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Through the magic of Zoom ten members of Shaker's class of 1985 came together to learn from each other



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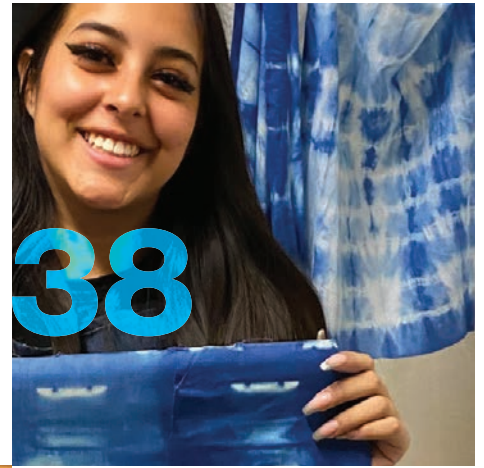
## ON THE COVER

Discussion group members from SHHS class of 1985 get together at the Van Aken Market Hall.

*Photo by Robert Muller*

## Building a Foundation for Opportunity

With a focus on supporting teachers, students, and curriculum, the Shaker Schools Foundation invests in opening up learning experiences inside and outside the classroom.

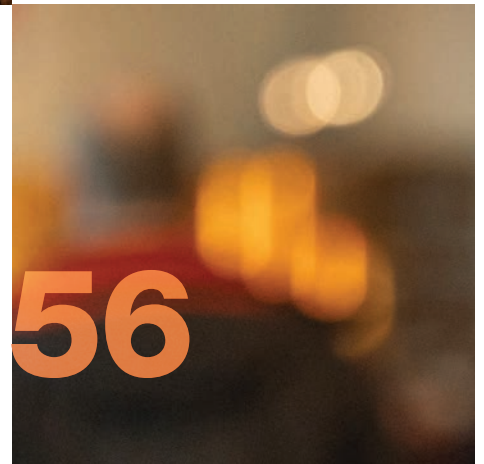


## Great Shaker Homes

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## SHAKER LIFE

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## The Right Moves

Opening a new studio and creating a new business model during a pandemic require passion, determination, and a boundless supply of positive energy, all of which you'll find in Sha'Ran Marshall.

*Winter 2021*



## Broadening the Narrative

Ron Reed and Vince Leskosky are not simply carrying the evolution of Shaker Heights residential architecture into the 21st Century, but helping redefine how we use the space in our homes.

*Summer 2020*



## The Second(hand) Time Around

Thrifting can be considered an art, of sorts. Just ask Makya Murray, owner of Reclamation, a resale/consignment shop on Chagrin Boulevard.

*Winter 2022*



Left to right: Civil Service Commission members Lee Trotter and Ronald Fountain, former member Sandra Kiely Kolb, and new member Patricia Inglis.

## Behind the scenes, Civil Service Commission promotes Shaker safety

After 15 years of service, Sandra Kiely Kolb completed her final term on the Shaker Heights Civil Service Commission with a sense of accomplishment and gratitude. But she suspects the majority of Shaker residents are unaware of what the Commission does.

The three-member Commission is the hiring authority for the City's civil servants, defined in Shaker Heights as sworn police officers, excluding the police chief, assistant chief, and commanders; and sworn employees of the Fire Department, excluding the fire chief and assistant fire chief. When the police or fire chief want to hire or promote employees, they first ask the Commission for permission.

As the hiring authority, the Commission is charged with determining the criteria for appointment and promotion in the Fire and Police departments of the City. In recent years, they made a number of revisions to the Civil Service Rules to help the City attract more diverse candidates.

"We had civil service rules that had not been changed since they were adopted in 1974," says Sandra Middleton, the City's director of human resources. "This group of forward-thinking residents put a lot of effort into revising the rules, bringing us into the 21st century but keeping the integrity of the civil service process."

This group includes Kiely Kolb and Commission members Ronald Fountain, appointed in 2012, and Lee Trotter, appointed in 2010.

So, what changed? Under the original rules, the City could only consider the candidates with the top three scores on the Fire Department exam, for instance. There may have been well-qualified applicants on a list of 100 or more, but the City couldn't even look at their applications because of test scores. Now the City can consider the top 20.

Another change the Commission enabled was allowing lateral hiring of police officers from other departments without requiring those officers to take a written test. This enabled the City to compete with other municipalities that were already making lateral hires.

And under Kiely Kolb, the commission also changed the rules to include extra credit points for applicants with military and higher education experience.

"I don't think the public realizes the layering, and the intent, that goes into the hiring process," Kiely Kolb says. "Every step is deliberate, in order to result in the best quality people we can attract. But it's also deliberate in being reflective of the community. We want to have a very transparent, very fair process by which our community hires and promotes members of our Police and Fire departments. We also constantly monitor how we're doing as far as diversity in hiring and promotion."

Fountain feels one of the biggest challenges the Commission encounters is "making sure that we reflect, and protect, the needs and urgencies of the community we serve. We make clear that we have an objective to reflect the diversity expectations of the community. Our role is more governance than management."

Trotter agrees, adding that what has been most rewarding for him in his tenure on the Commission has been "the ability to advance the cultural environment in the Shaker Police and Fire departments, consistent with our stated goals and objectives."

Kiely Kolb says what she'll miss most about the Civil Service Commission is attending the promotion and hiring ceremonies.

"It has been a great honor and a privilege, and I can't believe how the years have flown by," she said at her final Commission meeting in early December. "It has always been a privilege working with both police and fire. I just think they are two of the greatest assets we have in our community, and the leadership has always been phenomenal and so supportive of what we do."

Middleton said to Kiely Kolb in her final meeting, "Under your leadership, we have really grown and developed and positioned Shaker Heights to continue being a premiere place to come to work."

New member Patricia Inglis' official start date was January 1, 2024. A longtime Shaker resident, Inglis is the executive vice president of the San Francisco 49ers. Currently, she serves on the board and executive committee and chairs the strategic planning committee for In Motion, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people manage their Parkinson's disease, and she serves on the board of Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple.

"I grew up in Shaker, and although I have lived away from the City at times, I've spent a lot of time here as an adult, and we raised our kids here. The opportunity to do something to give back to Shaker is very appealing to me," says Inglis.



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### Reader's Garden installed outside Main Library

There's a new spot in town for a summer picnic or a fun selfie. Reader's Garden, an installation of larger-than-life sculptures of books written by Shaker and Cleveland-area authors, was installed in November on City-owned green space at the southwest corner of Lee Road and Van Aken Boulevard.

Made possible by a donation from former Mayor Judy Rawson and her husband Bob Rawson, the installation celebrates reading and writing while providing a place to sit, read, play, and gather.

The Rawsons made their donation to LAND studio to commission a new work of public art and then worked with LAND, community advisors, the City's Public Art Task Force, and the Planning Department to choose an artist and a design concept. Librarians and patrons of the Shaker Heights Public Library helped select the books featured.

Reader's Garden was designed by Haemee Han of Jaemee Studio in New Jersey, and fabricated by Rustbelt Cleveland.

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### City website gets new look, address

The City's website has a new address and a new look. To more accurately reflect the City as a government entity (rather than a company), the new website address is now [www.shakerheightsoh.gov](http://www.shakerheightsoh.gov). Correspondingly, City email addresses have changed to this format: `firstnameDOTlastname@shakerheightsoh.gov`.

Don't worry, though; the old [Shakeronline.com](http://Shakeronline.com) web address and email addresses will continue to work for several years to come. The new look features richer colors, improved navigation icons, and a better mobile experience. Have a look, at [www.shakerheightsoh.gov](http://www.shakerheightsoh.gov).



## City expands home maintenance grant programs

Spring is synonymous with renewal and renovation. And for homeowners, there's always that new project that arose during the winter months or was left over from last fall.

Thanks to a partnership between Shaker Heights and the Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC), a series of City-funded grants, largely benefiting seniors, has been improved to include more perks. Grant programs include exterior maintenance grants of up to \$3,500 to correct exterior violations cited by the Building and Housing Department; senior safety grants of up to \$700 to address health and/or safety hazards affecting those over 62 or permanently disabled; and the free paint program, which helps DIY homeowners correct cited exterior paint violations.

Grant eligibility requirements: Property must be located in Shaker Heights, owner-occupied, and current on taxes (or in a County-approved repayment plan). Households must meet income guidelines established by HUD.

"In addition to home repair grant funding, the City's partnership with HRRC also gives residents access to home repair education and training, contractor lists, and a tool library," said Theodore Darden IV, neighborhood and housing specialist for the City of Shaker Heights.

For more information and a link to a grant application, go to: [shakerheightsoh.gov/grants](http://shakerheightsoh.gov/grants). Residents may also contact HRRC's Carolyn Ostrom at [costrom@hrrc-ch.org](mailto:costrom@hrrc-ch.org) or 216-381-6100 ext. 10.

For those in need of additional technical assistance, Benjamin Rose offers free financial and housing counseling, property tax counseling, foreclosure and eviction counseling, home accessibility and aging-in-place counseling, and more. Go to [benrose.org](http://benrose.org) or call 216-361-0718 for additional information.

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[neorsd.org/doanbrook](https://neorsd.org/doanbrook)  
[neorsd.org/lowerlake](https://neorsd.org/lowerlake)



## Go electric and earn \$100

City to offer \$100 rebate for residents who switch from gas- to battery-powered electric mowers and leaf blowers

Green up your lawn care program this spring and get up to \$200 from the City of Shaker Heights.

Created by the Sustainability Committee to help improve air quality and reduce noise pollution, the Electric Lawn Mower & Leaf Blower Rebate Program offers residents — on a first come, first served basis — the opportunity to earn a \$100 rebate for purchasing a battery-powered electric leaf blower or lawn mower and turning in their gas-powered versions. To be eligible for the rebate, residents must:

1. Purchase a new electric battery-powered lawn mower or leaf blower from any vendor. Save the purchase receipt and take a photo of the make, model, and serial number on the electric mower and/or blower.
2. Bring their gas-powered lawn mower or leaf blower, with an empty fuel tank, to the City's Service Center located at 15600 Chagrin Blvd. on Saturday, May 4 between the hours of 9 am and 3 pm. Residents will receive a rebate form verifying they recycled a mower and/or blower.

The first 40 residents to turn in their gas-powered equipment and present the rebate form, the receipt for their new electric battery-operated mower and/or blower, and photo of the required information will be eligible to receive a \$100 rebate from the City of Shaker Heights. The rebate will be issued by check and sent by mail approximately three weeks after the complete information is received.

*Note: Residents interested in purchasing both an electric mower and leaf blower can provide paperwork for rebates for both (or up to \$200 in rebates). Read latest details at [shakerheightsoh.gov/go-electric](https://shakerheightsoh.gov/go-electric)*

## New director named for Doan Brook Watershed Partnership



Doan Brook Watershed Partnership (DBWP) has welcomed Maureen Drinkard as its new executive director.

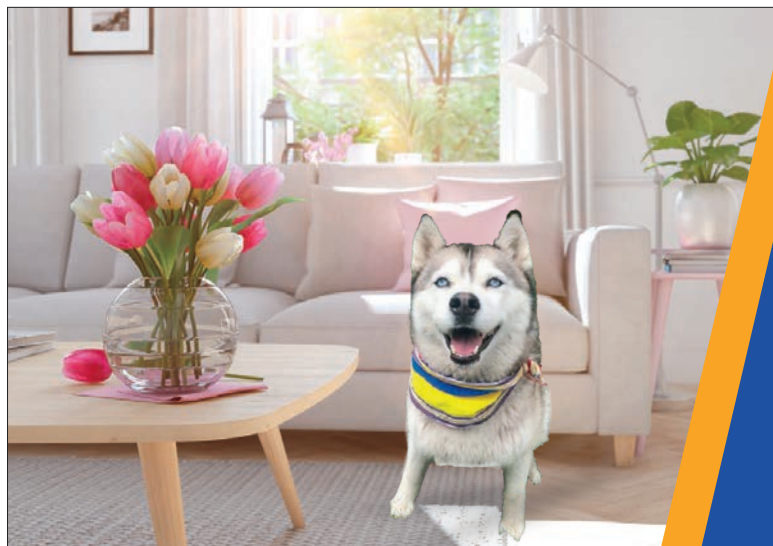
A stream ecologist, Drinkard grew up along the Cuyahoga River in Cuyahoga Falls and earned her doctorate from Kent State University. She pursued a career as an ecology professor and later moved into academic administration and then non-profit administration.

