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The Nahley home, October, 2023.
Photography by Kevin G. Reeves



Great Shaker Homes

After 30-plus years in Florida, a Northeast Ohio native and her husband find their dream home.

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Susan Oguche fell in love with public relations in college. Now the self-declared “nerd” is the chief communications officer for Rock Entertainment Group.

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The District’s commitment to provide high-quality instruction to its numerous international students means that they master English, the passport to academic success.

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Photo Essay

The Shaker Heights Figure Skating Club is one of the largest in Ohio. The club has received its 50-year plaque from the U.S. Figure Skating Association.

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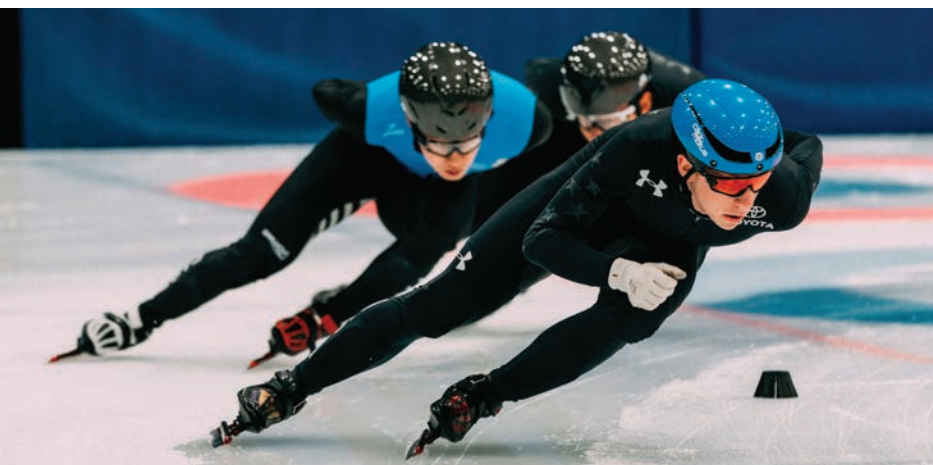
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Ice Skating at 30 Miles an Hour

The day of Ryan Shane's Shaker Heights High School graduation in 2022, his life changed in still another significant way: the U.S. Short Track Speed Skating National Training Program publicly announced that he had been named to its 15-member team.



Girl Talk

The International Women's Group of Cleveland gathers monthly for friendship and cultural outings, allowing international women who have relocated to the area to come together and share stories and experiences.



Passionate Pursuits

Some people just know what they are meant to do in life. Actress/singer/songwriter Mariama Whyte has mastered the art of staying busy.



Shaker Online

Mayoral and City Council Election Results



Mayor David E. Weiss



Kim Bixenstine

In November, Shaker Heights residents voted to re-elect Mayor David E. Weiss to a second term. For City Council, voters elected Kim Bixenstine and re-elected Sean Malone, Nancy Moore, and Carmella Williams.

Weiss lists his key priorities as economic development; fiscal stewardship; diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI); attracting and retaining residents; and sustainability. He serves as a member of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority board, the First Suburbs Consortium Executive Committee, and the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party Executive Committee.

Bixenstine, a professional mediator and arbitrator and retired chief compliance officer for University Hospitals, served as vice president of the board of the Shaker Heights Development Corporation and chair of the Fund Development Committee. She served as a citizen member of City Council's Administration Committee.

Malone was re-elected to a third term. He has served as vice mayor and as Council's representative on the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals. He has chaired the City's DEI Committee, and served on Council's Sustainability and Recreation committees.

Moore was re-elected to a sixth term. She has chaired the Tree Advisory Board, the Landmark Commission, and Sustainability Committee, and served as a member of the Finance and Neighborhood and Economic Development committees.

Williams was re-elected to a second term. She has chaired the Neighborhood and Economic Development Committee and served as a member of the DEI, and Safety and Public Works committees, Fair Housing Review Board, and the Forward Together Leadership Team.



Sean Malone



Nancy Moore



Carmella Williams



Earl Williams

Thank You for Your Service

Earl Williams, Jr. was elected to City Council in 2004 and completed five terms of service. He did not seek re-election. Williams served most recently as chair of the Administration Committee, the Board of Appeals, and the Fair Housing Review Board, and as a member of the Finance, Recreation, and Safety and Public Works committees.



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Kudos for City Planning Director and Lee Road Action Plan

The Lee Road Action Plan is already racking up the accolades. In September, the Plan was honored with a 2023 Best Practice Award from the Ohio chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Ohio) and the Innovative Transportation Solutions Award from the Northeast Ohio chapter of Women in Transportation International.

“The Lee Road Action Plan came into existence after two years of planning, including extensive community engagement,” says Shaker’s Planning Director Joyce Braverman. “We are grateful that this project has received so much local support and now state recognition too.”

The Best Practice Award was for the community engagement portion of the Plan. The Innovative Transportation Solutions Award recognizes a major transportation project led by women.

Completed in 2023, the Lee Road Action Plan creates a vision for the comprehensive transformation of Lee Road south of Van Aken Boulevard into a thriving commercial district that is attractive, walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly. The three phases of the Plan’s development each included extensive and robust community engagement with residents in nearby neighborhoods and business and property owners on Lee Road. Some 700 individuals participated via in-person and virtual meetings.

Nearly 2,400 respondents participated in online polls and a survey. Braverman, Principal Planner Kara Hamley O’Donnell, and Director of Economic Development Laura Englehart oversaw the development of the Plan.

APA Ohio also honored Braverman with its President’s Award. This award recognizes the exceptional contributions of an individual to the field of planning.



“I am delighted that Joyce has received this well-deserved recognition,” says Mayor David E. Weiss. “Joyce is not only a wonderful colleague, but a skilled and talented planner and leader of our Planning Department. Her work has left and will continue to leave an indelible mark on the City and position us for a bright future.”

Braverman has been with the City for more than three decades, during which she has guided many of the City’s most important planning processes and projects, including the award-winning Van Aken District and, more recently, the Lee Road Action Plan.



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And the winner is...

City Staff Recognized for Service, Professionalism

Autumn 2023 felt like awards season in Shaker Heights. In addition to the Planning Department staff, City employees in four other departments were recognized.

“The City is the beneficiary of an outstanding staff. I commend their professionalism, vision, and dedication to serving the residents of Shaker Heights,” says Mayor David Weiss.

CAO Chaikin Receives Denihan Award



Chief Administrative Officer
Jeri Chaikin received the 2023 William M. Denihan “Legends of Leadership Award” from the Center for Public and Nonprofit Management at Cleveland State University’s Levin College of Public Affairs and Education.

This annual award is given to a community leader who has made a lifelong contribution to public service, leadership development, and the Levin College’s Leadership Academy.

“Jeri certainly qualifies for this award. Her commitment to public service is unmatched,” says Weiss. “Through leadership positions here in Shaker Heights and previously with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and Cuyahoga County, Jeri has worked tirelessly to promote efficient, effective government for the public good. Here in Shaker, she has helped develop leaders across City departments who are focused on superior response and service delivery.”

A strong supporter and alumna of the Leadership Academy, Chaikin has sponsored several City employees for this program to develop their own leadership skills in the context of public sector service.

The late William Denihan, for whom the award is named, had a distinguished career in public service, holding leadership positions in the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County.

Detective, Firefighter Honored by Rotary

Shaker Heights Police Department Detective Matthew J. Lewis and Shaker Heights Firefighter Lieutenant Joseph Sepesy received the 2022 Police Officer and Firefighter of the Year awards, presented by the Rotary Club of the Heights of Greater Cleveland.

Rotary President Candice Hazelwood and club member John Sobotincic led the awards program. The awards were presented by Rotary members Mark Malin and Ken D’Amato. The awards have been presented in Shaker Heights for 30 years to honor those who embody the Rotary motto of “service above self.”

Police Department Honored for Traffic Safety

AAA East Central presented the Shaker Heights Police Department with its 2023 Community Traffic Safety Platinum Award. Platinum awards are given by AAA to departments that have put forth “outstanding effort” to improve the safety of their communities. Theresa Podguski, director of legislative affairs for AAA East Central, added the recognition was for police departments that had “gone above and beyond their call of duty to make their community a safer place for motorists and residents.”

Financial Reporting Recognized

The City and Finance Director John Potts received the Auditor of State Award with Distinction in recognition of excellence in financial reporting related to the City’s comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year that ended in 2022. Earlier in 2023, the Government Finance Officers Association awarded the City its Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The City earned that recognition for its annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2021.

City, Library, Historical Society Honored

The City, Shaker Heights Public Library, and Shaker Historical Society together were recognized with the 2023 State Historic Preservation Office Award for Public Education and Awareness for the educational efforts associated with the Warrensville West Cemetery Historic Preservation Plan and the cemetery tours that have been conducted over the past five years.

This cemetery is one of Cuyahoga County’s oldest burial sites. Learn more about the preservation plan and download a tour to do on your own at shakeronline.com/cemetery.



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Citizens Police Academy Returns in Spring

As one of only five percent of police departments nationwide to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement

Agencies, the Shaker Heights Police Department adheres to the highest professional standards. But what are those standards? What practices and programs set the SHPD apart?



The Citizens Police Academy offers answers.

