SHAKER LIFE

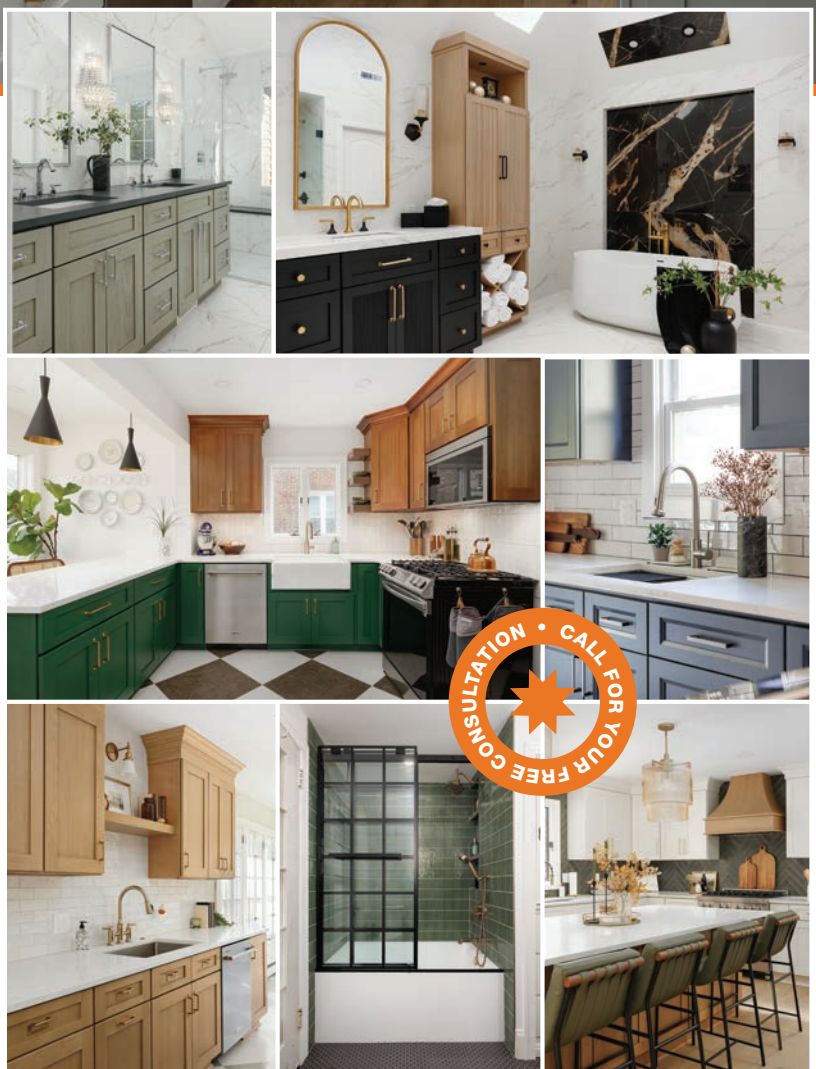


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SUMMER 2026



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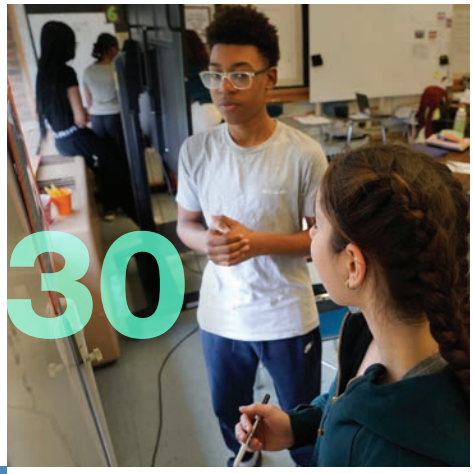
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Excellence for All

Shaker Heights Schools support diverse learners in high-quality, inclusive classrooms.



Running on Sunshine

Around the City, in residential, municipal, and community buildings, solar panels are becoming more and more common.



A Labor of Love and of Tribute

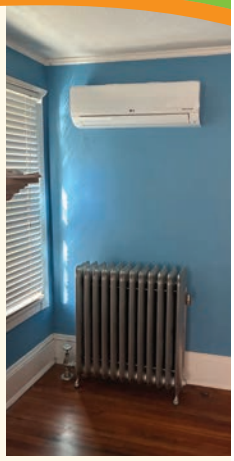
Behind every oak tree plaque on the nine-mile long Liberty Row memorial is a personal story of a World War I soldier.

ON THE COVER (left to right) Chris Kerr, St. Dominic parishioner; Liz Woconish, Director of Religious Education at St. Dominic; Jeff Campbell, Director of the Catholic Commission of Summit County

Photo by Robert Muller

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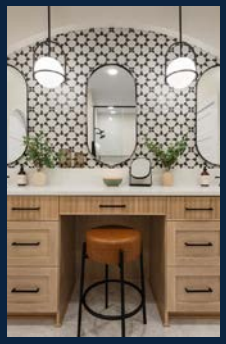
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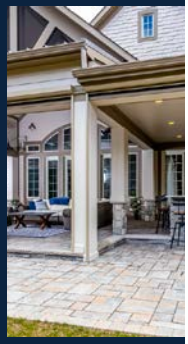
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SHAKER LIFE

SUMMER 2026 | VOLUME 45 | ISSUE 3

3400 Lee Road, Shaker Heights, OH 44120

WEBSITES: shaker.life | shakerheightsoh.gov

EMAIL: shaker.mag@shakerheightsoh.gov

VOICE MAIL: 216.491.1459

TTY: 216.491.3161

PUBLISHER
Ann McGuire

EDITOR
Susan Iler

ART DIRECTOR
Karen Myers

SHAKER LIBRARY COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
Lyndsey Brennan

SHAKER SCHOOLS EDITORIAL ADVISOR
Kristen Miller

ADVERTISING MANAGER
Lonnie Gronek: 216.721.0200
lgronek@livepub.com

ADVERTISING SALES REPRESENTATIVE
Rebecca Wong: 216.752.3059

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Sharon Broussard, Sharon Holbrook, Zachary Lewis, Nate Paige

SUBMISSIONS AND COMMENTS

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Christine Vegh: 216.491.1419
christine.vegh@shakerheightsoh.gov

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Browse the Archives



Library Director is Listening and Leading

Spring 2023

Amy Switzer was appointed the eighth director of Shaker Library in October 2016. Her commitment to customer-focused services has included enhancing the library's physical spaces and its outreach to the community it serves.



Boomerang Kids Make a Comeback

Summer 2024

These Shaker Heights High School graduates lived and worked in great cities. But they couldn't stay away from Shaker Heights. Drawn by family, community, and a yearning to recreate their own childhoods, these one-time Shakerites decided to boomerang and raise their children in Shaker.



Composting Made Easy with Rust Belt Riders

Fall 2025

Launched on Earth Day 2025, Shaker's unique partnership with Rust Belt Riders opens up a city-wide composting resource in each neighborhood. "The most important thing that made us bring composting to the City was the people of Shaker Heights," says Zoe Apisdorf, the company's hauling operations scope leader.

Shaker City News





Meet the Lee Road Muralists

July 29 Gallery Show, Artist Talk at Main Library is Followed by Mural Dedication

The City's newest works of public art, the new Lee Road murals, will be celebrated and dedicated on Wednesday, evening, July 29, and the public is invited.

Residents are invited to meet the muralists for an artist talk and gallery show opening at Shaker Main Library at 6pm. Artists Roni Callahan and Kim Lavery, who together run Snack Break Studio, and Darius Steward, who teaches art at Laurel School, will discuss their work, on view on the library's second level.

Following that, residents are invited to stroll (or drive) to a 7pm dedication of the recently installed murals at 3649 and 3705 Lee Road. In case of inclement weather, the artist talk/gallery opening will go on and the dedication will be postponed. The gallery show will be on display through Labor Day.

The Lee Road Action Plan, adopted by City Council in 2023, calls for public investment in projects that generate excitement in the district, including public art.

In 2025, the City released an open call for mural artists and received 28 portfolios for review by the City's Public Art Task Force. The design process included the selected artists meeting with neighborhood residents and business owners to ensure the art would reflect the neighborhood's rich history, unique culture, diverse people, and values.

The Lee Road murals were made possible in part by an Arts Rise grant from the Ohio Arts Council.

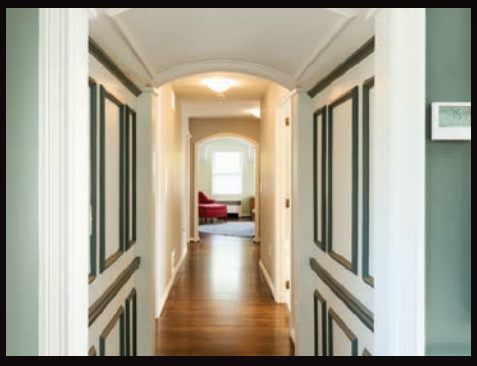
Background information is available at shakerheightsoh.gov/LeeMurals.

Ohio Arts Council

To register for the gallery opening and artist talk, please go to events.shakerlibrary.org/event/16660926 or use this QR code.

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Note from Colleen:

C&E Expands with Community Services Connections Coordinator Position

By Colleen Jackson, Chief Culture and Engagement Officer

Hello Shaker!

I'm pleased to announce the hiring of Grayson Henry, who will serve as the City's Community Services Connections Coordinator (CSCC). His start date was May 4.

This position is designed to bring a human services component to the work of the Culture & Engagement Office and the City in general.

There are unmet needs that pop up for some Shaker residents, but before Henry's hire, there was no one to connect residents with organizations that can be of help. The CSCC can identify some of the most prevalent needs of Shaker residents and connect them to the appropriate organizations.

We're not providing support so much as connecting residents to support that is already available.

This position will also help create greater awareness of the services the City does provide for residents – especially those aging in place – to promote utilization of those services.

Chief Administrative Officer Matt Carroll provided the vision for this position, as it aligns with our commitment to equity in our community. As we have been building out this department and learning how best it can function, we have remained mindful of our City Values (see shakerheightsoh.gov/769).

Shaker Heights is not inundated with residents requesting services, but during last year's interruption of federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, we learned that a substantial number of residents receive these crucial benefits. It was an emergency for these community members, and we came to realize we need a professional to connect residents to services.

Another key issue we noticed is with the rapid technological strides that move us towards a mostly digital, paperless world many residents, especially elderly, require assistance. We need to make efforts to bridge this gap.

The responsibilities of the CSCC include, but aren't limited to:

- Developing and maintaining effective partnerships with county agencies, nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers, schools, and other community stakeholders that provide direct services tailored to individuals and community needs.
- Coordinating and administering social service programs addressing identified community needs. Serving as the City's primary point of contact for residents seeking assistance, conducting intake assessments, making appropriate referrals, and providing follow-up support as needed.
- Collaborating with multiple City departments to deploy institutional resources in support of residents with complex needs and assisting with emergency response efforts during crises or disasters.

Further information is available at shakerheightsoh.gov/1001

CELEBRATE

National Night Out 2026 AUGUST 4

The Shaker Heights Police Department invites you to make plans to join your neighbors for an evening of camaraderie, education, and fun during National Night Out on Tuesday, August 4, 6-8pm at The Van Aken District. This annual event, celebrated the first Tuesday of August in cities across the United States, is an engaging and family-friendly opportunity to learn from the experts about safety in your home and community.

Attendees can enjoy food, games, giveaways, and live music. There will also be a SWAT truck, along with police and fire vehicles on hand for exploring. Children may interact with furry, four-footed K9 officers, meet first responders, learn about home, bike, fire, and water safety, and more. Adults may connect with volunteer safety organizations including the Citizens Police Academy and Community Emergency Response Team.

"National Night Out is a wonderful opportunity for residents to come together in one location and engage with the first responders who serve and protect Shaker Heights," says Police Chief Wayne D. Hudson. "I truly enjoy seeing our community and staff interact in such a positive and meaningful way. We value our strong partnership with the community and remain committed to working together to keep our city safe."







