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Droppin' In For The Win

The Shaker Heights High School esports team has snagged multiple state and regional titles with its commitment to mentoring and a professional play mindset.



Boomerang Kids

These Shaker Heights High School graduates lived and worked in great cities. But they couldn't stay away.

Giving Greenspace Another Chance

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ON THE COVER

Kinney family on a walk in Shaker.
Photo by Robert Muller.

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SHAKER LIFE

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STORY SUBMISSIONS
SHAKER LIFE does not accept unsolicited editorial material, but story suggestions from residents are welcome. Send suggestions by email or letter. Please do not call. We cannot respond to every suggestion but each will be given consideration. Freelancers: Please email the editor for guidelines.

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Taking Flight

Before Lyle Yost joined the Shaker Heights High School Swimming and Diving Team in 2015, the boys and girls one-meter springboard diving was, more or less, an intermission for both spectators and swimmers. "Lyle has reinvigorated an interest in watching diving," says SHHS Swimming and Diving Coach Eric Peterson.

Spring 2019



Reading, Recipes and...

Shaker Library's Cook the Book group is a book club that meets monthly to discuss cookbooks and share a meal. Members check out a pre-selected title to take home and peruse, cooking recipes that appeal to them as they go. A month later, they convene to discuss the book – with a prepared dish in tow.

Fall 2023



Mastering the Marketing

Jumar Newell's company, LaunchArts Media, specializes in social media marketing and promotional videos. In existence since 2014, LaunchArts got its start in Garfield Heights. Wanting a more interactive, collaborative setting, Newell moved in 2016 to The Dealership, the co-working space at 3558 Lee Rd.

Fall 2023

Shaker's Mental Health Response Program Expands to Four Neighboring Cities

Shaker's mental health response program is being expanded to include four neighboring cities, thanks to a funding package announced in May.

The program embeds a full-time social worker with the City's Police and Fire departments in order to improve Shaker's response to those suffering from a mental health crisis. Joining Shaker in the effort will be Cleveland Heights, University Heights, Richmond Heights, and South Euclid. The five-city program is titled First CALL (for Crisis Assistance and Local Linkage).

Once fully staffed, the program will build on Shaker's success by adding three licensed mental health professionals and three peer support workers, who along with the City's current social worker, will cover all five partner-communities. In addition, a licensed mental health professional will be assigned to the Chagrin Valley Dispatch, the joint dispatch center serving all five communities. Recovery Resources, a program of the MetroHealth System, will hire the additional mental health professionals.

Funding from the five cities plus the following agencies will keep the First CALL program running for its first two years:

- > ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County
- > Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) of the U.S. Department of Justice
- > George Gund Foundation
- > Cuyahoga County

"We are tremendously grateful for the support of these funders who understand the need for mental health care and the value of having mental health professionals available to respond alongside our police and firefighters/paramedics," said Shaker Heights Mayor

Mayor David E. Weiss at the May 7 press conference announcing the expansion of Shaker's MHRP.



David E. Weiss. "In addition to these funders, we are also grateful for ongoing partnerships with the MetroHealth System and its Recovery Resources for providing clinician staffing, and with Chagrin Valley Dispatch, for supporting this effort."

Shaker's program started as a pilot in 2022, when the City – with input from a task force of City Council members, the police chief and the fire chief, other staff, and residents – studied how emergency responders could better help those in mental health crisis.

The program has been a success from the start. The City hired a licensed social worker as a full-time employee, embedded with first responders. The social worker responds to mental health crisis calls, engaging with the person in crisis and the first responders on scene to determine the best course of action.

In 2023, the City's program had 645 referrals and completed 730 follow-ups. During that period, calls for service ranged from suicide in progress, to overdose, domestic violence, memory failure, and psychosis. Learn more at FirstCALL-NEO.com.





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Lower Lake Multipurpose Trail in the Works

In a matter of months, the parkland surrounding Lower Lake will become even more of a destination with the addition of a new multipurpose trail along South Park Boulevard.

Once completed, the 10-foot-wide, ADA-accessible asphalt trail will span the area between Coventry and North Woodland roads, avoiding existing trees and light poles, says Anna Mates, planner with the City.

“We’ll also have ‘sharrows’ (road markings to indicate shared lanes for bicycles and cars) on South Park Boulevard and North Woodland Road, and high visibility crosswalks at Coventry and North Woodland. The trail will also include wayfinding and other signage, directing people to other connecting trails in the area,” Mates says.

The project is partially funded by a grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ (ODNR) Clean Ohio Trail Fund, and the design of the trail is largely the result of input by residents. The width of the trail is based on the requirements of the grant.

“The neighbors were very engaged in the planning process during the public engagement meetings; they were very appreciative that their suggestions were heard,” says Planning Director Joyce Braverman.

“There are currently no paved trails around Lower Lake in Shaker. People with strollers or wheelchairs have to go in the street to get around. This will allow a safe travel place for people with wheels,” Braverman adds.

Construction is scheduled to be complete in fall 2024. For more information, go to: shakerheightsoh.gov/Lower-Lake-Trail.



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Tenille N. Kaus Chosen to Fill Vacancy on City Council

Shaker Heights City Council has appointed Tenille N. Kaus to fill the vacancy created on Council when member Tres Roeder resigned to move out of state. Kaus took office in May.

“City Council members were impressed with Ms. Kaus’ enthusiasm for and commitment to serving the residents of Shaker Heights,” says Councilmember Carmella Williams who, as vice mayor, led the process to fill the vacancy. “With her professional background in law, labor relations, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and her strong connections to the City, she is poised to succeed. We look forward to her perspectives and contributions.”

An attorney specializing in employment law and labor relations, Kaus was most recently director of diversity, equity, inclusion, and advancement at the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland. Prior to that, she served as director of labor relations for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

A former trustee of the Shaker Heights Public Library, Kaus received her J.D. cum laude from University of Akron School of Law. She lives in the Lomond neighborhood with her husband and daughter.

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Shaker City News

Citizens Police Academy Set for Fall



Learn about the policies, practices, and programs of Shaker Heights Police Department by signing up for the 10-week Citizens Police Academy. Open to Shaker Heights residents and those

who work in the City full-time, the program meets on Thursday evenings from 7-10pm starting September 5.

Class times will vary the week of September 30 to accommodate the Rosh Hashanah holiday as well as ride-alongs in police cruisers. No class on Halloween.

For more information, go to shakerheightsoh.gov/cpa or follow the Department's Facebook account at facebook.com/ShakerHeightsPD.

2024 REAPPRAISAL COMPLETE



The Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer recently completed a reappraisal of all properties in the county, as mandated by state law.

Residents should receive their proposed valuation notices during July and have until the end of August to file for an informal review.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the Fiscal Officer at 216-443-7420, option 3 or cuyahogacounty.gov/fiscal-officer.



Mayor Weiss appointed interested residents to an advisory group to help guide the process (and encourage their friends and neighbors to participate in surveys and public meetings). Earlier this summer, social media polls were conducted. Consultants and City staff met with recreation stakeholder groups and have popped up at City parks and events to collect residents' ideas and vision for future recreational opportunities and amenities at these key sites.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend either or both of these community engagement opportunities this summer:

- > August 7, 6-7pm, virtual information session, go to shakerheightsoh.gov/RecreationPlan for link
- > August 8, 6:30-8:30pm, in-person public workshop, Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building, 3450 Lee Rd

Sign up to receive email updates on the Recreation Strategic Plan at shakerheightsoh.gov/RecreationPlan.