This 10-week program sponsored by the Police Department "provides an opportunity for our citizens to get a taste of what we do in law enforcement, and the services we provide to the community," says Police Chief Wayne D. Hudson.

The course, to be offered again this spring, is open to Shaker Heights residents and those who work in the city full-time. Classes are held Thursday evenings from 7-10 pm with all necessary materials provided. There is no fee.

Citizens Police Academy is taught by Shaker Heights police officers, with lectures and field visits to help participants better understand the pressures, complexities, and operations of police work.

Topics covered include community engagement, biased policing, the mental health response program, responding to threats, and the K-9 unit.

"During the last class of the program, participants will be given a survey to discuss their likes and dislikes about the class, as well as offer suggestions on tweaks we can make," says Hudson. "Also, we'll ask if they would consider joining the Shaker Heights Citizens Police Association, and if so, where they would like to serve."

For more information, including the dates of the spring 2024 session, go to shakeronline.com/175/Citizens-Police-Academy or follow the Department's Facebook account at facebook.com/ShakerHeightsPD.

Snow removal reminders

The possibility of snow will be with us for at least a few more months. Here are some reminders about snow removal in Shaker Heights:

CodeRED: Be in the know when snowstorms are headed our way. Sign up to receive severe weather alerts via CodeRED, the County's mass notification system. Learn more at: shakeronline.com/224/Stay-Connected

Streets: The City is responsible for keeping more than 100 miles of roadway cleared of snow. Roads are plowed in this order of priority: main streets, streets around the schools, side streets.

Parking Ban: The snow parking ban takes effect on residential streets when snow exceeds two inches. The law enables plows to clear snow from the streets so that cars and emergency vehicles can move through the city safely and efficiently.

Sidewalks: A City ordinance requires residents to clear sidewalks, including corner property curb ramps, of snow, ice, and slush by 9 am the day after a snowfall. However, if snow on the sidewalks reaches at least six inches, the City will plow after streets are cleared and when crews are available.

Driveways: Homeowners are responsible for clearing their own driveways. Snow removal contractors must be permitted by the Police Department, display the permit, and adhere to guidelines about where snow may be deposited. Please note that City street plowing will result in some snow pushed onto driveway aprons, which homeowners need to clear.

Fire Hydrants: During winter months when the snow and ice pile high, Shaker's 1,500 fire hydrants often are buried. If you are able, please clear snow from around hydrants and avoid shoveling snow on top of them so that fire crews can quickly gain



access during an emergency. However, if fire hydrants are buried in snow and you are unable to dig them out, don't worry! The Shaker Heights Fire Department has detailed maps indicating the specific locations of all hydrants. In the event of a fire where a hydrant is not immediately accessible, each truck is equipped with 700 gallons of water — enough to fight a fire for approximately 10 minutes — while crews simultaneously dig out the closest hydrant.

For additional information, visit shakeronline.com/346/Ice-Snow-Removal



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A Note from Colleen

By Colleen Jackson, Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer

Live ‘Witness to History’ event, Rev. Tutu lecture among scheduled MLK activities

As many longtime residents know, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is woven into the history of Shaker Heights, as he visited the City in 1965 and delivered a variation of his inspirational “American Dream” speech from the steps of Heights Christian Church building (now the East View United Church of Christ). As we approach the 38th anniversary of the observance of the MLK holiday, several special events are scheduled throughout January in Shaker, under the theme The Beloved Community: Civil Rights to Human Rights.

These learning opportunities – to include lectures, a storytelling event, student performances, a study guide, and a youth art exhibition – are made possible through a collaboration among the City’s DEI Committee, the Shaker Heights City School District, Shaker Heights Public Library, and the Shaker Schools Foundation. Mark your calendars for:

- Dr. Donna Whyte, host of the “Witness to History” series of recorded interviews with Shaker residents, will host a live discussion with residents who lived in Shaker during King’s visit, on Sunday, January 14, from 3-5 pm, in the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building at 3450 Lee Road.

- The Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu, daughter of the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, visits Shaker for a special lecture on January 29, 2024 at 7 pm at Shaker Heights High School.

We hope the great variety of events planned will resonate with residents. For details about all MLK-related events in Shaker, go to shaker.org/mlk. To reach me, call 216-491-3201 or email me at colleen.jackson@shakeronline.com.

There are So Many Reasons to SAVE HORSESHOE LAKE

10. Horseshoe Lake is an irreplaceable asset. Once it is gone, it is gone forever.
9. Horseshoe Lake makes our communities more vibrant and has been enjoyed by generations of families.
8. Our residents have said they clearly want to save Horseshoe Lake.
7. It’s a nationally registered historic site and the lakes are an important part of Shaker Heights’ Master Plan.
6. It’s a vital habitat for wildlife and a key migration point for birds.
5. The cost of the Sewer District’s plan to permanently destroy Horseshoe Lake has soared to over \$20 million.
4. Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights are already spending hundreds of thousands of your tax dollars on additional design plans for a “park” that would permanently destroy the lake.
3. The cities admit they have no funding to pay for the millions in costs for this so-called park and now taxpayers could be on the hook for them.
2. The cities have a contractual obligation to maintain and preserve the lake.
1. There is another option that would save the lake – The Horseshoe Lake Restoration Plan. It’s safe, controls stormwater, and costs the same or less than the Sewer District’s plan that destroys the lake.

Our work is not finished.

Please join us at
SaveHorseshoeLake.com

2024 Recycling Events

Find details about what's accepted at the City's annual recycling events at shakeronline.com/recycling-events. All events take place at the Service Center (15600 Chagrin Boulevard).

Computer, Electronics & Small Appliances Roundup

January 6-7, April 13-14 & 20-21,
August 3-4 & 10-11
8 am-4 pm

Community Shredding

April 20, October 19
9 am-1 pm

Habitat for Humanity Restore Collection

August 24
9 am-1 pm

Household Hazardous Waste Roundup

April 27-28, May 4-5,
September 7-8 & 14-15
8 am-4 pm

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Shaker's
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Transitions

Since 2005, veteran journalist Rory O'Connor has edited Shaker Life magazine, turning ideas about Shaker people, programs, history, and homes into compelling articles that tell the story of a community.

A Shaker resident for more than 40 years and father of two Shaker Heights High School graduates, O'Connor has played a key role in producing a publication that reflects Shaker in its beauty and complexity. He brought in a professional advertising manager, John Moore, whose ad sales dramatically reduced the publication's need for public subsidy. And he worked with professional art directors who have taken tremendous care to design the magazine for logical flow and eye appeal, as well as a visual reflection of the unique community that is Shaker.

O'Connor and Moore are stepping down, but leaving Shaker a more connected place. We thank them, wish them all the best, and look forward to bumping into them around town. **SL**



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@makingshakerhome | Leafy accents



@districtgalleryart | Flower power



@bantershaker | Culinary art



@1899socialclub | Decadent indulgence



@inangelascare | Time to make muffins!



@shakerheightsanimalhospital | Good patient



@sgros_barbershop | Different strokes



@northstarcafe | Peanuty goodness



@scorpacciata_ | From scratch



Shaker Heights High School featured on WKYC-Channel 3 and 'TODAY'

The Shaker Heights Schools had the opportunity to shine on the national stage in October when students and staff were featured on the Friday Morning Lights segment on the TODAY show. The morning began with several features on the local WKYC-Channel 3 morning show, where the marching band, the Raiderettes, and cheerleaders performed.

The Channel 3 segments also featured interviews with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner, band director Jason Clemens, Shaker Heights High School marching band member senior Samuel Srivastava, and football team member junior Trey McNutt. The coverage also included a special feature on the District's Stay in the Game! partnership with the Cleveland Browns to promote school attendance.

The Friday Morning Lights segment then featured an interview with head football coach Alex Nicholson and Clemens as well as a live full band performance.



Save the date for January events commemorating MLK

Under the umbrella theme of The Beloved Community: Civil Rights to Human Rights, Shaker Heights City School District, the City of Shaker Heights, the Shaker Heights Public Library, the Shaker Heights PTO, and the Shaker Schools Foundation will host a series of events during January to honor and celebrate the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Join us for:

- Witnessing History: A Panel Discussion on Sunday afternoon, January 14, 3-5 pm, Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building
- Human Library: A Storytelling Event hosted by the Shaker Heights Library on Tuesday, January 16, 5-8 pm, Main Library
- Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu speaking engagement on Monday, January 29, at 7 pm, Shaker Heights High School

For details on these events and others, including times and locations, please visit shaker.org/mlk.

Be sure to follow Shaker Heights Schools on Facebook, X and/or Instagram to join us for in-depth learning opportunities throughout the month.

A Night for the Red & White Comes Home to Shaker

Saturday, March 2, 2024, 7 pm
at Shaker Heights High School



Tickets are now on sale for A Night for the Red & White, the Shaker Schools Foundation's 32nd annual fundraising gala. The High School will be transformed into an elegant event space fit for a night of lively conversation, cocktails, tapas, and dancing. There will also be talented student performances, online silent auction, and two unbelievable raffle packages. The entire community is invited to join us for this fantastic fundraiser. Proceeds from A Night for the Red & White support the Shaker Heights City School District: Every Student. Every Grade. Every School.