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Shaker Judge Keller Named President of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association

Congratulations to Shaker Heights Municipal Court Judge Anne Walton Keller, sworn in earlier this summer to a one-year term as president of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (CMBA). As president, she is the presiding officer of the CMBA, chair of its 32-member Board of Directors, and leader of its 20-person staff. The president also serves ex-officio on the Cleveland Metro Bar Foundation Board.

The CMBA is a leading professional organization with nearly 5,000 members in Greater Cleveland including attorneys, judges, law students, paralegals, and other business professionals. With a rich history dating back over 150 years, the CMBA was formed in 2008 through the unification of the Cleveland Bar Association and Cuyahoga County Bar Association, creating Ohio's largest and most influential metro bar association.

Keller will be the 20th president under the unified CMBA. From the organization's origins in 1873, she will be the 119th president.







Shaker Heights Police Department Earns National Accreditation



Few U.S. law enforcement agencies meet this "gold standard" for policing

The Shaker Heights Police Department (SHPD) has earned its eleventh consecutive National Accreditation Award from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Of the nearly 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country, only three to five percent are CALEA accredited.

"This achievement reflects not only our continued commitment to excellence, but also the sustained professionalism and dedication demonstrated by every member of the Shaker Heights Police Department," says Police Chief Wayne D. Hudson. "CALEA accreditation is a testament to our unwavering focus on accountability, transparency, and the delivery of high-quality police services to our community."

The department has maintained CALEA accreditation continuously since 1989, placing the agency among a select group of the longest consecutively accredited law enforcement agencies in the United States.

"Maintaining this status for decades underscores our police department's enduring commitment to professional standards and continuous improvement," says Shaker Heights Mayor David E. Weiss. "It's a reflection of the trust of the Shaker Heights community."

Established in 1979 through the collaborative efforts of the nation's leading law enforcement executive associations, CALEA serves as the premier credentialing authority – often referred to as the gold standard – for public safety agencies.

The accreditation process is both comprehensive and demanding, requiring agencies to undergo an extensive, multi-year self-assessment. This evaluation rigorously examines departmental policies, procedures, and operational practices to ensure alignment with internationally recognized best practice standards.

"As Chief of Police, I commend the men and women of this department for their diligence and integrity in upholding these standards," says Hudson. "This recognition is not only an honor, but a responsibility, one we accept with pride as we continue to serve Shaker Heights with excellence."

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Reminder: Short-term Rentals are Banned in Shaker

Short term rentals (less than 30 days), such as through services like AirBnB and VRBO, are prohibited in Shaker Heights.

To bolster enforcement, City Council last year adopted amendments to the Housing Code that shifted responsibility for enforcement of this prohibition from the City's Planning Department to Building and Housing, which has long been responsible for property inspections and rental regulations. Through new internal processes and procedures, Building and Housing inspectors expect to deliver more consistent enforcement of the ordinance.

Have a concern about a neighboring house? Use this QR code to open the City's property complaint form or call the Building and Housing Department at 216-491-1460.



Mental Health Response Program Coordinator Honored

The program coordinator for the mental health response program launched by the City was recognized recently by the Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County for her work to benefit people living with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.

Annette Wallace, who coordinates the regional First CALL (Crisis Assistance and Local Linkage) program, received the ADAMHS Board's Helping Hands Award at the organization's annual meeting in May.

"We know that compassionate and highly trained first responders play a vital role in behavioral health crisis response. Through the First CALL program, individuals are met with understanding in their most vulnerable moments and connected to the support they need. This reflects the spirit of public service at the heart of this award category," says Ian Jameson, the ADAMHS Board's external affairs officer.

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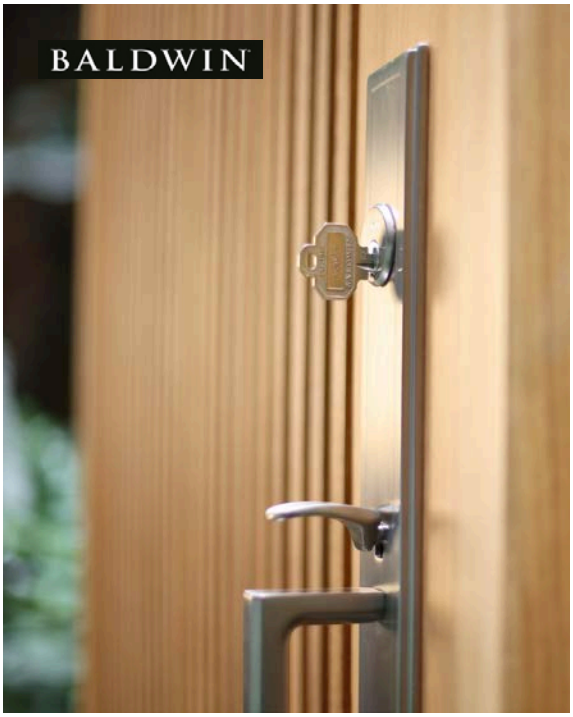
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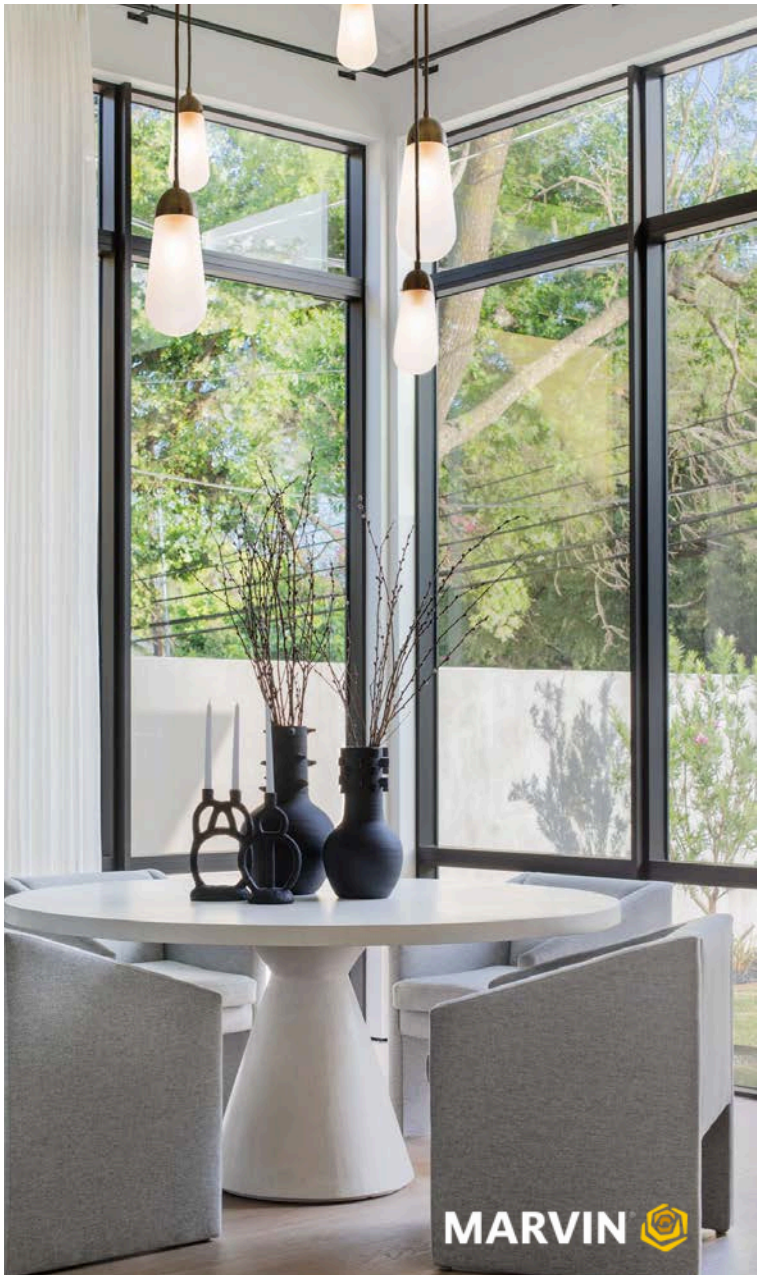
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Shaker Social



Living in Shaker Heights

Neighbor #1 Saw this outside of Onaway by the rose garden. A simple (probably free) yet important educational tool that can ignite the brains of countless generations of a "tree donut" taken from one of the trees that fell during the recent windstorm. We should have 2-3 of these at each school (even the high school). **Neighbor #2** The Shaker Tree Advisory Board asked for this slice of the trunk of a Pin Oak that was felled in a storm. It is being used by teachers at Onaway School to educate students on the value of mature trees and how to calculate their age. Our Public Works forestry crews took the extra time to make this educational goal a reality! **Neighbor #1** Excellent – thanks! This makes me very happy. **Neighbor #3** Yes, my kids were super excited to count the rings on this. **Neighbor #4** Awesome that your kids were able to learn from this!



Living in Shaker Heights

Neighbor #1 Thank you, Shaker Fire Department for being fast and professional. Our fan motor caught fire in the basement, and four firemen were at our house in less than five minutes. Professional and friendly. I applaud them, and I'm truly thankful for the service. **Neighbor #2** Way to go! **Neighbor #3** The Shaker Heights Fire Department is the best!



Fernway Neighborhood Shaker Heights

Neighbor #1 Fernway Principal Chris Hayward announces retirement. **Neighbor #2** OMG! You are way too young to retire, aren't you? You will be missed. **Neighbor #3** Congratulations to a great guy! He was so nice to our family when our girls were at Fernway. **Neighbor #4** I always had so much respect for Mr. Hayward. He was such a great help to me and my youngest during COVID. He really went above and beyond. I know he will definitely be missed, but I hope he enjoys his retirement! **Neighbor #5** The lessons you taught, the love you gave, the friendships you made...

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Shaker Schools News



The Shaker Heights High School Marching Band performs in Germany during their spring break trip in March 2026.

Shaker Heights High School Students Travel the World

Global education and travel have long been part of the Shaker Heights Schools experience. Hundreds of students traveled around the globe this spring for language study, service projects and cultural exchange programs. Here are a few recent international trips:

- Middle and High School students traveled to Quebec City for language and culture immersion study.
- High School marching band students traveled to Germany, Czech Republic, and Austria.
- High School students traveled to Thailand for service projects and immersion.
- High School French students traveled to Rouen, France, as part of an exchange program with a sister school.
- German language students participated in an exchange program with the High School's sister school in Goslar, Germany.
- Asian Studies students traveled to Nara, Japan for cultural immersion.

The District wants all students who wish to participate in its travel programs to have that opportunity. The Shaker Schools Foundation's Travel Assistance Fund helps remove barriers to participation. This year, 49 students were provided international travel scholarships through the fund.

SHAKER SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

A Legacy of Support: *A Night for the Red & White*

A unique magic happens when the Shaker Heights community gathers under one roof. This spring, that magic was on full display as over 400 guests attended the Shaker Schools Foundation's signature event, *A Night for the Red & White*. The evening was a resounding success, proving what is possible when the community comes together for Shaker students. Co-hosts Betsy Werbel (Class of 1992) and SHHS School Counselor David Peake kept the energy high as the community's generosity reached new heights – attendees donated more than $65,000 in live contributions alone. While the event is a one-night celebration, the Shaker Schools Foundation ensures its impact is felt year-round in every building across the District. As an independent partner to Shaker schools, the Foundation remains committed to its mission to Educate, Empower, and Engage our students.

SAVE THE DATE
March 13, 2027

The 35th annual *A Night for the Red & White* returns March 13, 2027, at an exciting new location. Stay tuned for details, and view photos from this year's gala at shakerschoolsfoundation.org.



SHHS Senior Isaiah Bady poses with a $500 check after his business pitch, Sensory Safe Cuts, came in second place in the Teen Accelerate competition this spring.

