified by the Society for Ecological Restoration as an ecological restoration practitioner and is a qualified data collector for the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.



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Grab a Bite; Charge Your EV

Residents can now charge their electric vehicles while spending time at the Van Aken District, thanks to new Tesla Supercharger stations at Van Aken District plaza, just north of 1899 Indoor Golf.



The station has 12 Tesla Superchargers, joining a network of more than 45,000 Tesla Superchargers across the U.S. While the Superchargers are plug and play with all Tesla models, residents with some other EVs can purchase an adapter to be able to charge via the Tesla app (check with your manufacturer).

The Tesla Supercharger station joins the existing network of EV chargers the City installed at four locations several years ago. Most of the City's locations allow two EVs to charge simultaneously. They support charging of up to 7.2kW through the industry-standard J-1772 connector and are located at City Hall (3400 Lee Rd.), The Dealership (3558 Lee Rd.), Thornton Park (3301 Warrensville Center Rd.), and the parking lot at the corner of Larchmere and Kendall roads. There is also charging at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cleveland at 21600 Shaker Blvd.

Learn more at shakeronline.com/sustainability.

City Receives Grant to Purchase, Redesign Recycling Containers

A regional grant has enabled the City to purchase 20 new recycling containers and spruce them up with educational wrap packaging.

Each year, the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District offers an opportunity for municipalities to apply for a Cuyahoga Recycling Awareness Grant (CRAG). The maximum amount is \$6,000.

"We apply for this grant every year and have been fortunate enough to be awarded the maximum each time," says Public Works Administrative Manager Kelly Baker.

The colorful new wraps were designed by Ellen Seguin Design, a Shaker business.

"The recycling cans that were purchased years ago with the CRAG were getting worn and we really wanted to

continue our recycling messaging, staying consistent throughout the city," Baker says.

The new containers are located at City Hall; Thornton Park; the Kendall Road parking lot and the BP Gas Station, both in Larchmere; Warrensville Center Road by J Pistone; and Chagrin Boulevard in front of the shops at Van Aken District South.



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By the
Numbers:

Shaker's Business Boom

More than
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businesses in total

8 prospective
businesses
and **2** business
expansions
in the works

65
new business openings
since 2020

42%
of the City's income tax
receipts now come from
businesses,
up from 34 percent
10 years ago

3
new development projects
to help further diversify
our tax base:
• Farnsleigh Rd. apartments
(Van Aken District Phase 2),
• Van Aken Mews, and
• Arcadia

\$455K
invested in 20 storefronts
since 2016, thanks to
the City's Storefront
Renovation Program

\$17.7M
in grants secured to implement the
public infrastructure improvements
of the Lee Road Action Plan,
which will revitalize the Lee Road
commercial district **SL**

**Read
more**
about new
and expanding
Shaker businesses
beginning on
page 44.

Shaker Grams

We **see** you **seeing** Shaker.

- H/T to those capturing the community.
- Tag your photos to #shaker365.
- You might just see them on these pages!



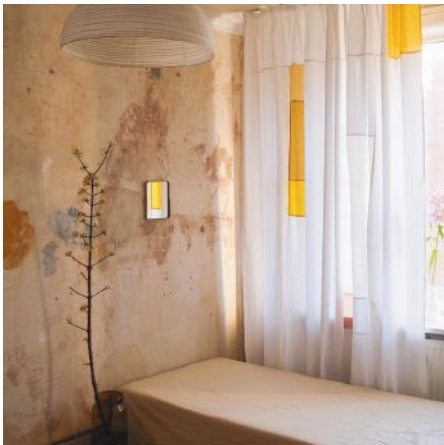
@gardencitycle | Plentiful 'garden'



@manifest_cle | Eye see you



@extraordinarylady | Seasonings' greetings



@rsboutique | Summer simplicity



@shakerartscouncil | Live art



@shakerlibrary | Timeless fun



@shakerhtsnutrition | New beginnings



@sugarartsbakehouse | Sweet Swifties



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Shaker
Schools



Nurturing and Developing Young Learners

Q + A with Dejunee Lawson, Early Childhood Coordinator

Dejunee M. Lawson, the Shaker Heights City School District's first full-time early childhood coordinator, assumes this crucial role as the District plans to expand its pre-kindergarten program. She will provide administrative oversight for the planning, implementation, and student support for the Early Childhood Classrooms.

Lawson will also help plan the District's pre-K expansion at Ludlow, and serve as a point person to collaborate with other local pre-K providers.

Before coming to Shaker Heights, Lawson served as an assistant principal in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, where her duties included overseeing a 120-student preschool program. Prior to that, she was a classroom teacher for 10 years in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District.

Lawson has a strong track record of nurturing and developing young learners through collaboration with staff, students, and families. She recognizes the importance of a high-quality early childhood program and its ability to drive equitable educational opportunities for all students.

Educators seem to agree on the importance of a high-quality early childhood program, especially for children from poverty and marginalized communities. Do you agree?

It's not necessarily that the value of early childhood education is different for students from marginalized communities. It's more that access is different. If you have a child being raised by a single parent or a grandparent or a foster family, it looks different. Those children may really need to receive that readiness and exposure to socialization.

What brought you into early education?

Since I was a young child I loved learning and I loved teaching. As a young person I loved babysitting and teaching summer school. I love our youngest learners because they are so honest and open to new things. I feel this was just my calling. This is who I am. At my core I am an early childhood educator. My path to this role has been a unique one. When I began my career, I wanted to teach for five years and then open my own preschool. Here I am 20 years later. I love public sector education. I believe I now have the best of all worlds.

Shaker Heights is contemplating a significant expansion of its preschool program. That must be exciting for you.

One of my key goals is to live in the present, but also to live in the future. That means living now and when the transition to Ludlow happens. We want to ask how we can take this program to Ludlow and make the transition seamless for our students and staff.

What interested you about coming to Shaker?

I grew up in Cleveland Heights, so I am certainly familiar with Shaker. What I really love about Shaker Heights is its rich history and traditions. Combine that with the fact that the community is investing in an expanded preschool program, and it's an exciting journey.

What hobbies or activities do you enjoy?

In addition to spending time with family and friends, I love to learn and do research. I'm always thinking about what I can do to improve my skill set and help the stakeholders I serve. I guess I'm really a lifelong learner. These days, learning just doesn't happen in the classroom. You can do research on the internet anytime, even sitting on a park bench.

Funding continues to be a challenge, both in Ohio and across the nation. Why haven't we secured universal preschool for all?

I think it would be nice if early childhood education was better understood in the political arena. We still have a lot of work to do to show why it's so critical for our children.



Felecia Evans to Lead Statewide Education Organization

Felecia M. Evans, director of school leadership, is the new president-elect of the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators (OAESA). Evans also serves on the board of directors for OAESA as the federal relations coordinator, and through this role she represents thousands of school leaders across the state.

Evans, who joined the District in 2022, provides leadership and support to the District's eight school principals to strengthen and develop them as building and instructional leaders. During her career she has served as a classroom teacher, instructional coach, assistant principal, and principal. Before coming to Shaker Heights, Evans was principal at Lander Elementary School in the Mayfield City School District. She also taught and held leadership positions in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights and Solon schools.

Originally from Minneapolis, Evans played Division I basketball at the University of Akron.



A Letter from the SHAKER SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Hello from the Shaker Schools Foundation

It is my pleasure to update you on the work of the Shaker Schools Foundation. Our community is unique for many reasons and our Foundation is one of them. Since 1981, the Foundation has been enhancing opportunity and access to the excellent education that Shaker provides.

I'm happy to highlight some of the projects we helped launch that continue to provide Shaker students with learning opportunities for years to come. They continue to warm my heart as I visit our schools and see our mission in action.

All kindergarteners and first graders have been learning to ride two-wheelers, thanks to the All Kids Bike program. Our physical education teachers are surrounded by students with matching bike helmets and big smiles as they hit a milestone in learning to ride solo without training wheels. This program continues annually at our five elementary schools.

Our Woodbury students are imagining, creating, and designing in their Innovation Lab. It's been fabulous to see fifth- and sixth-grade students applying the design cycle as they program 3D printers and laser cutters. In Woodbury's halls, you can see beautiful posters of student photographs they created by using the wide-format printer.

"It's my favorite class," is what we hear from eighth-grade students in the Woodworking Design Course at the Middle School. They love hands-on learning as they collaborate, design, and see projects come to life. They learn lifelong skills such as measuring and safe tool use and are so proud of their finished products.

The Foundation has also supported the High School's jewelry courses, where students use industry-standard technology and software to design and craft amazing pieces. We're also supporting the launch of the new Fashion Design course sequence this year. Coming soon: Our own Shaker Project Runway.

The High School's Raider Athletic Center is busy with physical fitness classes and athletic teams working out from zero period to after school. It's a state-of-the-art fitness center where students can build strength, conditioning, and teamwork.

Finally, I'm thrilled to share that A Night for the Red & White is coming home to Shaker! For the first time, we are holding our annual gala at Shaker Heights High School. Mark your calendars for 7 pm Saturday, March 2, 2024, and come out to enjoy a night of dinner, dancing, silent auction, and a champagne toast with emcee David Pogue (SHHS '81). Go to shakerschoolsfoundation.org/events for more information and ticket sales.