According to an announcement by DBWP, “As an administrator, she developed many programs — from idea to launch — including a technical bachelor’s degree in environmental management, an MBA in sustainability, and a nationwide scientific fellowship program placing thousands of scientists in research positions each year. Her ongoing research and professional interests include riparian, wetland, and watershed ecology, entomology, and sustainability.”

Says Drinkard, “I am looking forward to getting to know my neighbors who also call this watershed home through education activities, community events, and watershed outreach. As an ecologist, I am also thrilled to have an opportunity to get back into my waders and serve the watershed through restoration projects along the Doan Brook.”

Drinkard replaces Victoria Mills, who had led the Partnership since 2008 and who last fall received the group’s Watershed Hero award.

DBWP was formed in 2002 to facilitate and support conservation and restoration projects within the watershed, with an eye towards environmental justice. The City is a funder of this organization.



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## Maintaining a Safe and Just Shaker Heights: a Framework update

City Council last summer passed a resolution adopting a Framework for Maintaining a Safe and Just Shaker Heights, stating the City's intention to:

- > Conduct a community-wide Listening Project, facilitated by an independent consultant, to enable a community-wide discussion on policing policies and practices.
- > Expand the City's mental health response program.
- > Create a Community Advisory Group to provide feedback to City leaders.
- > Post online certain public records of the Shaker Heights Police Department to make access easier for the public, including some data by demographic and other metrics.

### Listening Project

The consulting firm Strategy Matters will facilitate the Listening Project, hosting public engagement events this summer to give residents opportunities to share any concerns or suggestions about police policies and practices. The City will publicize all public engagement opportunities. A public presentation of a final report is expected in fall 2024. Watch for announcements in the City's

e-newsletter, social media accounts, and its website. Sign up for these notifications at [shakerheightsoh.gov/stay-connected](http://shakerheightsoh.gov/stay-connected).

### Mental health response program

The City secured a federal grant of nearly \$400,000 to expand its mental health response program to include partner cities in the Chagrin Valley Dispatch network: Cleveland Heights, University Heights, South Euclid, and Richmond Heights.

The plan is for MetroHealth/Recovery Resources to hire two licensed mental health professionals and two peer supports who, along with the current Shaker Heights social worker, will cover all five partner communities. In addition, a licensed mental health professional will be assigned to the joint dispatch center. Work continues: the City is pursuing additional funds needed to fully implement this expansion.

### Community advisory group

The City is establishing a Community Advisory Group (CAG) to provide feedback to the mayor, police chief, chief administrative officer, and City Council on topics that may include:

- > The implementation of recommendations from the Listening Project;
- > Policing policies and practices;
- > The operation and expansion of the mental health response program; and
- > Community engagement efforts by both police and mental health professionals.

### Public records

Work continues on a transition to a Motorola software system for improved access to Shaker Heights Police Department public records.

For future updates on these and other initiatives, sign up at [shakerheightsoh.gov/stay-connected](http://shakerheightsoh.gov/stay-connected) to receive the City's monthly e-newsletter, occasional email announcements, and/or to follow the City on social media.



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## Help us Grow Not Mow in 2024



### The City's Grow Not Mow program continues to thrive



The 2024 season kicks off on Saturday, April 13, 1-3 pm with a planting event at Grow Not Mow Site No. 1 on the corner of

South Park and Courtland boulevards, across from Hathaway Brown School. All ages are welcome. Learn more and register at [doanbrookpartnership.org](http://doanbrookpartnership.org).

Launched in 2021, the Grow Not Mow program seeks to restore native habitat on unused parcels of public land by limiting – or stopping altogether – mowing, and instead planting native trees and shrubs. In addition to Site No. 1, there is Site No. 2 on the corner of Lee Road and South Park Boulevard.

Volunteers hold regular work sessions in spring, summer, and fall. At the April 13 event, volunteers will plant a variety of native trees, thanks to a grant from the Cuyahoga County Soil & Water Conservation District.



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“We’ll also be planting shrubs and wildflowers that benefit wildlife and pollinators,” says Councilmember Nancy Moore, who chairs the Tree Advisory Board and is a member of the Sustainability Committee, which partner to oversee the program. The Doan Brook Watershed Partnership is also a partner in the program.

“The planting area is in the floodplain of the Doan Brook and what used to be a marsh with standing water is now a rolling meadow filled with hundreds of new trees and native plants,” she adds. Learn more at [shakerheightsoh.gov/grow-mow](http://shakerheightsoh.gov/grow-mow)



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*You're invited!* Come out for some fun with the Shaker Heights Recreation Department.  
*full details at [shakerheightsoh.gov/recreation](https://shakerheightsoh.gov/recreation)*



### THORNTON PARK SPRING ICE SPECTACULAR

FRIDAY, MAY 3 & SATURDAY, MAY 4  
Thornton Park Ice Arena

The community is invited to join us for the 2024 Shaker Spring Ice Spectacular, A Night at the Museum: Everything Comes Alive at Thornton Park. This star-studded event highlights our skaters from Recreation's Learn to Skate program and members of the Shaker Figure Skating Club.



### MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY AND PARADE

MONDAY, MAY 27, 9 am | Ceremony Start, Parade Immediately Following  
City Hall, Van Aken Boulevard & Van Aken District

Take part in Shaker's Annual Memorial Day Ceremony near the flagpole in front of City Hall. Join friends and neighbors to watch the parade immediately following the ceremony. The parade will proceed east from City Hall in the westbound lane of Van Aken Boulevard to the Van Aken District.



### HOLIDAY POOL PARTIES AT THORNTON PARK

SUMMER HOLIDAYS, 1-5 pm  
Thornton Park Pool

Join your friends and family at Thornton Park Pool for a holiday "splash" this summer! Music, activities, and fun in the sun. Food and beverages available. Regular pool admissions and rules apply – advance daily admission for our holiday pool parties will be available at [shakerheights.recdesk.com](https://shakerheights.recdesk.com).

**MEMORIAL DAY >** MONDAY, MAY 27 | Pool opening weekend, music & fun!

**JUNETEENTH >** WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19 | Enjoy music from a live band!

**FOURTH OF JULY >** THURSDAY, JULY 4 | DJs and rides on the Euclid Beach Rocket Car!

**LABOR DAY >** MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2 | Pool closing weekend, fun and games in the sun!



### DIVE-IN MOVIE

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 8-10 pm  
Thornton Park Pool

Jump in after hours for a 'dive-in movie' experience at the Thornton Park Pool! Entrance to the pool for this event starts at 8 pm and the movie starts at 8:45 pm. Regular pool admissions and rules apply – advance daily admission for this event will be available on [shakerheights.recdesk.com](https://shakerheights.recdesk.com).



### DOGGIE DIP

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 10 am-1 pm  
Thornton Park Pool

Bring your pup to Thornton Park Pool, where they can swim in the unheated, unchlorinated water and enjoy the company of their canine friends. Well-behaved dogs are welcome. A lifeguard will be on duty. Only dogs will be permitted in the water for safety reasons. Pup-related prizes from local vendors will be raffled off throughout the event! Advance daily admission for this event will be available at [shakerheights.recdesk.com](https://shakerheights.recdesk.com).



### TOUCH-A-TRUCK

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 9 am-1 pm  
Van Aken District

Head on down to the Van Aken District for lots of fun at Touch-A-Truck! Kids can touch and explore a variety of City trucks and vehicles, from the Recreation, Public Works, Police and Fire departments, and more! From 9 am-10 am is a 'sensory hour' with no horns or flashing lights. Fun for all ages! Free, no registration required.



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### Carbon monoxide detector legislation passed

City Council has passed legislation to enable building and housing inspectors to cite homeowners for the absence of carbon monoxide (CO) detectors under the property maintenance code in any residence where the Ohio Fire Code requires one. Inspectors will confirm the presence of CO detectors when required during any interior inspection, including point of sale and rental inspections.

Regular maintenance and replacement of CO detectors can help ensure they are working properly and providing the necessary protection against dangerous levels of CO, a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that can cause serious health problems and even death if not detected in a timely manner. CO is a byproduct of combustion of fuel-burning appliances, as well as internal combustion engine vehicles and equipment. Installing a



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If fuel-burning appliances are not vented properly, or if the equipment is malfunctioning, there is a risk of CO buildup in a home. There is also a risk in homes where bedrooms are on the same floor as an attached garage, where exhaust fumes from an idling vehicle can accumulate. The greatest risk occurs when carbon monoxide builds up while residents are sleeping and unable to recognize the symptoms of CO poisoning: headaches, nausea, or dizziness.

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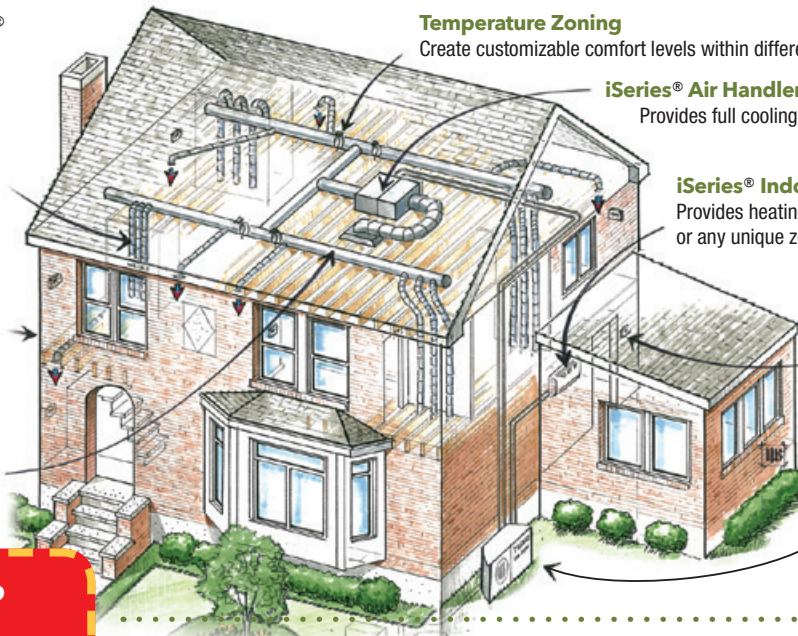
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# # Shaker Grams

## 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!



**@shakerlibrary** | Flashback fun



**@giospastaria** | Succulent sauciness



**@norka\_fit88** | Dream achieved



**@ninjacitykitchenbar** | Bahn Mi magnificence



**@aroundthetableyarns** | Modest Mouse



**@harborchaseseniorliving** | Game Night



**@midnightowlbrewingco** | Packaged anarchy



**@africaart2** | Versatile fashions



**@shopdoublerainbow** | Charming clips

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Toddler – Grade 8 | Lyndhurst Campus

### Birchwood School Open House

Sunday, 4/28/24, 2:00 pm

Preschool – Grade 8 | Cleveland-West Campus

### Upper School Open House

Sunday 4/14/24, 1:00 pm

Grades 9 – 12 | Gates Mills Campus

### Mastery School Open House

Sunday, 4/21/24, 1:00 pm

Grades 9 – 12 | University Circle Campus

## To RSVP and for more information:

440.423.2950, (Early Childhood, Lower, and Middle School)

216.251.2321 (Birchwood School)

440.423.2955 (Upper School)

440.423.8801 (Mastery School)

[hawken.edu/admissions](http://hawken.edu/admissions)

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Shaker  
Schools



**Thank you to voters:  
District's facilities plan is underway**

On November 7, 2023, voters approved a ballot issue providing funding necessary for Segment 1 of the District's Long-Term Master Facilities Plan. Segment 1 includes:

- > Renovating Ludlow to accommodate an expanded PreK program.
- > Renovating and expanding Woodbury as a Middle Years Building (Grades 6-8).
- > Renovating Boulevard, Lomond, Mercer, and Onaway and converting elementary school buildings to include Grade 5.
- > Building an addition to Fernway to accommodate Grade 5.