Teen Entrepreneur Isaiah Bady Grows His Business

This spring, Shaker Heights High School Senior Isaiah Bady came in Second Place in the Teen Accelerate competition, which is sponsored by the Young Entrepreneurship Institute. See below for a Q&A with Isaiah about his business pitch, Sensory Safe Cuts.

What is Sensory Safe Cuts?

Sensory Safe Cuts is a mobile, sensory-friendly barber service designed for individuals who struggle with traditional barbershop environments. This includes children with autism, individuals with anxiety, and people with sensory sensitivities. Traditional shops can often be loud, bright, and overwhelming, which leads many families to delay or avoid haircuts. My service fills that gap by providing calm, one-on-one haircuts in a familiar environment, using quieter tools and a personalized approach to create a more comfortable experience.

What are the next steps for your business?

After placing second in the Teen Accelerate competition, my next steps are focused on growth and professionalism. I plan to continue building my client base, invest in better equipment, and work toward expanding Sensory Safe Cuts into a fully equipped mobile barbershop to serve more clients efficiently.

What support have you received from the Shaker Schools Foundation?

The support from the Shaker Schools Foundation has been extremely important to me. They've provided not only encouragement, but also essential barber supplies that helped me get Sensory Safe Cuts started. I also want to give a special thank you to SHHS Mathematics Teacher Ms. Angela Harrell for constantly pushing me and other students toward success, and for always supporting my ideas.

Important Dates for Schools

> Back-to-School BBQ: Wednesday, August 5

> Staggered Start Schedule:

* School Day 1 (Tuesday, August 18, 2026):
  - Kindergarten-Grade 5 will have meetings scheduled with each family
  - Grade 6 attend all day
  - Grade 9 attend all day
  - Grades 7-8 and 10-12 do not attend
* School Day 2 (Wednesday, August 19, 2026):
  - All K-12 students attend all day
* Ludlow Early Learning Center:
  - Meetings with families on August 21 and 24
  - First day of preschool will be August 25

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Shaker Library News

Pollinator Garden Installed at Bertram Woods Branch

Last month, Shaker Library staff and community members celebrated the opening of the pollinator garden at Bertram Woods.





Shaker Library to Welcome Tada Magician for Summer Reading Midpoint Celebration

We're celebrating summer readers across the city with a magical Midpoint Celebration.

Join us on Thursday, July 16 from 3:30 to 5:30pm for a magical afternoon of games, snacks, and more. Claim your milestone prize for 45 days of reading.

Cleveland's Tada Magician will perform a magic show from 4 to 5pm. Pick up your tickets at the Children's Desk at the start of the event to ensure each of your family members gets a seat.

Forgot to sign up for Summer Reading this year? It's not too late to start logging to win prizes. Get started at shakerlibrary.org/summer.

The garden was proposed, designed, and planted by Shaker resident and garden designer Ann Cicarella.

Cicarella received grant funding from the Shaker Lakes Garden Club ($3,225) and several local Greater Cleveland rotary organizations ($1,000) to make the garden a reality.

"Not only can the garden enhance the building's aesthetic appeal, but it can provide a living, vibrant educational space for visitors of all ages. In 2024, the Bertram Woods Branch had 38,011 visitors. The opportunity to model native plant gardens for homeowners and other public entities is extremely impactful," Cicarella wrote in her grant application.

Bertram Woods Branch Manager Lynne Miller echoes Cicarella's enthusiasm.

"One of our library's core values is sustainability. We hope library customers will enjoy the garden and maybe get inspired to help the environment in their own ways. We've got lots of resources to get them started."

Planting for the garden began in May. Cicarella and many dedicated volunteers maintain the garden, which includes red cardinal flower, purple coneflower, milkweed, asters, bee balm, mountain mint, and many others.

The garden provides food for butterflies, birds, native bees, beetles, flower flies, and hummingbirds.



The Friends Of The Shaker Library Receive Grant to Update Library Recycling

This March, the Friends of the Shaker Library secured $8,500 in grant funding from the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District to fund the purchase of clearly labeled recycling bins in both library buildings.

The Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Composting Equipment grant will allow the library to communicate more clearly to customers how to recycle correctly, thereby reducing contamination.

"Lots of people want to recycle correctly but don't always know how," says Shaker Library Green Team Leader Erin MacLean. "We're grateful to the Friends, and to the Solid Waste District, for this opportunity to make recycling simpler and more understandable for our customers."

In August 2025, library staff conducted a waste audit, collecting a full day's trash and recycling from both buildings to get a bird's eye view of the library's waste streams.

The audit found that 25% of what was thrown in the trash at Main Library and 40% of what was thrown in the trash at Bertram Woods could have been recycled or composted.

In terms of recycling, 20% of Main Library's recycling stream had been contaminated with trash. At Bertram Woods, 98% of the recycling was clean, with only 2% contamination.

"We're looking forward to seeing how the new containers and signage improve our numbers," MacLean says. "We're proud to serve a community that cares about this issue."

Find more information about Shaker Library's recycling program at shakerlibrary.org/sustainability.





DOAN BROOK RESTORATION
AT HORSESHOE PARK, MARCH 2025 RENDERING

Work in the watershed

DOAN BROOK RESTORATION AT HORSESHOE PARK

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District has completed the design phase of this project. We hope you will continue to be a part of the conversation and the future of this important community space. **neorsd.org/DoanBrook**

LOWER SHAKER LAKE PROJECT

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has determined that Lower Lake's Class 1 High Hazard dam is out of compliance with state safety standards. The Sewer District continues to work with the Cities to resolve this public risk. Learn more about our recommendation and what we've learned: **neorsd.org/LowerLake**

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REFERENCING THE COMMUNITY

Gone are the days of stern, buttoned-up librarians sitting behind a desk, shushing the masses. A new generation of librarians forges partnerships and connects people in new ways.

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



Shaker Memorial Day Parade

Josh Romig would never, not in a million years, admit to being a superhero.

But the cape certainly suggests otherwise.

Each year, for the Shaker Memorial Day Parade, Shaker's Adult Services Librarian Romig dons a hooded cloak printed with a book pattern and falls into step with the library drill team, pushing a cart and running formations with his coworkers, his cape billowing behind him.

But unlike members of the Justice League, Romig doesn't take himself too seriously. The entire time he's zigzagging down Van Aken, he's giggling like a little kid. It's not long before the other staff members and onlookers are grinning too.

While this is perhaps the most fun of his yearly appearances in the community, it's just one of many.

Since stepping into his community engagement-focused role in 2024, Romig has been popping up all over the City.

He's turned up in council chambers, at committee meetings, and at Moreland Neighbor Night. He's been invited to emcee poetry slams, pose for photos at ribbon cuttings, and moderate discussions.

Recently, alongside fellow Adult Services Librarian Stacie Anderson, who also has a community engagement focus, he's been spearheading partnerships around the City, pushing through some of the library's most impactful initiatives in recent years.

Hosting the weekly produce giveaway, Access2Equity, at Main Library? Romig had a hand in getting that started. The compost bins stationed at Main Library for resident use? Romig was involved with that too.

Community meals, book discussions, swap meets, and cemetery, bus, and bike tours have been co-presented with an array of partners across the city – all of this the result of intentional, often invisible work called community engagement, for which Romig is just now finding a rhythm.



Josh Romig and Shaker Heights Councilwoman Tenille Kaus at the Library's Swap Meet.

The guy to get a hold of

Community engagement is a relatively new approach to librarianship, in which librarians take inventory of the people and organizations in their communities and seek to bring together resources and residents at opportune moments.

Often, this looks like "being everywhere:" showing up for all kinds of meetings, gatherings, and open houses to learn names, find out who's doing what, and discover what kind of resources people are looking for.

In January, Romig was sitting at his desk when the phone rang. "Is this Josh?" said the voice on the other end, who introduced themselves as being from the Cuyahoga County Office of Violence Prevention. "We want to conduct firearm safety training, and we were told you and Stacie are the people to call to make that happen."

By the time they hung up the phone, the date was set, the room was booked, and the program sponsor, the Shaker Heights Police Department, was cemented. Twenty-four people attended the March training, receiving indispensable education around firearm safety.

When SNAP benefits were temporarily suspended last fall due to the government shutdown, Lomond resident Luette Harris reached out to Romig, having met him at Moreland Neighborhood Night, for support.

For years, Harris had been operating Wednesday produce giveaways out of her driveway on Winslow Road with her nonprofit organization, Access2Equity – but now winter was approaching, and she was anticipating a surge in demand.

Romig asked around about a space to host the produce giveaway and was given the green light to have it at Main Library.

"Sometimes it's that simple: someone needs a resource, and the library is the one to provide it. Other times, I make the connection, then step back. And even if the library isn't involved in the final product, I've done my job," Romig says.

Since December 2025, Access2Equity has been setting up a pop-up grocery store on the second floor, giving out free food. "Every Wednesday, we see people lined up down the hall and sometimes down the stairs, using the resource," Romig says.

Since moving the produce giveaway to Main Library, Harris says she's seen a 35% increase in use. She estimates her dedicated team of 12 volunteers serves about 70 families per week.





Pop-up Grocery Store

"Without Josh and the library, I'd still be on my lawn," Harris says, laughing. In the past month, Access2Equity's visibility has exploded. Their volunteer base has expanded, and grants and donations have been coming in.

"At no point do I want to even remotely suggest that I'm anything more than a cog in the wheel," Romig says. "At the end of the day, this work gets done because the neighborhood comes together. I'm just happy to be part of that process – and contribute as much as I can on behalf of the library."

Tangible results

As part of their role as community engagement-focused librarians, Romig and Anderson periodically attend city council and school board meetings. They also sit on City committees as non-voting members, with Anderson attending Culture and Engagement Committee meetings and Romig Sustainability Committee meetings.

As a result of his presence on the Sustainability Committee, Romig was able to advocate, along with council member and committee chair Tenille Kaus, for placing composting bins at Main Library, so Moreland residents who don't have a school compost drop off nearby could easily access them.

During their first year in use (from April 2025 to April 2026), the library compost bins have collected 31,556 lbs. of food scraps from 226 participating households, creating 70 yards of compost, offsetting 31,303 miles driven, and avoiding 27,769 pounds of methane in the atmosphere.

"That's one instance in which there's a tangible result of me being in the room, helping not only the library, but the neighborhood the library sits in," Romig says.

Shaker Library started its community engagement work over a decade ago, in 2014. "We really loved the idea of designating a librarian to do work around the community's values – not the library's values, but the community's – and explicitly directing them to strengthen the work of other organizations and agencies," says Shaker Library Director Amy Switzer.

The work gained momentum in 2015 when Gabriel Venditti, the librarian doing community engagement work at the time, helped establish Moreland's Neighbor Night.

Venditti worked with City staff members, helping to run the initial meetings and train residents to run later ones, says Adult Services Manager Cindy Maxey. "Gabriel really helped extend what the City was able to do."

Just as Romig is carrying forward the legacy of those in the position before him, he and Anderson aren't operating alone. The library has its own Community Engagement Team that consists of Local History Librarian Meghan Hays, Early Literacy Specialist Maura Dunn, and members of the administration and marketing teams, who are each doing their own networking and listening within their spheres.





Once a library kid, always a library kid

Romig began frequenting libraries with his siblings and friends in his teenage years during the summer.

His family wasn't well off, and he would spend weekdays bouncing between free hot meals offered around Ashtabula, where he grew up, and the teen room at Ashtabula Public Library, where he'd use computers, chat with the librarians, and eventually join the Teen Advisory Board.

"The library was a sanctuary for me," Romig recalls. "My earliest mentors were librarians. The single most important thing that ever happened to me was that Ms. Sandra [the teen librarian] asked me to join the advisory board. I made a lot of good friends. They let me put up displays and plan gatherings for my classmates."