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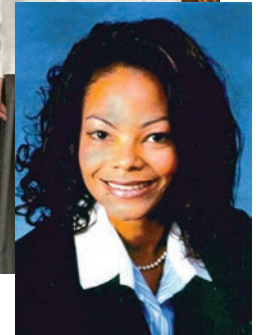
Discounts are available for young alums, staff, and first-time attendees (21 and over, please). For questions, call 216-295-4325, email redandwhite@shaker.org, or



scan this QR code to purchase tickets.



Back Row: Russell Stokes, Michael Jeans, Kevin Clayton, James A. Goldsmith.
Front Row: Heather Hanson, The Honorable Ellen Rippner Cohen, Dr. Ellen McWilliams-Woods.



In Memoriam:
Aisha Fraser

Congratulations to the Shaker Schools Alumni Hall of Fame Class of 2023

In November, eight new inductees were welcomed into the Shaker Schools Alumni 2023 Hall of Fame. The Shaker Schools Foundation hosted a dinner and induction ceremony at the Cleveland Skating Club. The newest class of the Shaker Schools Alumni Hall of Fame includes eight Shaker graduates who have made significant contributions to the fields of K-12 public education, public service, law, advocacy, finance, public health, business, and diversity, equity and inclusion.

Alumni Hall of Fame Class of 2023 Inductees:

- Kevin Clayton, Class of 1977
- The Honorable Ellen Rippner Cohen, Class of 1958
- Aisha Fraser, In Memoriam, Class of 1991
- James A. Goldsmith, Class of 1973
- Heather Hanson, Class of 1995
- Michael Jeans, Class of 1992
- Russell Stokes, Class of 1989
- Ellen McWilliams-Woods, Ph.D., Class of 1980

The eight inductees joined more than 326 graduates inducted into the Hall of Fame since its establishment in 1986. Read full bios at shakerschoolsfoundation.org/hall-of-fame-2023.

Do you know an outstanding Shaker graduate? Complete your 2024 Shaker Schools Alumni Hall of Fame nomination online at shakerschoolsfoundation.org/alumni.

To be considered, alums must be distinguished in their field of endeavor, make significant contributions to the community, and serve as positive role models to current students.

Stay Informed:

For the latest news and information about Shaker Heights Schools, visit shaker.org. Follow us on [Facebook.com/ForShakerSchools](https://www.facebook.com/ForShakerSchools), or post to us on X @ShakerSchools.

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Onaway Elementary School Turns 100!

The last six principals of Onaway Elementary School were on hand October 27 to kick off the school's centennial celebration. Current Principal Dora Bechtel (left) was joined by former principals Rosemary Weltman (second to left), Eric Forman, Amy Davis, Jean Sylak, and Lynn Cowen for a special evening of food, fun, and stories. **SL**

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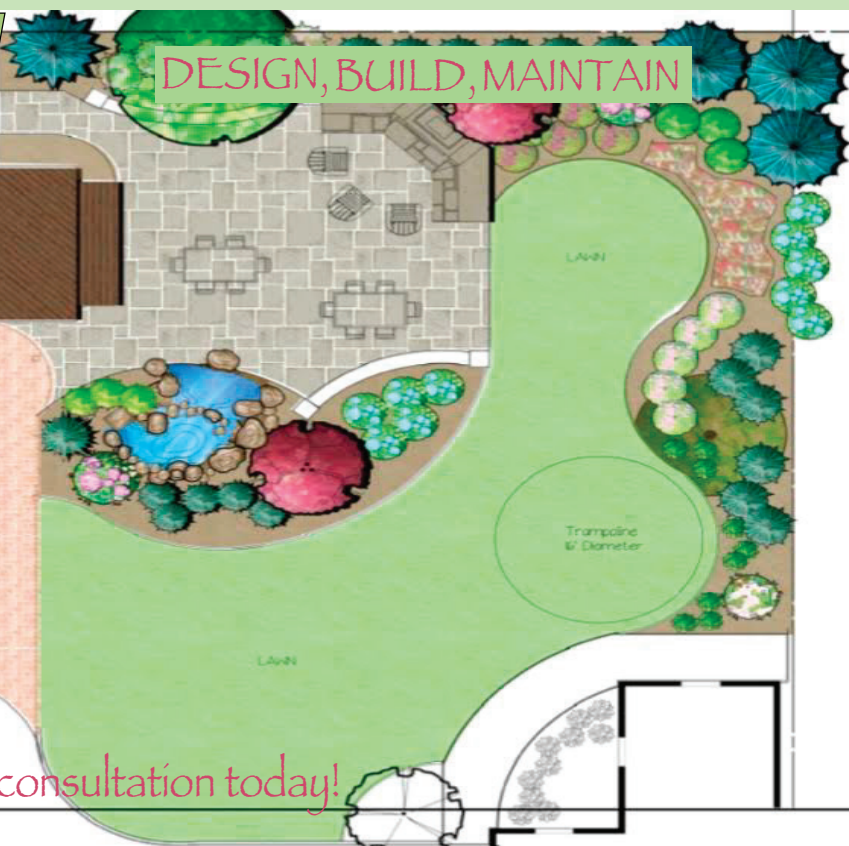
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Shaker Social



Living in Shaker

f Neighbor #1: I thought the rays of light were cool against the backdrop of the old sink that came with our house! **Neighbor #2:** The first thing that came to mind was that your fairy godmother was about to appear. **Neighbor #3:** I've never seen a concrete laundry sink with three bays. Two was pretty common. That's an indestructible utility sink. Never get rid of it! **Neighbor #4:** The sink is indestructible, but the legs are not — they can rust. The concrete sink in my 100-year-old house is supported by a car jack!



Onaway Community Organization

f Neighbor #1: I'd love to meet and maybe jam with (or take lessons from) the mystery Onaway neighborhood guitar player jamming out today at maybe 1 pm-ish somewhere between Southington and Onaway on Huntington or Warrington. My wife and I have heard you before – really awesome playing every time, and sweet electric guitar tone! **Neighbor #2:** Marc Pelletier **Neighbor #3:** Sorry, I may have been a little loud-ish; I try to play when folks are at work. You are welcome to come over sometime. IM me. Thank you for the kind words! **Neighbor #4:** Keep it up, we love it! **Neighbor #1:** No apologies necessary! We open our windows to hear you better while working from home. **Neighbor #2:** These kids and their rock-and-roll!

Living in Shaker

f Neighbor #1: So this happened today, right across the street. Watch the littles. Photo credit goes to my neighbor. **Neighbor #2:** Yep. My chickens are staying locked up in a covered run for the rest of the fall. **Neighbor #3:** I'm right across the street (the "flag house"). The squirrels in my backyard are making jungle animal sounds I've never heard before. I'm pretty sure they are voicing their apprehension towards hawks.

Neighbor #4: I thought he might be a red tailed hawk, his tail had an auburn color. **Neighbor #5:** Gorgeous! **Neighbor #4:** I was driving on Van Aken on Saturday and saw this beautiful creature land, spread its majestic wings, and then appeared to look in a hole (maybe for a chipmunk?). It was spectacular. **Neighbor #2:** I love thinking that they look like they are wearing fluffy pants. **SL**





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The Athletic covers over 1,000 teams across 40-plus leagues, delivering best-in-class reporting and analysis. And if you're looking to make a big purchase, Wirecutter provides independent reviews based on real-world testing.

Visit shakerlibrary.org/nyt to get started.



Shaker Library Contributes Storytelling Event, Art to the City-wide MLK Celebration

As part of the 2024 city-wide celebration of the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Shaker Library will host a Human Library event on Tuesday, Jan. 16 from 5 to 8 pm.

During the Human Library event, real people become books who share their life stories.

The books come from all walks of life and will talk about having been stigmatized or stereotyped due to race, class, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, lifestyle choices, or disability.

Attendees are invited to borrow these human books for conversations. The goal is to challenge stereotypes, promote understanding among diverse individuals, and foster empathy for others. The library welcomes adult readers and teens accompanied by an adult.

The Human Library is a unique opportunity to build a more inclusive and compassionate community through one-on-one dialogues.

Shaker Library will also contribute art created by children and teens to display at the MLK Celebration keynote event with Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu on January 29.

In December, children created paper quilt squares celebrating King's Beloved Community. Teens worked to create a collaborative art piece with local artist Mary Addison-Carter during a series of workshops at Main Library.

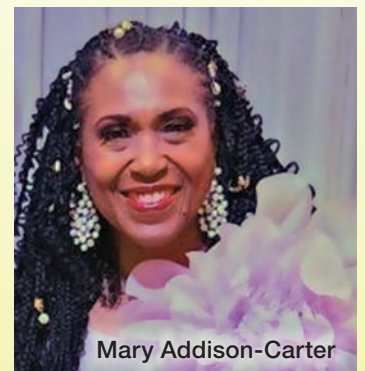
Mary Addison-Carter is a retired art educator who served for 35 years with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

Find more information at shaker.org/MLK.



Stay Informed:

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



Mary Addison-Carter

Shaker Library, SAMS Partner to Run Reimagined Fairy Tales Workshop in February

Shaker Library is proud to partner with Kim Harris of SAMS (Shaker African American Mothers Support) to present a series of workshops to help students in



Kim Harris

grades 4 through 7 reimagine fairy tales from different perspectives.

“The stories children have grown up listening to, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and

the Beanstalk, and others historically lack diversity,” Harris says. “This series will encourage youth to ‘remix’ these well-known stories using a variety of characters from different backgrounds.”