Funding from this bond issue will help to strengthen and create the safe, comfortable, and vibrant learning environments that our students, staff, and families need and deserve. It will help us expand our preschool program. Shaker Heights will continue to be known as a community that takes pride in our excellent schools and we will continue to attract and retain families and students from all across the region.

Follow this process online at [shaker.org/facilitiesplan](http://shaker.org/facilitiesplan) and sign up for the District's ongoing email updates by scanning the QR code.







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## Travel assistance fund soars to new heights

Global education has long been part of the Shaker experience. At Shaker Heights High School, a great number of international travel opportunities exist for students. They have taken up hammers to remove chunks of the Berlin Wall, sung at St. Peter’s Basilica the day after Pope John Paul II passed away, performed atop the Great Wall of China, and helped build homes on floating villages in Cambodia. Trips have included performance tours, service programs, and cultural exchange programs. Shaker students have traveled to France, Quebec, Puerto Rico, Fiji, Costa Rica, Germany, Chile, India, Laos, Cambodia, Morocco, Kenya, China, Japan, Vietnam, South Africa, and more.

The Shaker Schools Foundation is dedicated to making these travel

opportunities available for any student who wishes to participate. The Foundation recently launched an International Travel Endowment Fund campaign to raise additional funds for travel assistance scholarships that remove barriers to participation. Donations to the International Travel Endowment Fund will allow students to learn beyond textbooks and gain a better understanding of history, culture, and the world, and will help to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to explore the world.

A Shaker Heights senior who received financial assistance shared her experience on a trip to Spain her junior year. “I traveled with the Orchestra to Spain. It was the best thing I have ever done in high school so far! Little did I know this

trip would change the trajectory of my identity and my high school identity at Shaker in general.”

The impact of these trips will stay with students forever, shaping their outlook on the world and contributing to their personal and academic growth. The International Travel Endowment Fund will not only facilitate current travel opportunities but also ensure a lasting legacy, allowing future generations of Shaker students to benefit from transformative international experiences.

Do you want to help a Shaker student take flight? To learn more about Shaker’s International Travel Endowment Fund campaign, visit [shakerschoolsfoundation.org/travel-assistance/](http://shakerschoolsfoundation.org/travel-assistance/)



The mission of the Shaker Schools Foundation is to support all Shaker Heights City School District students by cultivating community resources to advance equitable access and enhance opportunities in and out of the classroom.



## District-wide Kindergarten Kickoff is April 20

Join us for Shaker Heights Schools District-wide Kindergarten Kickoff on April 20, 2024, from 1-4 pm, at Lomond Elementary School, 17917 Lomond Blvd. Bring your incoming Kindergartner and learn more about the District, including the enrollment process, transportation, health and immunization information, communications, special education support, and more.

Learn more about events for incoming Kindergarten families and complete a Kindergarten Kickoff registration form online at [www.shaker.org/kindergarten](http://www.shaker.org/kindergarten).

## Enroll now for the 2024-25 school year

Enrolling your student in the Shaker Heights City School District is easy.

Parents and guardians can visit [shaker.org/enroll](http://shaker.org/enroll) and complete all the necessary documents online, then schedule a by-phone appointment to review the completed forms and to complete registration for your student. For more information, please contact the Registration Office, 216-295-4321. The office is located in the Shaker Heights Schools Welcome Center in the Shaker Heights Public Library main branch. Telephone support is available from 8 am-4:30 pm Monday through Friday. In-person office hours are 9 am-4:30 pm Monday through Friday.



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- Kim Crane - \$47.6M
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\*Top Producer - Market Share Report published Dec. 2023. Analysis dates are 12/1/2022 through 11/30/2023 based on all property types sold at \$750,000 and above.

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Prices for the sold Shaker Heights listings reflect the listing price for each home, not the sold price.

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# Shaker Social



## Living in Shaker Heights

**f Neighbor #1:** Just wanted to post a recommendation for iRiE Jamaican Kitchen! On the south-east corner of Lee and Chagrin. I went for the first time the other day and absolutely loved it. The food was delicious and the service was exceptional. When I mentioned that I hadn't eaten there before, the server (I wish I had gotten her name!) gave

## Living in Shaker Heights

**f Neighbor #1:** Anyone recognize a door? **Neighbor #2:** We could have a dozen versions of this poster because Shaker Heights has Architectural Digest-worthy doors! **Neighbor #3:** The door on the left hand side in the second row is on Torrington Road. **Neighbor #4:** Third row all the way to the right looks like my neighbors at Van Aken and Southington. **Neighbor #5:** Yes!! Bottom left corner is our door! **Neighbor #6:** I would love to one day have a door worth a mention!! **Neighbor #7:** Second from the top is ours on Parkland! Gorgeous collection. **Neighbor #8:** Is this a book? **Neighbor #1:** I think it's just a poster. Just came through one of my architecture appreciation FB groups.



me samples of different entrees, and later on when I was eating my meal, she came over to give me a complimentary salsa and chicken patty appetizer. I will absolutely be going again soon!

**Neighbor #2:** My family frequents iRiE. Great food and service. Glad to hear you had a great experience as well.

**Neighbor #3:** The Jahpotle wrap w/a side of plantains is my go-to, but the curry vegetables are also a winner.

**Neighbor #4:** Gotta try it! **Neighbor #5:** I haven't eaten there; now I'm looking forward to going there soon.

**Neighbor #6:** The food and the service are stellar! **Neighbor #7:** A few weeks ago, I was on my way to Heinen's when I smelled the most delicious aroma of spices. I looked around and saw iRiE Jamaican Kitchen and followed my nose there. Friendly, festive vibe as I entered. I had smothered ox tails, cabbage, beans and rice and plantains. Outstanding.

## Living in Shaker Heights

**f Neighbor #1:** A morning visit from this guy. **Neighbor #2:** Oh my gosh! What neighborhood are you in? **Neighbor #1:** Sussex. **Neighbor #3:** We see him over on Rolliston, too. Majestic. **Neighbor #4:** That is a big boy! **Neighbor #5:** I guess that the buck stops here!



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LIBRARY FEATURE STORY >

*a conversation with*  
**Connie Schultz**

Connie Schultz takes inspiration from her decade of living in Shaker Heights for the setting of her debut picture book, *Lola and the Troll*

Written by **Lyndsey Brennan** | Photography by **Robert Muller**

If you know Connie Schultz, you know she doesn't talk often about winning the Pulitzer Prize.

While teaching college-level journalism classes, she said something so often that her students had it memorized: "A hero never lays claim to the title." In other words, good writers don't brag that they're good.

But today, over Zoom, she is making an exception, because she wants to convey what living in Shaker Heights for a decade meant to her.

"When it (the Pulitzer) was announced, I had people leaving flowers on my porch because they knew where I lived. I had neighbors calling out my name from their cars."

When she won in 2005, Schultz was living in an Onaway duplex at the corner of Southington and Huntington Roads. She wrote many of the columns that won the Pulitzer at a desk looking out onto Southington.



"There was a parade of support passing by my house that day. I felt like the adopted daughter of Shaker Heights, and I've never forgotten it," she says.

Nearly two decades out from the Pulitzer, The Plain Dealer journalist-turned-columnist-turned-memoirist-turned-journalism-professor-turned-novelist set her sights on writing for children.

"I have found I'm increasingly focused on the well-being of children in the last decade of my career — in my column writing, and certainly in my personal life, with all these grandchildren." Schultz has eight, ranging in age from 3 to 11.

"The messages children receive about themselves have really become a focus for me. It's been something I've wanted to write about, and I never thought I'd get a chance to do it in a children's book," she says.

"I know what [children] are up against, and I want little girls in particular to know they're great just how they are. They don't need to be changing themselves to be someone else's idea of the ideal girl," she says.

Schultz says she could tell it was time to tackle this topic when she stopped knowing it in her mind and started feeling it in her heart.

"Frankly, when I look back over the years, that's how all my writing comes about. When it hits me right there" — she gestures to her heart — "and I can't shut it off."

"I tell my students, 'Trust the ideas that interest you, that you can't close the door on, that are consuming your imagination. Those are the ideas we should be pursuing in our life's work.'"

*In January Schultz sat down with Shaker Life, ahead of the book's release, to discuss its origins, the challenges of writing it, and how her decade living in Shaker inspired the setting.*

*The conversation has been edited for length and clarity.*



## Lola and the Troll

by Connie Schultz

Illustrated by Sandy Rodriguez

Lola is a happy kid who loves recess and her imaginary dog, Tank. There's just one problem: the neighborhood bully. He hides behind a troll costume and says mean things to everyone who walks by, including Lola. Soon she starts wearing her hair differently, walking on her tippy toes to add a few extra inches to her height, and even putting cornstarch in her shoes because he said her feet stink! But when Lola's mom takes her to her favorite place, The Bee's Sneeze bookstore, the owner, Ms. Sneesby, reminds Lola that she is brave. Lola and the Troll is about remembering how to be brave, even when it's hard, and realizing that sometimes all a bully really needs is a little kindness.

Ages: 4 - 8 years



Children pay keen attention and erupt in giggles at Connie Schultz's author talk at Shaker Library on Saturday, February 10, 2024.

FEATURE STORY > continued

**Q** *How did the picture book come about?*

**A** On social media, I am always moderating discussions and blocking trolls. One day I told my followers, "OK, Tom the Troll has been blocked," and someone joked, "That would be a great children's book."

So I went on Twitter and simply said, "I'm thinking of writing a children's book titled, Tom The Troll Has Been Blocked."

Not two hours later, my agent Gail Ross calls and says, "Why are you working on a children's book when you're supposed to be working on your novel?" This was July 2021.

I said, "I'm not working on a children's book."

She said, "You are now. Because Casey McIntyre [an editor at Razorbill, an imprint of Penguin Random House] reached out to me and said, 'We want that book.'"

**Q** *What was it like working with Casey?*

**A** Casey died of ovarian cancer in November, which makes this bittersweet. Yes, I'm overjoyed about the book. I'm overjoyed Lola is about to go out into the world. I just wish I could call Casey.

She was so great in her advice. She made me braver. The first time we spoke over Zoom, I said to Casey, "Who am I to presume I can write a children's book? I can't imagine doing it."

And she said, "Well, I can. So let's get started."

**Q** *Did you have a specific setting in mind when you were writing *Lola and the Troll*?*

**A** I said to them, "Can it be set in an urban neighborhood?"

And of course, I was imagining Shaker, specifically the Onaway neighborhood. When I was there, it was so diverse. The sidewalks were uneven, which I loved, and there were lots of trees.

When I imagined Lola walking down the street, I was imagining her passing through Shaker Square as it was back then, with storefronts including the local bookseller, Joseph-Beth.

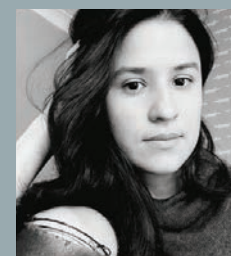
**Q** *Is the bookseller in the book, Ms. Sneesby, based on someone from the staff there?*

**A** No, not one person. But she represents so many wonderful booksellers — almost all women — that we knew, especially during those Joseph-Beth days when Caitlin [my daughter] and I would go in. They all knew her name and acted very happy to see us.

The staff at the library was the same. You know, I haven't thought about this in years. There was a woman who worked behind the desk. When we got our puppy, she found out about it and gave us a crate.

That's what it meant to be in Shaker, and that's what that library meant to me. It was a community center. It was as close to a second home as we could have had.