Romig's first display, unsurprisingly, was a Poetry Month display celebrating Edgar Allen Poe and Shel Silverstein, his favorites at the time. (Romig is a published poet in his own right, with three books of poems under his belt.)

"I liked that there were these stable, approachable adults who were always there. They were constants in my world. And they provided something that I wasn't getting in other areas of my life: a sense of purpose," Romig reflects.

Romig says he sees himself in a lot of the teens who frequent Shaker Library. "They come here to hang out with their friends – which is what I did. They come here because it's a safe third space that isn't school or home – which is what I was doing."

Romig is grateful that instead of kicking him out, his library mentors gave him something to do. "I can imagine a world in which they made a different choice, and I would have found something else to do that was less productive and less meaningful. But they didn't. They saw me and thought, here's a kid who clearly needs something we can give."

What brought Romig back to libraries was, oddly enough, his wife's homework. She was in library school, working on an assignment where she had to read books and then figure out who to recommend them to. "It felt like a fun little puzzle I wanted to solve."

When Romig enrolled in library school, his thought process was, "I am going to give back what I got. You know, giving people the space and resources to build something, to see what they can do with their potential." **SL**

Lyndsey Brennan is the communications and marketing manager for Shaker Heights Public Library

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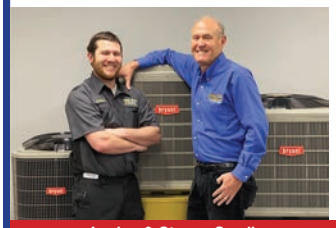
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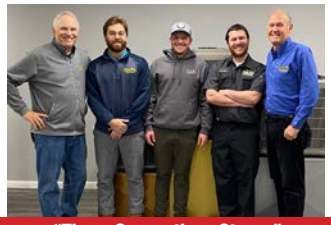


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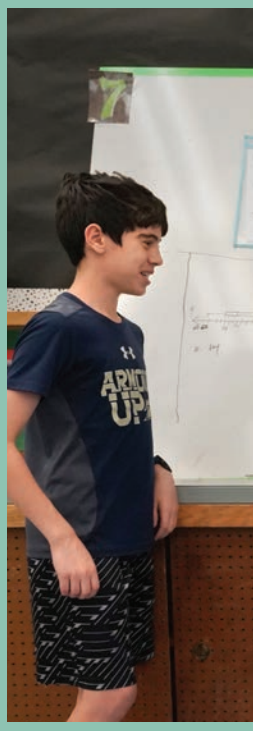


excellence for all

Shaker Heights Schools support diverse learners in high-quality, inclusive classrooms

Written by **Julie Hullett** Photography by **Gus Chan**





Shaker Heights Middle School faculty and staff discuss student support strategies during a professional learning day.

As you walk through Shaker Heights Middle School on any given day, students of all backgrounds are learning side by side, exchanging ideas, solving problems, and building long-lasting friendships. Classrooms are designed to support a wide range of learners, with teachers using multiple approaches to ensure all students can engage with rigorous material. This is simply how learning works in Shaker Heights today: high expectations, broad access, and support for every student.

That approach reflects a shift the District began in Grades 5-8 several years ago, grounded in a commitment to expanding access to challenging, high-quality coursework. Previously, students were grouped into separate course levels that often limited access to advanced instruction at early ages and tended to channel students into academic paths that were difficult to change later.

With the adoption of a new Strategic Plan in 2020, the District moved to align classroom practices more closely with its commitment to inclusive excellence. Today, that work continues to take shape in classrooms where access to rigorous learning is the expectation, not the exception, and the focus remains on helping each student reach their full potential.

"Inclusive learning environments and the types of instructional strategies that are used are better for students, and they are more reflective of the real world," says Superintendent David Glasner. "We want to differentiate and individualize instruction so each student is being supported and challenged."

Rising Up: Expanding Access For All Students

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme and the Universal Design for Learning framework are critical in the District's commitment to inclusive learning environments.

Shaker Heights is certified as an IB District, so building and administrative leaders leaned heavily into IB to guide their work in differentiated classrooms. IB goes hand in hand with the District's commitment to an inclusive, heterogeneous learning environment.





Grade 8 students (left) solve math problems on whiteboards in their Algebra I class. Superintendent David Glasner (right) leads the District's work in expanding access to challenging, high-quality coursework for all students.

Director of Curriculum & Instruction John Moore says IB provides instructional guidance to support an environment that brings together a wide range of learners.

"What Shaker wants is an enriching education for all children," Moore says, "which is why we are leaning on our IB framework. Our faculty has been trained on high-quality instructional strategies for years."

Moore says IB units are based on universal design, which serves as a baseline for a differentiated classroom. The most common example of universal design is accessible curb cuts. They are needed for people who use a wheelchair or a stroller but they benefit everyone.

"That's how IB units are designed," Moore says. "IB units are designed with a low floor. Everyone finds an entry point so everyone has access. Simultaneously, IB units are designed with a high ceiling, so there's a lot of room to stretch."

Instructional staff also participate in ongoing professional learning sessions for teaching in a differentiated classroom environment. Professional learning opportunities have expanded over time. Every year, there are several sessions on how to engage diverse learners and differentiate instruction.

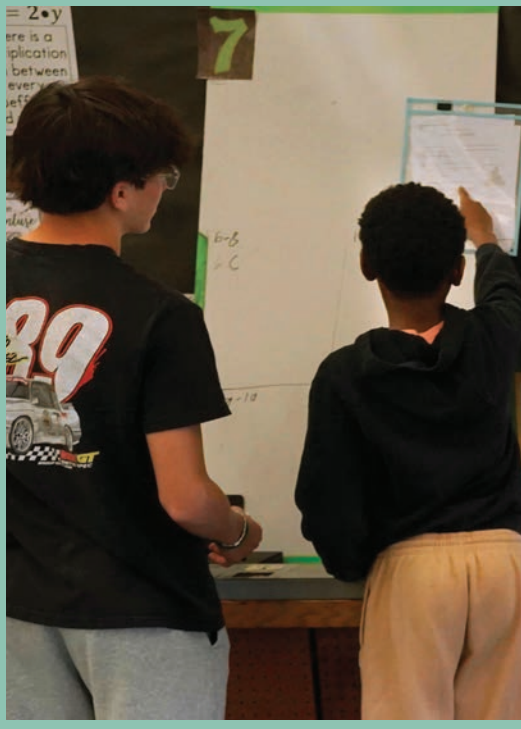
The Classroom Where it Happens

Robyn Hegele serves as an Algebra I teacher at Shaker Heights Middle School. She says inclusive learning environments allow students to decide how to best engage with the content to fit their needs.

"An inclusive classroom creates opportunities for movement within Algebra I content," Hegele says.

In a differentiated classroom, Hegele says there are different versions of assignments, especially as the unit goes on. Level 1 may be for students who are developing understanding, and Level 2 may be for students who have developed the basics and are ready to go deeper with





Grade 8 Mathematics Teacher Robyn Hegele (left) and Intervention Specialist Teacher Nichole Kerr (right, next page) support students in inclusive Algebra I classes at Shaker Heights Middle School.

their understanding. Some Shaker learners are ready for Level 3, where they are pushed to apply their thinking in new and different ways. All students, no matter the level, are held to grade-level expectations.

"An inclusive classroom is an individualized approach for learning intended to challenge all students," Hegele says. "It helps develop opportunities for students to cultivate peer leadership and collaboration skills. As teachers, we see that interaction between students, regardless of what level they are working on. They interact and support each other."

This collaboration is visible in Algebra I as students work on vertical white boards. When using the white boards, students can select assignments from a menu of mild, medium, or spicy, which indicates the level of difficulty. Students work together to solve equations on the white boards.

Some classes are also co-taught, meaning that they are taught by one teacher and one intervention specialist, says Miata Hunter, assistant principal at Shaker Heights High School. Co-teaching supports classrooms with diverse student needs.

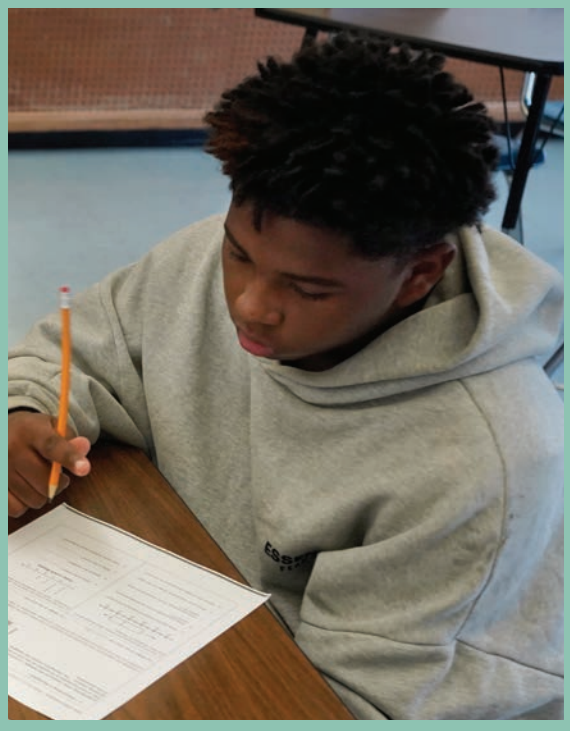
"Our hope is that intervention specialists, who are experts in inclusive instruction, are there to help not only students with special needs, but also help other students with varied learning needs," Hunter says.

She notes that the District has also hired gifted intervention specialists at the primary and secondary level to assist teachers with enrichment to help students deepen their understanding of course material.

History Has Its Eyes on Us

A range of positive indicators supports this approach of bringing students together in inclusive learning environments. State testing data indicates increased growth and achievement for students who were previously in core courses, consistently strong performance for students in the highest quintiles, and high-growth, high-achievement as a whole. Data also shows significant growth among Grade 8 students, who now all take Algebra I.





When visiting classrooms at Shaker Heights Middle School, Glasner says the classes accurately reflect the Shaker Heights Schools community. The courses are diverse, and all students have enriching, in-depth, robust learning experiences.

"We want more students to have more options when it comes to the course pathways they can pursue at Shaker Heights High School and college and career options they have after high school. We want more students to pass end-of-course exams and excel in advanced course pathways like Advanced Placement and IB Diploma Programme courses," Glasner says. "We want students to be prepared for whatever option they choose instead of being pigeon-holed because they didn't take Algebra I in eighth grade or weren't eligible for advanced courses."

Glasner says there are successes we can measure, and there are successes that cannot be quantified.

"All of our students get to face the same high expectations and see themselves as a teacher, mathematician, or engineer because of their experience in an inclusive learning environment," he says. "There's no single data point that can fully capture that impact."

Glasner says all students are better prepared to enter diverse workforces and communities and maintain relationships across the social spectrum throughout their educational experiences.

Extending the Runway

Moore explains that even though the District has developed all integrated courses in Grades 5-8, there are still various levels for classes at Shaker Heights High School. As students prepare for college and careers, there are opportunities to hone in on specific topics to cultivate expertise.

"There are still honors and advanced classes at the upper grades in high school. The difference is that we extended the runway for how students can enter those courses," Moore says. "Rather than knowing if you're going to be in tenth grade AP U.S. History based on your fifth grade year, we've given students a much longer time period to develop before they start making those decisions. Now, a student's





Grade 8 Mathematics Teacher Robyn Hegele (left) works with a student in an Algebra I class. Shaker Heights Middle School faculty (right, next page) and staff participate in a professional learning session.

tenth grade year might influence their twelfth grade class, not fifth grade. It should be the student's choice, not the District's decision at such a young age."

Hunter is a Class of 1992 graduate of Shaker Heights High School. She looks back on her own experience, and knows that the District is improving educational experiences for its current and future students. She recalls meeting her best friend in seventh grade. They both took a test to determine their course placements, then she never had classes with her friend again. Hunter and her friend have excelled in their careers and are still close, but were on different academic tracks through high school.

