The Metanoia Project hosts its 10th Anniversary Open House

The Metanoia Project held a special celebration of its 10th Anniversary Open House, on Sunday, November 19th, at its shelter at St. Malachi Parish, 2459 Washington Avenue. The Open House followed the opening of the overnight shelter and homeless hospitality center, on Friday, November 17th. Now in its tenth year, the Metanoia Project's ministry to the homeless will continue to offer respite to guests on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday evenings, starting at 7 p.m. each night. During nights of severe weather, the Metanoia Project will open on weekdays when they normally would be closed. The shelter will remain open through mid-April. The Community Open House featured a healthy dinner prepared by Care Alliance Health Center. The dinner featured healthy items like spaghetti squash with meatballs, baked chicken, cooked vegetables, fruit salad and vegetable salad. Care Alliance staff and volunteers brought the food to tables occupied by Metanoia Project volunteers, supporters and guests who make use of the shelter.

Speakers included Executive Director Megan Crow, Program Manager Carl Cook, and co-founders Jim Schlecht and Tim Walters. Speakers talked about the history of the Metanoia Project and the current services it offers. They noted the availability of MetroHealth doctors on Friday nights; Courage to Change classes on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays; and the Care Alliance Clinic's medical and mental health services on Sunday nights.

continued on page 5

The NRP Group sponsors Habitat for Humanity home on W. 99th Street

The NRP Group, a Cleveland-based vertically integrated, best-in-class developer, has been recognized recently as a leader in its field.

Mayor Frank Jackson shares his post election priorities for governing the City of Cleveland

Mayor Frank Jackson shared his post election priorities for governing the City of Cleveland, focusing on Education, Public Safety & Economic Development. In a post-election press conference with neighborhood and community newspapers, Mayor Frank Jackson said he hoped that everyone in Cleveland would be able to participate in improvements in the quality of life and the progress of the city.

To that end, Mayor Jackson outlined three areas of focus: education, public safety and economic development.

In education, Jackson mentioned the importance of improving the investment schools, addressing the needs of students with individual educational plans (IEPs) and quality education as a means of wealth creation by preparing young people for future jobs and careers.

Jackson said the Cleveland Plan has resulted in quality school choices such as Campus International and John Hay that have caused people with school age children to stay in Cleveland rather than move to the suburbs. He noted the Cleveland Metropolitan School District was applying to be a “Say Yes to Education” school system, which he said would create an infrastructure around the child.

When asked about providing more dollars to investment schools, Mayor Jackson said he didn’t feel more funding would necessarily improve performance in the investment schools. He tied school performance to “something going on within the school.” He said you could have two schools drawing from the same population, with one school performing well and the other not. He said improving the performance of a school was a matter of program and staffing.

Jackson talked about the “Say Yes to Education” grant that he hoped would create an infrastructure for future jobs and careers. He said he hoped the grant would open the door to additional funding for the Cleveland Plan.

continued on page 3
Christmas Dinner

There will be a delicious Christmas dinner served at St. Augustine Church, 2486 West 14th St., on Christmas day from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. If you are homebound and unable to attend, please call 216-781-5880 and we will make arrangements for a meal to be delivered right to your door. Requests for Christmas Dinners will be taken up until 1 p.m. on Friday, December 22nd.

Please call between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
ESOP receives Bank of America’s Neighborhood Builder Award

On October 17th, Bank of America announced the selection of Empowering and Strengthening Ohio’s People (ESOP) as a 2017 Neighborhood Builder. ESOP, a HUD-approved housing and financial counseling nonprofit agency dedicated to promoting sustainable homeownership, is being recognized for its work to foster financial stability among Ohio homeowners.

Through Neighborhood Builders the bank provides nonprofits with a unique combination of leadership development (for the executive director and a developing leader in the organization), $200,000 in flexible funding; a network of peer organizations across the U.S. and the opportunity to access capital in order to expand their impact in the communities they serve.

Since 2005, ESOP has assisted more than 35,000 homeowners in all 88 counties across the state of Ohio, including 17,000 in the Cleveland area alone.

In 2014, ESOP launched the Senior Financial Empowerment Initiative (SFEI) to help older adults regain and maintain control of their finances. The program has grown four-fold over the past four years and features a variety of client offerings, including senior financial education workshops, ongoing housing counseling and coaching, senior property tax loans, and free income tax preparation and filing. SFEI will remain a top priority as ESOP uses its Neighborhood Builders funding to develop an outcome-based evaluation system, implement additional programming to facilitate aging in place, and meet its overall staffing and training needs.