**Q** *How was Sandy Rodriguez chosen to illustrate *Lola and the Troll*?*



**A** It was very important to me that the illustrator we picked be Latina and be representative of who Lola is. And I knew Sandy would do a good job.



**Q** *What do you think the illustrations add to the story?*

**A** There's a reason I want both of our names to be the same size on the cover. I had the dialogue. I had the ideas. But Sandy brought them all to life. She was a genius with the troll — I wasn't sure how to depict him. She ended up creating a boy who stands on a crate and hides behind a costume. He's an insecure kid, and that really comes across in Sandy's illustrations.

**Q** *What were the challenges of writing a children's book?*

**A** I revere good children's books. I have collected them always. I have a stack that lives on my coffee table that I love looking at. So I didn't presume that I could do this.

But then I thought, "What do I always tell my kids and my students? 'If you're never afraid, you stop growing.'" So this was my growth spurt.

Another challenge was: How do you show trolling when it's happening to a child in person? And then I came up with the signs.

**Q** *The signs?*

**A** In the book, the troll holds up these signs that have insults on them. Lola reads them as she walks past his house and responds by changing who she is.

For instance, he holds up a sign that says "your hair is too big," so she starts wearing a tight bun. He has another that says "your voice is too loud," so she starts whispering.

**Q** *How have your grandchildren responded to the book?*

**A** When I read a draft to my grandkids, they kept saying, "Grandma, why does she keep changing everything about herself? Why would she let him do that to her?"

And it let us have this conversation about, "Well, what would you do? How would you respond?"

I also wanted their feedback on the ending. It was a challenge to figure out how to end the book without it looking like a surrender. I didn't want Lola to be mean. I wanted her kindness to be her super-strength. But I didn't just want her to roll over either.

So I asked them, "What would you do if you realized the troll was another kid just like you?" My granddaughters said they would want an apology from the troll, so that's what Lola does.

When Caitlin was little, there weren't many children's books with strong girls as the lead character. It's gotten better since then. But I thought, if I'm going to write one, I'm going to bring another strong girl into the mix.

At the end, when the troll gets down off his crate, he realizes he's shorter than she is. And he says, "Wow you're tall." And she responds, "I'm tall on the inside. That's what matters."

**Q** *Who did you write this book for?*

**A** The answer is twofold. I wrote it for my granddaughter Ela, because three years ago, her father told me that he stopped speaking Spanish to her in public places because of the reaction. So from early on, I wanted Ela to know my faith in her. Of course, I love all the grandkids and dedicated this book to all of them. But the story was for Ela.

Also, the more I worked on this book, the more I thought about the mothers and grandmothers who will be reading this, many of whom have experienced something like trolling in small and big ways in the workplace. You know, when you're being ignored, and when someone thinks they're giving you great advice by saying, "If only you weren't so loud..."

This is the closest I've ever come, in book form, to addressing how we talk about ourselves. Whose voice are we going to listen to? The voice we should be listening to is our own, and it should be informed not by the people who are trying to change us but by the people around us who affirm who we are. **SL**

*Lyndsey Brennan is the communications and marketing manager at Shaker Library.*

## Memory care collection aims to help residents with memory loss stay connected

In the summer of 2023, a Shaker Library user approached the information desk with a question: Does the library carry materials I could check out to help a loved one who's experiencing memory loss? "At the time, we didn't have anything like that, so we started researching," says Adult Services Associate Gretchen Witt, who looked into the items other libraries carried and began making a wish list of her own.

In December, Shaker Library's Memory Care Collection began circulating. It is made up of books, DVDs, puzzles, games, and manipulatives intended "to keep people's hands and minds busy, and get them talking and remembering," says Witt, who is in charge of the collection.

The items come from the Alzheimer's Association store and vendors that make items that help people living with dementia stay active.

The board games in the collection ask users to tell stories or select images that



remind them of people, places, and experiences they had in life. They are non-competitive, simple to play, and come with large, colorful pieces designed for people with dexterity problems.

The manipulatives in the collection are fidget toys that bring comfort or help users practice coordination. All the items in the collection are absent of childlike features, designed to maintain the dignity of the adults using them.

The collection is housed at Main Library, though customers may call to request items be sent to the Bertram Woods Branch for pick up.

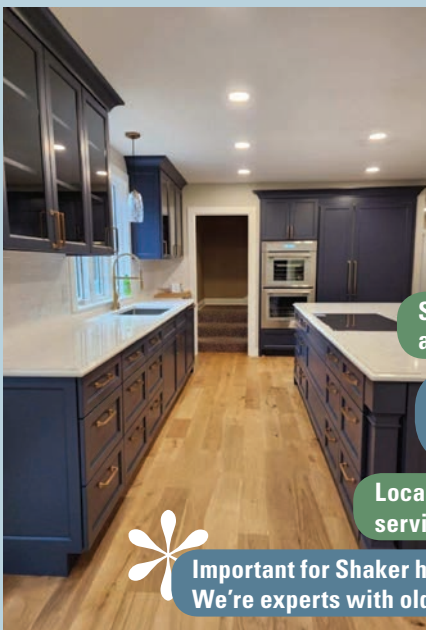
The items circulate for two weeks, "to give families a sense of whether this item is a fit for their loved one," Witt says. "Maybe the item is a 'not now.' Maybe it's for later. But we want people to know these items are here, and you don't have to make a large investment to try them out."

Witt's hope is that the materials will create opportunities for people with memory loss to stay engaged and get the sense that they still matter and have value.

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## @ Shaker Library



### Shaker Library unveils new bike repair stations

In January, Shaker Library installed Dero bike repair stations outside the Main Library and the Bertram Woods Branch for public use.

The repair stations include an air pump for filling tires and a set of tools including screwdrivers, tire levers, and a variety of wrenches for making basic repairs. Each station has been labeled with a QR code users can scan to watch bike repair videos.

The repair stations were selected and placed with expert guidance from Bike Cleveland, a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping Cleveland cyclists safe.

“We want people to know the bike stations are free and available for anyone to use, whether we’re open or not,” said Shaker Library Director Amy Switzer.

“They support our value of environmental sustainability and are our contribution to keeping Shaker a bicycle friendly community.”



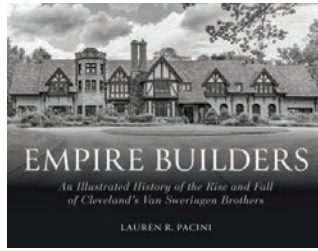
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### Book launch for empire builders

The Shaker Historical Society and Shaker Heights Public Library are sponsoring the launch of *Empire Builders: An Illustrated History of the Rise and Fall of Cleveland's Van Sweringen Brothers* (Indiana University Press, 2024), the latest history book from architectural photographer and local history author Lauren R. Pacini. This biography shares the remarkable rise and fall of Oris P. and Mantis J. Sweringen. June 6, 2024 from 7-8:30 pm at the Shaker Historical Society. Visit [shakerhistory.org](http://shakerhistory.org).

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# Modernizing A Historic City

## Collaboration evolves | Forward Together continues

In past eras, the City, the Shaker Schools, and the Shaker Library sometimes found ways to work together. For example, the Library has long served as a resource for Shaker Schools students and City recreation programs have for years taken place in school buildings.

But these collaborations were rarely at the leadership level and never involved creating a shared vision for the future of community facilities and other amenities.

Well, times have changed. For the past five years, as part of the Forward Together planning process that kicked off in 2019, leaders at the City, Shaker Schools, and Shaker Library have been meeting regularly to update one another about ongoing projects and to seek new ways to work together.

While the early focus of Forward Together was on facilities, the process has evolved to include amenities, defined broadly, including ideas that emerged from Forward Together's community engagement (see Key initiatives at a glance).

"Over time we have come to recognize that Forward Together means collaborating on more than just buildings," says Mayor David E. Weiss. "It's about working together to help each other better meet the needs and desires of our community. It's a process, not a project, and it has brought the leadership into close, regular contact."

This evolution in Forward Together has been shaped by several important developments. First, the Library completed comprehensive, stunning renovations of its Main Library in 2021 and Bertram Woods Branch in 2023 that better meet the needs of residents and will preserve the buildings for years to come.

Second, voters last fall approved a bond issue to renovate the District's school buildings and thereby help strengthen and create safe, comfortable and vibrant learning and recreation environments for students, staff and residents.

And finally, with a school facilities plan now moving forward, the City is commencing a formal recreation planning study, which will include extensive community engagement, to create a roadmap to guide the City as it works to renovate existing or potentially build new recreation facilities in the coming years.

"As we work to implement our long-term facilities plan, the Forward Together collaboration will allow us to better understand how we can renovate our school buildings in a way that can provide additional and expansive recreational opportunities for all, from the youngest to the oldest members of our community," says Superintendent David Glasner.

Adds Library Director Amy Switzer, "I am happy to share lessons learned after two major renovation projects. Beyond that, it is vital for the library to be 'at the table,' given the role the library programs and services play in building community here in Shaker." **SL**

## Key initiatives at a glance

Hundreds of ideas and suggestions were generated by the community as part of the 2019 Forward Together Vision process. Through discussion and prioritization, this list was narrowed down by the community and the Joint Facilities Task Force. Below are some recent examples of new amenities or other wins from the Forward Together process. For a more complete list, visit [forwardtogethershaker.com](http://forwardtogethershaker.com).

- › Expanded evening and weekend lap swimming, open swim, and swim lessons in the school pools.
- › Indoor pickleball in a school gym that will continue during the cooler indoor months.
- › The Shaker Schools Engagement and Registration office has relocated to the Main Library.
- › The City's Sustainability Committee has helped facilitate composting at all elementary schools through Rust Belt Riders.
- › A new facility scheduling tool is under development and will allow users to see available school athletic space and schedule the facilities for use.
- › Again this year the District, Library, and City collaborated to present compelling programming honoring the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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**Location:** Shaker Heights Public Library  
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**Register:** [shakerheightsoh.gov/FH-basics](http://shakerheightsoh.gov/FH-basics)

**Learn more about the Fair Housing Review Board:**

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Fair Housing Review Board, 3400 Lee Rd., Shaker Heights  
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# *Building a Foundation for Opportunity*

*With a focus on supporting teachers, students, and curriculum, the Shaker Schools Foundation invests in opening up learning experiences inside and outside the classroom.*

Written by **Scott Stephens**

*Armed only with their imaginations*, Jimmy John's subs, and a bag of chips, the dozen students who have gathered after school in Room 275B of Shaker Heights High School roll up their sleeves and get to work on a problem that has stumped some of the best urban planning minds for decades: What should be done with Cleveland's Burke Lakefront Airport?

These students, ages 15 to 18, are part of the high school's ACE (Architecture, Construction, Engineering) Mentor Program. Now in its third year, ACE is a club that 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 opportunity for these youngsters to reimagine the Cleveland lakefront, a political conundrum for at least a half century, would not exist if not for the Shaker Schools Foundation, the state's oldest and most robust public school Foundation. When it began in 1981, the Foundation handed out modest grants to supplement classroom instruction. Forty-three years later, it is a juggernaut for change, supporting curriculum, driving diversity and inclusion and, in the process, changing lives of students and the community.

### *Investments with impact*

"In some ways, the Foundation supports our department like venture capitalists," says John Moore, the district's Director of Curriculum & Instruction. "When there is a spark of innovation, the Foundation often serves as a partner to take ideas into action."

The face of that partnership is Holly Coughlin, the Foundation's first full-time executive director. Coughlin was hired to lead the Foundation in 2016 after spending 20 years in marketing and management in both the for-profit and nonprofit worlds. She succeeded Christine Auginas, who served as executive director and laid the groundwork for future success, Coughlin says. Coughlin has also assembled a seasoned, collaborative staff crucial to the Foundation's continued growth and success.

For Coughlin, a school district Foundation was a natural fit: as the mother of two Shaker graduates, she volunteered in the school system at a variety of levels, from serving as a PTO co-president at the Middle School to helping out with the High School's annual flower sale.