"To be part of a team to make decisions to let children take courses that they might not have had the opportunity to take, it's amazing to me. I'm very proud of it," Hunter says. "Based on our test scores and student experiences, we're seeing the fruit of that decision." **SL**

Julie Hullett is the communications specialist for the Shaker Heights City School District.



Fact or Fiction
Differentiated Learning

Integrating course levels means all students are taught exactly the same lesson at the same level.

Fiction. Integrating levels brings students together around shared academic standards while teachers differentiate instruction to meet varied readiness levels.

Research suggests that combining tracks can accelerate growth for students previously placed in lower tracks without harming students who were previously in higher tracks.

Fact. Studies of school systems with integrated courses show heterogeneous classrooms can raise achievement for lower-track students without negative effects on higher-track students.

Heterogenous classrooms eliminate advanced coursework such as IB, AP, or College Credit Plus classes.

Fiction. Heterogeneous classrooms expand early access to rigorous coursework while maintaining advanced pathways in later grades.

Tracking systems developed partly in response to school desegregation and integration mandates.

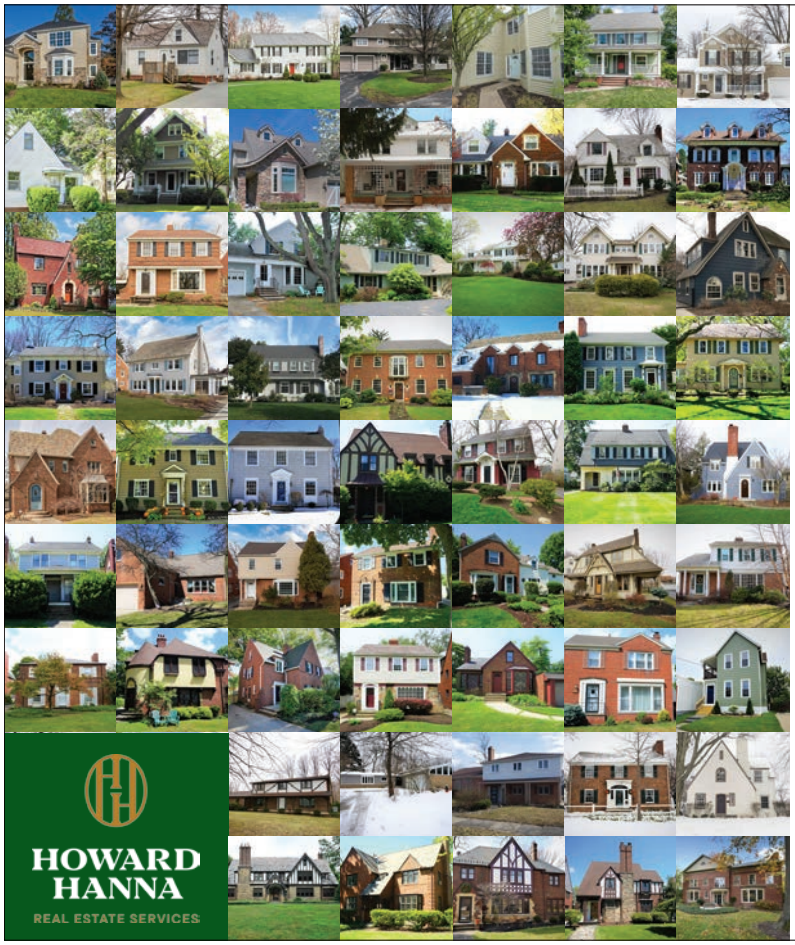
Fact. Scholars have documented that ability grouping (leveling) expanded in many districts as a way to segregate students within integrated schools.

Integrated classrooms reduce opportunities for students to pursue advanced mathematics.

Fiction. Students still access advanced mathematics pathways after the shared early sequence.

Inclusive classrooms can improve peer relationships and social networks among students from different backgrounds.

Fact. Research shows heterogeneous classrooms can promote social integration and positive peer interactions.



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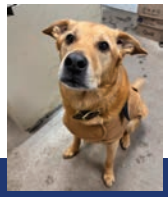
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RUNNING ON SUNSHINE

Around the City in residential, municipal, and community buildings, solar panels are becoming more and more common. With relaxed residential requirements and commitments to reducing fossil fuel consumption, residents and businesses alike are reaping the rewards of making the switch.

Written by **Zachary Lewis** Photography by **Robert Muller***



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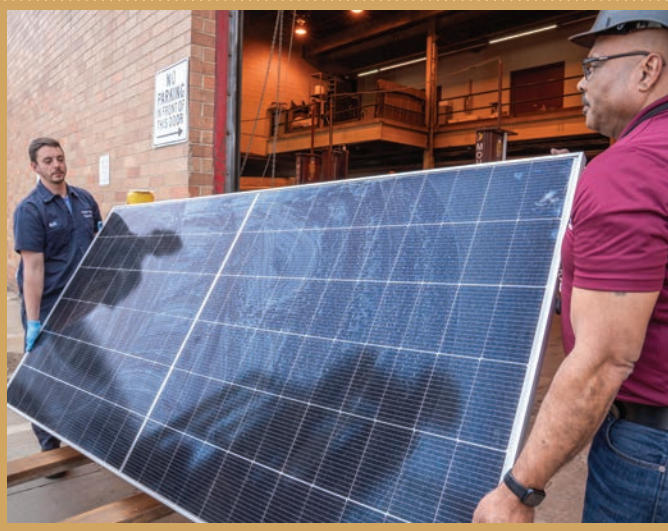
When it comes to solar technology in the U.S. now, it is a lot like the situation at the start of "A Tale of Two Cities." It's both the worst of times and the best of times.

Worst because federal incentives to install solar panels have lapsed, and aren't likely to return soon. Best because the need for renewable energy is soaring in direct proportion to the cost of fossil fuels, making the concept more attractive.

Straddling those two forces is the City of Shaker Heights. It's doing everything it can at both the local and state levels to encourage solar technology and dampen the headwinds against it, all while modeling the adoption of solar tech itself.

"The economic argument continues to get better," says Michael Peters, the City's sustainability coordinator. "While it makes economic sense now, it's going to make even more economic sense going forward."

Evidence to support that assertion isn't hard to find – except in the literal sense that, in Shaker, solar projects are often designed to be inconspicuous. In most other ways, the value of solar is only becoming clearer.



Shaker Public Works mechanic Matt Fairchild, (left) and project construction manager Earl Bumgarne (right) move one of the hundreds of solar panels now on the rooftops at the service center.

Unmistakable signs

The loudest pleas for renewable energy are unmistakable, palpable in the global effects of climate change. Wildfires, droughts, floods, hurricanes: all are made worse by use of fossil fuels. What's more, says Shaker Heights City Councilmember Kim Bixenstine, "It just seems like these things are happening more frequently."

Hardly easier to ignore are the rising costs of energy. Anyone who regularly pays an electric or natural gas bill can attest how steadily and steeply those charges have increased in recent years.

*except where otherwise noted


"It's somehow emotionally satisfying to think
I'm running on sunshine from my roof."





Shaker Heights is neither immune to these pressures nor unaware of their impact on residents. That's why, as a city, it's responding on two fronts, doing what it can to encourage residential solar projects while undertaking a significant solar installation of its own, and contemplating others. At the state level, it's also voicing support for legislation that would allow residents to purchase electricity from solar farms elsewhere.

Together, these efforts, combined with other offerings such as free, public composting sites, a 100% renewable electric aggregation program, and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, "show that Shaker is really forward-thinking," Bixenstine says. "They demonstrate our long-term commitment to environmental and economic sustainability. It's my hope that one day soon we'll have a more forward-thinking Congress and an administration that will consider renewable energy."

Benefits of the cost

Make no mistake: a solar installation of any kind is a significant expense. Residential projects can entail dozens of panels, each of which can cost hundreds of dollars.

And that's before the cost of installation. (Point of reference: For a system on a 3,000-square-foot Shaker home, an online estimator generated quotes ranging from just over $23,000 to $30,000.)

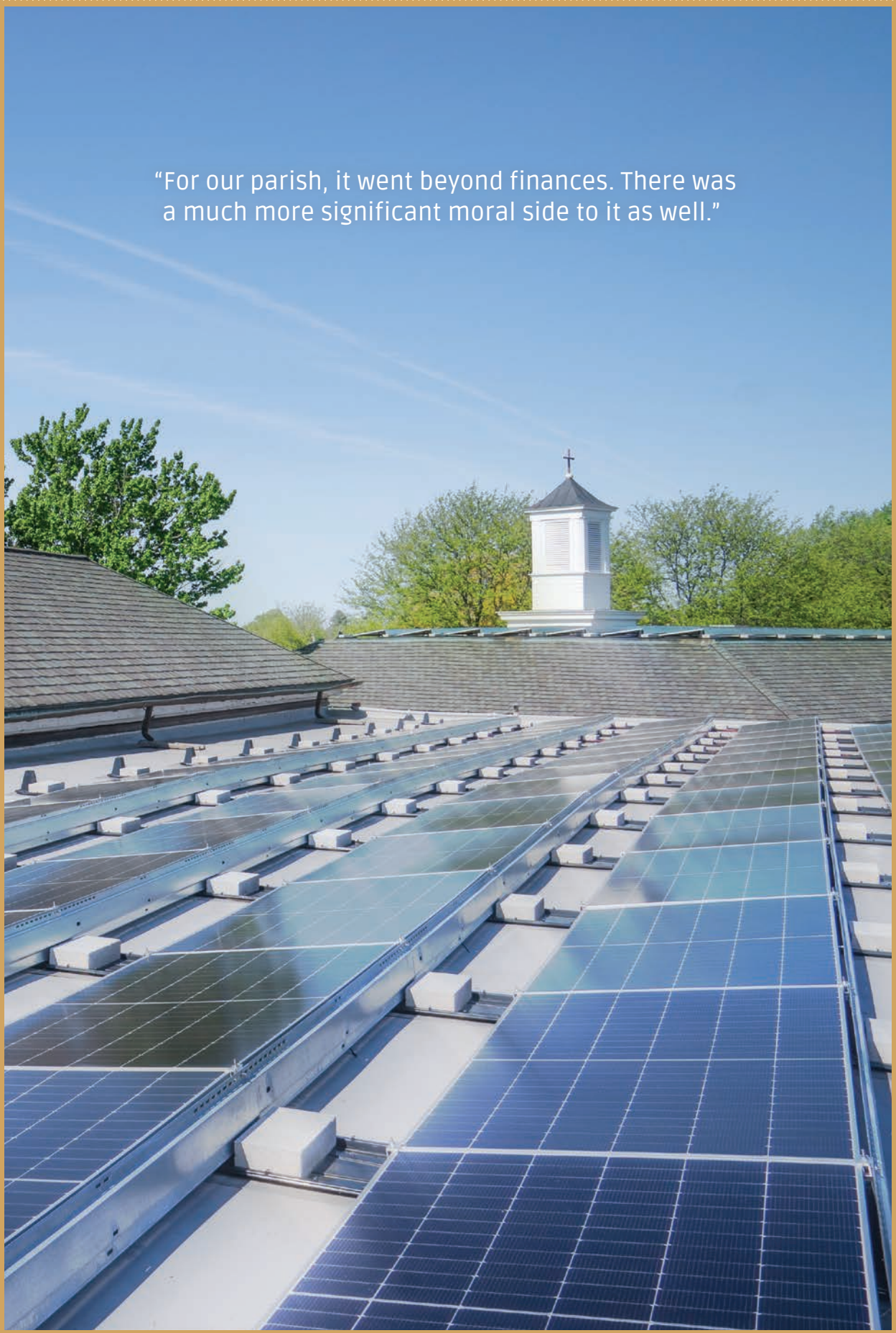
But the benefits can be correspondingly large. Shaker resident Cyrus Taylor says the solar panels he installed in February 2024 – in tandem with a new roof – generate about 80 percent of his overall electrical needs, saving him thousands of dollars over the course of a year.