Workshop dates will be on Mondays, February 5, 12, and 19 from 4:30 to 6 pm at Main Library. The series will conclude with a presentation of the participants’ work and art inspired by their imaginations on National Fairy Tale Day, Monday, February 26 at 4:30 pm.

This program is paid for by the Cuyahoga Reads Grant and the Friends of the Shaker Library. Visit shakerlibrary.org/events to learn more.

Friends Pack the Van Donation Drive Set for March 2

Are your bookshelves getting a little packed? The Friends of the Shaker Library (FOSL) can help.

Drive any clean, used books you’d like to donate up to the library van parked at the Bertram Woods Branch on Saturday, March 2, between 10 am and 1 pm. Volunteers will unload them for you (and provide a donation receipt, if needed).

“The Friends wanted to make it as easy and convenient as possible for people looking to donate, especially older folks who may have trouble lifting their donations,” says Lyndsey Brennan, communications and marketing manager at Shaker Library.

All proceeds from donated books sold at our FOSL Spring Book Sale will help cover the cost of programming for all ages, including Summer Reading.

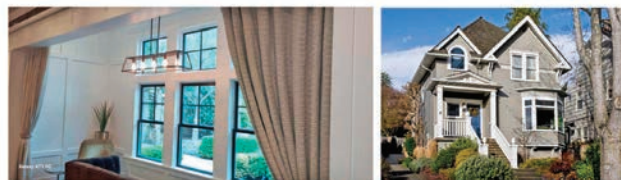
Visit shakerlibrary.org/friends for more information. **SL**

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Bringing the Outside In

**A look at
Shaker Library's
\$3M Bertram Woods
Branch Renovation**

By Lyndsey Brennan
Photography by Robert Muller

There seems to be a good story behind nearly every building in our community, and the Shaker Library Bertram Woods Branch is no different.



In the late 1950s, architects drew up a plan for a branch library, funded in part by the local farm-boy-turned-railroad-engineer, Bertram Woods.

Their plans were quickly derailed, however, when then-director Virginia Robinson (SHHS Class of 1924) took a trip to Menlo Park, California and fell in love with the California ranch-style library there.

She brought back photos and a magazine article about the building, and the architects pivoted, settling on the structure we now have.

"It was really Miss Robinson who was responsible for the design of the building, though I wouldn't want that to get all around town," Robinson overheard one of the architects saying at the branch's dedication ceremony in June 1960.

Opposite page: Upon entering, visitors can immediately connect with staff members at the strategically-placed reference and circulation desks. This page, top: Children play, read, and color in the newly renovated children's room at the Bertram Woods Branch. This page, bottom: Girls play in front of the stained glass window in the children's area.



The branch has had four renovations over the course of its 60-plus year life. The first two added a dedicated children's area, more space for the fiction collection, and a basement.

This most recent renovation, designed by architecture firm Bialosky Cleveland and executed by Turner Construction, was all about preserving what was useful and beautiful about the initial design – and reclaiming space that had been lost in previous renovations.

"We wanted to honor the existing architecture – the high ceilings and the tremendous natural light coming in from the windows – by creating openness and visibility through the space," says Ben Crabtree, the Bialosky senior architect who served as project manager and architectural design lead for the project.

The challenge was opening up lines of sight through the building in a way that didn't compromise the collection, Crabtree says.

Library administrators worked closely with the Bialosky team to devise a shelving plan that would allow for unobscured views of both wings of the building while maintaining the



Above: Library Deputy Director Maureen Brodar leads a tour of the newly renovated building.

Below: Ben Crabtree served as project manager and architectural design lead for the renovation.

wide-ranging collection customers were accustomed to browsing.

"That was something we heard loud and clear from Shaker Heights residents – they don't want to see a library that doesn't have books in it," Crabtree says.

For the look, feel, and function of the space, Bialosky senior interior designer Sandy Tilberg says she wanted to build on the success they'd had in renovating Main Library without replicating it.

"People seemed to love the design approach and fun wall graphics at Main Library, which are about neighborhoods and the Shaker community. But we didn't want Bertram Woods to be a mini-Main Library. We wanted it to have its own identity and personality," says Tilberg, who served as the interior design lead for the project.

Tilberg and her team took inspiration from the branch's wooded location, choosing design features that played well with views of the reading garden and the surrounding neighborhood.

"It's kind of a cheeky play on the name Bertram Woods, who we know is a real person. But the name, in addition to the setting, really gave us some inspiration," she says.

Bertram Woods Branch Manager Lynne Miller has been in her position since 2003 and has become well acquainted with the building over the years.

"The thing I've always loved about Bertram Woods – which has been accented now by lowering the shelves and popping up the ceiling – is the outdoor space. And how the windows bring the outside indoors," says Miller.

"I was talking to someone the other day who said, 'Wow, are those the same windows?' Yes, they are. But they're so much more obvious now – and such a feature, without shelves blocking the way. The building had good bones to begin with, it was just a matter of rediscovering them."

Shaker Library Director Amy Switzer says the board of trustees played a pivotal role in producing the design we have today.

"After they hired Bialosky, they gave guidance to the design team that applied to both branches: They wanted something uniquely Shaker. They wanted the buildings to be open and inviting places for people to gather," Switzer says.

They also gave specific directives for Bertram Woods. "We knew we needed study rooms, because customers were always requesting them. And we knew we needed to reconfigure the meeting room so it was equipped with the right tools for hosting meetings."

The renovation has made the space more efficient for both customers and staff, Miller says. "We have so much more to offer customers now – two study rooms, a passport office, and a meeting room with up-to-date technology. I think people are going to appreciate having access to these features, moving forward."



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Above left: Library Director Amy Switzer, Deputy Director Maureen Brodar, Bertram Woods Branch Manager Lynne Miller, and Communications and Marketing Manager Lyndsey Brennan in the South Reading Room.

Above right: Members of the Walkden family, relatives of Bertram Woods.

Left: Friends of the Shaker Library representatives Joyce Becker and Pat Neville chat with young customers.

Children's Area

In the first hour that Bertram Woods was open to the public on Wednesday, October 11, four children and their caretakers made a beeline to the children's area, without having to stop for directions.

Crabtree says there's a name for what happened there: "the payoff moment" when you walk into a space and "immediately feel a connection with an area."

Right away, the kids began playing. They climbed on the fox- and bear-shaped animal stools. They took turns playing a coloring game on the touch screen. One of the children walked slowly through the stacks, taking it all in, then selected a book and sat down to read it with her caregiver on the window seat.

The \$3 million allocated for the renovation wasn't spent solely on cosmetics, Crabtree says. "There were roofing repairs, a new skylight, and a full replacement of mechanical and electrical systems that will allow this building to keep serving the community for years to come.

"People don't always see that money being spent," he adds, "but it was a critical part of this project."

Entryway

Prior to the renovation, when you entered the building, you were met with bookshelves and a large checkout counter. Now, thanks to strategically-placed reference and circulation desks, visitors can immediately connect with a staff member.

The ceiling above the desks also incorporates acoustic panels, so if someone is speaking with staff about materials or their account, the panels will absorb some of the conversation.

The designers took the opportunity to introduce warm wood tones at each of the desks. "There was plenty of wood in the building before, but it had darker finishes – what you would have seen in the '80s or '90s," Tilberg says.

"We wanted to incorporate some of that texture but do it in a lighter color that brightened the space and fit better with the palette we were using."



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To create the woodland animal art featured on the children's area wall, the Bialosky team brought in Chelsey Finnimore, the firm's graphic designer who won a 2022 American Graphic Design Award for her graphics in the Main Library atrium and children's room.

Finnimore's mural features a deer, a raccoon, bats, birds, and other animals you could find in any Shaker Heights backyard. "That was intentional," Crabtree said. "We wanted the design to be very Shaker-specific and prompt kids to become curious about the nature around them."

The design complements the area's stained-glass window, which resident Lucille Winston donated in 1996 in honor of her parents, who were long-time branch regulars.

South Reading Room

Crabtree's favorite part of the redesign, hands down, is the south reading room.

Prior to the renovation, shelving blocked natural light. Swapping in shorter shelves in the center of the room and relocating taller shelving to the perimeter brightened the space considerably.

Now when you move from the entryway and walk toward the south window, "you get this compression and release – those are the architectural terms for it – that allow the south reading room to feel all the more grand. Like something worth celebrating," Crabtree says.

Then there's the view out the south window: "If you saw that cool view and walked down there but had nowhere to sit, that [design] wouldn't have been successful," he says. "It was really important to us that customers be able to sit with a book in front of that view – that's the experience we wanted to create."

Who Was Bertram Woods?

Not much is known about the farm boy who would become the namesake of Shaker's branch library, but one thing is clear: he knew how to get a ball rolling on a vision.