We are grateful for our generous donors — alumni, parents, residents, and local businesses — who make this important work possible. Thank you for your dedication to this community and our students. To learn more, and to join in supporting Shaker students, visit us at shakerschoolsfoundation.org.

With gratitude,

Holly Coughlin, Executive Director
coughlin_h@shaker.org
216-295-4325 **SL**



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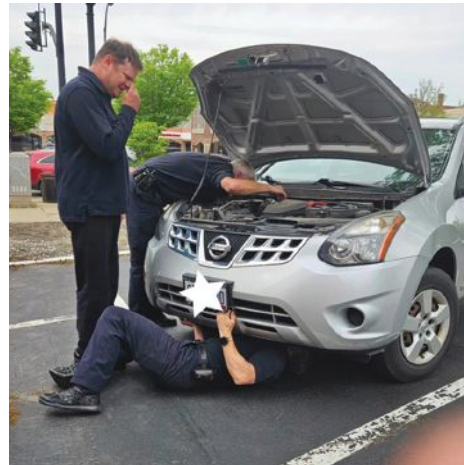
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Shaker Social



Living in Shaker

f Neighbor #1: Shaker incubator.
Neighbor #2: And that's the fuzziest nest I've ever seen! Pretty, too!
Neighbor #1: You are 100% right. It's beautiful & the feathers flutter in the breeze.
Neighbor #3: Love it!
Neighbor #2: Mrs. Mallard is doing a great job already! 9 eggs!



Living in Shaker

f Neighbor #1: On Thursday I was at the gym when someone came in to say that there was a cat screaming from my car. We all ran out to see what was going on. While I do own cats, I was sure neither of them could be in my car. When we got outside we didn't hear it anymore. Even with about 10 of us looking, we couldn't see it either, so I went home. Once there, I heard the poor cat screaming again. We and the neighbors spent hours trying to find him, but could not. We ended up leaving the car out of the garage and leaving food for him, hoping he would come out once the coast was clear. The next morning, the food was gone, and after starting my car alarm and beeping my horn, I heard nothing, so assumed my little passenger had moved on to safer pastures, so went on to work. Imagine my shock when I started my car after work to hear this cat screaming again. Fortunately I was parked right across from Fire Station 1. I went right over and three wonderful firefighters came out and performed an actual cat rescue, worthy of the movies. They were awesome! So, shout-out to the Shaker Heights Fire Department Station 1. I and our new family member, Rogue, are forever grateful.
Neighbor #2: What a story! We will share your thanks with the SHFD.
Neighbor #3: So was this your cat? If not, it must be now. Crazy story... glad it's safe!
Neighbor #4: Wow! That's awesome! Now you have a new member of the family: Rogue.
Neighbor #5: Love this story!



Onaway Neighborhood

f Neighbor #1: I LOVE our Onaway families, who set up movie nights at Triangle Park on lovely summer nights and clear the ice for skating at Triangle Park on 20-degree winter days!
Neighbor #2: Thank you for setting this up.
Neighbor #3: We are a very lucky neighborhood.
Neighbor #4: Love this!



Living in Shaker

f Neighbor #1: The spillway at Green Lake today. Now I've heard of keeping all of one's ducks in a row, but geese? **Neighbor #2:** Great photo. **Neighbor #3:** Sort of reminiscent of a men's urinal at a sports arena — sorry for that. **Neighbor #1:** You're probably not wrong, seeing what geese are best at.



Living in Shaker

f Neighbor #1: Help! These babies' mama went to groundhog heaven last Friday. I found a lady who will take care of them. She had one for 14 years. Shaker Nature Center referred her. The only issue is, I have to take them to her in Parma. I am scared. She said they still need their mama, so they need help. To move them you can't touch them with your bare hands. I have blankets to use and can get gloves. Can anyone help? I need someone to catch them and place them in a box. **Neighbor #2:** I would be happy to help! **Neighbor #3:** Also available if you need help! Groundhogs are my boyfriend's favorite animal, and he would love to help out. **Neighbor #4:** Get a shovel and a box. Put a blanket in the box. Put the groundhog on the shovel. Place the groundhog in the box. Close the box. **Neighbor #5:** This is amazing. I think I missed the groundhog moving event of the year. Post pics! **Neighbor #6:** Please update outcome. **Neighbor #1:** Update! The babies have been caught and taken to a nice lady who will raise them for a while, then release them. **SL**

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Modernizing A Historic City



Transit Oriented Development, Then and Now

Public transportation has been at the heart of Shaker Heights from its earliest days.

“When the Van Sweringens developed the city, the street plan was woven in with rapid transit,” explains Joyce Braverman, the City’s planning director. “The neighborhood stops on the Rapid are positioned to maximize how many residents could get to those stops. No house in Shaker is more than quarter mile from a Rapid stop.”

Jump ahead 100-plus years and public transportation is still at the core of the City’s development efforts. Today, there’s a name for this approach. It’s called Transit Oriented Development, or TOD, and its goal is to create vibrant neighborhoods with a mix of uses — residential, retail, entertainment, office — that are also pedestrian and bicycle-friendly and, importantly, in close proximity to public transportation. In short, neighborhoods that draw people in to live, work, or just hang out.

“The idea is you’re creating, in a relatively small place, a very vibrant, dense neighborhood that is full of everything you would need, including public transit,” explains Braverman.

If this sounds familiar, it’s because the Van Aken District is a prime example of TOD. Phase 1, developed by RMS and completed in 2019 after more than 20 years of thoughtful planning and infrastructure improvements by the City, includes retail, residential, and office with access to public transit.

Phase 2, now under construction, includes a new 228-unit apartment building — also developed by RMS — on Farnsleigh Road. On its heels will be Arcadia, a mixed-use development planned for the southeast corner of the intersection of Farnsleigh and Warrensville Center roads. Arcadia will feature 140 residential units, including townhomes and a mix of market- and affordable-rate apartments. Columbus-based developer Metropolitan Holdings plans to start construction in 2024.

This kind of density is key to the success of TOD projects like the Van Aken District, says Braverman.

“This density creates a real sense of place,” she notes. “Residents emerge from their apartments and feel enclosed by the buildings. You’re in a vibrant neighborhood.”

Adds City Councilmember Sean Malone: “These kinds of neighborhoods are interesting and enjoyable and also safer when residents and visitors are out on the sidewalks, biking and strolling to desirable, convenient destinations. This is even more important as people work from home.”

Further investments in the public transit areas of the District are now also underway. The City has been working with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to upgrade the District’s Rapid station and busway. In the same area, the City will construct a new public plaza with public art thanks to a \$1.5 million grant from the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA). With another \$1.5 million grant, also from NOACA, the City will install a new bikeway on Van Aken Boulevard to connect the District to Lee Road, which will also get a bikeway as part of the Lee Road Action Plan, and to the multi-purpose paths on Warrensville and Farnsleigh.

The Van Aken District is the city’s first truly mixed-use, transit-oriented neighborhood — the zoning code was amended in 1995 to allow for mixed use. Many of the same TOD principals will be used in redeveloping Lee Road.

“The Lee Road Plan offers a unique opportunity to create a new Shaker destination,” notes Malone. “We can improve connections to Chelton Park and adjoining neighborhoods, including in Cleveland, increase our supply of modern office space along Lee Road, and attract new housing, restaurants, and retail to the Chagrin/Lee District. Just like the Van Aken District, we hope to see people biking or strolling to these new gathering spots to meet up with friends and neighbors.”



What About All the Cars!?

With two new residential developments in the works for the Van Aken District, some residents have expressed concern that there will be a lot more traffic — too much traffic — and not enough parking.

Not so, says Joyce Braverman, the City’s longtime planning director.

“For any new residential development, the zoning code requires a traffic study,” she says. “The studies for this area show that if you live in the Van Aken District, you might see five percent more traffic from these new developments.”

Traffic studies allow traffic engineers to understand how projects like Arcadia and the Farnsleigh Road apartments will impact traffic in the surrounding neighborhood and more broadly. These studies are routine in communities across the country and use proven methodologies.

“Typically, they start with traffic counts,” says Braverman. “They see how much traffic there is at different times of day, but also where the traffic is going in the area.”

This data is imported into sophisticated models, which enables engineers to forecast local and regional impacts of new developments, including detailed analyses of traffic patterns.

“So we know that for the new apartment building on Farnsleigh, for example, about 17 percent of the added traffic will go west on Chagrin, 22 percent will go west on Farnsleigh, 24 percent will go north on Warrensville. So we’re not going to see all this traffic that some residents are concerned they’re going to see all at once.”

Braverman also notes that the number of cars in the District overall has steadily declined for the last 30 years. In the 1990s, an average of 65,000 cars came through the Warrensville-Chagrin intersection. Today, it’s closer to 45,000.

Both developments will also include additional parking. Arcadia’s plans call for a parking garage in the center of the development with 140 spaces, plus a surface lot at the side of the building. The Farnsleigh apartments will include a parking garage at the side of the building with 260 spaces. **SL**



Shaker Library

Shaker Grad and Pulitzer Prize Winner Wes Lowery to Speak on October 16

Join us Monday, October 16 at 7 pm for an evening with Wesley Lowery, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and 2008 Shaker Heights High School graduate, as he discusses his latest book, *American Whitelash: A Changing Nation and The Cost of Progress*.