Resident Input Sought for Recreation Strategic Plan

The City is undertaking a Recreation Strategic Plan that will set the stage for future recreation investments. The Plan will focus on these locations for potential future recreational facilities or amenities:

- > Shaker Heights Middle School
- > Thornton Park
- > Chelton Park/Shaker School District Bus Depot, and
- > Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building/Colonnade area

Two additional sites could be added to the study based on resident input. The Recreation Strategic Plan will provide a comprehensive analysis of recreation needs and be informed by robust community engagement to reflect the needs of all members of the community. The Plan will include a community needs assessment to evaluate existing conditions and trends; assess community needs for certain facility types and locations; and propose priority uses for each potential site. A final plan is expected by spring 2025.

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Hathaway Brown School Achieves Green Building Council Recognition

Congratulations to Hathaway Brown School for achieving LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) gold certification in operations and maintenance in recognition of its commitment to sustainable and environmentally friendly policies and practices. HB is the only school in Ohio to earn this distinction.

LEED certification, awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council, is the most widely used rating system in the world for green building and sustainability.

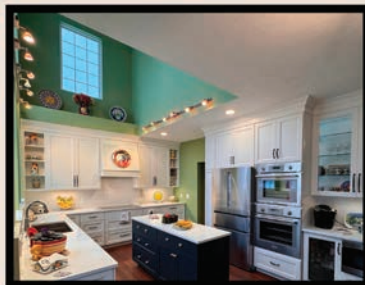
“Hathaway Brown earned the operations and maintenance rating, which is a performance-based certification for existing structures based on how we run the building, not the actual construction,” says Director of Sustainability Torrey McMillan (SHHS Class of '90) who led the 18-month certification process.

“Nationally, operations and maintenance certification based on existing buildings is extremely difficult to achieve,” says Head of School Dr. Fran Bisselle.

To achieve LEED gold certification, HB implemented and analyzed a range of sustainable strategies and practices on the school's campus, which houses a co-ed infant and toddler center and



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early childhood program, along with kindergarten through high school classes for girls. Notable features that contributed to HB's LEED gold certification include:

- > Transportation, water, waste, and energy performance
- > Energy efficiency best management practices
- > Indoor air quality and ventilation
- > Purchasing policies
- > Green cleaning policies
- > Light pollution reduction
- > Indoor environmental quality performance

"It is important to note that, in addition to the work we did to achieve the certification, the policies we adopted are the drivers for ongoing work that will continue to advance our sustainability performance," says McMillan.



Fire Department Acquires New Ambulance

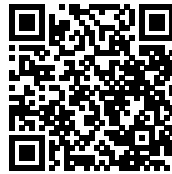
New to the fleet: the Shaker Heights Fire Department has upgraded one of its rescue squad units. Manufactured by Horton Emergency Vehicles of Grove City, Ohio, this 2023 International MV Chassis includes updated ergonomic cab features and liquid spring suspension for a more comfortable ride for patients. Other highlights include: a cot fastener system to improve paramedic and patient safety by supporting the cot throughout the loading and unloading process; updated electrical system and additional control panels; redesigned cabinetry and additional countertop for improved storage; and Whelen Pioneer scene lights for locating address numbers at night. Shaker Heights ambulances have a life span of well over 10 years and more than 100,000 miles.

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Note from Colleen: Listening Project Continues Through October

By Colleen Jackson, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer



Last August, the Shaker Heights City Council passed a resolution adopting a Framework for Maintaining a Safe and Just Shaker Heights. One component of that Framework is a community-wide Listening Project, designed and facilitated by an independent third-party consultant, to promote discussion on policing policies and practices with specific emphasis on any real or perceived bias in policing in the City.

In April 2024 the Listening Project officially kicked off, led by Strategy Matters LLC, a Boston-based firm chosen after a competitive bid process.

Strategy Matters supports organizations tackling complex societal challenges. They bring extensive experience in supporting successful police-community relationships across many types of communities and through many obstacles.

The firm's website states, "We are uniquely well-versed in two very different worlds: public safety theory, strategy and practice, and grassroots community organizing, social justice and anti-oppression work." This is exactly the combination we hoped to find in a consultant and we are thrilled to be working with the Strategy Matters team.

Another important aspect of the Project is to provide education to the public and stakeholders on current police policies and practices, the City's Mental Health Response Program (see story on page 4), and the Police Department's public records.

The project will run more engagement opportunities until its conclusion in October. Thank you to those who have already participated in the engagement sessions. For those interested in future engagements, visit the City's Framework page for updates at shakerheightsoh.gov/framework. Or contact me at 216-491-3201, or colleen.jackson@shakerheightsoh.gov.

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Shaker Schools News

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Shaker Launches South Africa Cultural Exchange Program

Twenty-two students as well as District faculty and administrators embarked on the first South Africa Cultural Exchange (SACE) program trip for Shaker Heights Schools in late March 2024. Shaker's travelers started off their trip spending two days with students from the Johannesburg School District. The group visited different cultural and historical sites such as the Apartheid Museum and Nelson Mandela's home, and the visit ended with a traditional South African Braai – or BBQ. This initiative marks the District's first comprehensive international educational and cultural exchange experience to South Africa.

Save the Date: District's Annual Back-to-School BBQ is August 7

Pack your chairs and blankets and head over to the Onaway field on Wednesday, August 7, from 6-8pm for the return of the District's community-wide Back-to-School Barbecue. All community members within the Shaker Heights Schools attendance area are invited. (Rain date: Thursday, August 8)

This casual evening includes a free dinner, an opportunity to mingle with friends and your favorite principals, and entertainment. District representatives will also be on hand to share information about back-to-school, registration, Family and Community Engagement, the Shaker Schools Foundation, and more.

Please RSVP with a number attending by Wednesday, July 24, for planning purposes. Community members may RSVP at shaker.org.



All Shaker Heights Schools community members are invited to attend the District's 2024 Back-to-School Barbecue on August 7.

Shaker Schools Foundation: Spotlight on *A Night for the Red & White*



The Shaker Schools Foundation's 32nd annual *A Night for the Red & White* on March 2 at the Shaker Heights High School was a huge success! Over \$53,000 in donations was raised and more than 500 attendees experienced student artwork and performances from the SHHS Cheerleaders, Vocal Ensemble, String Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, Theatre, and Sankofa.

Student Raider Reps welcomed attendees and Shaker alums Mariama Whyte (Class of 1993) and David Pogue (Class of 1981) emceed the event, which also featured a raffle and silent auction of more than 180 auction items. The funds raised through donations, the raffle and auction support the Foundation's mission of *Every Student, Every Grade, and Every School*.



Visit the Shaker Schools Foundation's website at shakerschoolsfoundation.org to learn more about the organization's support of the Shaker Heights Schools and to make a donation.

Save the Date

Please mark your calendars today to join us for our 33rd annual *A Night for the Red & White*!