Founded in 1993, Empowering and Strengthening Ohio’s People (ESOP) is a HUD-approved housing and financial counseling agency headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio. ESOP was responsible for putting over $117 million back into the community through the Save the Dream Ohio program administered by Ohio Housing Finance Agency. Since 2014, ESOP has helped more than 10,000 low-income seniors age in place with greater financial stability and a reduced risk of financial exploitation through its Senior Financial Empowerment Initiative, an innovative, integrated suite of financial capability programs directed at vulnerable older adults. ESOP is a subsidiary of the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging. Learn more about ESOP at www.esop-cleveland.org and connect on Twitter at @esopcommunity.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOME

For Ramos, the fourth time applying for a Habitat home proved to be the charm, after three previous attempts.

“I was discouraged, but I just kept working on myself in order to get over that hurdle,” she said. “Through volunteering, it is very humbling for me to see how much goes into Habitat and see the different things that they do.”

NRP’s work on the Habitat home included all new flooring and drywall, repainting, new lighting and light fixtures, new plumbing lines and fixtures, new gutters and downspouts, the installation of two-panel doors throughout, installation of high-efficiency mechanical/AC systems, low-emissivity glass windows throughout, new shingles and siding, new insulation throughout the home and in the attic, and rebuilt front and back porches.

On meeting and getting to know employees of sponsor partner NRP Group, Ramos added: “To have sponsors and people who are there to help you, I’m appreciative,” Ramos said.


Plain Press Online: Visit the Plain Press website at: www.plainpress.org

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOME

continued from page one

Marketta Ramos, the Habitat homeowner, grew up in the same neighborhood on Cleveland’s west side and is now the mother of two daughters, Patricia, age 15, and Rylee, age 6.

“I wanted to find a home that they can grow up and have memories in, and be proud of,” said Ramos, who was introduced to Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity by a friend who is also a Habitat homeowner.

“It feels like a fresh start, a new beginning, a new outlook.”

Plain Press Online: Visit the Plain Press website at: www.plainpress.org

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOME

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PHOTO BY JENEEN HOBAN OF BENJAMIN ROSE INSTITUTE ON AGING

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December 2017 • Plain Press

LETTER

Lutheran Hospital urged to accept detox patients with a single addiction -- heroin

To the editor:

I would like to commend the Plain Press on its coverage of the panel discussion at Lutheran Hospital concerning the present opioid crisis. As I read the article, however, I was aware of the fact that, while As I read the article, however, I was aware of the fact that, while hospitals might reconsider their present detox and treatment. In my opinion, providing more detox and treatment would be a significant step in addressing this crisis. It is my hope that Lutheran Hospital might reconsider their present policy.

Jim Schlecht
Outreach Worker

LITERARY CLEVELAND LAUNCHES

Literary Cleveland launched the first edition of the Gordon Square Review at a November 9th party at Gordon Square Review. The inaugural issue of the biannual magazine features eight prose pieces, ten poetry pieces and work by local artist Chris Pekoc. To read the prose and poetry and see the art work in the Gordon Square Review go to www.gordonsquarereview.org.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOME

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Plain Press Online: Visit the Plain Press website at: www.plainpress.org
Cleveland artists to raise funds to help Puerto Rican hurricane victims

Puerto Rico was ravaged by hurricane Maria, leaving millions in need of shelter, food, water and other goods. Local artists Eileen Sheehan and Linda Zolten Wood are coming together to help families and communities in need on the island through an event called CLE ART for Puerto Rico. The upcoming event will raise funds through the sale of art donated by local artists.

Mayor Jackson and Zolten Wood were inspired by the efforts of local chef and TV personality Lisa Pucci Del Gatto. She has been working hard, since Maria hit, to facilitate the shipment of supplies through Amazon to her isolated hometown of Ponce Azul. After seeing the devastation in Puerto Rico, the artists created the idea of selling art from local Cleveland artists to raise funds for Puerto Rico relief efforts.

Well known Cleveland artist, Hector Vega, and graphic designer, Richard Romero, volunteered to be involved in the fundraiser and brought with them valuable resources.

Campaign underway to repair “It’s Up To Us” mural

The mural, designed by artist John Rivera-Resto, was defaced with grafitti. The painting of the mural was a massive project that involved many people. The goal is to help the Rivera-Resto, including neighborhood youth, get the mural back to life. Artwork is available at person at https://www.pontum.de/muralart/puertorico. Walk-ins welcome with the donation at the door. Children are free. The hours are from 4-8 pm. You can find out more from your local artists. Editor’s Note: For more information contact Eileen Sheehan at eileen@eileenstudio.com or call 216-505-0684.

Teachers under stress in Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s Investment Schools

by Gluck Hoven

At the November 21st meeting of the Cleveland Board of Education, educational advocate Don Freeman, for the third month in a row, brought up the issue of the stress that the teaching staffs at Cleveland’s twenty-three investment schools are experiencing.

Freeman emphasized the need on the island through an event called CLE ART for Puerto Rico.