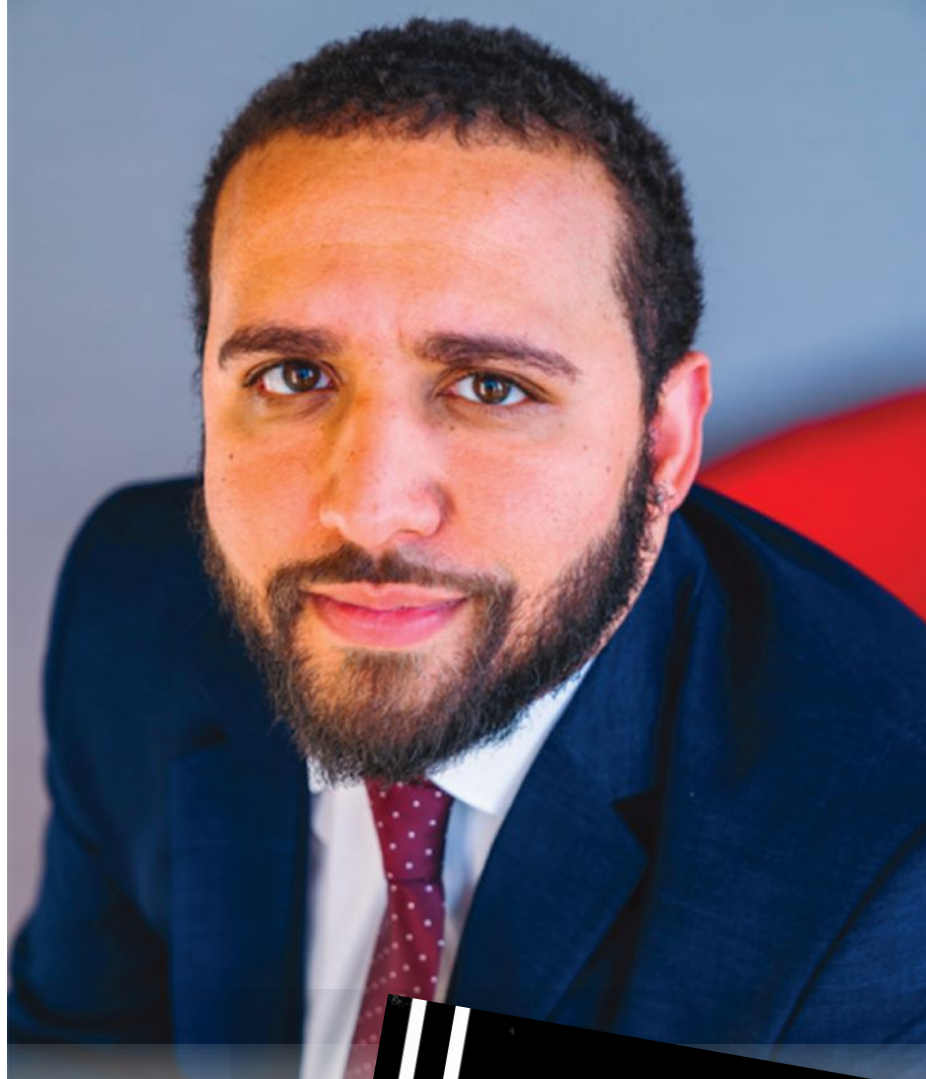
American Whitelash and Lowery's previous best seller, *They Can't Kill Us All: The Story of the Struggle for Black Lives*, will be available for purchase and signing.

In *American Whitelash*, published earlier this year, Lowery examines how the 2008 election of Barack Obama was met with retaliatory violence from white supremacists that helped propel the rise of Donald Trump.

Reporting with what Time magazine called "galvanizing" and "empathetic" prose, Lowery gives readers an in-depth look at six acts of racial violence that occurred in the decade following Obama's election, placing victims' voices at the center of his reporting. Lowery helps readers make sense of the United States' past and present by illustrating how a cyclical pattern of violence has marred every moment of racial progress. From there, he charts a course for leaders to enact meaningful change.

Stay Informed:

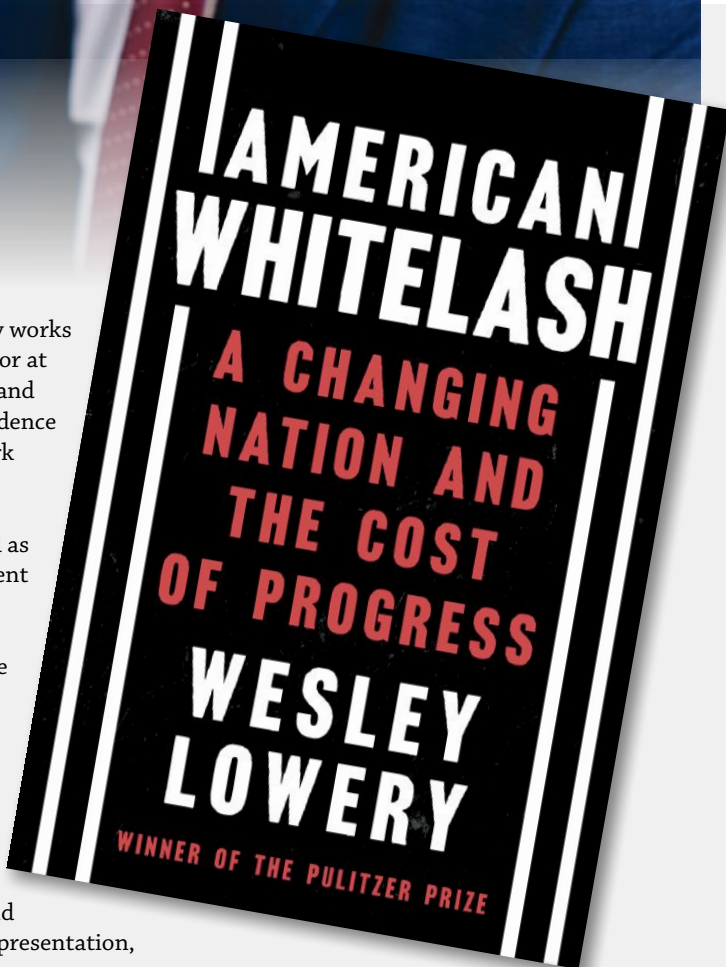
For the latest news and information about Shaker Heights Public Library, visit our web site at shakerlibrary.org. Follow us on Facebook at [ShakerHeightsPublicLibrary](https://www.facebook.com/ShakerHeightsPublicLibrary) and on Instagram @ShakerLibrary.



Lowery currently works as a contributing editor at The Marshall Project and as a journalist-in-residence at the CUNY Newmark Graduate School of Journalism. He previously worked as an on-air correspondent for "60 Minutes+" and as a national correspondent for The Washington Post.

He was the commencement speaker for the Shaker Heights High School Class of 2023 in June.

To learn more and register for Lowery's presentation, visit events.shakerlibrary.org.





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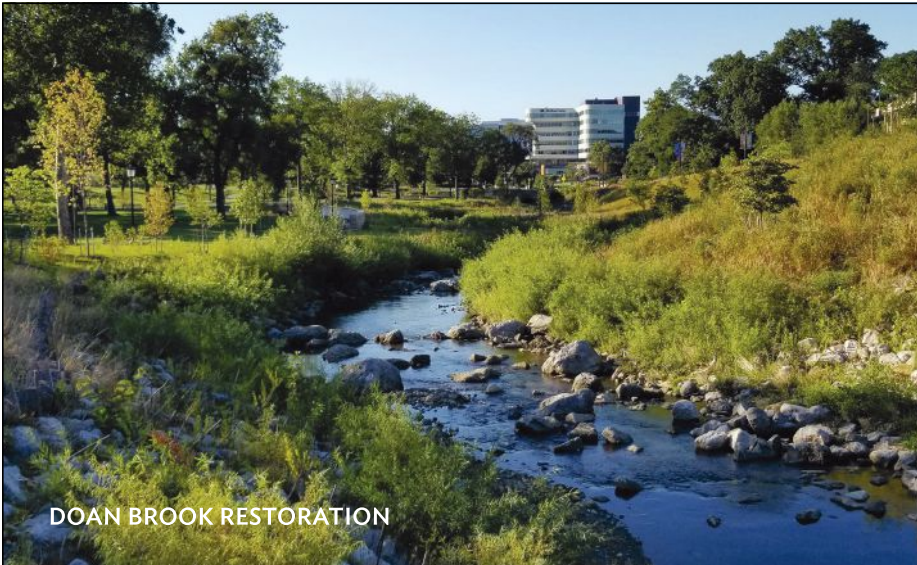


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Grant-funded Shaker Reads Initiative Will Help Build Positive Reading Habits

School children around the world are behind academically after COVID-19 disrupted their educations. At the local level, Shaker Library is doing something to address that.

In August, the Library partnered with eight other libraries across the county to launch Cuyahoga Reads, a literacy initiative spanning nearly two years that will help students in grades K-12 form positive reading habits. Shaker Reads is the name of our city's specific program and falls under the umbrella of Cuyahoga Reads.

The initiative is paid for by a \$750,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Education and is part of its Libraries Accelerating Learning Grant.

At the heart of the initiative is the 200-Day Shaker Reads Challenge.