March 8, 2025, at the Agora Ballroom & Theatre!

The entire community is invited to donate, dine, and dance the night away! Don't miss our student performance showcase, Pre-K-12 art show, raffle, and silent auction.

Shaker Schools Music Programs Receive National Recognition



Celebrate the Class of 2024 Hall of Fame

Join the Shaker Schools Foundation in welcoming the Class of 2024 Hall of Fame Inductees. The Foundation will host a dinner and induction ceremony on Saturday, September 14, 2024, at the Shaker Heights Country Club at 6:30pm. The dinner and ceremony are open to the public and all are welcome to join us. Tickets must be purchased online in advance at shakerschoolsfoundation.org/alumni.



The Shaker Heights City School District has again been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. Now in its 25th year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students.

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its 15,000 member companies and individual professionals.

To qualify for the Best Communities designation, the District answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by the Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

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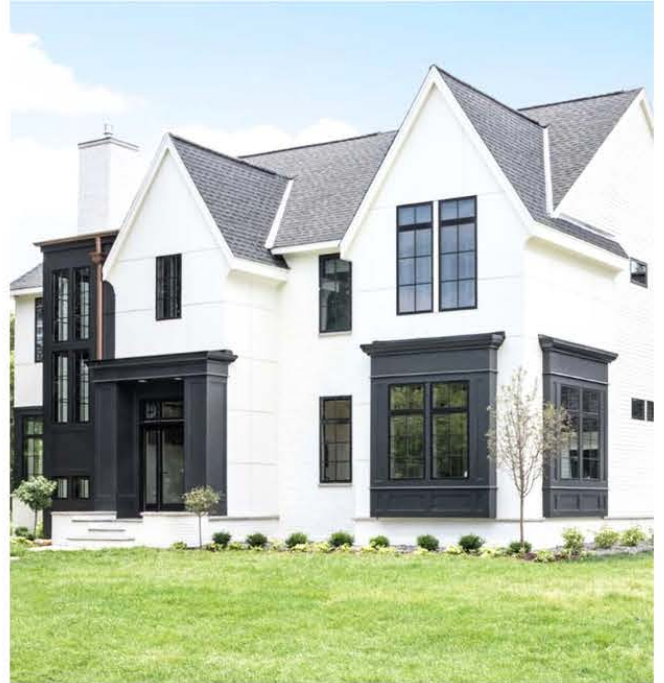


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Shaker Library News



Julia Koops Awarded Shaker Library Research Prize

Each year, Shaker Heights Middle School students participate in Ohio History Day, conducting research on a topic of interest and presenting a project to a panel of historians and educators.

In 2017, Shaker Library established a research prize for the project that made the best use of library resources. This year, middle school student Julia Koops won the Shaker Library Research Prize for her exceptional use of library resources in making her documentary, "A Contradictory Turning Point: The U.S. Occupation of Haiti."

In addition to the standard contest prizes, local organizations offer special awards recognizing a particular area of expertise. For Koops this came as a \$60 cash prize sponsored by the Friends of the Shaker Library.

"For some of these students, this may be the most involved research they've ever done," says Local History Librarian Meghan Hays, one of the judges for the prize. "So we're just looking for some out-of-the-box thinking, some following leads, and a discussion

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of what the library did for their project. Julia was a great example of somebody who had a real depth of understanding about her resources and how they impacted her project.”

In the fall, ahead of the project, Hays invited participating students to Main Library for Research Day to learn about the resources they could use in their research. In addition to books, Koops found journal entries, newspaper clippings (some translated from French), and photos, and pulled them together for the documentary. Then she recorded a voiceover narration.

Haiti first appeared on Koops’ radar when she watched a BrainPOP video about the Haitian Revolution, which she says was “very cool.”



When it came time to pick a History Day project, she perused the suggested topics and found out the U.S. had occupied Haiti. She decided to make it her topic.

Koops’ passion for the subject is evident in the way she explains her project. “I feel like a lot of Americans assume that Haiti is poor because they’re one of those small countries that isn’t as good as the U.S. But what a lot of people don’t know is that the U.S. [occupation] played a big role in Haiti having a bad economy.”

She adds: “I also feel like we need to acknowledge that Haiti persevered. Especially the journalists in Haiti. Even when Americans were persecuting them, they still spoke out against the occupation.”

Koops thinks what she’s learned is important to share with her peers. “People my age need to understand that the U.S. has impacted other countries in ways that you can still see evidence of today. It’s not just a thing of the past.”

Moreland Elementary Celebration Set for Sunday, August 4

Before it was Shaker Main Library, the building that stands at the corner of Van Aken and Chagrin was Moreland Elementary School. Join us on Sunday, August 4 from 2-4pm for a celebration of Moreland Elementary School and what it has meant to this community.

We will dedicate the Moreland Elementary cornerstone and entryway plaque with music, art, special guests, and refreshments. Learn more at events.shakerlibrary.org.

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Shaker Library Welcomes Two New Trustees



Emily Cole-Kelly joined the Shaker Library Board of Trustees in January, following the departure of Timeka Rashid. She will complete Rashid's unexpired term, ending in 2026.

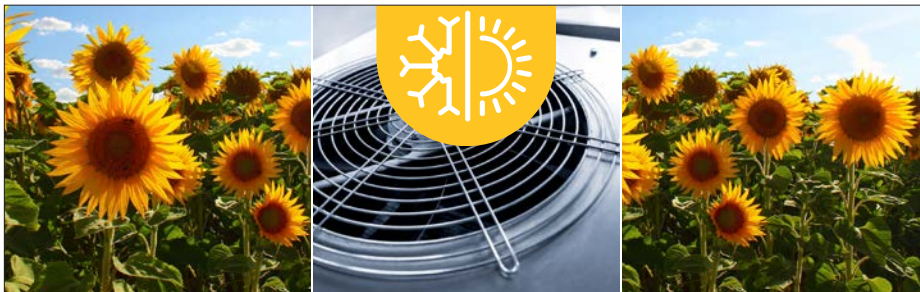
Cole-Kelly is a dedicated and passionate non-profit development and fundraising professional with over 20 years of experience. She is currently working with Birthing Beautiful Communities, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing holistic prenatal, birthing, and postpartum services to expectant Black women.

She has held leadership roles at numerous non-profit institutions including The Paris Review and The Battery Conservancy in New York City and Geography of Hope and the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

She returned to Shaker with her family in the summer of 2022. The first thing they did was get library cards. She loves to run and lives in the Onaway neighborhood. She and her two boys can regularly be spotted at the library checking out a laundry basket full of books.

Dylan Yépez was appointed to the Shaker Library Board of Trustees on March 12, following Doreen Katz's departure. Katz completed her seven-year term in March.

Yépez is an attorney for the Cleveland Clinic. He grew up in Shaker Heights, attending the Shaker public schools from kindergarten through high school. After graduating from Ohio State (B.A.) and Georgetown Law (J.D.), he began his career at the Cleveland office of Squire Patton Boggs and returned to Shaker, where he lives in the Lomond neighborhood with his husband, Ricardo. In his spare time, he performs pro bono legal work and enjoys reading, baking, and jogging around Shaker. Yépez is set to serve on the Board through 2031.