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Cleveland Clerk of Courts

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by Victoria Shea

The sight of a fully decorated Christmas tree is something that many of us look forward to, but in the family of Bernadine Martens and Walter Martens, Jr, the tree is a symbol of hope.

Bernadine got the idea after she read an article in a trade journal, Martens said. “Anybody can decorate an ornament, but when you read an article in a trade journal,” Martens said. “Anybody can decorate an ornament, but when you read an article in a trade journal, you find that there’s an idea out there, and then you take it and make it your own.”

Bernadine and Walter Martens, Jr created what has become a holiday tradition of hope, called the Tree of Remembrance. The tradition was started shortly after the loss of their grandfather. Bernadine found themselves with several small children left grieving the loss of their grandfather.

“Bernadine got the idea after she read an article in a trade journal,” Martens said. “Anybody can decorate an ornament, but when you read an article in a trade journal, you find that there’s an idea out there, and then you take it and make it your own.”

The Tree of Remembrance consists of several parts: people bring ornaments in honor of their loved ones. These ornaments are placed on a live tree until the Christmas season. The ornaments are then placed on a tree and all the ornaments on it. The last part of the service is a candlelight ceremony, led by various staff members. As candles in a wreath are lit, those present are given a final chance to reflect, remember and celebrate their loved ones.

The Tree of Remembrance is already under way this year, as people think it has to be. The family has grown from being a small neighborhood event to something that many describe as the most unusual form: A Christmas Tree.

Continued from page one

The dedication and ceremony lasts just over an hour, and consists of the formal dedication of the tree and all the ornaments on it. Following the ceremony, there is a reading of those the Martens family served over the last twelve months and an opportunity for others present to remember loved ones from past years or those served by a different funeral home.

“The reading of the necrology has to be the hardest part of the ceremony,” Martens said. “Other than the voice of those reading the names, a hush comes over the room and those present as they reflect and remember.”

The last part of the service is a candlelight ceremony, led by various staff members. As candles in a wreath are lit, those present are given a final chance to reflect, remember and celebrate their loved ones.

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Advocacy effort calls for restoring lost $1 million to Cleveland Schools’ Comprehensive Extracurricular Activities Program

by Chuck Hoven

On June 28, 1995, the Cleveland City Council passed legislation which increased parking, admissions and motor vehicle leasing taxes. The legislation allowed the money to be used for extracurricular activities for the Cleveland Schools, repairs for the football stadium and the general fund of the City of Cleveland.

With the funds designated for the school system, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District created the Comprehensive Extracurricular Activities Program. The legislation created a Joint Board made up of the Mayor of Cleveland, the Council President and the Superintendent (now CEO) of the school system or their designated representative to oversee the funds that were to go to the school system and agree on an annual budget.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Why, might you ask, was the City of Cleveland getting involved in passing taxes to fund the school system, which has local property taxes already designated for its use? Educational advocate and retired Cleveland School Teacher Gene Tracy, who has been involved in advocating for the Comprehensive Extracurricular Activities Program (CEAP), says the reason for the funding was to make the Cleveland School System whole for the Cleveland Brown's stadium being exempt from paying property taxes.

During the county-wide campaign to raise funds to build the stadium, it was promised that the new stadium would result in increased property taxes to fund the schools. Instead Mayor Michael White went downstate and successfully lobbied for the stadium to be exempt from local property taxes. Tracy says at the time the stadium, if taxed, would have meant an additional $2.3 million for the Cleveland schools. While Cuyahoga County voters overall supported the new building for the Browns’ stadium, the tax did not win a majority of Cleveland voters.

To make up for the loss of property tax revenue for the Cleveland Schools, Tracy says the Mayor and City Council proposed a portion of the revenue from the parking, admissions and motor vehicle leasing taxes to go to the school system for extracurricular activities. The amount given to the school system amounted to about $2 million a year from the 1997-1998 school year until the project was completed and completed.

In the 2010-2011 school year the amount dropped to $1 million and has remained roughly at that level since.

Tracy sees the cut in funds allocated to CEAP as a betrayal of a promise made to make the school system whole for the loss of property tax revenue from giving the stadium a property tax exemption. A number of years ago Councilman Jay Westbrook told the Plain Press, the million dollars was moved to the general fund to make up for State Budget cuts. In a recent interview with Mayor Frank Jackson, he gave a similar response. Jackson said as a result of the recession and State cuts of $10 million, the money was needed to provide City Services. What Westbrook and Jackson failed to mention was that the Cleveland Stadium fund received $3.5 million in the 2010 City Budget, the same as the previous year, while funds for the extracurricular program for the Cleveland Schools were cut from $2 million to $1 million.

Mayor Jackson said he believes the extracurricular programs do help students. He recalled some of the many activities funded by the CEAP, including, but not limited to, chess clubs, cheerleaders, and arts programs, he noted. Jackson said the City of Cleveland continues to give to the program “whatever we are able to.”