"Science shows that it can take between 20 and 200 days to form a new habit, so we're hoping participating in this challenge will bring students closer to building that reading habit," says grant administrator Christine Pyles, who is on staff at Euclid Public Library. Participants will have until December 2024 to complete the challenge and can log days using the Beanstack app. Active participants will have their names



Staff from participating libraries at the Cuyahoga Reads Kickoff.



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The directors of participating libraries pose with an RTA bus wrapped in Cuyahoga Reads graphics.

entered in monthly drawings for prizes.

To complement the reading challenge, Shaker Library will also be offering grant-funded programming such as Academic Screening Night, which will help families determine if their children face barriers to literacy such as dyslexia or ADHD, and Family Literacy Afternoons, which will show families how to make literacy fun with interactive games, music, art projects, and more.

“The grant will make it possible for us to extend out-of-school-time learning into the 2023-2024 school year and will enhance the work our staff does every day through STEM programs, storytimes, and book clubs,” says Shaker Library’s Youth Services Manager Jessica Smith.

Also accompanying the reading challenge and programming is the digital card campaign, which will allow anyone with a smartphone to scan a QR code and immediately access eBooks and audiobooks through the Libby app. Ads for the digital card are currently running on RTA buses and rapid lines, as well as in bus stops.

“The digital card can live in harmony with the standard library card, so even if a user’s card is blocked, they can still access eBooks and audiobooks instantly through Libby,” Pyles says.

The \$750,000 will make a huge difference in helping Clevelanders become more aware of the literacy resources and supports local libraries can offer.

“This is an opportunity to spread the word about our services that so many of our libraries never would have had, if not for the grant,” says Pyles.

To sign up for the 200-Day Shaker Reads Challenge, visit shakerlibrary.beanstack.com. For more information about Cuyahoga Reads, visit cuyahogareads.org.



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African American Quilt Gallery Opens November 6

Members of the African American Quilt and Doll Guild will show over a dozen pieces on a variety of subjects, including Kwanzaa, at Shaker Library from November 6 through December 22.

An opening reception is scheduled for Saturday, November 11 from 2-4 pm.

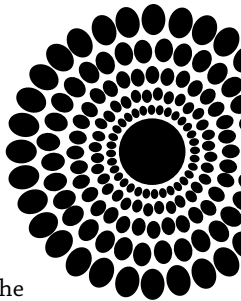
The guild's 75 members hail from across Northeast Ohio and do exhibits and talks throughout the community. Some members' quilts have traveled the world and found their way into museums, including the Smithsonian.

The quilters use their pieces to express powerful ideas about political movements and events like the Underground Railroad, Juneteenth, and Black Lives Matter.

"We use quilts to tell our history and our stories, from our perspective," says guild member Gloria Kellon.

She says she hopes that the Library show will encourage young people to get into quilting. "Many people think quilts are only for beds, but this is a new day. You could put a quilt on a jean jacket or a bag now. You could use it to decorate your home."

To learn more about the guild and their upcoming show at Shaker Library, visit aaqdg.org.



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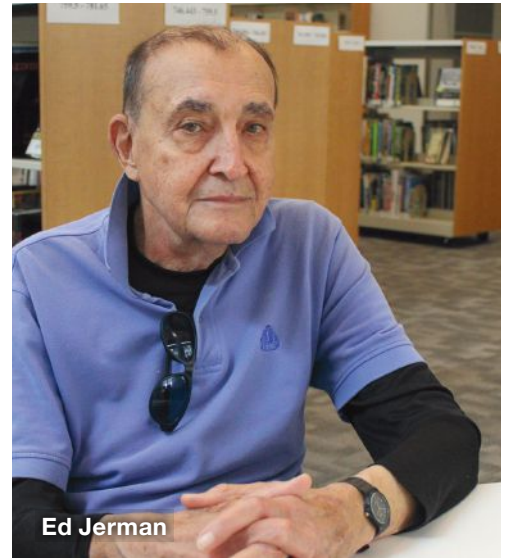
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Ed Jerman

Meet a Reader

Name: Ed Jerman

Occupation: Retired

Neighborhood: Sussex

Branch: Main Library

How long have you lived in Shaker Heights? I lived here in the '70s, moved away, then returned in 2012. I've been here since then.

What types of books do you like to read? History books about politics, corruption, and wars — basically, any book that helps me get an understanding of how we got to where we are.

What is your all-time favorite book? *A Bright Shining Lie* by Neil Sheehan.

The author was out on the frontlines in Vietnam when he met a guy named John Paul Vann, who was in the Army Special Forces. As Vann's time there evolves, he begins to understand the whole conflict as "a bright and shining lie" presented to the American people.

A lot of people would say, "That's heavy." What is it about the book that makes it your favorite? I spent three years in the Marine Corps. I wanted to go to Vietnam but didn't get to. Reading this book told me, basically, "You didn't miss a damn thing." But I want to try and understand how this could have happened. Reading about and reflecting on history helps me put the pieces together.

What are you currently reading? *The Fifth Act* by Elliot Ackerman. The author grew up fairly privileged. He graduated from Tufts and enlisted in

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A Different Kind of Book Club



Members of Cook the Book find connection and community at Shaker Library

By Lyndsey Brennan
Photography by Robert Muller

“

Would you buy this cookbook, accept it as a donation, or light it on fire?

”

That’s the question

that often opens discussion at Shaker Library’s Cook the Book, a book club that meets monthly to discuss a cookbook and share a meal together.

Bertram Woods Manager Lynne Miller and Circulation Manager Jim Bagwell started Cook the Book in October 2016 after hearing about other libraries that had success hosting similar groups.

The concept for Cook the Book is simple: Bagwell selects a cookbook, with input from the group. Members check out a copy to take home and peruse, cooking recipes that appeal to them as they go. A month later, they convene to discuss the book. Each brings a recipe from the book to share, and they eat dinner together, potluck-style, on dishes they’ve brought from home (to save waste).

But what began as a space for people to come together over a common interest in cooking has become so much more. In a post-pandemic age where Americans are feeling a deepened sense of isolation, this group serves as a case study in how to build and maintain genuine connections.

Bertram Woods Manager Lynne Miller and Circulation Manager Jim Bagwell started Cook the Book.



During interviews, group members repeatedly referred to each other as “family” and used words like “sanctuary” and “sacred” to describe the meetings. Spending time with the group members, it’s clear that their connection is genuine.

This month marks seven years that the group has been meeting together — something that dumbfounds Bagwell.

“I don’t know what the secret to the group’s longevity is. I just try to make people feel welcome. But the attendees, they make it what it is. There’s just some sort of magic with this group that maybe they don’t fully see,” he says.

A core group of a dozen attendees hails from different generations and backgrounds.

There is Debbie, a professional genealogist, who talks about her grandma’s experience as a Black chef working for white Shaker families.

There is Anne, the granddaughter of Italian immigrants, who describes her mother’s pizza rustica with the same reverence some people reserve for religion.





Christine Bretz and Meghan Hays



Ruth Pettker and Deborah Abbott

Then there's Pete, who made that infamous loaf of rosemary bread that people still can't stop talking about two years later. And there's Henry, the recent college grad with math and philosophy degrees, who describes a recipe as "needlessly finicky" to a chorus of nods.

When I enter the room on a Wednesday evening this summer, I am struck with two immediate thoughts: "Holy cow, something smells amazing," and

“

Walking out of a meeting, you just feel rejuvenated. It's not just the food... there is so much genuine love in that group.

”

"How long have these people known each other? They're greeting each other like old friends."

Throughout the meal, I observe the attendees falling into easy conversation with each other, their laughter ringing through the room. During the discussion, they take turns talking about what they made and offering their candid thoughts on the cookbook.

"Did I like the book? No," says one attendee.

"Are any of us surprised?" pipes another attendee. "Also no."

Everyone laughs.

"Would I grab this book if I were drowning?" one participant muses. "Yes." After a pause, she adds, "Otherwise, it's a no for me."

Another participant is aghast. "I love it. Out of all the cookbooks we've done in this group, I've only purchased two, but I'm seriously considering adding this one as a third."

They also tell stories about preparing this month's recipes. One person describes a recipe that sent her on a journey across town, into several grocery stores,

in search of something called squash blossoms. Another spent \$50 on her winter vegetable lasagna, and brought the receipt to prove it.

The tone is light-hearted, wholesome, and warm, similar to the camaraderie you'd observe in an episode of "The Great British Baking Show," with Bagwell stepping in as the group's Noel Fielding to host and crack jokes.





Cindy Campbell and Donita Singerman



Quintilla Draper, Megan Foradori and Pete Foradori



"We learned early on that a serious approach wasn't going to work," Bagwell said. "Some book club leaders will throw out serious, almost-academic questions like, 'On page 64, paragraph 3, the author says this. Why?' And some of our participants do offer up those insights. But I try to keep it casual and light."

Everyone from cooking novices to professionals has found a way to challenge themselves in the group. "That's the beauty of it," Miller, the Bertram Woods manager, says. "There are a variety of skill levels, but the advanced people don't make the beginners feel bad. They're very accepting."

Ruth Pettker, a Canadian transplant to Shaker Heights, is one of the more advanced attendees, having received culinary training. "When I get the book for the month,

out of a meeting, you just feel rejuvenated. It's not just the food, though it's delicious. But there is so much genuine love in that group."

Miller observes that the group's chemistry and dedication to each other are rare.

"There is another group that's been meeting here at the library for just as long, but I don't think they'd call each other 'family.' There's just something about sharing a meal and breaking bread together — it binds you."