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The Joy of Getting Together

Seniors build connections at Shaker Library's Coffee and Community hour

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



Virginia Schoelch assists Coffee and Community attendees with a craft project.

It's 9:55am on Wednesday morning at Shaker Main Library, and the Teen Room is starting to fill – not with teens, who are currently at school, but with community members, the majority of them retirees.

And when the teens are away, the retirees will play.

Standing at the entrance is Virginia Schoelch (pronounced shell-shush), a veteran Shaker Library employee, warmly greeting each person by name and inviting them to fill their mug with coffee or tea at the refreshments cart.

Every attendee, it seems, has the same question for Schoelch: "What do you have planned for today?" Knowing Schoelch, it could be literally anything.

Maybe it's an unexpectedly fascinating talk on the history of yarn, given by the owner of the local yarn shop. Maybe it's a lively discussion of the City's upcoming revitalization plans, headed by the mayor himself. Maybe it's a local artist, author, or entrepreneur, coming to share about their area of expertise.

Maybe they're trying their hand at blackout poetry, rock painting, or art journaling. Or maybe they're learning to write their names in braille using pieces of candy.

At these gatherings, hosted Wednesdays at 10am at Main Library, the topic and activity are variable. What's constant are the faces – and the laughter.

Welcome to Coffee and Community, a gathering launched in 2017 with the objective of connecting residents for conversations that go beyond surface-level.



Top left: Attendees at Coffee and Community select stamps to use on their accordion pocket file craft. Right: Leslie Ostrander laughs with other attendees. Below: Geoffrey Hare enjoys coffee and conversation.



"The librarian who hosted this program before Virginia had been doing a lot of senior programming around health and financial topics. Then we noticed that people were looking for more than just information – they were looking to be together," Adult Services Manager Cindy Maxey says.

Maxey and her staff know that retirees can be susceptible to loneliness and social isolation, so they've provided a place where people can be together at no cost – a concept to which Shaker residents have really responded.

Each week, the gathering averages between 10 and 20 attendees. Even in winter, with the snowbirds gone, attendance didn't wane.

Since retirement, Quintilla Draper, who began attending the group in 2022, has become a homebody. "I'm fine at home. I've got my books. I've got TV. I've got my crafts. But this group motivates me to come out of the house."

"At my age, I'm not going to hang out at a bar. I wouldn't enjoy it," says Shaker resident Leslie Ostrander, who still works full-time. "But for me, Coffee and Community is a way to meet people I wouldn't otherwise get to know. We're different, but what we have in common is that we like to get together."

Coffee and Community took a hiatus during pandemic lockdowns and library renovations. It was rebooted in 2021, this time with a slight tweak in the objective. Maxey wanted the group to be member-led, with participants deciding what they'll discuss.



"Too often, especially with seniors, people make assumptions about what they want and need, which is really disempowering," says Maxey. "I think it's important to [structure programming] this way, so that the participants are deciding what they want to pursue."

Schoelch has taken the idea and run with it. Attendees bring her their ideas for topics and questions they have about the city and world. Then, she arranges for a speaker or activity.

Pam Corbin, a partially-retired Shaker resident who teaches Tai Chi, says attending gatherings like Coffee and Community keeps her young.

"Every time I turn on the TV, the first thing I see is a pharmaceutical commercial. It's like, you turn 50 and you're supposed to fall apart. But as long as you have breath and life you can keep learning, growing, and becoming whoever you need to become."

Top left: Pam Corbin shows off her finished product. Top right: Attendees created accordion pocket files made from recycled envelopes. Below: Coffee and Community attendees select materials for their project.



She continues, "I tell everybody, every time I come here, I learn something new. I learn about other people's interests, and they suggest things for me to try. So that's what we share – a curiosity about life. And an understanding that we're not done living yet."

I recently attended a Coffee and Community hour where attendees were working on puzzles, brain teasers, and coloring pages. ("This is our mental health day," one of them told me.)



During that session, Corbin shared a story from childhood. "The older people my parents brought around were vibrant. They were doing things, you know? And constantly learning. I had an aunt who learned how to drive at 62."

Another attendee jumped in: "A lot of us knew people like that."

And a third: "My mother didn't learn to drive until after she

raised four kids. I'm talking about the '40s and '50s. We used to take the bus because women didn't drive in those days."

The conversation became a lively back-and-forth, with the retirees swapping stories about their childhoods and families, discussing recent events and talking about how things "used to be," quoting religious texts and The Four Agreements, and ribbing each other about their clumsiness (walking into windows) or bad driving (going the wrong way in a construction zone).

At one point, the discussion turns to how attendees are changing the narrative on aging. Schoelch meets my eye and says, "Can you tell we inspire each other?"

I can.

What does Schoelch bring to the group? Without a moment's hesitation, Maxey tells me: "Joy."

But I can see it's more than that. Schoelch's care for the attendees is infectious – and they have followed her lead. You can tell by the way they greet each other, banter, and ask after each other if someone's not there, they've come to care about each other too.



Maxey's hope for the Coffee and Community group is that it continues to be a community-builder. Continues being participant-led. And continues helping attendees feel connected to their community – and each other.

With Schoelch at the helm and a host of invested, inquisitive people by her side, bet on it. **SL**

Lyndsey Brennan is the communication and marketing manager at Shaker Library.

Get to know Virginia



Years at Shaker Library: 36

Position: Adult services associate

Shaker connection: Fernway resident from 1971 – 1991

Origin story: “I started my career as a second grade teacher. I taught for 10 years, then had children of my own. I stayed home with them and brought them to the library for story hour. Then in 1987 the woman who ran story hour said, ‘Virginia, you think you might be interested in subbing for us?’ So I had tea with the director, and she offered me the job subbing at Main Library, which was still housed in the Stephanie Tubbs Jones building back then. I went full-time in the children’s room at Bertram Woods in 1992. I attempted to retire early in 2013 – but they couldn’t keep me away. I returned a few months later to work in the adult services department and have been here since.”

Favorite book: “You know, it changes with the wind. Because every time I read a new book, I fall in love with it. One series that I recommend to anyone who asks is the Kinship Series by Jess Montgomery. It’s historical fiction set in southern Ohio in the 1920s when there was mining, prohibition, and a fight for women’s and workers’ rights. The first book is called *The Widows*. A patron came in looking for it, and I ordered it for her. Then she came back and wanted the second one. She said, ‘It’s so good. You have to read it.’ So I did, and I couldn’t put it down.”

Favorite library memory: “There is a gentleman who is a regular customer at Bertram Woods. We hadn’t seen each other while the branch was closed for renovations. Then when it reopened, he saw me working the desk. He said, ‘Virginia, I am so happy you’re still here. I wasn’t sure I’d see you again.’

Then he said, ‘You have to know what you did for my kids. You got them to be readers and love the library and love literature.’ And there were tears in his eyes. He said, ‘I’m sorry, but I’m emotional.’ I was thrilled with that feedback because many families come in and out of storytime, years and years of them. We always have such a wonderful time together, but it is rare to hear how those storytimes impacted who the kids grew up to be.”