That's not all the system does, either. Because the panels also function as a giant shade, they also reduce his need for air conditioning in warmer months. He also uses the system to charge his electric car.

Caring for the planet

"There's something wonderful about plugging in the [car] and drawing directly from the solar panels," says Taylor, a professor of physics at Case Western Reserve University. "It's somehow emotionally satisfying to think I'm running on sunshine from my roof."

Left: Onaway resident Cyrus Taylor in front of his home fitted with solar panels.


"For our parish, it went beyond finances. There was
a much more significant moral side to it as well."

The same equation applies on a much grander scale at Church of St. Dominic. There, a large new installation of 290 panels is well on its way to saving $23,000 a year and recouping the parish's $275,000 investment. Soon, too, the parish expects to begin selling electricity to vendors out of state.

"It's really exciting to have something like this," says Christopher Kerr, a St. Dominic's parishioner and executive director at the Ignatian Solidarity Network. "We're excited to be leaders in this way."

Saving money, though, is not the church's top priority. For St. Dominic, the project is more about saving the Earth.

Kerr says the church was inspired by the writings of the late Pope Francis, who called on Catholics and others alike to care for the planet. "For our parish, it went beyond finances," Kerr says. "There was a much more significant moral side to it as well."

Incentives and less red tape

Both Taylor and St. Dominic were fortunate to begin their projects with incentives available during the Biden Administration. Those considering new solar installations today won't be so lucky.

They won't be on their own, however. Not entirely. Shaker Heights can't rival federal tax credits, but it can do one thing to help solar-minded residents and businesses: streamline the approval process.

Peters, the sustainability coordinator, pointed to the City's pro-solar policy under which projects that are low-profile or largely invisible may no longer require the approval of the City's Architectural Review Board (ARB) but do require administrative approval. The board has actively engaged with solar installers to develop design guidelines which both preserve the architectural character of Shaker's building stock and streamline the design review process.

"We're all very encouraging of homeowners taking any steps to reduce their carbon footprint," says Peters.



Left: The roof of the Church of St. Dominic with recently installed solor panels.


"I want to see something I've never seen before: an electric meter going backward."

Left: Ramona Lowery-Ferrell, director of public works, City Councilmember Kim Bixenstine, and Mayor David E. Weiss.

Taylor and St. Dominic appear to have experienced this new approach. Taylor says he encountered no red tape installing panels at his home on a side-street, while Kerr says that by involving the City early, St. Dominic avoided snags that might have held up the project.

"Unless you're going there to find the panels, you wouldn't notice that they're there," Kerr says. "They don't compromise the architectural integrity of the neighborhood in any way."

City joins the movement

St. Dominic may be a solar leader among churches, but the largest solar installation in Shaker Heights will soon be a City building. This summer, the City plans to turn on a significant array of 900 panels at the Department of Public Works.

The project, which also coincided with the need for a new roof, is expected to generate two-thirds to three-quarters of the electricity used by the City's maintenance, forestry, animal control, and refuse collection staff.

It's projected to pay for itself in time to yield 10 to 12 years of net savings at current electrical prices.

"It's going to be a great thing to watch," says Ramona Lowery-Ferrell, director of public works. "It's always nice to be the first."

"First" suggests that there will be other City buildings adding solar, and indeed, that is the hope. Peters says the next most likely candidates for a solar installation in Shaker Heights would probably be Fire Department Station #1 and a potential recreation center. Neither, though, is likely to materialize anytime soon.

In the meantime, while electricity prices climb and the long-term value of solar increases, Public Works Building Superintendent Shannon Marlin says he's going to enjoy reaping the fruits of the City's first installation.

"I want to see something I've never seen before: an electric meter going backward," he says. "Seeing those numbers go negative, that's going to be an exciting thing, right there." **SL**

Interested in adding solar panels to your Shaker home?

The City's website has you covered with information ranging from a checklist of architectural considerations, to tips for evaluating your roof, to advice for gathering quotes from installers.

Go to shakerheightsoh.gov/394 or use this QR code.



A Labor of Love and of Tribute

Written by **Sharon Holbrook**

Photography by **Gus Chan**

Behind every oak tree plaque on the nine-mile long Liberty Row memorial is a personal story of a World War I soldier. One dedicated Shaker Square area resident is committed to sharing and preserving each story.

Memory is a slippery thing: We remember our lost loved ones in our hearts and minds, but as time passes, who will carry on those memories for us? So, we put up memorials – stone, metal, the saplings of mighty trees – that we hope will last beyond ourselves.

With great fanfare, that's what the city of Cleveland did for 850 area soldiers who died in World War I. The Liberty Row oaks were – and still are, to some degree – a series of trees, each marked at their base with a soldier's name in a bronze and cement marker. This living memorial runs nine miles from Lake Erie through University Circle and Cleveland Heights and ends in Shaker Heights.

But what happens when the physical memorials begin to crumble and fade away? And when the identities of those people, once so beloved, begin to fade into obscurity?

Rosalie Litt's answer is in her years of unpaid dedication: she is gathering up those scattered pieces of memory and, via modern technology, safely carrying them forward again. One by one, she's working to tell the story of each of these lost World War I soldiers through the website she founded: ClevelandLibertyRow.com.

THE RISE AND FALL OF LIBERTY ROW

When the Liberty Row oak tree memorial was dedicated for Memorial Day 1919, it was part of a rousing celebration. Five planes flew over University Circle to honor fallen airmen, one of which flew low enough for a bouquet of roses to be tossed down. A chorus of 1,000 children sang patriotic songs. A parade and speeches marked the day, as well as the reading of a telegram from the Secretary of War, Cleveland native Newton D. Baker, congratulating Cleveland on its Liberty Row memorial. Thousands of people attended the event, including elderly Civil War veterans and more recent veterans. Everyone, it seemed, knew about the oaks and the soldiers they memorialized.

Litt and her family moved to Shaker Heights in 1991, and she had long noticed and wondered about the name plaques during her frequent walks around the Shaker Parklands. Around 2014, while driving, Litt saw one of the name plates and its concrete base lying in the middle of Park Drive near Horseshoe Park. Robert Nardi: A name, a person. She couldn't leave him lying in the road. Impulsively, she picked up the dislodged memorial and temporarily put it in her car trunk until she could figure out what to do with it.

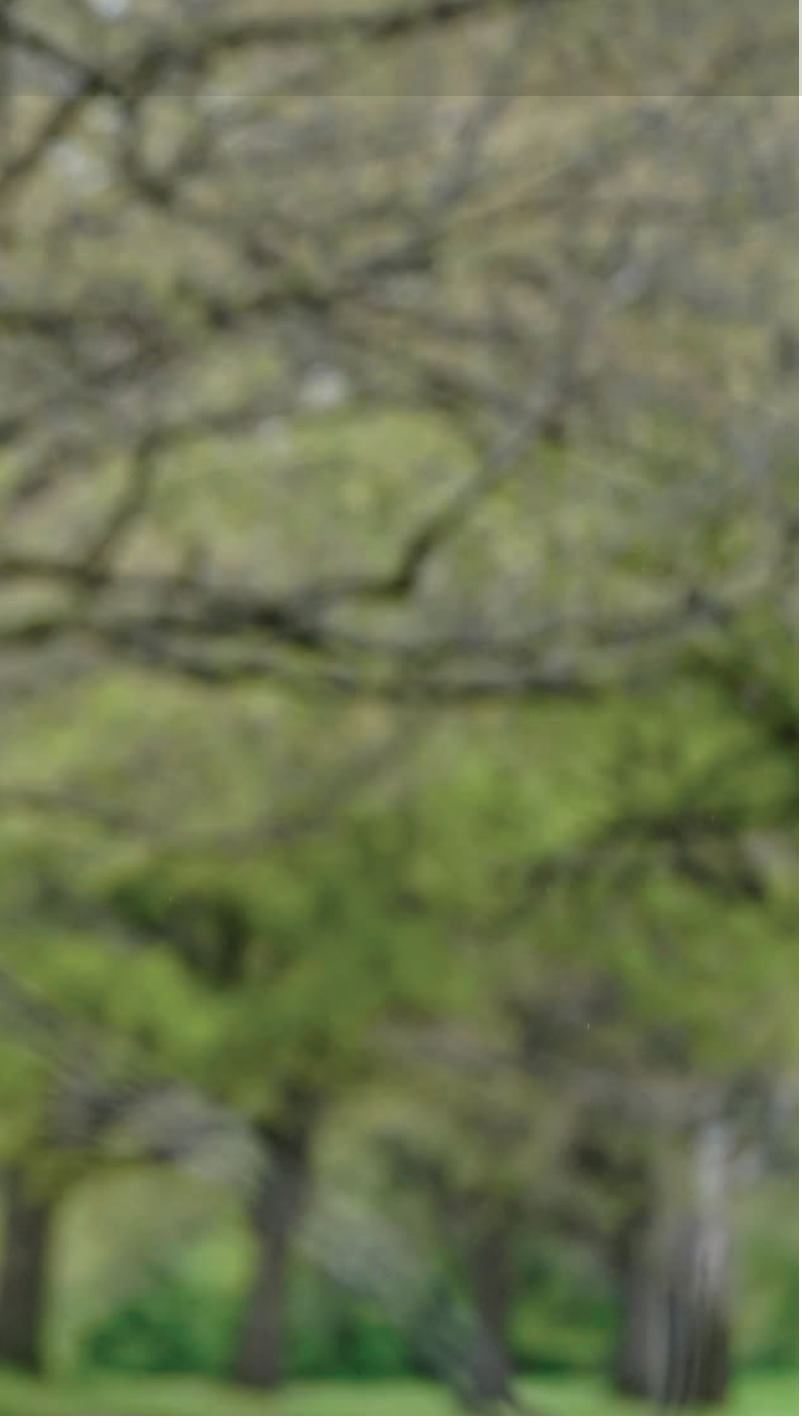


The plaque honoring Robert Nardi that launched Rosalie Litt's research and website project

Rosalie Litt on a walk near the Liberty Oaks that inspired her decade-long research and memorial website.

Litt followed her curiosity for the next year. As she learned more about the Liberty Row oaks, she realized what a personal and fragile memorial she had happened upon. In 2015, she and her teenage daughter spent an entire Saturday walking and photographing the Shaker and Cleveland Heights portions of Liberty Row. Nearly 100 of the memorials, including Robert Nardi's resettled marker, remained in place here.





Other parts of the memorial, Litt later learned, hadn't fared as well. There used to be about 850 plaques. In Cleveland, she says, "most of the plaques are gone. Most of the trees are gone."

Before it was Martin Luther King Boulevard, the winding parklike road running from University Circle to Lake Erie was called Liberty Row and, later, Liberty Boulevard.



"There used to be about 850 plaques in Cleveland. Most of the plaques are gone. Most of the trees are gone."

The trees and markers on this busy road were frequently subject to damaging car accidents. And, as early as 1920, just a year after their dedication, The Plain Dealer reported that vandals were damaging and taking the markers, presumably for the value of the bronze used in the plaques.

In the late 1950s, the newspaper reported that local children no longer knew what Liberty Row was, and that about 100 markers were missing at that time. The American Legion could not afford to replace them.

Today, the remaining Liberty Row oaks receive care from the cities – Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, or Shaker Heights – in which they are located. But there are few name markers left. In the late 2010s, Cleveland Heights installed several sturdy signs commemorating the memorial along North Park Boulevard. On Veterans Day 2022, the city of Cleveland installed a striking new Liberty Row granite memorial at Wade Park in front of the Cleveland VA Hospital. Acknowledging the decline of the original living memorial, it is engraved with the names of each soldier who'd had an oak tree and a plaque.

But, beyond their names, who were these young men?



"The memory is going to be lost because they were so young when they died. Most of them were not married or had children, so they had no descendants."