The group became even tighter during the pandemic, when they pivoted to meeting over Zoom.

"During those meetings, it was less about the cookbook and more about how we were doing. Just checking in with each other," Pettker says. "It was really nice to be able to sit down and connect with people over a meal still."

What did it mean to Bagwell to meet during the pandemic? "Everything."

"During COVID, everything was uncertain, so it was important to me to know that I had a community that wasn't going anywhere. And knowing that we were providing that as a library? Priceless."

To learn more about Cook the Book and other discussion groups offered at Shaker Library, visit events.shakerlibrary.org. **SL**

Lyndsey Brennan is the Communications and Marketing Manager at Shaker Library.

I try to cook different recipes from it to get a feel for the style of the book and the range of recipes."

She says bringing something to share is an equalizer that allows everyone to try dishes from the book they may not have had the resources to make otherwise.

When she first moved to Shaker Heights, Pettker couldn't work due to her visa status and was seeking other ways to connect socially. She described her first time attending Cook the Book as "nerve-wracking — just because it always is when you're striking out on your own and you don't know anyone. But Jim is a great host. From the first meeting, he made me feel welcome. He made me want to keep coming back.

"Being part of a community means making connections with other people, discovering common ground, and finding a place where you belong. That's Cook the Book for me," says Pettker.

Over the years, Bagwell watched the group's focus shift from the cookbook to the community itself. "Walking



Capturing the Essence of Shaker:



What makes Shaker Shaker?

That question was the prompt for entries in the 10th annual Preservation Month Photo Contest. The answers tell a compelling story of home.



2023 Preservation Month Photo Contest Winners



Architecture Runner-up:

Sunset on Winchell Road by Kiki Stout

Architecture Winner:

Gardening on Lynton by Sarah Ezzie Haines


In all, 26 photographers posted 66 entries to Instagram with the hashtag #PreserveSH23. Members of the Shaker Heights Landmark Commission had the difficult job of selecting a winner and runners-up in each of three categories: architecture, community, and landscape and nature. In addition, the People's Choice award was given to the submission receiving the most likes on Instagram.

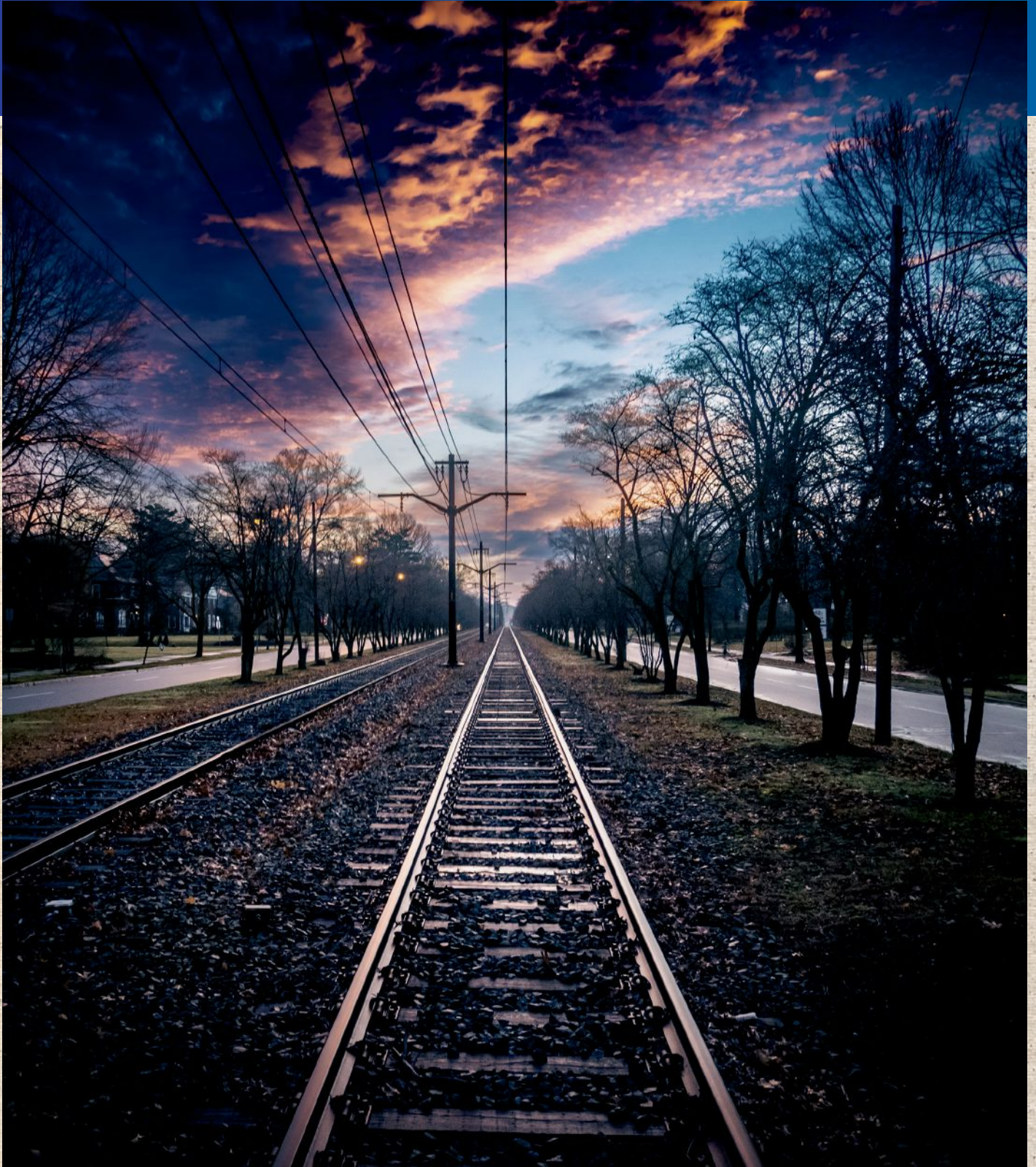


Community Winner:

Chasing My Shadow by Elizabeth Zborowski




Community Runner-up:
East Byron Block Party by Bruce Sherman



Community Runner-up:

RTA Tracks at Sunrise by Mark Goode



Landscape & Nature Winner:

Sunrise at Nature Center by Mark Goode

“The finalists for the 2023 Preservation Month Photo Contest have all visually captured the essence of what life in Shaker Heights might possibly be for any or all of us: a carefree moment of a summer block party captured through the prism of a diaphanous rainbow bubble; a sunbeam illuminating a front door, murmuring, welcome home; a child bundled against winter’s chill gazing at her world reflected in a puddle; a spring moment of abundant floral splendor; and the endless perspective of our own future tracks into an unknown sunset,” says City Councilmember Nancy Moore, who serves as chair of the Landmark Commission.



**Landscape & Nature Runner-up:
Attleboro Road Leaves by Doug Tayek**



People's Choice Winner:

Van Sweringen House by Lindsay Heller

"Enjoy the Landmark Commission's panoramic glimpse of our community and explore the potential of what Shaker life might be for you," adds Moore.

The Preservation Month Photo Contest was created in 2013 to amplify Preservation Month, celebrated each May by preservation organizations across the country. All entries can be viewed at the Instagram hashtag #PreserveSH23. **SL**

The Promise of Excellence

As the Shaker Heights Schools Go, So Goes the Community

By Joe Miller
Photography by Gus Chan

The Shaker Heights City School District's commitment to "excellence for all" is more than just a promise to students. It's a pledge that alumni take with them after the classroom. If they leave town after graduating, it often guides them back home. Sometimes it pushes them to pursue careers focused on giving back. In short, a Shaker Heights education impacts the entire community.

Shaker graduates — as well as current students and even classroom volunteers — come with many voices. Some are loud. Some are soft. All are important because they weave the rich tapestry of the Shaker educational experience. Here are five of them.





A Family Tradition

“Shaker provides the opportunity to interact with people of all walks of life. I wanted our kids to have that.”

Dave Carpenter is looking forward to seeing old friends this year at his 35th Shaker Heights High School reunion. But the 1988 graduate knows he’s just as likely to see former classmates — and their kids — at a Middle School band concert or a cross country meet.

“Of just my core good friends from my graduating class, there’s at least six or seven who have moved back to Shaker,” he says. “I think people get a full appreciation for this community when they leave.”

Carpenter thought about moving to Chicago when he graduated from Miami University in Oxford. But an initial job at American Greetings and marriage to his wife, Holly, changed his priorities. The two decided early on they wanted to raise their family in Shaker and send them to public schools.

“I had a really good experience growing up and going to Shaker,” he says. “I think Shaker provides both academically enriched classes and the opportunity to interact with people of all walks of life. I wanted our kids to have that.”

The Carpenters have watched two of their three kids graduate from the Shaker Heights Schools so far — David in 2021 and Anna in 2022 — as well as one of their nieces. Their youngest, Andrew, is an eighth grader at Shaker Heights Middle School.

Carpenter believes at least one or two of their kids will choose to live in Shaker and hopefully get the same chance he has had to reminisce with old classmates.

“We just tell stories and invariably we just laugh,” he says. “Whether it’s the people I see all the time, or if it’s someone from Shaker that I haven’t seen in five or ten years, you just start where you left off.”

The Scholar

"I definitely want to support the community I was brought up in."