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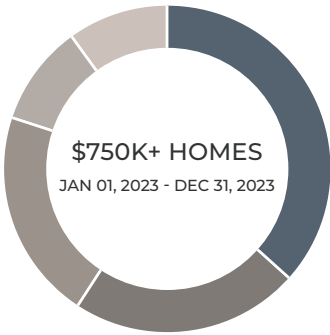
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DROPPIN' IN

The Shaker Heights High School esports team has snagged multiple state and regional titles with its commitment to mentoring and a professional play mindset.

FOR THE WIN

Written by **Julie Hullett**

Photography by **Gus Chan**



At the Esports Ohio state tournament in April, Shaker Heights finished third in Fortnite, second in Reserve Super Smash Bros Ultimate, and first in Club Chess. Since its inception in 2018, the Shaker Heights High School team has won multiple regional and state tournaments.

IN THE EARLY SPRING OF 2019

Shaker Heights High School Latin teacher Nora Murphy received an unusual request. Keith Szalay, German teacher and esports coach, was looking for a place for his students to play competitive video games.

After months of putting a team together, joining the Esports Ohio High School League, and preparing for a match, Szalay and the students discovered that the school's firewall blocked the game. Scrambling to find a new location for the match (instead of Szalay's classroom), Szalay pleaded with Murphy to open her nearby home before the team had to forfeit.



Above: Head Coach Keith Szalay and Assistant Coach Aric Kee say running the esports team is a passion project. Szalay, a German teacher, and Kee, a paraprofessional, manage the team on top of their own full-time jobs. "They look at us as people they can relate to and rely on," Kee says. "As a coach, you give a lot of yourself to the kids."

"It was the day of our first match. We plugged in our Nintendo Switches, and it was blocked. We had never thought to check," Szalay recalls. "I ran down the hall and asked Nora if 25 kids could competitively play video games in her living room. To her credit, she said sure."

This was the official start of the Shaker Heights High School Esports team, and it is a force to be reckoned with. Since its inception in 2018, the team has won multiple regional and state tournaments. Just this season, Shaker Esports came in second in the region and third in the state for Fortnite, first in the region and seventh in the state for Smash Ultimate, and first place in the state for Chess. At the Esports Ohio state tournament this past April, Shaker Heights came in third place for Fortnite, second place for Reserve Super Smash Bros Ultimate, and first place for Club Chess.

The esports team currently boasts 68 players spread among varsity, junior varsity, and club teams. Shaker's teams play Super Smash Bros Ultimate®, Overwatch®, Fortnite®, Valorant®, Rocket League®, Apex Legends®, and Club Chess®.

Young, Scrappy, and Hungry

It was only a matter of time before the esports team was born. On Mondays, Szalay starts his German classes with a conversation about what the class did over the weekend. The conversation starts in English but turns to German as the students learn the language. He hears about their weekend festivities, and the students learn about Szalay. "They knew I was a lifelong gamer," he says.

In the spring of 2018, three students came to Szalay with the request to start a digital gaming club. Students brought their Nintendo Switches to his classroom and connected them to the projector, and some brought their laptops for PC gaming. A thriving community was born, Szalay says.




The SHHS Esports team has experienced significant growth within a short period of time. A club that began with three gamers now boasts nearly 70 team members.

That same year, a group of educators founded Esports Ohio, the first Ohio esports league for high schools. There was clearly talent in that overflowing classroom, so Shaker joined Esports Ohio, which quickly became one of the best high school esports leagues in the country. Esports Ohio partners with the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA), and Shaker's esports team is a member of OHSAA.

Once these students decided that they wanted an esports team, there was no turning back. Mike Karenke, Shaker High School's Network and System Security Administrator, faces the herculean task of keeping the technology up and running for the esports team. He helps the team access games that may be blocked by the District's firewall. When the team first started playing competitively in the spring of 2018, the games were not yet accessible from the high school.

"That entire season was played out of students' living rooms. Parents volunteered to host us," Szalay says. "The kids ran to the computer lab at 3pm and grabbed four monitors and Nintendo Switches and we would run across Shaker on foot to whoever was hosting us. You have a 4pm deadline or you forfeit. As a coach, you see the enthusiasm the kids have and the lengths they are willing to go to to compete as a team. You recognize the power of what we have here."



Players on the SHHS Esports team learn the same skills of leadership, perseverance, discipline, sportsmanship, communication, and confidence that players would learn on a traditional athletic team.



Racking Up the Awards

Shaker's Esports teams have earned numerous awards, including seven ESO/OHSAA State Championship titles, three State runner-up titles, the Ohio/Michigan battle of the border, and multiple regional victories.

The Love of the Game

There are two aspects of the Shaker Esports team. The first one is a sense of community. Students with common interests found a gathering place to escape their daily stressors and indulge in a feel-good activity with friends. "We are a community for kids who need community," Szalay says. "That is the foundation of our team."

Heaven Clark, a sophomore and team captain for the junior varsity Valorant team, says she heard about the esports team when she was in middle school. Clark was excited to start high school so she could join the team. She made many new friends on the esports team but is still looking to recruit more women.

The second aspect of Shaker Esports is learning how to be a professional player on a team. Players on this team learn the same skills of leadership, perseverance, discipline, sportsmanship, communication, and confidence that players would learn on an athletic team.

"The students are learning how to go to the next level cognitively," Szalay says. "They study the characters, research their matchups, watch the best players in the world, and come in with a strategy. If you play a game a lot, you will get good, but you will never be great unless you have the right mindset."

Ariel Yaniv, a senior and varsity captain of Super Smash Bros Ultimate, says his role brings many new skills that will be applicable for the rest of his life, including communication, leadership, and managing a team. "This has been a great experience in building connections and developing teamwork skills," he says.

Trent Kafcsak, a junior and captain of the Esports Chess Team, has developed skills in fundraising while on the team. He helped coordinate a fundraiser with Cilantro Taqueria at the Van Aken District to support esports. The team raised \$300 in one day through this partnership when the restaurant donated a portion of the profit from each order to the esports team.



Scholarship Eligible

SHHS is known for its esports team, which is what draws college scouts to visit the team. Coach Keith Szalay says multiple college coaches have come to the high school to watch the students play and identify potential recruits for their university teams.

Several students have received scholarships for a few thousand dollars per semester to play on the university team. An esports scholarship often has the same perks as an athletic scholarship, such as priority registration, access to a tutor, and 24/7 access to their own PC in the esports room. Scholarships have come directly from a scout and in other cases students reached out to an esports team after committing to a college. Coach Szalay and Assistant Coach Aric Kee know several college coaches and help make connections for their students.

“We had enough support from family, friends, and teachers to buy a third Nintendo Switch,” Kafcsak says. “So we can have three teams for Super Smash Bros instead of two.”

Coach Szalay and Assistant Coach Aric Kee describe running the esports team as a passion project. As a full-time German teacher and a paraprofessional, respectively, Szalay and Kee manage the esports team on top of their own full-time jobs.

As coaches, Szalay says they help the students become better players. However, the coaches also go above and beyond because they want to see the students grow and develop into the best versions of themselves.