"When I look back at what made me feel good, it was my work in nonprofits," Coughlin says. "This role married everything together – the nonprofit work and the school district, which was already a part of my life. Our team really has a personal connection to Shaker Heights. And, it's been so much fun!"



Previous page: Members of the Shaker Heights High School ACE (Architecture, Construction, Engineering) Mentor Program work on designing Burke Lakefront Airport with adult mentors and advisors. ACE is one of many programs made possible by the Shaker Schools Foundation.

Left: The District's preschool program is one of the many initiatives supported by the Shaker Schools Foundation led by Executive Director Holly Coughlin.

Carter Strang has witnessed much of that fun from a front-row seat. Finishing his second term as president of the Foundation's Board of Trustees, the retired trial lawyer has deep ties to the district. His five sons are Shaker grads, and Strang himself taught social studies at the high school before entering law. His wife, Deedra, retired as a speech pathologist at Mercer Elementary School.

"I meet with other Foundations and it is really clear that the Shaker Schools Foundation is looked up to and followed," he says. "It is seen as the foremost Foundation of its kind. Holly has a lot to do with that. She is the first full-time director, and she is part of the District's leadership team. And, the superintendent and a school board member sit on our board."

As a young teacher in the district, Strang can remember when the type of help the Foundation now provides simply didn't exist.

"When I taught social studies, I used to take my government students on a trip to Washington to meet with members of Congress," he recalls. "I remember how excited they all were. But when it came time to pay, a percentage of them couldn't pay to go. I'll never forget seeing the disappointment in those kids' eyes. That wouldn't happen today."

### *Closing gaps*

These days, travel – international and closer to home – is a major priority. Whether helping a young cellist perform at Lincoln Center in New York City or ensuring that a student can be part of an immersion trip to South Africa, the Foundation regularly steps in to lend a helping hand.

At Shaker Heights High School, students study advanced manufacturing and machining, which is supported by the Foundation. This year, CTE and engineering students had the opportunity to visit MAGNET, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting small- and medium-sized manufacturers in Northeast Ohio.





Holly Coughlin (bottom) meets with her team (clockwise): Sharon Galin, Marla Walker, Erica Verderber, Megan Hanger, and Laura Orazi. (Photo by Gus Chan)

"I believe the Shaker Schools Foundation is an amazing force of good for students in the community," says junior Matthew Jones. "Personally, my family has been helped with extracurricular activities. They have contributed funding for my trip to France and my trip to South Africa. Because of them, I was able to attend a summer scout camp which led me to do more scouting. Because of perseverance, I'm almost an Eagle Scout."

The Foundation's role in closing gaps is what attracted the interest of Lawrence Burnley. A Shaker graduate, Burnley served briefly on the Foundation's Board of Directors before joining the district as its first Chief of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

"Under Holly's leadership, they are proactive in underwriting our efforts," Burnley says. "They have made significant contributions to closing gaps."

The Foundation's support for the district's DEI work is deep and wide. It supports DEI programming such as the Student Group on Race Relations (SGORR), the Minority Achievement Committee (MAC) Scholars program, Black Athletes Giving Support (BAGS), and Sankofa. The Foundation's assistance was integral to this year's community-wide Martin Luther King Jr. celebration: Beloved Community: Civil Rights to Human Rights. This year's events culminated with a keynote address by the Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu, a world-renowned civil rights advocate and the daughter of the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

The Foundation has also stepped in and offered support, where needed, to the South African Sociocultural Immersion Program. The program's inaugural trip, which included 24 students and about a dozen adults, took place in late March over spring break.

"One of the principles on which we built this trip was equity," Burnley says. "It's a costly initiative, and we need equitable access for students to have this opportunity. Because of the Foundation, students were able to experience this who otherwise would not have been able to."

Recognizing the need to level the playing field is what drove Shaker alumna Marcia Brown to create the Beyond the Desk scholarship fund during her senior year of high school. Brown, who graduated in 2015, realized that many of her classmates were missing out on enriching co-curricular

*"I meet with other foundations and it is really clear that the Shaker Schools Foundation is looked up to and followed."*

This year, the Foundation provided support to Shaker Heights High School to launch a fashion design course in consultation with Kent State University.



experience because they needed to work an after-school job. She asked the Foundation to establish the fund, and then persuaded her classmates to contribute to it.

Nine years later, the fund still supports scholarships for students seeking assistance to participate in camps, classes, or performing arts groups. Brown says that with the de-emphasis on entrance exams such as the SAT at elite colleges and universities, co-curricular experiences for high school students are more important than ever.

"It lifts all boats," Brown says of the fund. "I think the Foundation has really evolved and is meeting the needs of an evolving district and the changing needs of students."

### *A collaborative partnership*

The Foundation's work fits into four broad areas of focus: classroom learning, innovative teaching, opportunities for all, and career exploration. But within those buckets, there is room for unending creativity and innovation. At the high school, Shaker students and students from other high schools in the Heights Consortium study advanced manufacturing and machining. This year, a fashion design course was launched in consultation with Kent State University.

During the pandemic, the Foundation supplied headsets and hotspots to help accommodate remote learning. Social and emotional support programs were instituted at all schools. Design labs were established at three elementary schools to advance the i3 (inquiry, innovation, imagination) Initiative. High school students take apart and reassemble motorcycles to build self-confidence, resilience, and grit. Middle school students receive design courses ranging from woodshop to food insecurity.

These wide-ranging courses and initiatives are closely aligned with the District's Five-Year Strategic Plan, says Moore, the director of curriculum and instruction.

## *Supporting the next generation of philanthropy*

*The Shaker Schools Foundation is exploring a pilot project that would give students a seat at the table when funding decisions are being made.*

*Twice this year, Foundation Executive Director Holly Coughlin and Laura Orazi, director of development, have met with High School students to discuss the Foundation's work and how student voices could be included in the Foundation's philanthropic decisions.*

*The students, members of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, brainstormed ideas: Who should be funded? What should the scope of the grants look like? Several large grants? Many small grants?*

*"This kind of student involvement could make what we do even more impactful," says Carter Strang, president of the Foundation's Board of Trustees.*

"The Foundation is committed to communication and collaboration with curriculum and instruction, which means that they support projects that are well-aligned with broader district goals," Moore says. "This partnership means that resources are well spent and strategic, working in concert to provide advantages to students and teachers alike."

On a bitterly cold January morning, the Foundation's six-person staff huddles around a table in the design lab at Boulevard Elementary School for their weekly meeting. The scope of the conversation is astounding: T-shirts have been ordered for a robotics event. Former Cleveland Mayor Jane Campbell has agreed to participate in the Shaker Speaks lecture series, which features notable alumni. A donor has given the Foundation \$10,000. Yard signs will be distributed to tout A Night for the Red & White, an annual fundraising gala. A software company wants to support STEM education for girls. Dragons have been ordered for the Lunar New Year. The Flower Clown will conduct a balloon-twisting workshop for ceramics students. Lomond Elementary School received a new kiln.

Back at the high school, the students in the ACE Mentor Program pore over maps of the 445-acre lakefront property. Should the airport remain, or disappear? Should the land be developed privately, or by the public sector? What other uses are possible there? A large poster of Albert Einstein is on the wall, watching the students. "Einstein Asked Questions," it says.

An engineer from Gilbane Building Co. turns to a colleague.

"I wish they had this when I was in school," he says. **SL**

*Scott Stephens is executive director of communications & engagement for the Shaker Heights City School District.*

*"I wish they had this when I was in school."*



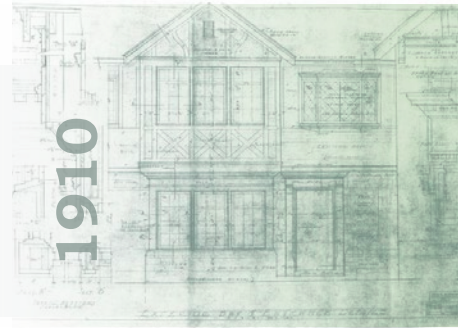
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Written by **Sharon Holbrook**

Photography by **Kevin G. Reeves**



> ORIGINAL GARAGE AND STAFF QUARTERS PLANS >



photo: Woodland Design Company

**T**HIS TUCKED-AWAY Shaker Boulevard home started its life as a garage and staff quarters for the iconic Van Sweringen mansion at 17400 South Park Boulevard. Now, it's a spectacular home in its own right, freshly updated and expanded by new owners Andrew Wolfort and Anna Strohl.

In 1910, there were almost no homes in Shaker Heights. In fact, it would be another two years before Shaker Heights itself officially existed.

A few 19th-century homes dotted the area. The community of North Union Shakers was long gone, leaving remnants of an old mill, earthen dams on the Shaker Lakes, and little else. But change was coming: Real estate developers and brothers Mantis and Oris Van Sweringen were building a handful of "demonstration homes," examples of the desirable

residences they were hoping to sell in their new planned community. They were also building a grand mansion for themselves on the street now known as South Park Boulevard.

Behind the house they built a sizeable garage, now the beautiful home of Andrew Wolfort, Anna Strohl, and their three young children.

From the time it was built in 1910, it has undergone two major renovations. In the mid-1940s, it was converted into a spacious single-family home. Now, the family has completed a renovation and expansion worthy of this singular home's next phase.

Left: Entryway to the former garage and staff quarters of the Van Sweringen mansion.

1910

First the Van Sweringen mansion at 17400 South Park and then the garage were built. The 1910 census shows unmarried siblings Oris, Mantis, Carrie, and Edith Van Sweringen living at the location.

> WALL GATE DETAIL >

Below left: Hidden behind years of overgrowth, the view of the home before its most recent renovation. Below right: An early map of the estate and surrounding undeveloped land. The garage and staff quarters are highlighted in red.



Opposite page: A view of the mansion from the former carriage house, through an original iron gate designed by the famed Rose Iron Works.



### A COVID HOMECOMING

When the pandemic hit, Wolfort and Strohl were living in Chicago with their first two children, and Strohl was working as a physician and Wolfort as a business executive. As Covid gave them time to pause and think about their family’s next steps, they realized it was time to come home to the Cleveland area.

Strohl grew up on Kingsley Road, where her parents still live, just a short distance from their Shaker Boulevard home. She met Wolfort, who grew up in Moreland Hills, when they were students at Hawken School. Even while in Chicago, Wolfort was working for Cleveland-based Olympic Steel. With such deep roots here, the decision was soon made.

They had just started a low-key search for their next home when the house at 17715 popped up on Wolfort’s screen as a for-sale-by-owner listing: a historic house sited on a large Shaker Boulevard lot. Already anticipating that they’d want to put their own touches on any historic home, Wolfort and Strohl had connected with Molly and Fritz Machmer-Wessels, Shaker residents and owners of the design-build firm Woodland Design Company. Still in Chicago, they asked Molly Machmer-Wessels to take a look at the listing. She thought it must be a typo – a lot that large on Shaker Boulevard didn’t exist – or could it?

### TUCKED AWAY

The confusion about 17715 is understandable. It’s easy to pass by without knowing the house exists. A single-lane driveway leads quietly off Shaker Boulevard, passes between two 1950s-era homes, and opens onto spacious grounds. Under towering trees and new gas-lit lamp posts, the drive meanders through a large lawn before circling in front of the home. From this quiet vantage point, you’d hardly know Shaker Boulevard’s cars and rapid transit trains were passing by at all.

Considering the origins of the home, it’s not so surprising that the house was hidden. It started its life in 1910 as a home for cars and servants – there’s no evidence there were ever horses or carriages in it, though the idea is intriguing.

The history of the home is as hidden as the house itself. But we know that in 1945, at the same time the South Park mansion’s extensive property was being subdivided and sold, the garage was converted into a single-family home. Both the current owners and the Shaker Heights Library have copies of those renovation plans, which include drawings of the home both before and after that first major expansion.



1920

The four Van Sweringen siblings still lived in the mansion at 17400 South Park, now with a maid, a butler, and a chauffeur and his wife.