When Nya Christian graduated magna cum laude from prestigious Howard University this past May with a degree in political science and minors in sociology and dance arts, the 2019 Shaker Heights High School alumna felt ready to take on anything.

"Dance is my first love and definitely my biggest passion," she says. "But I know that through my Shaker education and going to Howard, there are many pathways that I feel I can excel at now."

Christian had dreamed about going to the historically Black college in Washington, D.C., since the eighth grade. To get there, she pushed herself both academically through Shaker's International Baccalaureate diploma and the MAC Scholars programs, and artistically through the High School's Dance Club and Sankofa groups. She also captained the school's cheer team her senior year.

With that experience, Christian says she felt "very empowered to be a leader" on the Howard campus and found opportunities through the student government and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Since graduation, Christian has interned at the American Civil Liberties Union's D.C. affiliate and will perform with an African American dance company for the next year.

Christian sees herself continuing a dance career while she's still in her 20s, but eventually she plans to pursue a political career, including possibly running for office in Ohio someday. "I definitely want to support the community I was brought up in."





The Builder

“Mentors come in from other jobs and work with you. I think it’s great that Shaker provides this.”

The sky’s the limit for Rowan Dunn.

The Shaker Heights High School senior spent much of his summer learning about all aspects of construction management from the dizzying heights of the Farnsleigh apartments worksite. As an “extern” for Gilbane Building Company, Rowan inspected work on the project to ensure that it was compliant with the architect’s specifications. Hard hat and protective goggles in place, he had steady access to everyone on the construction site, from superintendents to trade union workers. It was a veritable crash course in construction, structural engineering, and architecture.

“A lot of what I’m doing is an introduction to the work environment,” he says. “I can see there’s a lot of flexibility in construction management in terms of paths you might want to pursue.”

That’s the idea of the program, said Christopher Kowalczyk, senior project manager with Gilbane.

“Our college interns, who are already enrolled in construction-related studies in college, usually work mostly in our office,” Kowalczyk says. “We like to give externs like Rowan exposure to the field to see if it’s a career they’d like to pursue.”

Rowan was introduced to Gilbane through the High School’s Architecture, Construction, and Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program. Now in its third year, ACE provides students the opportunity to work on interactive, hands-on, problem-solving activities in a collaborative environment with mentors, including architects, construction managers, and engineers.

The SHHS team mentors included representatives from Gilbane, Van Auken Akins Architects, Equity Engineering Group, The Austin Company, Intertek, CLM Designs, and Independence Construction. The High School’s participation in the ACE Mentor Program is made possible through the Shaker Schools Foundation.

Last spring, Rowan’s four-person team was recognized as one of the top three area ACE teams during a celebration at Windows on the River in the Flats. Their project: design a vocational school for architecture, construction, and design in the High School.

“It’s a great opportunity,” Rowan says. “All of these mentors come in from other jobs and work with you. I think it’s great that Shaker provides this.”

Now a senior, Rowan, 17, is in the process of visiting various colleges and universities and deciding what his next step will be. He’s considering studying marine biology or — you guessed it — construction management. Wherever he ends up, Rowan — whose family moved here from Long Island two years ago — will always have a soft spot for Shaker Heights.

“It’s been great,” he says. “The block parties, the neighborhoods, I really love it.”



The Homecoming

"I'm really excited to be in a position to be able to give back, after everything that's been given to me."

Will Warren has plenty of great memories from his days as a Shaker Heights High School student, from hanging out with friends to helping Shaker win the Lake Erie League basketball title his senior year as the team's co-captain and starting center.

But what stands out even more when he thinks back is how many African American men within Shaker schools — educators such as Danny Young, Michael Summers, Larry Miller, J. Lindsay Florence, and Ouimet Smith, to name a few — helped mentor him to success in the classroom and beyond.

"They did this with countless others at Shaker," Warren says. "To see a Black man in that role changes your entire path. We aspire to be like them."

Warren, who graduated in 2007, hopes to be "one of those guys" when he makes his Shaker return this year as program coordinator for the District's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team. The role is based at the High School and includes working with the Student Group on Race Relations and the Minority Achievement Committee Scholars program. It's familiar territory for Warren, who was in both groups as a Shaker teen.

"I really feel that I've been called to come home, work hard, be an example and make a real difference," Warren says. "I'm really excited to be in a position to be able to give back, after everything that's been given to me."



The Volunteer

“The basics come together for all they will need through school, and in life.”

Sharon Swagger may be a relative newcomer to Shaker Heights, but she’s become a familiar face at Lomond Elementary School. For the past three years, the retired bank trust officer has been reading once a week with first graders in teacher Adam Mortus’ classroom.

“The younger kids love for you to come in,” she says. “The volunteers in Shaker schools make a huge difference.”

Swagger moved to the Shaker Heights area five years ago to be closer to her daughter and granddaughter, who graduated from the High School in June. Although she retired in 2012 from a 27-year career at PNC Bank and National City Bank before that, Swagger has been keeping busy with volunteering at the Near West Intergenerational School in Ohio City, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Maltz Performing Arts Center.

But it’s her time at Lomond that has given her a chance to watch Mortus, the son of a close friend, in action.

“Adam is a very positive teacher who has a great demeanor with the kids,” she says. “He is incredibly dedicated and he never loses his cool.”

Plus, Swagger enjoys the time with the kids. “I love to see how far they progress during the school year. It is such an important time. The basics come together for all they will need through school, and in life.” **SL**

HOW TO SUCCEED, SHAKER STYLE

It's a familiar story: a Shaker family outgrows its starter home and moves to a larger home within the city. Recently, a few Shaker Heights entrepreneurs have made the same move.



In the first part of this series, learn how three local businesses have recently expanded to new homes up the street, around the corner, or across the way — but still right here in Shaker.

In the second part of this series, two Shaker Heights High School graduates have opened new creative businesses in town — a restaurant and a dance studio. They started elsewhere in Greater Cleveland, but have since found their way home. Shaker Life visited with them to find out what drives them to succeed.



HOW TO GROW A SMALL BUSINESS, SHAKER STYLE

Stories by
Sharon Holbrook

Photography by
Jason Miller





DISTRICT GALLERY

The idea for District Gallery was first written up on a napkin. Two of the co-founders, Richard Uria and the late Bob Roth, met on an airplane and got to talking about art, their own collections, and the need for a modern, contemporary-style art gallery in Cleveland. They immediately thought of collector Karen Chaikin, Roth's niece, as a partner on the project, and soon the three had moved beyond the napkin to put plans for the gallery in action.

District Gallery opened in the Van Aken District in 2019 on Walker Road next to the CLE Clothing Store. It quickly grew, and Chaikin and Uria were running out of space to display and store art in the 1,800-square-foot space. It was time to move.

Staying in the VAD was a priority. They loved being in the District and working with the developer, RMS. "Community is very important to us, and we're really proud of Van Aken," says Chaikin, a Shaker resident. "We're honored to be RMS clients. They're amazing landlords and are doing such a good job."

So when the former GrooveRyde space near Nature's Oasis opened up, District Gallery jumped to work with RMS on the move across the VAD. By spring 2023, the gallery was in its new space, doubling its size.

"We absolutely love it. And our traffic flow has increased a lot, our sales have increased, and we're able to properly store and show inventory in the back as well," says Chaikin.

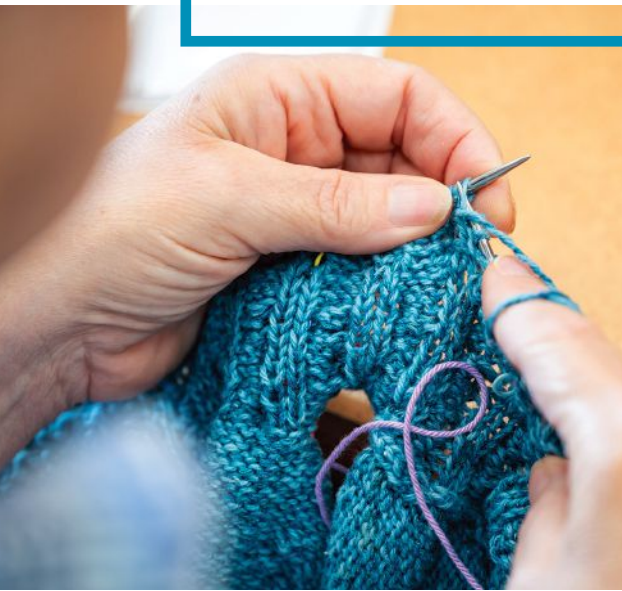
While the gallery has many local customers, it has also become a destination for collectors from outside the immediate area. "They'll come in and say, 'This is amazing.' And then they'll stay for dinner or go grab a coffee," says Uria.

The owners emphasize that this is no stuffy, intimidating place, and that everyone is welcome, including children. No appointments are necessary.

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AROUND THE TABLE YARNS



How does a shop based in principles of in-person community not only survive a pandemic, but also emerge stronger and ready to grow? Around the Table Yarns owners Beth Billings and Pam Berkson made it happen — and nearly doubled the size of their store.

This year, the destination for knitters and crocheters expanded from its original storefront at the rear of Shaker Plaza (facing Chagrin Boulevard) to add the adjoining space at the front of Shaker Plaza (facing the RTA station and the vibrant first phase of the Van Aken District beyond). Like the old storefront, the new shop space at 20166 Van Aken Boulevard still greets shoppers with a cheery rainbow of yarn, kits, books, and more. The rear space now houses the store's classroom as well as expanded back inventory for both in-person and online sales.