Kee, also a lifelong gamer, joined as the assistant coach two years ago. He expected to play a role in strategy, but quickly found himself in a whirlwind. “You build a relationship with the kids. You’re a part of their life now,” Kee says. “They look at us as people they can relate to and rely on. As a coach, you give a lot of yourself to the kids.”

For example, Kee stays in the esports room until nearly 6pm every day so the students can practice. Some have the technology and games at home to play on their own, but not all. He chooses to give them as much time as they need to better themselves. “The competitiveness is good, the strategy is good, but building young men and women is great,” Kee says.



“As a coach, you see the enthusiasm the kids have and the lengths they are willing to go to to compete as a team,” Coach Keith Szalay says. “You recognize the power of what we have here.”

Mentoring the Next Generation

The coaches put in countless hours of time and effort to support the team, but the real key to success is the culture of mentoring.

Many alumni of the Shaker Esports team went on to play for their college esports teams, with some even earning scholarships. One wall in the esports classroom displays names of alumni who have played on college teams. Many of those players return to mentor the current team members and share their tips and tricks.

“With Overwatch this season, we had newer players on the varsity team. Alumni players did video on demand (VOD) reviews with them. It’s like watching tape in football. The alumni would get online from their college and go over it with them,” Szalay says.

In addition to the support from the coaches, parents, administration, IT department, and community members, Szalay says the esports team could not be without the Shaker Schools Foundation. The foundation bought the team’s first pieces of equipment – two Nintendo Switches – and have continued to support the team over the last six years.

The esports team has experienced significant growth in a short period of time. A club of three gamers turned into nearly 70 gamers on a team with several state titles. Szalay and Kee describe the esports team as a machine, but they love every minute of it. The preparation, tournaments and mentoring are nearly nonstop throughout the school year.

“By the end of the year, we just drink Gatorade and chill out for the summer.” **SL**

Julie Hullett is a senior editor for Meister Media Worldwide, a freelance writer, and a 2014 graduate of Shaker Heights High School.

BOOMERANG KIDS

*These Shaker High School graduates
lived and worked in great cities.*

*But they couldn't stay away
from Shaker Heights.*

Written by **Sharon Broussard**

Photography by **Robert Muller**

Drawn by family, community,
and a yearning to recreate
their own childhoods,
these one-time Shakerites
decided to boomerang and
raise their children in the Fernway,
Lomond, Mercer, and Onaway
neighborhoods.

They were lured by several things -
families who could help them
raise their children,
comfortable housing, good schools,
and great childhood memories.

They found all that and more,
including neighbors who will even
give you a break on a house
during a seller's market.

Here's how four families who
returned to Shaker put it.

In their own words.

A photograph of a family of three walking through a field of green grass and yellow dandelions. On the left, a man with a beard and short hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and dark blue pants, is smiling and looking towards the woman. In the center, a young boy in a light blue shirt and jeans is walking and holding hands with both parents. On the right, a woman with her hair pulled back, wearing a denim jacket over a white top and flared blue jeans, is smiling and looking towards the man. The background shows a large tree and a clear sky.

THANKS TO THE MOM AND DAD CREW

Aaron, Matthew, and Lindsay



Once Lindsay (Holloway) Kinney, who graduated from Shaker Heights High School in 2005, and her husband Aaron, who graduated in 2009, found out she was pregnant, these Shaker graduates started thinking about leaving Columbus and returning to the area.

Not that they didn't like Columbus. It was booming in the summer with festivals and events. High school and college football filled the fall. But the Kinneys had few friends in Ohio's capital which made it "kind of isolating," says Lindsay.

So returning to Shaker became a priority. They had parents eager to help with the baby and both had great memories of Shaker. Lindsay liked attending Shaker High and being in the high school band. Meanwhile, Aaron played baseball and sang in the choir.

"It just seemed like a good baseline. A good place to start," says Lindsay, who works remotely for Nationwide Insurance Company.

But there weren't many homes available in Shaker in the summer of 2021 so they worked remotely from their parents' homes and stayed on high alert for a home for sale. After all, baby Matthew was due in November and they wanted to be settled in by then. "Can you imagine that summer?" asks Aaron, a manager in the Department of Community Development for the City of Cleveland.



They got lucky when Lindsay's father, who lives in the Mercer area, was out on a walk and discovered that a neighbor was planning to move. The Kinneys talked to the neighbor and the family sold the home to them instead of putting it on the market. They were ecstatic – and so were their parents. "I think the parents both put up a lot of prayers. My folks definitely wanted us to stay," says Aaron.

"They couldn't unpack us fast enough," adds Lindsay. "You have never seen a house set up in one day." They both laugh.

"We had a grounds crew here. Dad was outside. Our moms were here," says Lindsay. "When they left that day, we lived here. The sofa was here. Dishes were in the cabinet, food in the refrigerator. One day. They were great."



JUST THE RIGHT FIT
FOR A NEW STAGE

Nikki, Rachel, and family

Rachel Hutt, who graduated from Shaker in 2001, and her wife, Nikki Marks, were working in Washington, D.C. when Hutt became pregnant and they decided they wanted a place that was family friendly and less costly than the skyrocketing prices in the D.C. area.

Rachel thought of returning to Shaker where her parents live, but she wanted to be fair to her wife, who grew up in the Maryland area. So she held back while her spouse did her own research.

Their shared conclusion? "Shaker was the best option for us in terms of the quality of the public schools, the racial diversity of the town and the schools, and also being close to family," says Rachel, whose mother was a boomerang Shakerite as well.

They moved to Onaway in 2018. They have no regrets. "D.C. was wonderful," says Rachel. "It was a wonderful place to live for that phase of my life, but we are very happy to be where we are now in this stage of life."

More family has followed Rachel, Nikki, and their twin preschoolers, including Rachel's brother and his wife who moved to Shaker. Her mother-in-law left the D.C. area for Beachwood. "We have expanded the Cleveland population," she says with a laugh.



The city hasn't disappointed them. "The thing that is most noticeable, most prominent is just the wonderful sense of community in our neighborhood and the way that kids run between each other's yards and the way we really do know our neighbors here," says Rachel. "Our block has Pizza Fridays in the summer and there is just a real sense of community."

Rachel works remotely as an associate director for a national social sector consulting company called Community Wealth Partners. "I got to keep the job that I like from the comfort of my home in Shaker," she says – while Nikki is an advancement associate for the Joseph and Florence Mandel Jewish Day School.

The couple is already thinking about sending the twins to Shaker schools and being "part of the ongoing project of striving for racial equity in a public school system," she says. "We know it's not perfect but we are ready to throw ourselves into making that work."



A NEW GENERATION ADDING
TO DEEP SHAKER ROOTS

Ashley, Jordin, Kevin Jr., and Kevin

Buying a home in Shaker Heights was “a no-brainer” to Kevin Armwood, a 2005 Shaker grad, whose mother was one of seven children who attended Shaker schools and who has had a relative in the schools since 1980 and a relative in the city since the 1940s.

He moved around after graduating from Howard University, living in Washington, D.C., Cleveland Heights, and Mayfield Heights. But marriage to Ashley, who works for Penske Corp., and two children made him decide to buy a home in Shaker Heights in 2022.