SAVING SOLDIERS' STORIES

Each day, Litt, a retired nurse and medical research coordinator, sits down at her computer to seek out the story of one more soldier. She pores over Ancestry.com, Fold3.com (a military records site), and The Cleveland Necrology File of the Cleveland Public Library (which often has names of family members). From there, she follows leads to other sources such as additional documents or current Google Street View photos of the home addresses listed for the soldiers.

Gustaf Adolf Sundquist (1879-1918) was an American immigrant from Sweden who served in both the Spanish American War and World War I. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nation's highest honor for valor in combat, in the Spanish American War. In Cleveland, he was an ironworker and father of five, and the family lived on W. 38th St.

Sundquist died by accidental drowning off the coast of England in World War I. While his remains were not found, he had a memorial stone placed at Arlington National Cemetery, and he is listed on the wall of the missing at Brookwood American Cemetery in England. His wife Matilda likely went on a Gold Star Mothers' and Widows' pilgrimage to visit his memorial, at the U.S. government's expense, in the 1930s. Litt's research also unearthed photographs of Sundquist, adding to his unusually robust biography on ClevelandLibertyRow.com.

This level of detail in Sundquist's biography is unusual because of his relatively older age and his heroic military career. Most of Litt's research trails do not yield as much information, but she does her best. In many cases, without these biographies of the soldiers, "the memory is going to be lost because they were so young

when they died. Most of them were not married or had children, so they had no descendants," says Litt. Many were just 18 years old.

Litt has not yet found any soldiers from Shaker Heights – perhaps not surprisingly, given that it was founded in 1912, not long before the war – and only a handful of soldiers in Litt's work have hailed from Cleveland Heights, which was first organized in 1901. Almost all the soldiers



Litt photographs each marker as part of her research on WWI soldiers memorialized on Liberty Row.



are from the city of Cleveland, many from immigrant enclaves. Most were blue collar workers. They were a diverse group in other ways: some were Jewish, some were African American. Certainly, Black soldiers were subject to discrimination both in military service and at home, and Jewish residents faced discrimination, including early deed restrictions in Shaker Heights, but in death they all had identical memorials in Liberty Row.

"They came from every country, every ethnic group, every religion, every race," says Litt.

The markers were generally placed in alphabetical order starting at Lake Erie and working their way up into the Heights. Litt began researching her profiles with the soldiers remembered in Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights, so S-Z last names were the first she completed. She then moved to the top of the alphabet and had made her way to the E's as of this spring.







"They came from every country, every ethnic group, every religion, every race."

Luckily, a master list of the placards was discovered in 1999 by a Cleveland City Council archivist, and Litt works from this. Unfortunately, she has found numerous inconsistencies across various records over the years, even in the names of soldiers. This makes her research complex, and her painstaking attention to detail invaluable.

Litt is captivated by the work. It's sad, she says. The causes of death are many – not only war wounds but also tuberculosis, mustard gas, syphilis, influenza – so much influenza, given the 1918 pandemic and how disproportionately it killed young people. But the research is also gratifying work, because she's also spending time paying tribute to each man, getting to know him a little and sharing his story. One soldier a day gives her time to give each man his due, but also makes space for her to recharge in her own happy life.

LOOKING AHEAD

Litt anticipates that completing biographies of each of the 850 or so soldiers will take a few more years. She's focused on that task and on preserving these stories at ClevelandLibertyRow.com, which was built by Litt's tech-savvy sister, Susan Morss.

Ultimately, Litt would like to connect her research with other local groups who are interested in preserving the history of this memorial and the stories of the soldiers

To reconstruct the stories of each soldier, Litt consults multiple resources including, Ancestry.com, Fold3.com (a military records site), and The Cleveland Necrology File of the Cleveland Public Library.



it commemorates. "Another thing would be to perhaps get some schools interested in history projects around World War I that might incorporate some of the local history," says Litt. That's why the website includes an educator resource page to connect teachers and students with this history.

At this time, Litt's mission is to collect stories rather than focus on the condition of the physical Liberty Row monument. But she's glad to see that Shaker Heights still has dozens of Liberty Row oak trees still standing and thriving. "Don't you love that Shaker pays attention to trees? I love my trees," says Litt, who now lives in Cleveland near Shaker Square. "We're so lucky. I always say, this is the best place I've ever lived…it's such an incredible community." **SL**

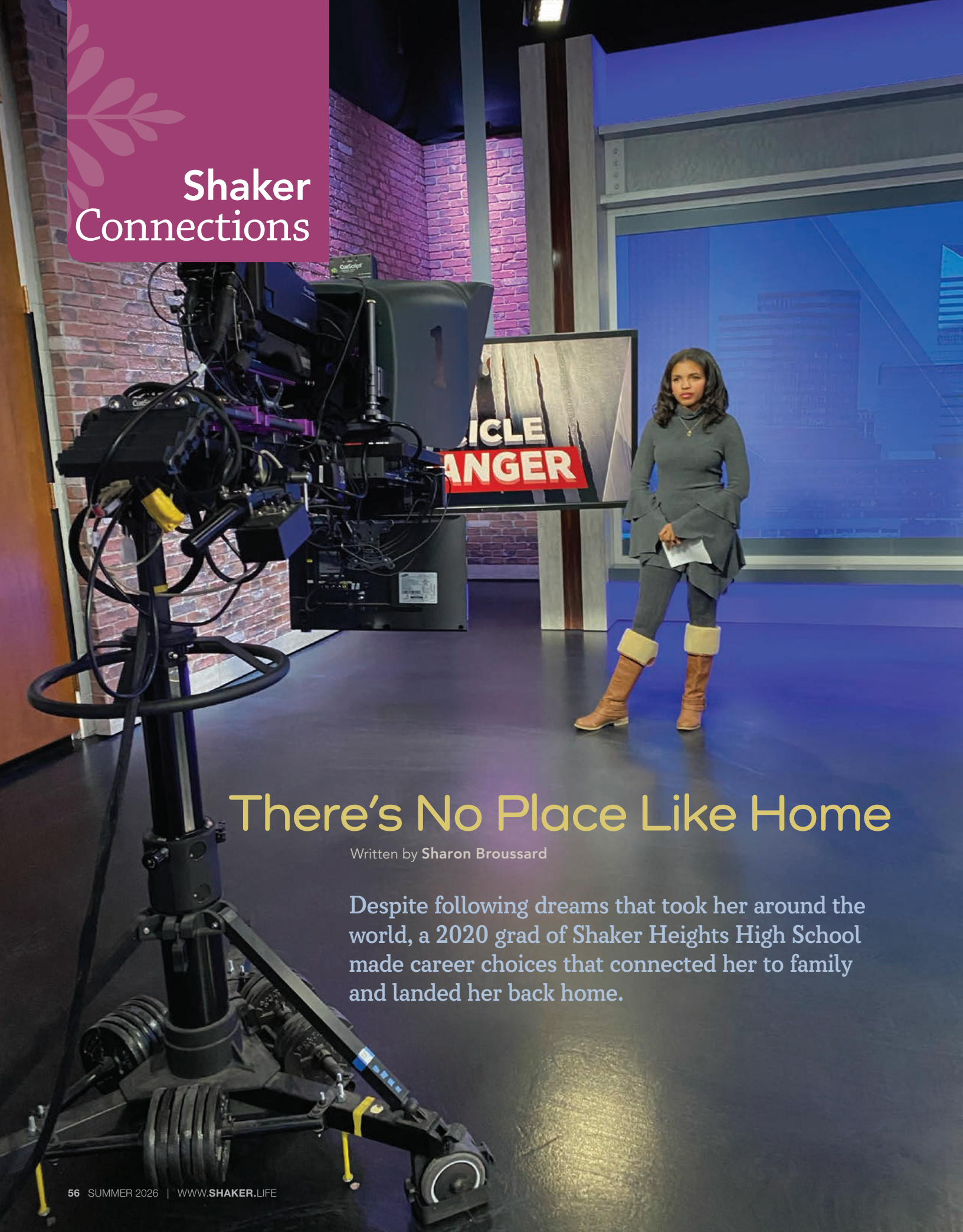
Information to Share?

Do you have information to share about Liberty Row? Are you a descendant of a Liberty Row soldier? Rosalie Litt would love to hear from you. You can email her at clevelandlibertyrow@gmail.com.

Explore Liberty Row

You can still find dozens of the original Liberty Row markers and oak trees, especially in the Heights. In Shaker Heights, Liberty Row follows North Park Boulevard to South Park Boulevard by way of Park Drive at Horseshoe Park and continues east on South Park Boulevard, terminating around Sherbrooke Road near Hathaway Brown School.

The Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at the VA hospital contains names of soldiers exactly as they appear on the original master list of Liberty Row names. Names on ClevelandLibertyRow.com are confirmed using multiple references including birth and death records, signatures on draft cards, and other military records.



There's No Place Like Home

Written by **Sharon Broussard**

Despite following dreams that took her around the world, a 2020 grad of Shaker Heights High School made career choices that connected her to family and landed her back home.



To Kiara Patterson, there is no place like home, and Fox 8 News. Which is where you can see the poised 24-year-old Shaker Heights High School graduate with microphone in hand, confidently delivering the news.

Patterson started at Fox 8 in January after working as a reporter at WZZM 13, an ABC television affiliate in Grand Rapids, Michigan for two and a half years. Coming back to Shaker, where her parents, grandmother, aunt, and other relatives live, is just what she wanted. "I decided to go back home and just be with my family and my friends. It is such a vibrant city," she says.

Patterson attended Shaker schools from kindergarten (Lomond) to high school (class of 2020), learning along the way that "if you could dream it, then you could do it."

She surely did. She took AP classes in high school, mastered Spanish while on an internship in Cali, Colombia, played in the orchestra, and made time to be a Raiderette, a theater nerd, and a MAC Sister. In her words, she was "able to experience different parts of myself in Shaker."

She also fell in love with writing and her AP Composition course, which led her to journalism.

There was one small hiccup after all of those achievements. Like many teenagers who graduated in 2020, she didn't have a prom or graduation because of the COVID pandemic. Instead, she watched Shaker's graduation events in her living room with her family.





Nevertheless, this high achiever was accepted into 14 colleges and universities, choosing Howard University in Washington, DC, a historically Black college, because she wanted to explore her history as a Black woman and to live in DC.

Patterson majored in journalism and interned at several news programs including the "Today Show" on NBC and the CBS evening news program hosted by Norah O'Donnell. She graduated from Howard in three and a half years.

She got her first job at the Grand Rapids station after sending the news director the three best stories she had produced at Howard, which, she notes, has an excellent journalism department.

Grand Rapids was ideal because it is just four and a half hours away from Shaker, and she wanted to be close enough to home, yet able "to spread my wings," she says.