The secret to their success during the pandemic was being smart about what they stocked in their online store — a whole line of hard-to-find Catona yarns in every color available proved wildly popular — and being creative with in-person services. The store transformed three parking spaces into a successful outdoor gathering space using artificial turf. And in the colder months, Billings and Berkson came outside to patrons' car windows to help with knitting and crocheting conundrums. When it came time to welcome customers back in, Around the Table found itself bursting at the seams.

Like District Gallery, Around the Table let their landlords, RMS, know they were looking to expand. At first, they considered moving within the plaza, but the space available wasn't quite big enough. The perfect solution emerged when RMS offered to work with them on a rate for the two spaces they now have.

New customers are finding the shop due to its increased visibility in the plaza. And while summer months tend to be slow in the yarn business, Billings and Berkson say foot traffic was steady and even increased a bit this past summer, which they attribute to the move.

The duo also credits the City for its support, saying that folks from the City's Economic Development Department check in "all the time" and that the Shaker Heights Development Corporation meetings and support have been helpful in growing their business from the ground up.

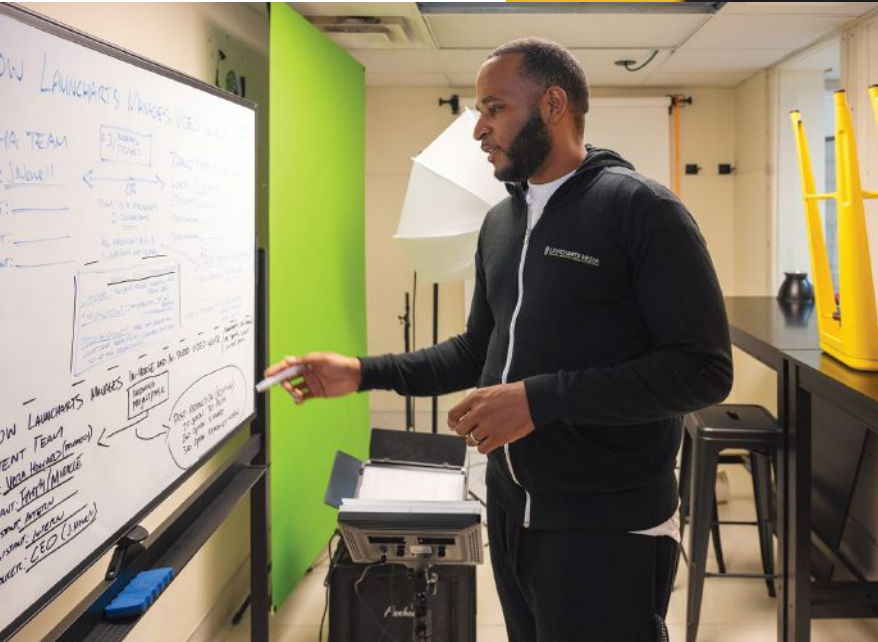
As Shaker residents, it matters to Billings and Berkson to grow a successful business here. It's not just about the store becoming a gathering space or a destination for yarn hunters, they say. It's also about employing local people, working towards paying them a living wage, and contributing substantially to local taxes.

"It's nice to know we're contributing to our community in a really important way," says Billings.

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LAUNCHARTS media

If it's marketing, Jumar Newell's company, LaunchArts Media, probably does it, but social media marketing and promotional videos are its top services. Newell, who's the CEO and creative director of the company, started LaunchArts in 2014 in Garfield Heights, where he had his own space. Wanting a more interactive, collaborative setting, he moved in 2016 to The Dealership, the co-working space at 3558 Lee Rd.

"It was very beneficial for me," says Newell. "My neighbors were very inquisitive about what I was doing, and I was able to network more strongly than in an industrial park space."

As his business grew, Newell looked for more space and moved LaunchArts down Lee Road to a space above FASS Real Estate, where he ran the business from 2018 to 2021.

With still more growth, Newell needed more space for audio and video production and photo shoots. He was also at a career turning point, ready to leave freelancing behind and make the leap into LaunchArts full-time.

He searched for a new location around the area, but says his relationship with Shaker Heights resulted in LaunchArts staying here. He'd worked closely with the Shaker Heights Development Corporation for years, so he went to them when he was thinking of moving. (The City founded SHDC, a nonprofit, more than 40 years ago with the mission of advancing economic opportunity in Shaker Heights.) "They seized the opportunity to show me some spaces," says Newell. "Shaker valued the presence of LaunchArts Media, and they really worked."

The old veterinary clinic space at 3612 Lee Rd. was the clear winner. LaunchArts moved into the space at the end of 2021. From the street and inside reception area, the building looks fairly small. But beyond that, there's a full upstairs where LaunchArts has offices for staff and interns. The first floor and basement each have photoshoot areas. In the back, the property has an enclosed courtyard which allows LaunchArts to do controlled outdoor shoots, and there's a flexible 600-square-foot annex that hosts bigger video and photo productions or social events.

Newell, keeping an eye on the future, is still looking to grow. But that's down the road, and for now he's enjoying having a space that works well for the company. "Right now, we aren't busting at the seams," he says. "This is efficient for us."

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FINDING THEIR WAY HOME

TWO SHAKER GRADS OPEN BUSINESSES IN THEIR HOMETOWN

Stories by
Joe Miller

Photography by
Robert Muller



Ninja City Community Connections



With the opening of his latest Ninja City location at the Van Aken District's Market Hall this summer, restaurateur Dylan Fallon's career has just about come full circle.

The 2003 Shaker Heights High School graduate got his start in the restaurant business just around the corner when he was still a teenager, working at local favorites Matsuo and Elsner's Steak and Steam on Chagrin Boulevard. Those eateries have since closed, but his childhood home in the Sussex neighborhood is still there, as are old friends, former co-workers, and more than a few influential teachers.

"I have an awesome history with Shaker and I love this opportunity to get back and get connected with the community," Fallon says. "It's really cool to be home and be able to bring something unique and new to Shaker."

Ninja City is as unique as it comes. Like the restaurant's other locations around Cleveland, the Market Hall spot features a decor influenced by hip-hop culture and comic books and — more importantly — an eclectic menu focused on urban and traditional Asian cuisine as well as "pub grub." The dishes range from the very popular Pho noodle soup and steam buns to spicy mac and cheese and loaded fries.



It's a theme Fallon and partner Bac Nguyen developed together when they opened the original Ninja City restaurant and bar in University Circle in 2014. Their mission since the beginning, according to Ninja City's website, has been to "serve awesome food and drinks you love — in a space full of your favorite stuff — with people you love."

Fallon has been interested in bringing the restaurant to Shaker Heights for a while. When Van Aken District developers started hosting weekend beer gardens to build interest in the concept, Ninja City was one of several restaurants that participated. But when it came time to claim a spot in the upcoming Market Hall, Fallon says he was preoccupied with relocating their original restaurant to Cleveland's Gordon Square neighborhood.

"We ended up not being able to commit," says Fallon.

Since then, Ninja City has continued to keep him busy. Once the Gordon Square location was up and running, he and Nguyen opened another Ninja City at Cleveland's Huntington Convention Center and then signed on as the official backstage caterer at Jacobs Pavilion and The Agora. Still, Fallon kept looking for a way into the Market Hall. That possibility finally emerged late last year.

"Everything fell into place at the right time," he says.

The Market Hall location will initially have about a dozen employees and feature most of the same menu as Gordon Square, minus any items that directly compete with Ninja City's new Van Aken District neighbors. And although the new location lacks an in-house bar, Fallon is using that as an opportunity to add a variety of bubble teas — also known as boba — to the menu. Eventually, he says he'll add bubble teas at Ninja City's other locations.

Although Fallon and his wife and kids now live in Brecksville, he has found time over the years to come back to town at the invitation of past teachers to talk to High School classes about his career. Now, with a restaurant in Shaker Heights, Fallon looks forward to being even more involved in his hometown.

"We've only been able to be successful by being a part of the communities and having a connection to those communities we're in."

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**Mayne
Attraction**
**BUILDING
Camaraderie
and SISTERHOOD**



When Sharmayne Freeman-Sellers talks about relocating Mayne Attraction Studios to Shaker Heights this fall, it's obvious she's planning more than just a change of venue for her 10-year-old dance school.

With 3,500 square feet of space, Mayne Attraction's new home at 3685 Lee Road not only gives it bigger dance floors than its old 2,500-square-foot location in Cleveland Heights, but it will also allow the school to add community areas such as a kitchen, a little library, study nooks, and even a dance apparel store.

"I really want it to be a welcoming space, not just for the dancers, but their families as well," Freeman-Sellers says. She is availing herself of the City's Storefront Renovation Program for new business signage to convey that welcome.

The rented building — most recently used as a daycare center — will also help Mayne Attraction expand beyond its current curriculum which focuses mainly on ballet, jazz, tap, and hip-hop for kids. Freeman-Sellers wants to add more adult dance and fitness offerings, including an "aerials" class where students can explore movement while hanging from the ceiling from a harness and fabric straps.

"I'm hoping we'll be here for a while," the 2003 Shaker Heights High School graduate says. "I don't see us outgrowing this building anytime



soon," she adds with a laugh.