Jackson said that students who develop a passion for an extracurricular activity, always do better. He cited passion, as a reason the School of Arts does so well. Indeed, data, presented by the Comprehensive Extracurricular Activities Program, reveals that students participating in the program had both higher attendance rates and higher grade-point averages than students that did not participate in the program.

As he has done for years, Tracy spoke at the Cleveland Board of Education, meeting on November 21st, calling upon Chief Executive Officer Eric Gordon to demand that the $1 million per year be restored to the Comprehensive Extracurricular Activities Program budget to bring the level back to the $2 million level that was originally promised. Gordon is one of three members of the Joint Board that must agree each year on the amount given to the program.
COMMUNITY BOARD
continued page from 2

financial assistance is available. Sign up by visiting www.horizonohio.org or call 1-877-312-3228 x 118. They are looking for volunteer coaches for all ages. Commitment level is about 25 hours a week. Season starts mid-January and runs through late March. Sign up to volunteer at newwelcome@horizonohio.org.

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Lou Tisler, Executive Director

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**November 7th General Election Results - Candidates in contested races**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mayor of Cleveland</td>
<td>Frank G. Jackson</td>
<td>35,506</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zack Reed</td>
<td>24,116</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59,622</strong></td>
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| Cleveland City Council | Ward 3: Kerry McCormack | 2,692 | 84.7% |
|                        | Logan E. Fahey        | 486   | 15.3% |
|                        | **Total**             | 3,178 |

| Ward 11: Gilder E. Malone | 519 | 21% |
| Ward 12: Anthony Bancatelli | 2,021 | 72.9% |
| Shalira Taylor | 751 | 27.1% |
| **Total** | 2,772 |

| Ward 14: Jasmine Santana | 999 | 51.2% |
| Brian Cummings | 951 | 48.8% |
| **Total** | 1,950 |

| Ward 15: Matt Zone | 2,522 | 79.7% |
| Alex Karrfalt | 643 | 20.3% |
| **Total** | 3,165 |

**Municipal Court Judges elected in contested races:**
- Jasmine Torres-Lugo
- Michael L. Nelson Sr.
- Ann Clare Oaker
- Ronald J. H. O'Leary
- Earle B. Turner

**Source:** Cuyahoga County Board of Elections

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**INVESTMENT SCHOOLS**

continued from page 4

about teaching methods provided by the outside vendors may have been useful in the first year of their contracts, the vendors were repeating the same information in the second and third years. The teachers report constant evaluation of teaching methods by vendors; vendors putting teachers out of classrooms to give them evaluation results; teacher training sessions that take teachers away from the classroom; and administrators unavailable to address discipline problems because they are so heavily involved in walking around with laptops filling out teacher evaluations.

Teachers say the evaluations don’t ask if the needs of the school or the classroom teacher are being addressed. Instead, the vendors just criticize teachers with negative evaluations without providing resources to address needs. Teachers described a pattern of bullying and intimidation by some of the vendors. They say the vendors and their agenda have taken over the school. When teachers complain that the program is not working, the vendors say it is because the teachers are not buying in.

The teachers say the stress level; the increased number of forms they must fill out as part of the evaluations; the constant scrutiny by evaluators; the intrusive methods such as having someone critiquing the teacher via an earphone while they are teaching; and threats of termination are causing veteran teachers to retire early and first year teachers to leave. The presence of the vendors and the extra burden on teachers in the Investment Schools also makes it hard to attract quality teaching candidates to replace lost teachers, say teachers involved in school hiring committees.

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**The Plain Press seeks your help**

Dear Plain Press Readers and Supporters:

This year marks the 46th anniversary of the Plain Press, a free community newspaper founded in 1971 to present issues and community news to residents of Cleveland’s west side. In 2017, the Plain Press continues its mission of presenting issues and news at no charge to its 40,000 readers each month.

The Plain Press’ ability to continue to serve the west side neighborhoods of Cleveland is due in large part to the contributions of readers and supporters in the annual Friends of the Plain Press campaign. The Friends of the Plain Press Campaign was established following the successful 2011 40th anniversary fundraiser. The Plain Press reached out to readers and supporters and you came through in a big way to help sustain the newspaper.

This year, we are again asking you to donate to the Plain Press to ensure the newspaper moves forward. To mark its 46th anniversary we are asking you for a donation of $46 or a reflection of its 46 years of operation (e.g. $92, $146, $460). It will help subsidize the operations of the newspaper, but will be specifically used to support the Plain Press Community Board that lists free events and resources for area nonprofit organizations.

A separate Plain Press fund has been established for the newspaper by Organize! Ohio (a tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization). Checks should be made out to Organize! Ohio and sent to 3500 Lorain Avenue, Suite 501 A, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Your contribution is tax deductible.

Please fill out the donation form to the left.