When he died in 1948, he left a wish in his will that there be a library for people in his farm community to

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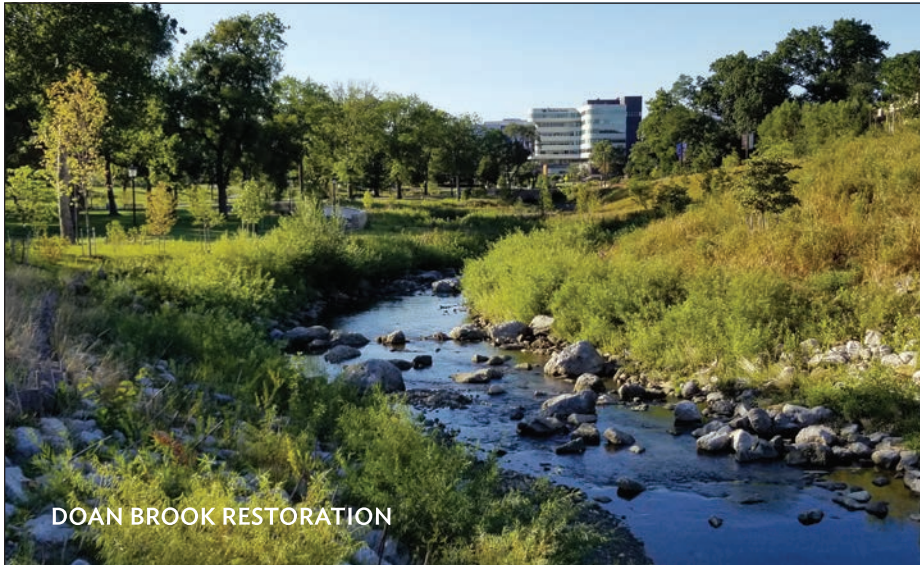
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visit. He also left \$15,000 (roughly \$190,000 in today's dollars) to ensure it happened.

Since Woods didn't name a recipient for the funding, his will wound up in probate court for two years until finally, a judge granted the money to Shaker Library to build a new branch.

Census data and other public records tell us Bertram Woods grew up as one of eight children on a farm at the corner of Warrensville Center Road and Fairmount Boulevard. He worked on the farm until he was 22, then took a job with a railroad as a "fireman" (a person who runs the boiler on a steam engine).

In his 40s, he married a woman named Sadie. They did not have children. After a 47-year career with the railroad, he retired to Florida where, apparently, he never forgot his childhood home. **SL**

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



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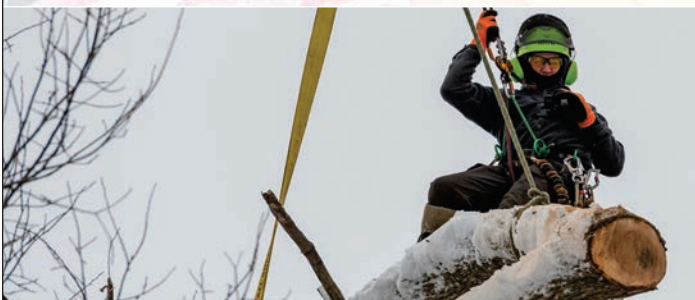
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Donna

Nahley bubbles over with excitement about Shaker Heights' trees, architecture, and the kindness of its community. Most of all, she's thrilled with the 1915 colonial-style house on South Woodland Road that she and her husband Mitch bought just over a year ago.

Its generous windows, abundant light, pleasing layout, and handsome built-ins all drew Donna and Mitch in. Donna, a retired interior designer, delights in every detail, and she just as happily digs into the history of the home as she does into her plans for updates.

The winding road to Shaker Heights Before their move to Shaker, the Nahleys experienced some difficult years. After the death of their beloved adult son Shane, the couple decided to leave Jacksonville, Florida and make a fresh start. They first moved to Colorado, not far from one of Donna's sisters. But both Mitch and Donna suffered from incurable altitude sickness, even after three years and many attempts to address it. It was time to make another move.

The Cleveland area was at the top of the Nahleys' list. Donna grew up in Conneaut, about 70 miles from Shaker

Heights, and her other sister still lives in the area. The Nahleys enjoy the change of seasons, and Donna, retired but still passionate about design, loves historic homes. So when Donna and Mitch traveled to Conneaut in 2021 for a family funeral, they added some extra days to their trip to explore neighborhoods and housing options. In search of beautiful old homes, they headed to the Heights, where they happened to meet realtor Paul Morris at an open house.

He helped the couple set the wheels in motion by locating a rental for them in Cleveland Heights. They would live there while searching for the perfect house to purchase. Paul reached out regularly to share listings as they popped up in a red-hot housing market. Donna had expressed a preference for a Tudor home, or perhaps something with Spanish influence, but Paul called the Nahleys with something else entirely: the South Woodland Road colonial they now own.

Donna says she knew the minute she walked through that this was it. But there were five bidders, and the Nahleys struck out. As luck would have it, the contingent buyer backed out, and the Nahleys got another shot. This time they were successful. Donna, already smitten at first sight, finally got her dream home. Now, her labor of love could begin.



Two mixed media pieces by Chinese-born artist Tony Fey feature three-dimensional images made with delicate thread woven around a network of push pins.



When

the Nahleys bought the house, it had already been updated by the seller, a renovation company that had bought it from the previous long-time owner. While they like most of the updates, Donna has her designer eye on every detail. First and foremost, she wants to honor the house and its history.

Honoring the home's history

Remarkably, all the owners through the years had passed down the home's original blueprints as well as a sheaf of papers with the architects' specifications for details in the home. Mitch noticed that the blueprints show that the home was built in 1915, not in 1912 as county records indicate – a date which is also etched into the historic home plaque by the back door.



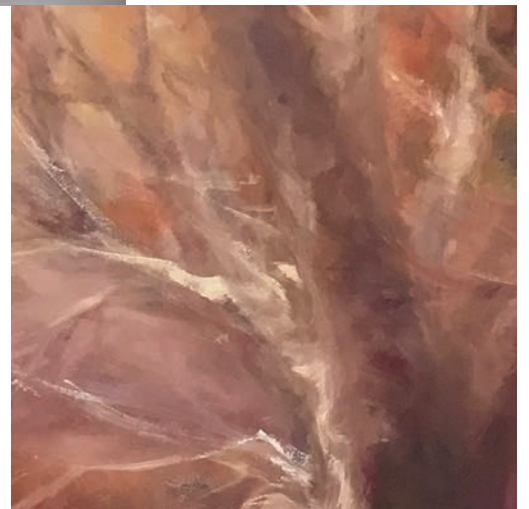


The Nahleys, curious to learn more of the home's history, reached out to Meghan Hays, the local history librarian at Shaker Heights Public Library. She was able to share more information, including the original building card for the house, which confirms the 1915 build date, and information about Meade & Hamilton, the well-respected architects who designed the Nahleys' home. (The house is modest compared to some other Meade & Hamilton projects in Shaker, such as the Marshall Mansion on Lee Road at South Woodland Road.)

Donna intends to incorporate this history into the home. She's planning to scan the blueprints and use the scans as custom wallpaper for the first-floor powder room. She'd also like to get a new historic home plaque from the Shaker Historical Society with the correct date of construction. And she's even thinking about honoring all the home's previous owners with plaques on the wall of the front entry.



Opposite bottom: Donna Nahley intends to convert scans of the house's original blueprints into custom wallpaper for the first-floor powder room. Above: A custom designed mirror by Regina Andrew and an oil painting by French artist S. Lofon, with details left and below.





While Donna Nahley makes each design decision with an eye towards the home's history and architecture, her other eye is on comfort and a personal sense of style.





This page:
The sunroom
features a hexagonal
Theodor Alexander
Company table
with brass details
and hand inlaid
marquetry patterns.
Opposite top right:
Inspired by 18th
century English
design, two Karelian
birch host chairs
by Baker Furniture
grace the study.



Honoring

the home's history is about more than names and dates for Donna, and she has identified many details she wants to change to make them more appropriate for the house.

The design the home deserves A sliding glass door in the kitchen will eventually come out, and in its place the Nahleys will install French doors that echo those on the other side of the house that lead from the sunroom to the broad side porch. Similarly, she plans to eventually add a backyard pergola with a design echoing the trellis-like supports of the side porch.

The backyard, Donna is quick to point out, has a contemporary brick patio that doesn't jibe with the vintage of the home. Instead, she will install sandstone. Mitch points out the sunken area that may have been a backyard pond in past decades, and both express regret about the trees that they had to remove because they were rotting. Right now, it's too cold to do anything in the backyard, but it's not too cold to dream and plan. Donna says this is the year they plan to buy porch furniture and enjoy their spacious porch in the warm months.

Donna is overflowing with ideas – here in the kitchen, she'll fix the grout, change the light fixture, and expose some original brick and, there in the living spaces, she'll swap out the rug, add blinds, repair window glazing, and update some of the furniture and paint. Always, she frames her ideas in terms of what the house deserves.

Donna clearly enjoys exercising her creativity. She hasn't always had time to focus on her own home like this. Before she retired, she would typically work 10-12 hours a day caring for her own clients and working at Arhaus as a designer in Jacksonville. Now, she can enjoy the process for herself in her own home – and without the exhaustion of long hours.





While

Donna makes each design decision with an eye towards the home's history and architecture, her other eye is on comfort and a personal sense of style.

Creating a respite

"If you've had a bad day, this is where you want to feel rested and rejuvenated," she says, and this plays into her decisions about fabrics, seating, lighting, decorative items, and, especially, art. Over the years, the Nahleys have collected art that's meaningful to them, and it's traveled from home to home with them even as other furnishings have changed.