1930

Census records list the four Van Sweringen siblings, a cook, a maid, a butler, and a gardener. Separately, but at the same address, chauffeur Virgil Randall, his wife Daisy, and their three children are listed – presumably living at the garage quarters.



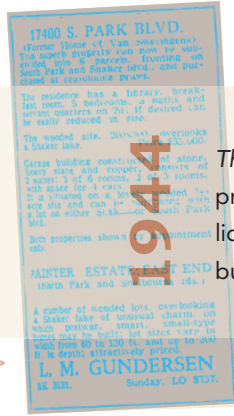
The pre-1945-construction drawings show a second floor with a turret, two bedrooms with a bath, a small sitting room, a hallway bath, and three tiny dormered rooms each marked as “maid.” The first floor of the building was dominated by its four garage bays and included a modest kitchen off to one side.

In contrast, architect George Burrows’ midcentury changes include the addition of a walnut library, intricate plaster moldings, an enlarged kitchen with butler’s pantry, bay windows, a new roofline, and an impressive living room and stairway. Two of the four garage bays were taken over for the kitchen. Parts of the hinges of those double doors were left in place on the exterior of the renovated house, a nod to the building’s past. They’re still there today, thanks to the family’s desire to preserve the history of the home.

Left: The exterior wall of the kitchen and family room. Visible in the upper left are the garage door hinges, as well as the stone walls, which were preserved from the original building.

1940

The chauffeur and his family are still listed as living at the mansion at 17400 South Park, but the mansion appears to have been empty. Three of the four Van Sweringen siblings had died by 1940.



The Plain Dealer reported that the 17400 South Park property was sold to developer M.T. Gundersen, liquidator for Union Trust Co. The article said the buyer liked that the 10-acre property was divisible.

> NEWSPAPER AD LISTING PROPERTY >

### UPDATING THE UPDATES

By the time they were looking at 17715 Shaker Boulevard in 2020, the house hadn't had a major renovation in 75 years. The house was mostly in good condition but needed some overdue improvements. Wolfort and Strohl wanted a bigger, up-to-date kitchen; an overall style refresh; and additional spaces that suit modern family life. Their renovation, which they did through Woodland Design with architect Jessica Powell, wound up touching every room in the house and adding more.



Above: Wolfort shares the original plans from the home's 1945 renovation.

Left: The original facade from the home's 1945 addition.

1945

The garage gets its own address, 17715 Shaker Boulevard. Gundersen is listed as the builder for a conversion of the property from garage to single-family home.

1950

The census shows William and Agnes Dunn as owners and residents of 17715. Meanwhile, the mansion at 17400 is listed as vacant and for sale. Virgil and Daisy Randall now reside in a home on Ludgate Road in Shaker Heights.

A major change was the expansion of the kitchen into the two remaining garage bays, allowing for a generous island and for the kitchen to spill into a connected family room. Wooden ceiling beams, a fireplace, and built-in shelving add a cozy, lived-in feeling to the new space. One thing that hasn't changed is that the kitchen sink still looks out at the backyard, with a view of the towering stone wall and vintage Rose Iron Works gates that separate the property from the backyard of the main house.

Now that the old garage was gone, a new garage was needed. A new wing on the west end of the house is connected to the existing footprint by a bright, glassed-in breezeway and includes a living room, upstairs guest suite, bathroom, and a spacious garage and mudroom. Other major updates in the living spaces include moving the laundry to the second floor, reconfiguring the second-floor layout, and modernizing all bathrooms, plumbing, and electrical.

Below: The breezeway represents a new chapter in the home, connecting the recent addition to the original house.





The renovated kitchen bridges both the new addition and the original building. Reclaimed beams were added as a nod to the kitchen's former life as an outbuilding.

1958

Ownership of the home moves through three families: Britton, Lincoln (founder of Lincoln Electric), and Schloss.

1977

Right: The dining room showcases restored architectural details, including crown molding, wall detail, and pocket doors.



Below: The newly built family room fireplace features stone that was removed from the exterior of the house, making room for the new breezeway.



**O**F ALL THE MYSTERIES and surprises that the house holds, one of the most intriguing is a massive safe on the first floor. Wolfort said they opened a “weird half door” to find an enormous locked safe sitting on bare dirt under the back stairs. How did the safe, which is extremely heavy and has an 1871 patent date on the lock, wind up here? Did the Van Sweringens hide their valuables out here in the garage, where no one would suspect they’d be hidden? Was there anything in it? Fritz Machmer-Wessels and the Woodland Design team, using a stethoscope and a lot of patience, figured out the combination and opened it. It was empty, but no matter. It’s now a handsome mini-bar, with a stone counter topped with glassware and a Great Gatsby-inspired mural.



The mural above the safe was commissioned for this renovation, illustrating the current owners and their family.

The current family purchases 17715 Shaker Boulevard from the Alga Schloss estate and begins their renovation and expansion.

> **PRESENT OWNERS BEGIN RENOVATION** >



photo: Woodland Design Company

Right: A view of the entryway, with the restored original exterior woodwork and door, as seen through a leaded glass window in the living room, which was added on to the garage and staff quarters in 1948.



## UNDERGROUND TRANSFORMATION

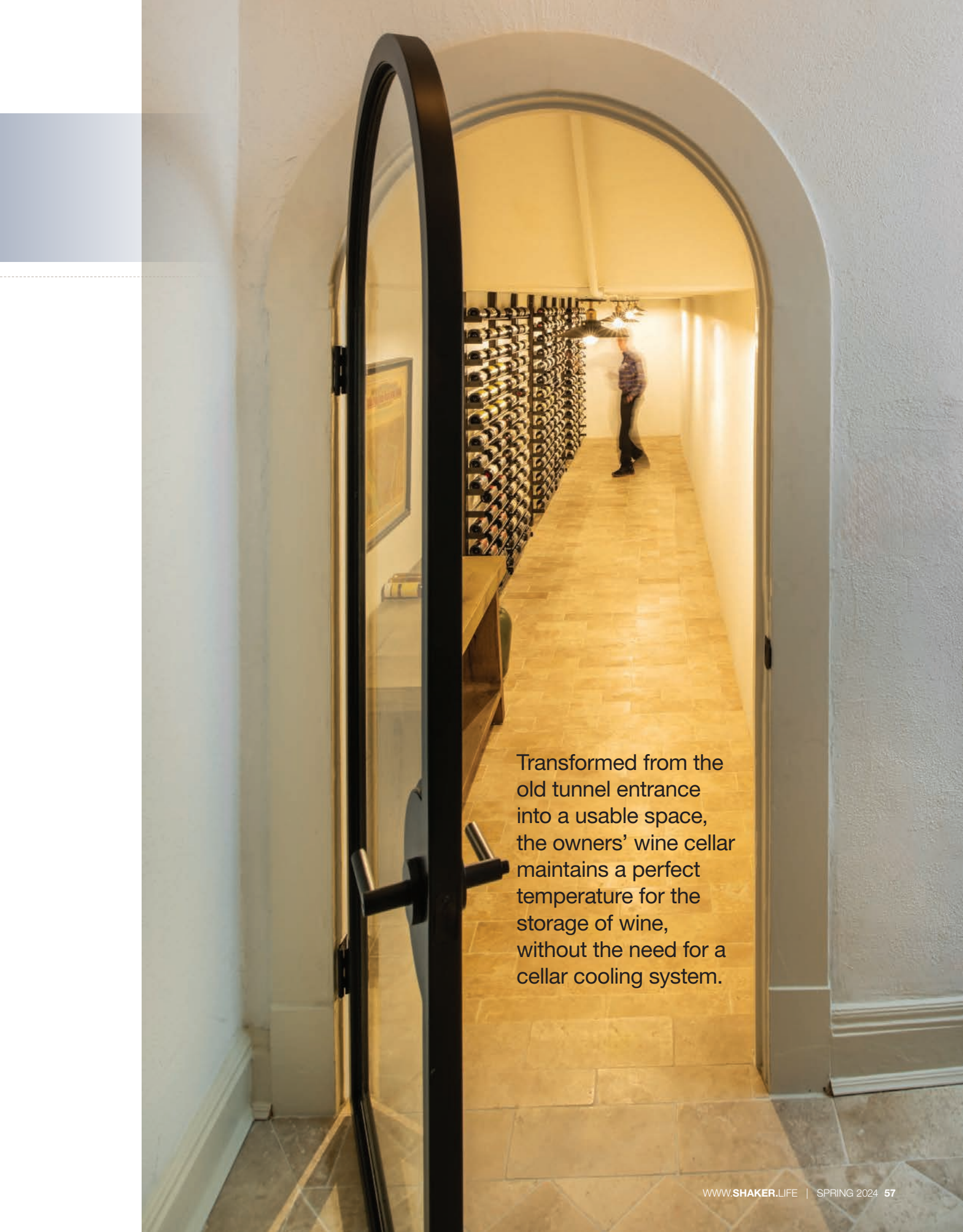
Wolfort and Strohl knew that waterproofing the basement would be one of the most difficult challenges of updating the house. While the rest of the house was dry, the basement was decidedly not. An old coal chute was not secure, and water would pour in during rainstorms.

More interesting, but even trickier, was the basement tunnel that originally connected to the mansion on South Park. It's unclear whether this was for staff on foot or heating and water connections or both, but the fact was that when the family arrived, it was unusable in any sense. Through an archway and down a couple steps, it then wandered about 80 feet before reaching a cinder block wall. More alarmingly, it had about six inches of standing water in it.

The tunnel is now transformed and, finally, usable again. Woodland Design shortened the tunnel, waterproofed it, and added electricity and a custom arched door. Now, it's an attractive wine storage area with not a drop of water in sight.

Just like the house, it remembers its past, but is refreshed and ready for another century. **SL**

*The timeline for the home at 17715 Shaker Boulevard was assembled from reviewing county property records, Shaker building cards ([www.shakerbuildings.com](http://www.shakerbuildings.com)), Plain Dealer archives, and census records. Shaker Heights Library local history librarian Meghan Hays provided additional assistance. The home is featured in the new book *Empire Builders*, the subject of a June 6 book launch. See page 39 for details.*



Transformed from the old tunnel entrance into a usable space, the owners' wine cellar maintains a perfect temperature for the storage of wine, without the need for a cellar cooling system.

A man wearing a black baseball cap, glasses, a dark coat, and a grey scarf is sitting at a table in a cafe. He is holding a white Starbucks coffee cup and gesturing with his hands while talking. On the table in front of him is a book titled "DREAM TOWN". The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

# Real Conversations About the Dream



Through the magic of Zoom, ten members of Shaker's class of 1985 came together to learn from each other and the book that fueled a months-long discussion.

Written by **Sharon Broussard** | Photography by **Robert Muller**

Bill McCrae, Rob Berick, and Michael Tate met recently at the Van Aken Market Hall to discuss *Dream Town*.

**At first,** Gretel Smith didn't want to read *Dream Town: Shaker Heights and the Quest for Racial Equity* by Laura Meckler, a book about Shaker Heights' racial integration odyssey.

Smith, who graduated from Shaker Heights High School in 1985, thought the book would be "dreadful," trashing her beloved hometown of Shaker and the integrated schools she attended decades ago, although the author grew up in Shaker (Class of 1986) and as a *Washington Post* education writer had written about the Shaker schools.

But Smith kept feeling the tug. She kept hearing about the book. National Public Radio interviewed Meckler when it came out and there was a lot of buzz about *Dream Town* in Shaker as well. When Meckler came to the Shaker Heights Main Public Library to discuss the book last year, the library had its biggest audience ever.

So Smith, a New York City high school art teacher, put out a call to some of her fellow 1985 classmates. "Maybe if I read it with others, it will make it more bearable when we get to those 'negative' parts, and we'll be able to talk them through together and come up with our own understanding of it," she says.