Still, Freeman-Sellers' crystal ball has failed her before. In fact, when she offered her first dance class in 2013 — with rented space at a Beachwood ballroom and just five students — she thought it was a temporary summer gig. Ten years later, Freeman-Sellers and four other dance instructors are teaching about 65 kids.

More recently, the school has found success with its first adult dance class. The drop-in course, which has attracted about 40 students, focuses on teaching women how to dance in high heels. "There's a specific technique to it that's sassier and kind of sensual," she says.

The class also gives students an opportunity to talk about the things they face as women. "It's about building that camaraderie and sisterhood while also dancing and getting a really good workout," she says. "So it's a really holistic health experience."

That may not sound like a typical dance class, but Freeman-Sellers isn't your typical dance instructor. Although she studied dance as a college undergraduate, she went on to earn master's degrees in school counseling and school psychology. When she's not at the studio, she works as a counselor at three charter schools.

Freeman-Sellers believes her experience in education, combined with her passion for dance, helps her bring a more comprehensive approach to Mayne Attraction. With that in mind, she has pulled together a staff with similar educational backgrounds who can help families navigate more than just the dance floor.

"My focus has always been the holistic health of children," she says. "I tell the parents, I am part of your village. I'm here if you need me, even if it has nothing to do with dance."

Freeman-Sellers, who grew up just one street away in the Lomond neighborhood, is also driven by her experience as an African American girl in Shaker Heights. Although she has been dancing since she was nine, Freeman-Sellers says she wasn't exposed to traditional styles until high school.

"I'm very intentional in serving children who look like me, because when I was younger I didn't have these opportunities," she says.

Contact:

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216-269-3829 **SL**





Work.
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New Tricks

By Sue Starrett
Photography by Robert Muller

Who: Chris Ramsay

Where: Onaway

Business: Shaker Hound Academy

Mission: Our mission is to help owners train their dogs to be their best, thereby improving quality of life in the home, neighborhood, public spaces, and at work.

What I Love About My Work: Helping a dog transform from a nervous, aggressive, insecure, overly stimulated animal into a happy, more relaxed one is borderline magical. I work with dogs that have a wide spectrum of problems. Slowly and methodically taking them and their owners through “grade school levels” is both rewarding and challenging.

I love training dogs one-on-one, but the real joy and satisfaction come through teaching owners to incorporate all the cues, methods, and procedures. When owners learn effective communication with their dogs, their confidence skyrockets, and confusion turns into clarity. Family members, neighbors, and coworkers reap the benefits of an emotionally flexible, well-behaved canine.

A favorite part of my week is the Shaker Heights Pack Walk, every Saturday morning at Horseshoe Lake. Initiated by Keith Vaquera-Little, a Shaker Heights resident and owner of Sirius Strides Dog Training, it began with two dogs and now attracts more than 50 with their owners. It’s free and non-contact, since the dogs are not allowed to meet. We paused during the pandemic; when we resumed, a record number of 128 dogs and their owners showed up. We’ve also helped trainers institute pack walks in other cities and states. I lead one at Pinecrest on Fridays. These walks are among the most gratifying public service events I have experienced.



The paws that refreshes:
the Pack Walk

Personal Background: I grew up in Cincinnati and graduated from Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in visual communication. A job interview brought me to Cleveland. I fell in love with the city, took the position, and got married.

While I was working in corporate design and teaching graphic design at Cleveland Institute of Art, we adopted a puppy. By then we had moved from Lakewood to Shaker Heights, and our three kids were at Onaway School. My goal was to have the best trained dog on the block. I bought books and DVDs and watched every TV episode of a well-known trainer. Within six months, friends were asking me for advice. In less than a year, friends of friends wanted to hire me.



Quickly, my hobby transitioned into a serious professional career choice. Because of my love for these special animals and of teaching, along with the healing nature dogs have on humans, I feel like I was meant to do this: make the world a better place through dogs.

Now I average 15 private sessions a week, talk to kids about dog training for school projects, instruct other trainers in person and online, speak to media about how to use food for training, host small group classes, and help prepare dogs for therapy dog tests and agility competitions. Six years ago I transitioned from my original techniques to a more reward-based, emotionally centered system called Training Between the Ears. Turns out, you can also teach an old dog trainer new tricks.

On Working and Living in Shaker Heights: We love Shaker's diversity, older houses, walkable streets, proximity to downtown, and great school system. In 2016 we did a major house renovation/addition to have more room for family —

continued on page 60

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and dog training activities. The dense neighborhoods make for a friendly, strong, tight-knit community, which is filled with dog lovers. The only downside is that when I'm working with dogs near my home, it can take longer, because I typically see people I know. So I walk a little, chat a little, walk a little, chat a little.

But that's why we chose Shaker Heights. We didn't want to be isolated from our people, like on an island. We moved because of the community. We couldn't ask for better neighbors on our immediate block, our whole street, anywhere in the city.

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Website: shakerhoundacademy.com

Facebook: facebook.com/shakerhoundacademy

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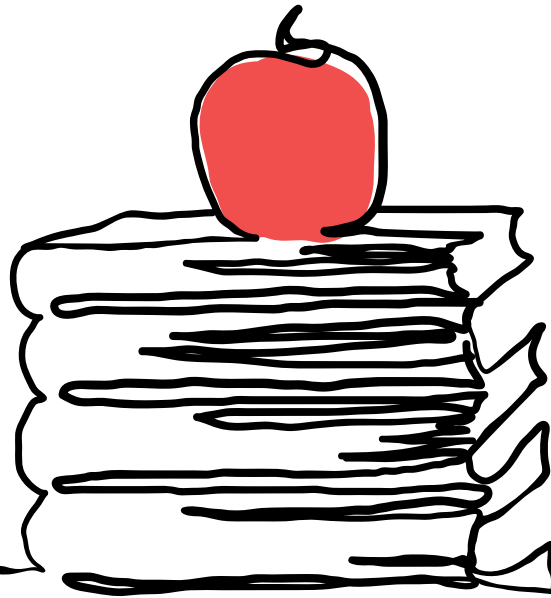
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Scene in Shaker

A Fascinating Year

By Jane Kaufman



"Fascinating"

• That was a word that Mary Krogness used frequently — often raising a single eyebrow — in describing her reaction to discoveries of her students.

In 1973-1974, I was fortunate to be part of her fourth grade class. There were 24 of us in room 9 at Boulevard School that year.

Dynamic and engaging in her out-of-the-box approach, she held high expectations for her students and encouraged us to cooperate, collaborate, and create alone and together. She introduced us to the concept of brainstorming as a class — writing our ideas on the blackboard, then encouraging us to choose as a group the best ones, which she circled. She also encouraged us to journal privately. She viewed any failure as the byproduct of an experiment — and an opportunity to learn.

She pushed social boundaries, eating her lunch with us on occasion and playing eraser tag with us in her classroom during recess on days it was too cold to go outside. She was a fiercely competitive player of a version of the game that required players to try to tag one another while balancing the fat, black chalkboard erasers, dusty with chalk, on top of their heads, temporarily graying a player's hair.

I know that I'm not alone in feeling that every day was an adventure. We took a trip to the Shaker Lakes Nature Center and toted pond water back to school to examine under the microscope for amoebas — and then, after an introduction to literary terms, wrote poems inspired by the plants we identified on our walk. We picked apples and made applesauce in the faculty kitchen and pressed cider in our classroom. We studied Africa, culminating in the creation of an African meal. We explored each of the systems of the human body, most memorably perhaps the reproductive system, where we pushed our desks out of the way to join in a circle where Mrs. Krogness bravely answered our questions.

**I know that I'm not
alone in feeling that
every day was
an adventure.**

We lampooned national political figures, including then-President Richard Nixon, in political cartoons that she kept under lock and key once finished, fearing for her job; wrote the libretto, composed music, created costumes and sets in order to perform "The Flood That Saved the Day," an original operetta that she directed with assistance from music teacher John Hall and art teacher Diane Kwiecien.

At my 40th Shaker Heights High School reunion last fall, one of my fourth-grade compatriots mentioned that another couldn't attend. That observation led me to realize that I wanted to reunite our fourth grade.

I scoured Facebook. By November, I had critical mass. In January, 14 classmates, from Jerusalem to Portland, Maine, along with Mrs. Krogness in Cleveland (who now insisted we call her Mary) gathered virtually for an hour of online reminiscence.

Mary opened the meeting with a brief moment of appreciation for the event and for us.

Then, each of us took about three minutes to speak about our most vivid memories of fourth grade and what about that year that we've carried with us 49 years later.

Seth Levy closed the event with an improvised piece on the piano.

We're already planning another virtual reunion, partly in the hopes of including a few more of us who weren't able to be there, and partly to catch up more with one another.

Mostly, though, we'll meet again to marvel in what we shared in one fascinating year. **SL**



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p. 59
amplifydispensary.com

Mayfield Smiles
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Public Utility

Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer
District
p. 18
neorsd.org/doanbrook
neorsd.org/lowerlake

Real Estate (Residential/Commercial)

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jackiecollesi.howardhanna.com

Shaker Heights Fair Housing
Review Board
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shakeronline.com/fair-housing

The Nordstrom Group
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Retail/Restaurants

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The Van Aken District
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thevanakendistrict.com

Retirement/Assisted Living

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