Whether it's finding someone to hang that art, or looking for contractors who understand historic homes, Donna marvels at the friendly and helpful people she's working with in Shaker. She mentions District Arts Gallery in the Van Aken District and bldc design studio on Warrensville

Center Road as both being particularly generous and down-to-earth with suggestions and resources.

The Nahleys moved to Shaker Heights for a beautiful home and neighborhood, but the cherry on top has been the community they've found.

"I'm not exaggerating, the people here are amazing," says Donna, praising the kindness of the community, the warm welcome she and Mitch got from their neighbors, and the new friends they're making here. "I'm just astounded at the people around here.

"I couldn't be happier here. I just love this house, and I have so many ideas for it." **SL**

Note: If you find original house plans in your home and you're wondering how to care for them, or if you'd like to learn more about the history of your home, contact Meghan Hays, the local history librarian at Shaker Library. Email her at localhistory@shakerlibrary.org or call 216-367-3016.

A photograph taken from a white porch, looking out onto a lush green lawn and trees. The porch has a white railing with a decorative pattern. In the foreground, there are pink flowers. The background shows a large tree and a house with a white porch. The sky is blue.

The Nahleys moved to Shaker Heights for a beautiful home and neighborhood, but the cherry on top has been the community they've found.

A Magical Place

Susan Oguche fell in love with public relations in college. Now the self-declared “nerd” is the chief communications officer for Rock Entertainment Group.

By Sharon Broussard | Photography by Jason Miller

Purpose. Community engagement. Personal and professional growth.

Those are the touchstones in the nearly 20-year communications career of Susan Oguche, who last year became the executive vice president and chief communications officer for the Cleveland Cavaliers, Rock Entertainment Group, and the Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse.

“For me, purpose is my biggest thread – and contributing and learning, entering spaces that stretch and challenge me,” says Oguche, who has worked for Cincinnati-based Procter & Gamble, the health tech giant Abbott, and Nike, Inc.

The new Shaker resident has been able to do all that and more during her first year at the communications helm for Rock Entertainment Group, the umbrella for Cleveland Cavaliers owner Dan Gilbert’s sports and entertainment companies.

During a tour of Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse, which includes Cleveland Cavaliers’ arena and corporate offices, we watched as employees carefully laid down the basketball floor like a huge jigsaw puzzle. Underneath the flooring is an ice rink for the ice hockey team, the Monsters, which also plays at the arena.

In addition to the Cavaliers and the Monsters, Oguche and her communications team of 10 are also responsible for the Cleveland Charge, an NBA affiliate basketball team formerly known as the Canton Charge, the Legion Gaming Club (an esports team), and myriad events at the Fieldhouse.



Cleveland Cavaliers Basketball

Auto

Auto Auto Auto Auto Auto

Auto

A higher purpose

On Cleveland Cavaliers' game night, you can find Oguche, a passionate basketball fan, sitting with the media – "just in case I am needed" – or roaming the arena, greeting people because she is in "an introductory phase," she says with a laugh.

The Fieldhouse has something happening "200 days a year," including weddings. But the married mother of two, who just bought a home in Shaker, came to Rock Entertainment for a bigger reason.

"Honestly, what sold it were my initial conversations with Nic Barlage, who is also a Shaker Heights resident," she says. Barlage is CEO of the Cleveland Cavaliers, Rock Entertainment Group, and Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse.

"Nic started talking about the role that our team has in the community and the way he saw our arena as a community asset, how he saw the organization as important community champions," says Oguche. Her career has "always been trying to work with organizations that have a higher purpose."

It's apparent that Rock Entertainment is a great match for her. Barlage says Rock Entertainment is doing more than just counting "wins and losses." It's also helping to make the Cleveland area a better place, a message straight from owner Dan Gilbert.

Since she started in 2022, Oguche has been all in, doing everything from serving as a board member of Providence House, Cleveland's crisis nursery, to meeting people in the community and telling the company's story, says Barlage.

"I think she's great," he says. "She has a positive attitude, a can-do attitude. We have this saying, 'Yes before no,' and she absolutely embodies that. She's been a ball of energy for us in a great way."

"Soul work"

And Oguche hasn't been disappointed in Rock Entertainment. She's proud that the company's second annual Wine and Gold Gala recently raised \$1 million to support nonprofits and programs for Northeast Ohio youth. She eagerly talks about Hoops After Dark, a program sponsored by Rock Entertainment and the City of Cleveland that strives to prevent crime by keeping basketball-loving teenagers off the streets. "Our North Star is to be a force for good in the region," she says of her company.

And she likes to be hands-on. It's why she became a Providence House board member. The agency, which offers short-term care for the children of struggling parents, partners with the Cleveland Cavaliers and other sports teams, says Natalie Leek, the president and CEO of Providence House, who was pleased to get a phone call from Oguche asking if she could serve on the board.

Oguche calls it "soul work."

"I feel like I'm joining Providence House at such an important time as well because it has historically been focused on Cleveland's West Side and now they're like five minutes from my house in Shaker with their new Buckeye neighborhood location," she says. "So the proximity of that and the opportunities that open up to rally my neighbors and my friends around this mission, I think are really important as well."

"She has such an interesting background in her own career path," says Leek, who points to Oguche's public relations work at Procter & Gamble, which sells diapers among other products, and Abbott, known for its infant formula. "It's providence that she ended up in Providence House."

It's providence in a lot of ways. Oguche, who spent her teen years in Cincinnati, never thought she would be in public relations. She was born in Nigeria to Aaron Isa Baba, a chemist, and Pauline Ann Baba, a computer scientist. The family immigrated to the United States so her father could get a doctorate in chemistry. The Babas lived in Louisiana, New Jersey, and Alabama as Aaron followed his dream. When her father became a chemistry professor at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Oguche attended Reading Junior Senior High School in Reading, Ohio and graduated from Ohio State University with a BS in marketing.

She loved to write. She was an avid participant in the Power of the Pen writing contest and the editor of the Devil's Advocate student newspaper at Reading High. In college, she took business and professional writing classes and considered becoming a journalist.

Yet it wasn't until her last year as a summer intern at Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati that she discovered her true love – public relations. "I was like, 'What is this magical place?' It was what I had always been looking for. It was marketing in that you're promoting a product or a good or a service, and I also got to write and work with journalists. I got to tell the story of the brand."



The hard works pays off

Procter & Gamble hired her after college. She worked on a number of different accounts in Ohio and Boston including Mr. Clean Magic Eraser, which, she points out with a laugh, is “literally a block of melamine foam. How do you romance a product like that? How do you tell a story around that? So it was fun. It was challenging.”

Her hard work at the company did not go unnoticed. She won numerous public relations awards during her 11 years there. Phillip Sontag, who has held senior positions at some of the world’s best known PR firms, and who knew Oguche at P&G during her early career days, says he is not surprised by her success. First of all, P&G is a great training ground for young people in the communications field and secondly, he knew that Oguche would just soak it up.

“She always came across as very poised, very bright,” says Sontag. “I always thought to myself that this is a young woman who will go far in her career.”

After Procter & Gamble, Oguche worked in public affairs for Abbott handling communications for the health tech giant’s infant formula division, and later at a startup in Chicago where she built a communications team. When the startup was sold, she moved to Sleep Number, the “smart” mattress company in Minneapolis.

In January, 2020, she accepted a job at Nike, Inc. in Portland, Oregon because she wanted to work at a global retail company. It was a huge challenge because the store had 45,000 retail employees in dozens of countries, but she says, “I’m always trying to find that balance of where I can learn a new skill, a new industry, and where I can be useful.”

The COVID-19 pandemic hit just three months later. Nike closed stores as employees became sick and it had to operate under different, often confusing masking and quarantine regulations. This made communicating the rules to employees a challenge. Still, the company managed to open one of its flagship stores in Paris, the Nike House of Innovation, during the pandemic. While she handled the communications for the new store, she didn’t get a chance to see it until this summer when her family went to France on vacation.

“It was a horrible time for the world,” she says about the pandemic. “It’s crazy to think that that was just a few years ago, but in terms of being able to flex different muscles and understand the business of communication in a different way, it was really a meaningful learning experience.”

By the time Oguche landed at Rock Entertainment, she had a lengthy resume – and experience in the world of basketball. The self-declared nerd knew all about the game, thanks to her husband’s nonprofit, Crown Elite Sports, which helps develop the next generation of basketball players in Nigeria. Her husband, Hanson Oguche, used to play for the Nigerian national basketball team. His nonprofit holds tournaments in Nigeria in an effort to popularize the game.

Oguche started out as just the “press release writer” for her husband’s project but “I developed my own passion for basketball. So when this opportunity at Rock Entertainment came it felt like a natural next step.”



Because it’s beautiful

Falling in love with the tree-lined streets of Shaker Heights after living in leafy green Portland was another natural step, says Oguche, who is the mother of two daughters, Abigail, 7, and Grace, 2. “It’s so beautiful here and the old homes have such beautiful architecture.”

Inventory was tight in Shaker, but she was able to find a house thanks to real estate agent Kim Price, a long-time Cincinnati friend who insisted Shaker was the perfect city for Oguche.

And it has been perfect, says Oguche. “I feel blessed that we get to be here. We didn’t sacrifice the things that are important to us like diversity and being able to have neighbors that invite us over for dinner and ring the doorbell and ask if the girls can come over and play.”