## Assembling the group

Smith first contacted fellow former classmate Rob Berick, the marketing director for the Cleveland Jewish Foundation, who had trepidations about the book for similar reasons, but joined the book reading group because he knew the discussion would "come from a place of love."

Another classmate, Ervin Mason Jr., whose parents Thomasine and Ervin Mason appear in the book, says he was happy to reflect on how they grew up. The Mason family was the first Black family to live in the Onaway neighborhood. The white family who promised to sell the home to his parents later changed their minds. His parents wouldn't back down and filed a successful lawsuit to own the home.

The Masons became good friends with their neighbors and Mason, who works for Sherwin Williams Company here in Cleveland said he is no exception. "We still remain in touch," he says of his Shaker classmates, "and that speaks volumes. A lot of my friends are surprised that I have such close friends from high school."

Michael Tate, the director of digital and data at Stanford University, also joined the group – although he says, "Shaker was no walk in the park" because of the hostility he sometimes faced as a queer Black kid. "I was thrilled to be able to talk to some people whom I haven't seen in more than 30, 40 years," says Tate, with a burst of laughter.

In the end, ten members of the Class of 1985 – Rob Berick, Sarah Gardner, Jaime Kean, Julia Fuller, Steve Kelly, Ervin Mason, William McRae, Michael Tate, Darrin Thornton – became regulars in Smith's cross country, multi-racial, book club/high school reunion this fall. They read six chapters at

a time and met for three weeks – Sundays at 8 pm on Zoom, says Smith. The experience turned out to be so great that "we don't want it to end," says Smith, who notes the book club is planning to hold more meetings on *Dream Town* and perhaps read other books.



Gretel Smith and members of the book club on Zoom.

**"Maybe if I read it with others, it will make it more bearable when we get to those 'negative' parts."**

“If there were easy fixes for these issues this would have been taken care of a long time ago.”

### Perspectives from a new vantage point

During their discussions there were plenty of surprises for book club members, a number of them said on a recent Zoom. Smith, who is white, says she didn't realize that Shaker was still struggling to desegregate its schools when she went to school in the 1970s and 1980s. She didn't know that the Mason family was the first black family in Onaway, although she knew Erv as a child. “I thought we had fixed (integration),” she says, recalling how proud she was of Shaker Heights for being a leader. “But to read the book and see the efforts the city was making, it was still happening.”

Meanwhile, Bill McCrae, a West Point graduate who retired after a 30-year military career, says he remembers when his mother bused him from Moreland elementary school, a predominately Black school, to Mercer, a predominately white school, as part of the voluntary school busing program.

“Boston was on the news when we came home from school in the 70s,” he says, comparing the violent clashes in that city when Black students were bused to white neighborhood schools, to the calm of Shaker's program. “A lot of the nation was so far behind us ... we could see how bad it was going elsewhere.”

Despite the racial and social minefields embedded in *Dream Town*, the members say they had no trouble keeping their discussion civil and non-confrontational. McCrae says it helps that they have known each other for years. “We had that common ground.”



Darrin Thornton, who is Black and the associate dean for academic affairs and outreach at Pennsylvania State University, says although the conversation could be robust, that “respect was there.”

Fuller Nakayama, who is white and a vice president of a risk analysis company, points out that they were able to talk about “so many issues that are really third rails in American life and society because it was always just from a point of view that this was my experience and my family's. It was really, really meaningful to hear about everybody's experience.”

In the end, book club members say they are hopeful about Shaker's journey and proud that Shaker keeps trying to make integration work, despite some stumbles.

“The rest of the country needs to know, if there were easy fixes for these issues this would have been taken care of a long time ago,” says Berick. “There is a part of me that is proud of the continued efforts and that they are really trying to get it right.” **SL**

# WIDENING

## Shaker dads tap into their love of lacrosse to create a new pathway for future players

Written by **Joe Miller** | Photography by **Robert Muller**

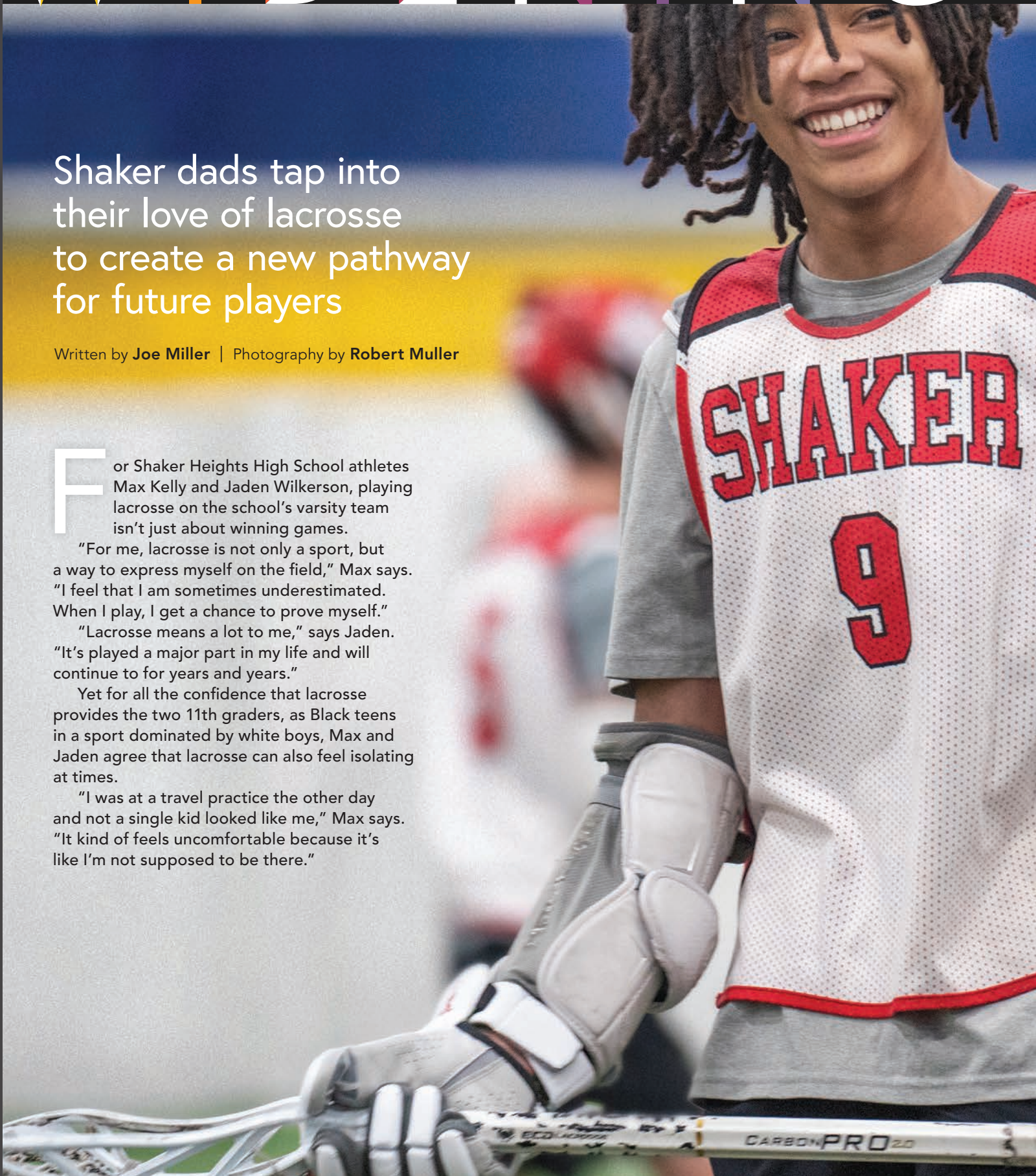
**F**or Shaker Heights High School athletes Max Kelly and Jaden Wilkerson, playing lacrosse on the school's varsity team isn't just about winning games.

"For me, lacrosse is not only a sport, but a way to express myself on the field," Max says. "I feel that I am sometimes underestimated. When I play, I get a chance to prove myself."

"Lacrosse means a lot to me," says Jaden. "It's played a major part in my life and will continue to for years and years."

Yet for all the confidence that lacrosse provides the two 11th graders, as Black teens in a sport dominated by white boys, Max and Jaden agree that lacrosse can also feel isolating at times.

"I was at a travel practice the other day and not a single kid looked like me," Max says. "It kind of feels uncomfortable because it's like I'm not supposed to be there."



# THE FIELD

Max Kelly, son of Shaker Heights Youth Lacrosse co-founder Matt Kelly, at practice.





“We have all the right ingredients in Shaker. We have an untapped number of kids who haven’t been exposed to the sport. We have an infrastructure for the sport already set up. And we have very motivated coaches.”

**M**att Kelly and Aman Wilkerson – Max and Jaden’s fathers – are hoping to change that by tapping into Shaker Heights’ diverse community and attracting younger kids of color to the game, well before high school.

As board president and vice president, respectively, of Shaker Heights Youth Lacrosse, Kelly and Wilkerson are leading the charge to expand and diversify the 15-year-old organization by eliminating the hurdles that have traditionally kept Black families away. Those hurdles range from the high cost of equipment to a lack of familiarity with the sport.

So far, their efforts have already boosted the percentage of Black youth participating in Shaker Youth Lacrosse – which has traditionally focused on kids in third through sixth grade – from the single digits to about 40 percent in just a few years.

“Lacrosse has never really been a diverse sport, and that’s something that really drives both Matt and me,” Wilkerson says. “Now we have an opportunity to diversify the sport here in Shaker.”

“We have all the right ingredients in Shaker,” adds Kelly. “We have an untapped number of kids who haven’t been exposed to the sport. We have an infrastructure for the sport already set up. And we have very motivated coaches.”

#### A PASSION THAT GROWS WITH PURPOSE

Both men are passionate about the sport that has been part of their lives since they were little. Kelly played for his high school in the suburbs of Rochester, New York, and has been coaching his two sons’ teams in Shaker since 2015. Wilkerson, raised in Summit, New Jersey, played in high school and college and has been involved in lacrosse in some capacity, including refereeing, for more than 35 years.

Wilkerson cites lacrosse and diversity as two of the top reasons he moved his family to Shaker in 2021. In fact, he had started scoping out Shaker’s lacrosse community five years earlier on a business trip.

“I told my wife, I think I found a pretty cool town,” Wilkerson says. “Shaker checked off quite a few of the boxes on our checklist, with lacrosse being a major box to check off.”

Still, it hasn’t always been easy being Black athletes in a white-dominated sport.

Like their sons, Kelly and Wilkerson were typically one of maybe two African Americans on the lacrosse field growing up, sometimes facing racial slurs from other players and even adults. But, they say, those incidents during their youth – and later as dads and coaches – never diminished their love of the sport. And now it drives them to push for change.

For Kelly, the real turning point came during one of Max’s travel tournaments in 2021. The tournament was not long after George Floyd’s murder by police and the protests that followed, and the jerseys for one of the opposing teams featured large “Blue Lives Matter” flags.

“At the time it happened, we were still in the middle of the storm,” says Kelly. “It was certainly not welcoming to the few Black families and players there and likely just served to intimidate and discourage people of color.”

“It is certainly the ‘why’ of what drives me fundamentally when it comes to diversity in the sport I love so much.”

Soon after that incident, Kelly, Wilkerson, and other leaders of Shaker Youth Lacrosse started putting together a plan. First, it was decided, the program needed to get lacrosse sticks into the hands of kids much earlier.

Youth lacrosse in Ohio has traditionally focused on kids from grades three through six. But where Wilkerson grew up – near Newark, New Jersey – youth lacrosse starts reaching out to kids by kindergarten. Soon after moving to Shaker, he started pushing for the same strategy here.



Recent team photo of Shaker Youth Lacrosse 3rd and 4th grade teams. SYL coaches, left to right: Scott Shelfer, Aman Wilkerson, Track Malone, Matt Kelly, John Wallace, and Scott Seiffert.