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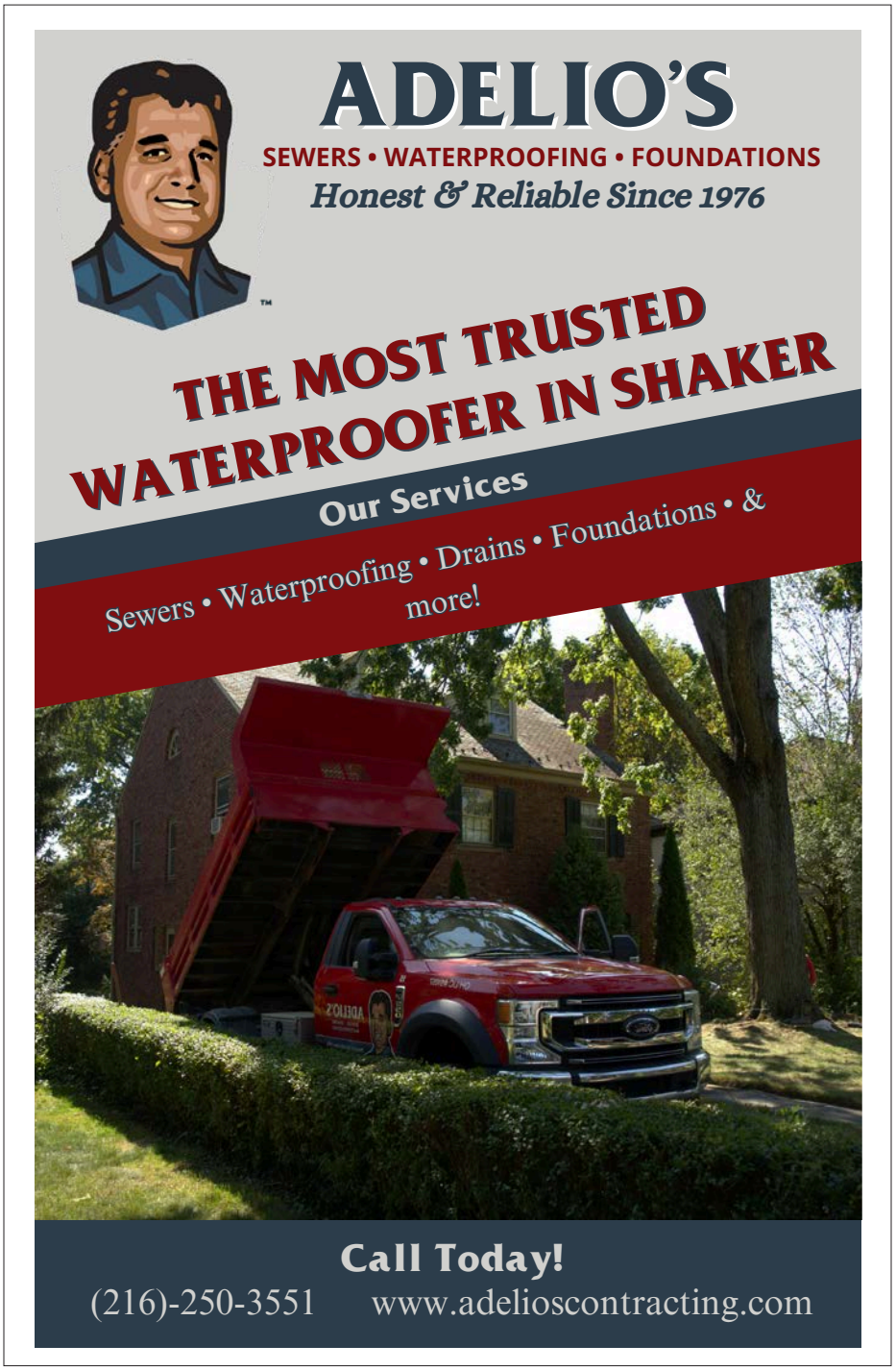
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Now she is a general assignment reporter at Fox 8, covering everything from fires to feature stories at a station that the whole family used to watch when she was a child. She's on the air three days a week and Saturdays and Sundays.

One of her favorite stories on Fox 8 involved a Youngstown woman who re-connected with her lost microchipped dog named Saleo after nine years of the dog being "out in the wild," says Patterson. The dog was so unkempt with matted fur. "Their reunion was so emotional for both the dog and the owner."

Not surprising, perhaps, that a homecoming story would capture her heart.

Currently the youngest reporter at the station, Patterson says it is "a huge dream to sit with the legends there. I pinch myself every day."

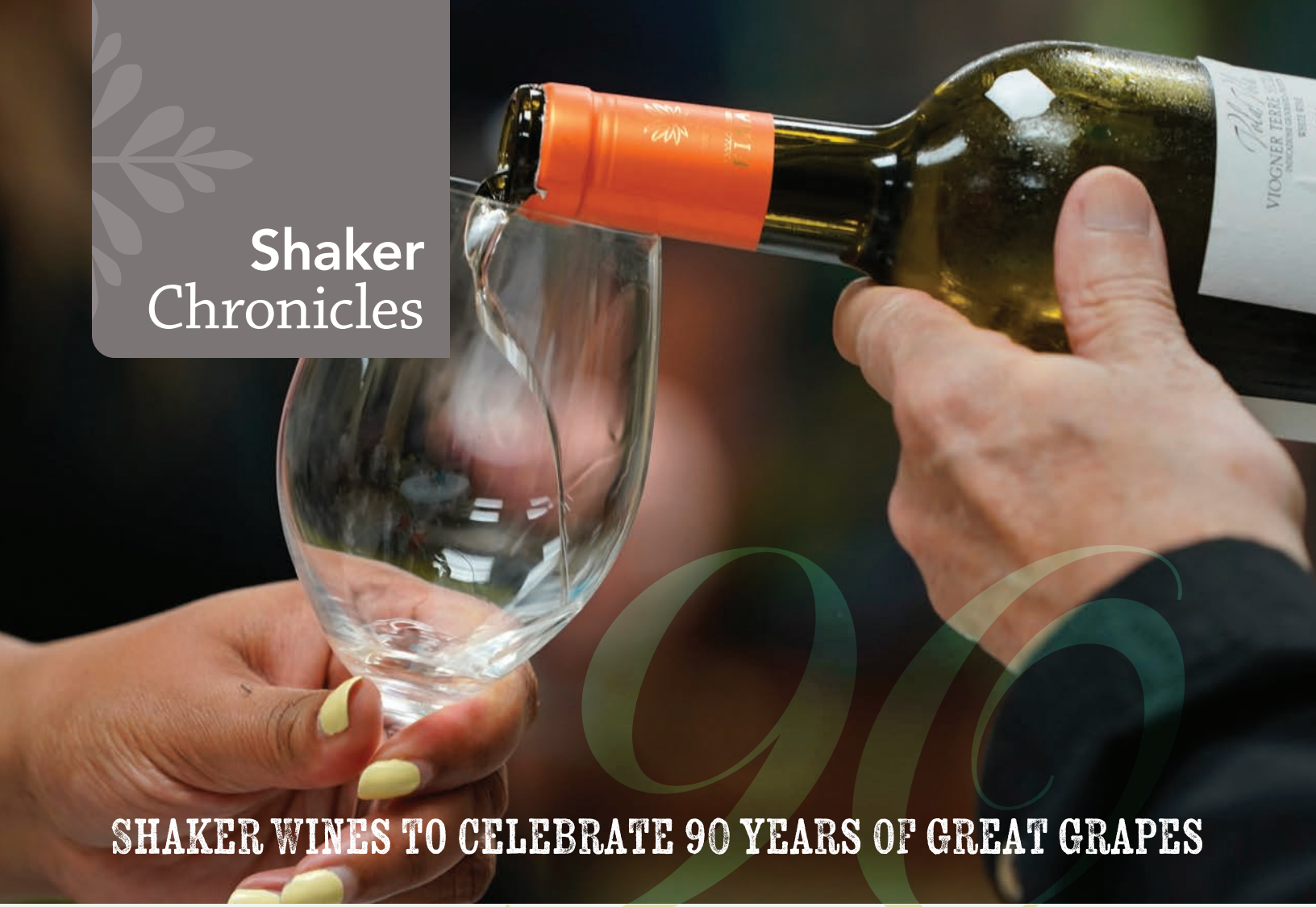
One of those legends, Wayne Dawson, a Fox 8 mainstay for 46 years, says Patterson has been doing a great job.

"I am proud to see her on the air," he says. "She has a good delivery. It's always good to see people from Cleveland."

Now Patterson is compiling a list of things she wants to do, from learning how to roller skate to traveling to Japan soon.

A self-described positive person, Patterson says her goal as a television reporter is to help make connections between people and to find stories with happy endings.

"That's what we need," she says. **SL**



SHAKER WINES TO CELEBRATE 90 YEARS OF GREAT GRAPES

Written by **Nate Paige**

1937 was quite a year.

*

Greater Clevelanders were wowed by the Great Lakes Expo;
President Franklin D. Roosevelt began his second term;
Warner Bros. put the finishing touches on its art-deco
masterpiece, the Colony Theater in Shaker Square;
Amelia Earhart's plane went down over the Pacific;
and less than four years after Prohibition ended,
Jurgen von Leutwitz opened Shaker Square Beverages.

Fast forward 42 years. Gene Veronesi, an Advanced Placement European History teacher at Collinwood High School, approached the beverage store owners in search of an apprenticeship. After months of rejections, his persistence and passionate interest in wine paid off. Veronesi worked unpaid, part-time, until an opening became available.

He was trained at the Shaker Square location to become manager at the second location, at Severance Center in Cleveland Heights. (Additional locations would open in the Halle Building, downtown, and in Kent.)





In 1979, Gene Veronesi, an Advanced Placement European History teacher at Collinwood High School, approached the beverage store owners in search of an apprenticeship.

In 1984, Veronesi purchased the establishment from Bob Gries, and in 2005, Veronesi moved the business to Van Aken Shopping Center and changed its name to Shaker Wines.

Trends over the years

As with any product, wine trends come and go. Shaker Wines has weathered years of what's hot and what's not.

"In 1984, my best-selling wine was Robert Mondavi, which was approximately $15 a bottle," recalls Veronesi. "But the most popular wines nationwide were Lambrusco and Bolla Soave, going for $5 a bottle. Today, our average sale is around $30 a bottle, whereas the average purchase of wine nationwide is around $9.

"In 1984, my best-selling wine was Robert Mondavi, which was approximately $15 a bottle. Today, our average sale is around $30 a bottle. Shaker customers know quality, which is what we still advocate today."



"The latest trend in the wine business is that young people are drinking less of it. Older wine buyers, aged 40-65, aren't drinking more wine, but they're drinking quality wine. Shaker customers know quality, which is what we still advocate today."

Quality product, combined with excellent customer service, creates repeat business.

Assistant Erika Stephens, who was hired last fall, feels Veronesi provides the epitome of customer service.

"He creates an atmosphere with long-term clients, as I'm learning to do. It's part of the education of the store. Not just customer service, but true relationship-building hospitality that creates a welcome environment, is valued," she says.

"He creates an atmosphere with long-term clients, as I'm learning to do. It's part of the education of the store. Not just customer service, but true relationship-building hospitality that creates a welcome environment, is valued."



Several tasting events last spring sold out within days of being announced. Veronesi enjoys teaching the basics of wine.

"If I can expose you to the simple principles of wine, I've done my job. The most important aspect is, drink what you like, but don't be afraid to venture into new wines."

Veronesi is mapping out plans for the 90th anniversary celebration, but he's also looking to the future, wondering what it will be like running a 100-year-old business. **SL**

Nate Paige is communications specialist with the City of Shaker Heights.

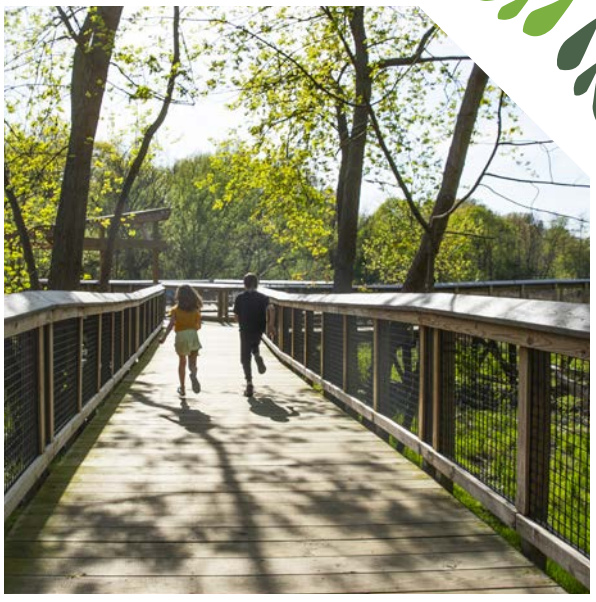




"If I can expose you to the simple principles of wine, I've done my job. The most important aspect is, drink what you like, but don't be afraid to venture into new wines."









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