Her goal is to get her mother and little brother, who will graduate from high school soon in Portland, to move to Shaker. Her father died recently.

“We want to make sure that he’s able to finish strong without too much transition,” Oguche says about her brother. “But I’m like, as soon as he’s done, you got to come on over here because it’s beautiful.” **SL**





Shaker
Heights
Schools

Building Connections Through a Common Language

The District's commitment to provide high-quality instruction to its numerous international students means that they master English, the passport to academic success.

By Scott Stephens | Photography by Gus Chan

Enter Jill Damore's peaceful, second-floor classroom at Boulevard Elementary School and you'll hear the language of love.

A poster near the door welcomes visitors in 15 foreign tongues. A kaleidoscope of flags adorns the walls. Every nook and cranny is filled with children's reading books and other learning materials. A stack of well-worn table-top games crowds the closet shelves.

Damore, one of the Shaker Heights City School District's five English-language instructors, sits at a table with a Taiwanese second-grader. He has chosen "Animalia," a popular picture book by author Graeme Base, for today's session. Damore reads softly to the little boy.

"Lions lounging in the local library," she says. "Juggling jugs of jelly. See how that sounds? That's called alliteration."

This school year, the District has 49 international students who bring a dizzying array of home languages: Kannada, Chinese, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, Tigrinya, Vietnamese, Urdu, Turkish, Japanese, Punjabi and Bengali. Ohio is home to some 60,000 English-language learners. While Spanish is the home language for 40 percent of those youngsters, schools across the state deal with 90 other languages ranging from Swahili to Pennsylvania Dutch.





Students in the English Language Learners program develop their skills individually or in a small group with their instructor. Using research-based strategies, the program addresses each student's needs while supporting the learning taking place in their other classes. It's not uncommon for a student who speaks little or no English in August to be talking up a storm by winter break, some to the point where families become concerned about the child remembering their home language, Damore says.

The commitment to provide high-quality instruction to international students dates back to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which spells out the obligation of public schools to ensure access to and engagement in high-level activities that include early learning, K-12, and career-technical education programs. Translated, that more often than not means mastering English, the passport to success in math, science, and other subjects.

Serving international students also means providing families a soft landing in a new and sometimes confusing home. Damore and her colleagues stage a variety of social and informational events for international families, including a large potluck dinner at the Middle School. Equally popular is the International Families Activity Night, which includes bingo, board games, crafts, and snacks. The international festival at Lomond Elementary School includes an art walk and musical performances by students.



Jill Damore

“I try to draw from the international families,” Damore says. “They bring a different perspective that we all benefit from. It’s something we can harness and use to our advantage.”

Boulevard’s international flavor

While international students are sprinkled throughout the District, Boulevard – either by accident or design – has evolved into a magnet for families arriving from abroad. It’s been that way for decades.

Much of it has to do with Damore and her teaching partner, Monica Triozzi, who splits her time between Boulevard and Fernway Elementary schools. And, says Principal Neal Robinson, “A lot of it has to do with the fact that we’re an International Baccalaureate school in close proximity to Case Western Reserve University, the Cleveland Clinic, and University Hospitals, where a lot of families come to study and work. Monica and Jill give our international families an extra layer of welcome.”

The proximity and reputation of Boulevard are what attracted families such as Piet Hagenaaars and Tammy Rupnik to Shaker Heights. Hagenaaars, who retired as an officer in the Royal Netherlands Army after 38 years, was happy to move to the United States when a position opened for his wife, Tammy Rupnik, at Philips Healthcare in Cleveland. The couple has four children: Alexandra (Grade 1) and Elliana (Grade 3) are at Boulevard; Isabella (Grade 11) and Johannes (Grade 9) are at the High School.

The family settled in Shaker Heights last year. Rupnik, an alumna of Case Western Reserve University, had some familiarity with Shaker Heights and the District’s International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme, one of only eight programs in North America offering IB in grades Pre-K to 12. Shaker is recognized as a leader and model for schools around the world in promoting equity and access to the IB framework and philosophy, which feature a rigorous curriculum and a global focus, and emphasize creative problem-solving, hands-on projects, inquiry-based learning, and community service.



Piet Hagenaaars and Tammy Rupnik

The family settled in Shaker Heights last year. Rupnik, an alumna of Case Western Reserve University, had some familiarity with Shaker Heights and the District’s International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme, one of only eight programs in North America offering IB in grades Pre-K to 12. Shaker is recognized as a leader and model for schools around the world in promoting equity and access to the IB framework and philosophy, which feature a rigorous curriculum and a global focus, and emphasize creative problem-solving, hands-on projects, inquiry-based learning, and community service.



"One of the primary drivers to us was IB," Rupnik says. "The kids were in an IB school in the Netherlands. We wanted them to continue school in an international environment. We even restricted our viewing of houses to the Boulevard area."

The family jumped right in, bringing stroopwafels – a waffle-like cookie popular in the Netherlands – to the international potluck, and meeting families from across the globe. Still, there are challenges. The ubiquitous nature of cell phones came as a surprise, as did the American system of interscholastic sports. In the Netherlands, athletic teams are tiered, allowing all children a chance to compete at their skill levels. The importance of homework, unusual in the Netherlands, was also a surprise.

"When we told the children we're moving to the U.S., they found a good video to watch on the plane and I thought, 'Problem solved,'" Hagens says. "Of course, it wasn't that easy. I underestimated the impact of an international move to kids, and ours are fluent in English."

The family soon found they were not alone. Their son has a German teammate on his soccer team, and a French student in a class. Their neighbors across the street are from Spain. After two weeks in Shaker Heights, they were invited to a bar mitzvah.

While the public schools provide an important touchstone for international students and families, they are not the only resource. For years, the Shaker Heights Public Library has offered English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes that provide language tutoring

for new residents as well as help in acclimating to their new lives in Shaker Heights. The recruiting and training of tutors have been turned over to Cuyahoga Community College's Aspire Greater Cleveland, which offers free high school equivalency diplomas, basic reading, ESOL, and U.S. citizenship classes for adult learners.

Building those kinds of connections is vital, Damore says, and is central to the District's diversity, equity, and inclusion work as outlined in the District's Strategic Plan. "They are a marginalized group," she says of international families.

At Boulevard, Damore serves as the Family and Community Engagement liaison. The school is in its third year as a member of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), the only school in the District that is part of the organization. Established at Johns Hopkins University in 1996, NNPS invites schools, districts, states, and organizations to join together and use research-based approaches to organize and sustain excellent programs of family and community engagement that will increase student success in school. As part of that work, Damore has assembled an action team of parents to help enhance family engagement.

"I try to draw from the international families," she says. "They bring a different perspective that we all benefit from. It's something we can harness and use to our advantage." **SL**

Scott Stephens is Executive Director of Communications and Engagement for the Shaker Heights City School District.

Things To Do



Skating:

Go Figure!

Photography by Jason Miller

It might seem counterintuitive, but a good way to shake off the winter doldrums is by attending the Ohio High School Figure Skating Championships in February.

The Shaker Figure Skating Club is host to the event, held at the club's home at the Thornton Park Ice Arena.

The SFSC is one of the largest U.S. Figure Skating-affiliated clubs in the state of Ohio. The club received its 50-year plaque last year from the U.S. Figure Skating Association.

"We have a diverse membership from all over the Greater Cleveland area and offer activities for skaters of all ages and levels," says club president Angela Robinson. "We are dedicated to providing a community for growth and excellence for all disciplines within the sport of figure skating."

Pictured here are young skaters participating in training sessions called the Bronze Clinic. The program is designed for the skater who is working on fundamentals, from Pre-Preliminary to Pre-Bronze figure skating skills. **SL**