By last spring, Shaker Youth Lacrosse had launched a free “soft toss” program, designed to teach basic skills to boys and girls in kindergarten through third grade and get them comfortable with a lacrosse stick and ball. Of the nearly 30 boys and girls attending the six-week program, about one-fifth were Black. “Just being able to introduce the sport to kids as early as possible is the key to our long-term success,” Wilkerson says. “Our goal is to use soft toss as the real mechanism to grow the sport.”

Another barrier has always been the high cost of equipment.

To help tackle that, Kelly and Wilkerson turned to USA Lacrosse, the sport’s national governing body. USA Lacrosse has been helping bring the sport to underserved communities through diversity grants. For Shaker Youth Lacrosse that included 50 soft-toss sticks for younger kids and 20 full sets of equipment for the older boys and five sets for girls.

“It was a perfect fit,” says Matt Burke, the Midwest regional manager of USA Lacrosse. “We’re going to support them however we can.”

Shaker Youth Lacrosse also offers its own scholarships to cover some costs or guides families to youth sports scholarships through the Shaker Schools Foundation’s Level the Playing Field program.

The goal is to make sure money isn’t the issue, according to Kelly. “If a kid wants to play, they’ll play,” he says.

### IT’S CATCHING ON FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

The efforts are winning over new fans among African American parents such as Darrell Hunter. Not that long ago, Hunter, the father of three boys and one girl ages 8 through 11, assumed lacrosse wasn’t for him or his kids.

“A lot of Black families are discouraged to be a part of some sports that they don’t see in their own neighborhoods, like lacrosse or hockey,” he says. “They don’t think they’re welcome anyway.”

Then three years ago, his son, Darrell Jr., decided to play Shaker lacrosse to be on the same team with his good friend Mason Kelly, Matt Kelly’s younger son. Before Hunter knew it, all four of his kids were playing lacrosse and recruiting their friends from other sports such as football and track.

“The coaches are positive and treat the kids like their own kids. All of the parents are involved,” he says. “They are doing everything they can to make it a welcoming atmosphere for everybody.”

To ensure future growth and diversity, leaders of Shaker Youth Lacrosse have had to rethink the whole organization. Recently the group became a 501c3 charitable organization in order to apply for grants from USA Lacrosse and to better fundraise for all of its initiatives. It also has a newly created board of directors that – along with Kelly and Wilkerson – includes parents, longtime youth coaches, and representatives from the middle school and high school teams such as varsity coach Will Talbott-Shere, Shaker Class of 2017.

Shaker Youth Lacrosse also plans to add girls’ youth lacrosse for the first time this spring with two new teams. Previous girls’ teams in Shaker had been run by a separate organization that shut down during the pandemic. Kelly and Wilkerson also would like to eventually add boys’ and girls’ travel teams.

Altogether, Kelly estimates Shaker Youth Lacrosse will have more than 100 boys and girls on its teams this spring, up from between 50 and 70 during past years.

“We won’t see the real impact to the high school program for another three to five years,” says Wilkerson. “But we are building. And it feels good when we see new kids pick up lacrosse sticks.”

Max Kelly, who has helped his dad with the younger teams, sees the changes already taking place at the youth level and can’t wait for what that means for the future of Shaker lacrosse.

“I hope a lot of those guys stick with it all the way through high school,” he says. “And hopefully it changes what the team looks like so that it’s more diverse and represents the population of our city more accurately.” **SL**



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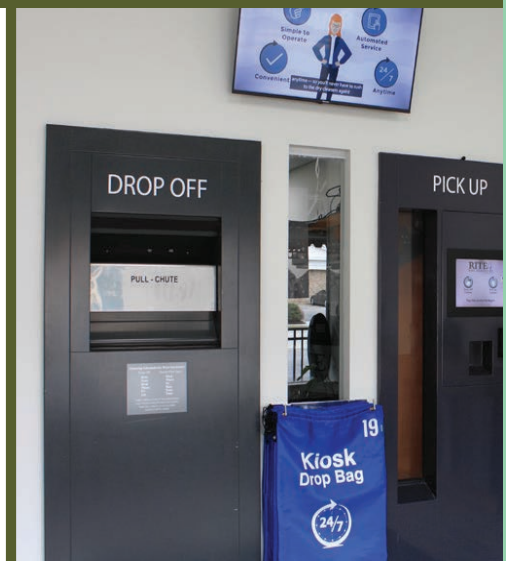
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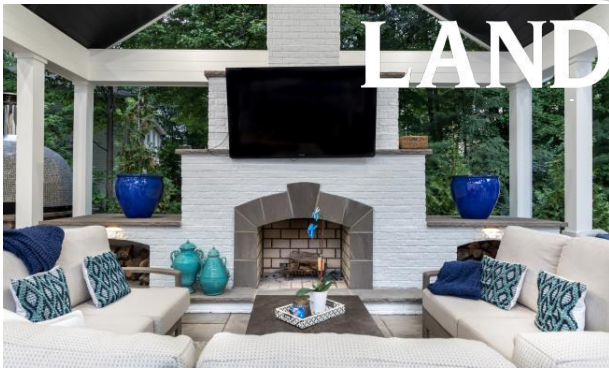


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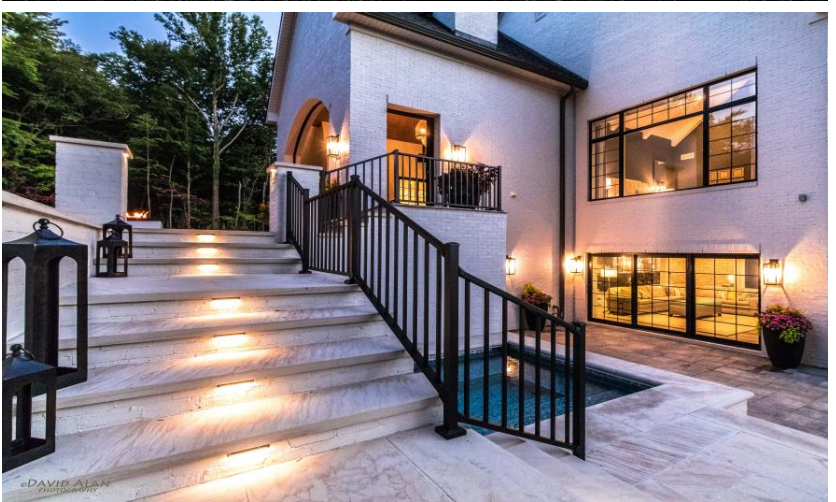


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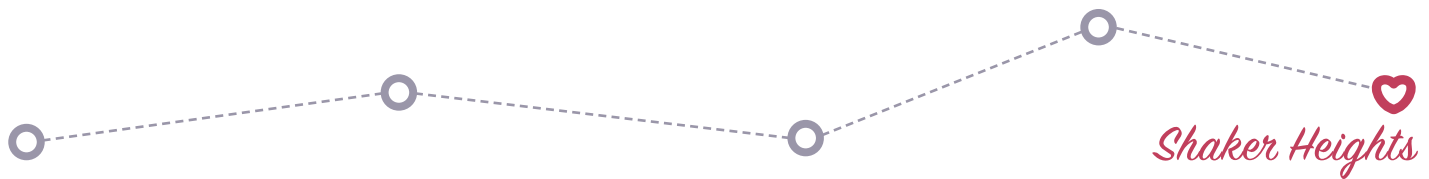


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## Scene in Shaker



# trailing parents



*Shaker Heights*

**A dream from childhood realized in a move that connects family and opens a whole new chapter.**

Written by **Sue Starrett** Photography by **Jason Miller**

*Sometimes* the classic parental prediction – work hard and you will achieve your dreams – does come true, as evidenced by the move Drs. David Chatman and Yolando McGriff-Chatman made to Shaker Heights in mid-2022.

When he was younger, Chatman’s family lived in Cleveland Heights and his father often took his three children on weekend excursions. “We drove through Shaker Heights, Pepper Pike, and other fancy neighborhoods, and my dad said that if we did well in school, we might live in one of those places.” To young Chatman, Shaker seemed special, particularly its Tudor architecture.

But the family relocated to Nashville, and “it felt like the clock turned back 30 years.” A high school anatomy class and his mother’s encouragement inspired Chatman’s interest in medicine. He earned degrees from Vanderbilt University and East Tennessee State University College of Medicine.

In the meantime, McGriff-Chatman grew up in Nashville. Her father was a physician, and from age six, she knew she would emulate him. The Spelman College

graduate earned her MD at East Tennessee State University, where she met Chatman. They continued their educations in Washington, D.C. and New Orleans, McGriff-Chatman as an obstetrician/gynecologist and Chatman, a vascular surgeon, before returning to Tennessee in 1997 to practice at the Murfreesboro Medical Clinic and SurgiCenter.

The Chatmans’ daughter Imani is also an East Tennessee State University graduate, and the third generation of McGriff physicians. She completed her ob/gyn residency at the Cleveland Clinic and practices at its Willoughby Hills Family Health Center. About six years ago, her parents were pondering when to retire. Imani suggested moving to Cleveland, but they weren’t ready. Then Chatman’s mother and McGriff-Chatman’s father died. “Suddenly our nuclear family became smaller, and it was important to be near our only child,” he explains.

To prepare for their summer 2022 move, which would include McGriff-Chatman’s mother, Chatman spent hours online reading about Shaker. Now, as residents, they experience the city as a homey and welcoming place.

*“It feels like a small town, but the big difference is the inclusivity.*

*That has everything to do with why we are here.”*


Previous page, left to right:  
Yolando McGriff-Chatman,  
Imani Chatman, Ruth McGriff,  
and David Chatman

"It feels like a small town, but the big difference is the inclusivity. That has everything to do with why we are here," he says.

They've dined at every Van Aken District restaurant and appreciate Shaker's proximity to Cleveland, which McGriff-Chatman labels "a real city." Immersed in local culture, the Chatmans appreciate live theater, the Cleveland Orchestra, and summer festivals. Chatman attends Browns, Monsters, Cavs, and Shaker Heights High School football games. "Living here is all about the experiences," he says.

Retirement, however, remains on the horizon. McGriff-Chatman is a gynecologist at the Clinic's Stephanie Tubbs Jones Health Center, and Chatman reviews claims as an Optum Health medical director. He also is earning an MBA at CWRU's Weatherhead School of Management.

The Chatmans are keenly aware of the differences from their middle-Tennessee existence. "Our community was in a rural region and we always regretted the lack of diversity," recalls McGriff-Chatman. "I didn't want to retire and grow old there," Chatman adds. They cite the contrast in terms of the Shaker community's education levels, diversity, and tolerance. They love their new lives, "which are more family- and relationship-friendly and for which we've yearned for years," says Chatman. Gains certainly have outweighed losses for these 'trailing parents.' **SL**



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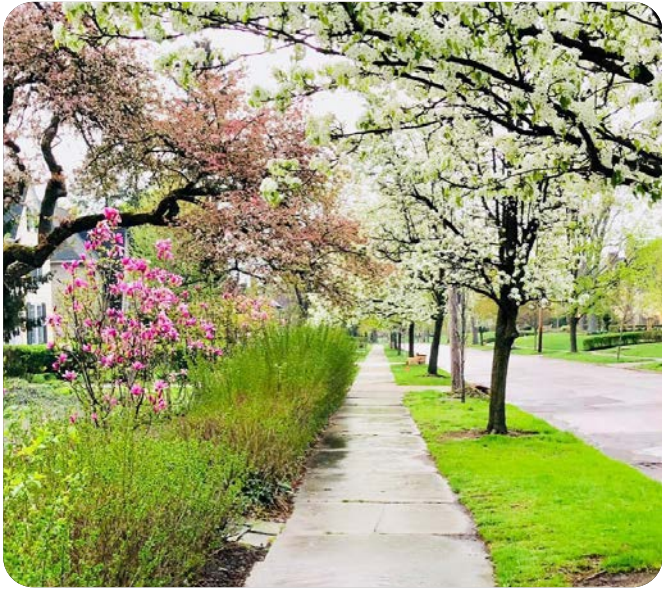
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