Shaker’s racial and economic diversity showed him how to get along with everyone and that’s something he wanted for his children, Jordin, 9, and Kevin, Jr., 3, says Kevin, who is in sales.

“You have every spectrum here. It really boosts you when you go to the real world because you are able to operate in any situation. It really made me a well-rounded adult – so I want that same thing for my children,” he says.

Their Lomond neighborhood has been great. “I feel like it is more of a community, not just where I live. I know my neighbors. My daughter walks to (Lomond) school and everybody on my street are friends,” he says. He recalls that when they first moved into their home some neighbors brought over baked goods from a farmers’ market. Another neighbor loaned him a tool when he was out working in his yard.



And he feels comfortable in a city that welcomes diversity. “We really wanted to be in the kind of community where neighbors are welcoming and with people who are thriving and trying to do well,” he says. “They want to be around people who don’t necessarily look or live the same way that they do and they are accepting of that.”

Kevin is also surrounded by family. The grandparents are nearby and are able to watch their son during the day. His brother also lives in Lomond.

And he too loves the Van Aken District, which is a 15-minute walk from his home. “It’s becoming an area where everything that I need is right here.”

DEBUNKING THE SUBURBAN MYTH

Cameron, Rob, Caroline, and Sarah



Rob Markt, Shaker class of 2001, and his wife, Sarah, loved Boston – the restaurants, the parks, the busy city life – so much that they didn’t want to leave. But the city didn’t love them back.

Home prices were “ridiculous,” he says. In addition, Sarah, who was then a cancer researcher, was looking at a short list of universities for her next position and Case Western Reserve University was one of the schools. They moved back to Shaker in 2018 because one of their priorities was being close to family and, Sarah who is from Buffalo, got a job at Case.

He is glad it turned out that way. “I had such a wonderful upbringing here,” says Rob, whose father also boomeranged back to Shaker Heights and now lives here.

Still, Rob, an executive recruiter for a research institution, didn’t insist upon Shaker. He waited for Sarah, now a data scientist for a pharmaceutical company, to make up her own mind about moving to Fernway. “We did the real estate tour. We looked in Cleveland Heights and we looked in Solon. I didn’t want to push my preferences for Shaker too much, but she came to the same conclusion on her own,” he says.

In the end, they chose Shaker because “you can have a big, nice house here for a reasonable amount of money,” he says. “And that is fundamentally not true on the East Coast.”



Strong public schools were important to the couple as well – in part because Sarah’s parents worked as public school educators in Buffalo, says Rob. They send their two children, Cameron, 9, and Caroline, 6, to Fernway School. “I think we wanted great public schools and a reasonable cost of living. It was a lot of trying to repeat our childhoods.”

Shaker is even providing them with some Boston vibes now that the Van Aken District is open, he says. “It’s amazing how things have panned out to be a lot more like our city life in Boston. We can walk to the Van Aken District, to restaurants, and bars. We were really living the city life in Boston and we were hesitant about doing suburban life.”

Not any longer. **SL**



Giving Greenspace Another Chance

Shaker's Grow Not Mow program moves ahead to enhance biodiversity, powered by an ecosystem of helping hands

Written by **Michael Peters**

Photography by **Jason Miller**





It's often easy to forget that we share our city with the plants and animals who also call it home.

Fortunately the City's Stormwater and Green Space Subcommittee meets every month to offer the City guidance on ways to improve and protect this natural environment.

Their guidance is built on experience in the field, literally. Many of the subcommittee members are practitioners and volunteers with local and regional environmental organizations. Maybe it should then be no surprise that the subcommittee and its volunteers also actively dig, plant, water, and educate in our community to make it greener and healthier for us all.

One of their key initiatives is the Grow Not Mow program. "The Grow Not Mow program grew from early conversations within our subcommittee with regard to the Great American Lawn obsession and the devastating environmental and human health costs of maintaining traditional lawns," says Subcommittee Chair Julia Larouche. The goal of the program is to create an alternative model for maintaining greenspaces in order to restore and enhance biodiversity and function, starting on city-owned parcels.

Site selection

Beginning in 2021, public lands were identified by the subcommittee as good candidates to return to native meadows and woodlands. This means more growing, planting more native trees and bushes, and removing invasives. And less mowing – saving the City time and money while reducing stormwater runoff.

The two current sites are both along the Doan Brook, one at South Park and Courtland Boulevards and the other at South Park Boulevard and Lee Road. These were selected in part due to the often marshy conditions that make them ideal planting areas but not good candidates for traditional parklands and pose challenges to mowing when the ground is soft.

Each spring volunteers organized by the Doan Brook Watershed Partnership (DBWP) assemble on a Saturday afternoon to plant roughly 100 native trees and bushes. "The Doan Brook watershed is an ideal place for Grow Not Mow





programs because it is an impacted urban watershed. Any way we can work to slow and reduce stormwater is a great help to the brook and eventually Lake Erie," says Mo Drinkard, executive director of the DBWP.

Because the water in the Doan Brook goes directly into Lake Erie, and the runoff from streets and yards most likely ends up in the Brook, it is important to consider what goes into storm sewers (no oils or chemicals) and to limit the synthetic fertilizers applied to lawns. This is also where programs like Grow Not Mow, planting species not treated with any chemical fertilizers, can have a big impact. "DBWP is bringing back a watershed-wide water quality monitoring program this year. Programs like Grow Not Mow can help improve some of the metrics we will be monitoring," says Drinkard.

Perfect mix of plants and volunteers

The selection of the native trees and bushes is led by an experienced team of local volunteers, many of whom also serve on the City's Tree Advisory Board and have honed their knowledge for years through efforts such as the Friends of Lower Lake. Volunteer John Barber explains how plantings are selected: "We look for trees, shrubs, and flowering plants that 'belong' here – species native to northeast Ohio." That's important because these plants need to increase biodiversity by providing food and nesting places for native birds and insects, especially native pollinator species. The chosen plants also need to spread naturally, reducing future planting work without requiring frequent maintenance. "Finally, we look for plants that will be beautiful to look at, both up close and from a distance," says Barber.

No experience is needed to volunteer, and as Councilmember Nancy Moore, chair of the Tree Advisory Board and member of the Sustainability Committee, shares, "One measure of the Grow Not Mow program's success in my eyes is that we continue to attract volunteers of all ages who donate their time each year to put their shovels in the ground to 'plant native' at our two sites. I love to see five-year-olds helping their parents plant new trees. And I think about these Shaker students coming back when that tree is 20-feet tall. It fills me with hope for the future."

The Grow Not Mow events, which include the removal of invasives during the summer and often another planting event in the fall, bring together a broad range of residents. Volunteers not only help restore the native habitat but learn how to identify invasives in their own yards and plant and care for native species. Some, like residents Nick Fletcher and Tim Kalan, even grow natives in their own yards to donate to the planting events. "These residents have developed expertise in growing native plants from

seed, ensuring genetic diversity and hardiness,” says Barber. “We can rest assured that no systemic insecticides or fungicides are used while the plants are being grown.”

In addition to the ‘homegrown’ species, the City purchases plants from local native plant nurseries within a short drive of Shaker Heights. “These nurseries encourage genetic diversity, have plants that are raised in our local climate, and are not treated with systemic chemicals,” says Barber. The subcommittee allocates a portion of its budget to support these activities and these funds are also the required local matching dollars for grant programs such as those through the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District.