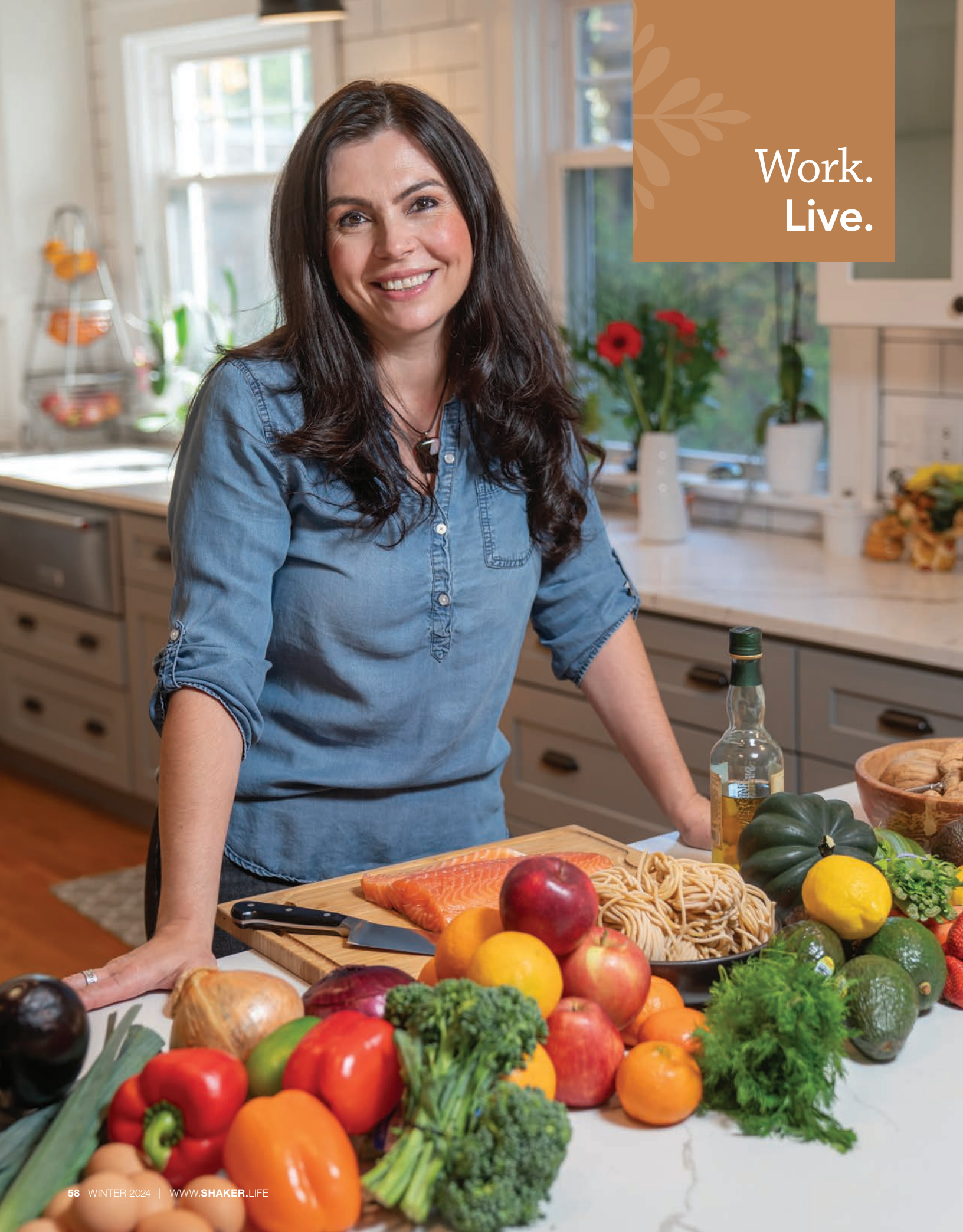
Top: Young skaters preparing for a "stroking" exercise
Bottom: Lorena Tovanche



Left: Eliana Hodgson
Right: Julia Robinson and Garrett Resnick
Below: Instructor Libby Treu with her charges



For information about the Ohio High School Figure Skating Championships, and how to enroll in the Shaker Figure Skating Club, go to shakerfsc.org.



Work.
Live.

A Good Meal is Easy to Find

By Sharon Holbrook
Photography by Robert Muller

Who:

Jonida Preka Morelli

Where:

Boulevard Neighborhood

Business:

Tricks in the Kitchen, offering low-effort, healthy, pantry-to-table recipes and other ideas to simplify your time in the kitchen.

Mission:

My mission is to simplify your culinary journey so you can spend less time working on a meal and more time enjoying it. Whether you struggle with dinner ideas, need help with healthy meal plans, seek personalized guidance, or are looking for other tricks to reduce your preparation time, I'm here for you.

What I Love About My Work:

A good meal can completely shape the course of my day. When I can use ingredients from my fridge and pantry to craft a well-balanced meal, it fills me with a profound sense of achievement and contentment. I love sharing that with others.



Personal Background:

I was born and raised in Albania and moved to Cleveland with my parents my senior year of high school. I was born in the midst of communism and spent my youth in years of chaos and civil war. Starting at age seven, I became a classically trained pianist through the conservatory of music in Albania. The nine hours of practicing a day instilled a strong work ethic in me.

Despite the limited availability of food in my homeland, I developed a strong passion for cooking at a young age, figuring out how to create tasty meals with whatever was available.

When I came to the United States, financial resources were limited so I worked weekends in restaurants, always keeping an eye on the kitchen and what was being prepared. I attended Baldwin Wallace College, majoring in piano performance and international business. I began teaching piano in Shaker Heights as a college student in 1998 and have taught ever since.

My husband Matt and I have lived in Shaker since 2003. We started out in the Fernway neighborhood and moved to the Boulevard neighborhood in 2010. We have three kids, Matteo (16), Nico (14), and Nini (12), who are the best food critics. We have a dog, Zeus, and two cats, Harry and Flash.



In summer 2022, my son Matteo and I began watching the MasterChef cooking competition show. In the midst of the first episode, he paused it and said, "Mom, you would be amazing on this show. I think you should apply." A few weeks later, I was contacted by MasterChef and began a rigorous application process that lasted over six months. It was an honor getting picked out of thousands of contestants and making it through the competition to the top 10 for the Midwest region.

I was able to do all this thanks to my husband, my kids, and our family, but also my friends and neighbors in Shaker who were my support system. They did everything from meals (there was a cooler placed by the front door for the rotating meal deliveries from them) to picking up kids.

On Working and Living in Shaker Heights:

Shaker Heights is home. I don't take for granted the community and lifelong friends I have here. To be an immigrant and leave home is tough, but to find a new community that embraces you with incredible people and build a new home thousands of miles away is a gift.

I am so happy we are raising our kids here. Their childhood is full of memories of playing outside with friends and neighbors and being out late until mom calls them home. Having our kids in many community sports organizations like the Shaker Youth Soccer Association has created bonding experiences not only for our kids but also for Matt and me.

My favorite grocery store is Heinen's, and not just for the food. It's also an opportunity to see friends, the employees, and neighbors I haven't seen in a while. (That's why my kids and husband don't like to go with me – it takes me double the time to get out of there.)

I love Van Aken District and all its exciting food options. We spend a lot of time there – getting ice cream at Mitchell's, eating everywhere from the Market Hall to the Rice Shop, shopping at Luster, SLFMKR, and more. My boys love Principle Barbershop, and I always make sure to stop in at Stump and Nature's Oasis.

Needless to say, I am proud to call Shaker Heights my home.

Contact:

Email: trixinthekitchen@gmail.com

Instagram: [tricksinthekitchen](#)

Facebook: [Tricks in the Kitchen **SL**](#)



Scene in Shaker



Run, Then Walk



By Sue Starrett | Photography by Robert Muller

Tyrone Brown is a 70-year-old runner. The “running” actually began in Brown’s South Moreland neighborhood after the birth of his first child, a son, in 1984. “I needed to keep up with him,” he laughs, along with his younger brother who arrived a few years later.

His first competitive race was the 1985 Revco 10K, which he continued running for 20 consecutive years. He now runs for health and fitness – and for good causes. He’s participated in 5K, 10K, and half-marathon races for beneficiaries ranging from the Red Cross, Cleveland Clinic Transplant House, and American Heart Association to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame 5K and the Shaker Lakes Hike and Run. He often finishes in one of the top three positions for his age group. “There are very few streets I haven’t run on.”

To commemorate his extensive race history and show love for his two grandsons, Brown recently commissioned a local needleworker to make a queen-sized quilt out of 48 of his many race shirts. He plans to have her create at least two more, though three such quilts hardly will make a dent in Brown’s vast collection of memorabilia. Some of his trophies, medals, and other artifacts from 38 years of racing are on display in his home, while others are stored in boxes.

Brown grew up near the Cleveland Clinic. His childhood mentor was Lawrence Nichols, who engaged the neighborhood kids in a variety of projects. (Alexandria Nichols, Shaker’s recreation director, is Nichols’s daughter.) As a teenager, he worked as a busser for Holiday Inn to earn tuition for high school and college.

After studies at The Ohio State University, Brown was a computer operator for ADP in Cincinnati. He moved to Shaker Heights in 1978 and worked for the Cuyahoga County court system for 30 years, retiring at the age of 53. For the past three decades he has been manager of two Shaker Heights apartment buildings.

Brown’s other pastime is dancing, specifically Chicago-style Steppin’, which involves a lot of spinning and dipping. (YouTube is full of instructional videos.) He hosts and attends dance events in Northeast Ohio, and is a member of a national network. Not surprisingly, he also registers for races when he is steppin’ out of state. His 2024 calendar already includes events in Tampa and Atlanta.

He eats a healthy diet and drinks a lot of water. Occasionally he indulges in a hamburger or a glass of wine, but he avoids dairy. He’s never had a cup of coffee or smoked

a cigarette. He takes vitamins and has had no significant injuries – thanks in large part, he feels, to his favorite Nike running shoes. “I sure have saved a lot of money over the years,” Brown says, “and I sleep really well at night.”

He believes physical activity is good not only for his body, but his brain and soul. His response to the pandemic? Run. In fact, the only conditions that prevent him from his routine are rain – particularly on uneven and hilly terrain – and wind chills of 20 degrees and below. From the ages of 31 to 68, he completed five miles nearly every day. Two years ago, he decided to run between three and five miles on alternate days; this schedule includes meeting his goal of participating in at least one race every weekend.

The baby who inspired his father to start running, Marco Brown, graduated from Shaker Heights High School in 2002, followed by his brother Jermaine two years later. Jermaine lives in Mentor and is the father of two sons, and Marco lives in Las Vegas. When his father visits, he includes a race or two in his schedule.

“I plan to run until I can’t run anymore,” Brown says, “Then I’ll walk.” **SL**



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