Bringing the ideas back home

Responding in part to this interest residents show for removing invasives and planting natives in their own yards, the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is working to create a Certified Yard Habitat program to help guide residents in these efforts. This collaborative approach yields multiple benefits that are a win for everyone involved, with increased engagement, more learning opportunities, and tangible benefits to the environment.

Drinkard agrees, “DBWP is glad to have a strong collaboration with Shaker Heights in the Grow Not Mow program. Shaker Heights is doing the right thing by reducing mowing, planting trees, and increasing native vegetation. These actions do benefit wildlife and improve ecological function but also offer tangible economic benefits like stormwater reduction and direct cost savings from reduced maintenance.”

What does the future hold for Grow Not Mow? “I hope that these sites are only the beginning of a widespread program,” says Drinkard. “Shaker Heights is showcasing that Grow Not Mow sites are beautiful, beneficial additions to urban/suburban landscapes. The City has the opportunity to be an exemplar in sustainable leadership with its low cost and effective Grow Not Mow efforts.” This has proven to be true, with organizations as far afield as the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources contacting the City to learn from the program.

Likewise, Councilmember Moore sums it up nicely, “I hope the Grow Not Mow program can expand to include the restoration of more sites in Shaker that lack tree canopy, where planting native species can sustain a biodiverse environment that is healthier for birds, wildlife, pollinating insects, and people.” **SL**



Michael Peters is sustainability coordinator for the City of Shaker Heights.



Selecting native plants

The Grow Not Mow program only selects trees and plants that are considered non-invasive and native to our region. While adding new trees is important to expand the ecosystem that supports birds, pollinators, and other wildlife, it is equally important to remove the invasive trees and bushes that are commonplace in the City. Otherwise these plants compete with and eventually overtake the native species.

The program encourages residents to do the same in their own yards. You can start by volunteering for a planting day to learn how to select, plant, and care for young trees and bushes. This includes the critical step of protection from deer, including using metal or plastic tree protection.

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A Blueprint for Sharing a Passion

Architect Christine Medvedev infuses sustainable design into her home and her work and shares that passion with the next generation.

Written by Zach Lewis

Photography by Meg Holiday



Work-life balance is a non-issue for Shaker architect Christine Medvedev. In her regal South Park Blvd. home, the two domains overlap seamlessly, just as she likes it.

It isn't just that Medvedev often works from home, running Christine Medvedev Design. It's that she works throughout the whole home, and that in many ways, her home is her work.

"For us, it's all blurred together," says the New Jersey native, in a dining room with both artwork and landscape drawings. "The house is multi-functional. It's where we love to hang out, but it's also where we work."

On a tour that includes the bedrooms of her three children – ages 6, 8, and 10 – Medvedev spotlights not only her cozy, den-like office, where she produces Computer-Aided Design (CAD) drawings, but also the many other areas where she does business.

Sculptures, paintings, photographs, and the occasional Lego build tastefully populate a series of inviting, comfortable spaces including the family's dining room, living room, kitchen, and rear patio, where a new in-ground pool is under construction.

All of these have been newly renovated. Upon moving in during the pandemic, Medvedev set about opening up and brightening the 1908 home, preserving its old-world grandeur while setting it up for daily life in the 21st century. She also converted from gas to electric, added insulation, and installed a rain garden, to clean up stormwater runoff.

"We took a home that wasn't designed for a modern family and made it sustainable," she says. "We see ourselves as stewards."



DOAN BROOK RESTORATION

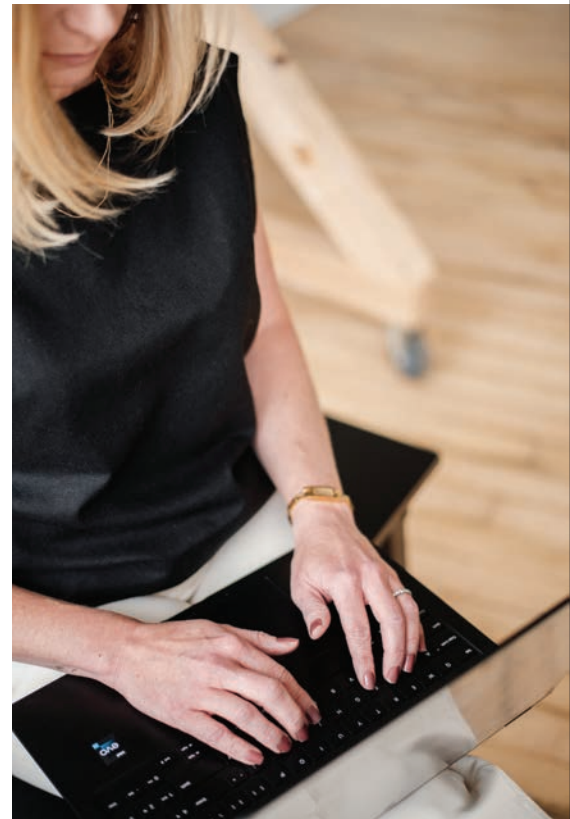
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A lived-in example

Motivation for this work was both personal and professional. Medvedev’s mission wasn’t only to make her home more practical and environmentally friendly but also to erect a model home, a lived-in example of her transformative style and priorities.

She also had her husband’s work to consider. Andrew Medvedev, a Cleveland native, is dean of the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. In that capacity, he often hosts faculty dinners and other events at the house. Both also open their home to the several community organizations they serve as volunteers.

“On any given day, we’re doing so many different things,” Medvedev says. “I just take my laptop everywhere.”

Engaging future architects

There is one thing that often takes Medvedev out of the house, and that is a desire to share her passion for environmentally informed architecture. For this reason, she often can be found in Shaker Heights City Schools or at City Hall.

At Boulevard and Mercer Elementary Schools, Medvedev spearheaded a successful food-waste composting program, in partnership with Cleveland's Rust Belt Riders and the Shaker Schools Foundation. She also champions thoughtful architecture on the school district's Facilities



SHAKER HEIGHTS

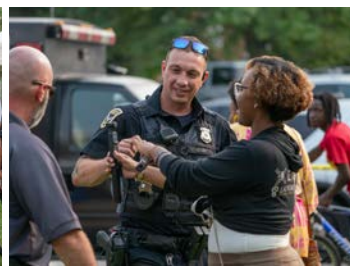
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(continued from previous page)

Advisory Committee and addresses stormwater and energy issues as a member of two municipal sustainability sub-committees.

But if there's one rival for Medvedev's affection, beyond her home, work, and family, it's a special program at Shaker Heights High School. Specifically, the School District's ACE (Architecture, Construction, and Engineering) club.

When Medvedev learned about ACE she couldn't resist getting involved as a mentor. Now, every time she meets with the group to advise on one project or another, Medvedev is reminded of why she became an architect and how she ended up living and working in a beautiful and eco-conscious home in Shaker Heights.

"Architecture is my first love," Medvedev says. "That's the thing I'm most passionate about, and now I'm helping other people figure out if it's their passion, too." **SL**



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