

The Cleveland Observer

Engage * Educate * Empower

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March 2023

Black Wall Street in East Cleveland



ECEF members, residents and friends

Goodrum, Minister Gwendolyn Pitts, Danielle Dronet, and Jason Andrews.

The people in attendance ranged from toddlers to elders. With great audience participation, the Foundation asked the residents and others to lend their talents to the rebuilding of this once-great place. The Foundation feels East Cleveland was once a “Black Wall Street” and can be again.

Beverly Moore and an Neighborhood Leadership Institute (NLI) staffer.

The Neighborhood Leadership



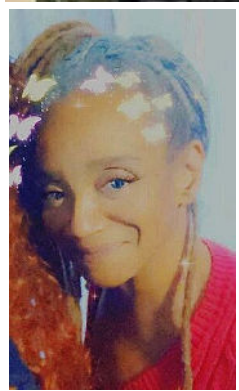
Barclay-Jones with honoree Yvetta Eley



East Cleveland Councilwoman Juanita Gowdy in attendance

Institute (NLI) was also there. Neighborhood Navigation Coordinator Beverly Moore and the NLI staff were there to help residents learn about infant mortality rates and how they can be reduced.

How can you be a great contributor to the rebuilding of this city? Contact the foundation’s EIAnee Barkley Jones, HOW Institute, at Hbarkleyjones@gmail.com. Plans to move forward with committees will be shared accordingly.



By Marvetta Rutherford

A few weeks ago, over a hundred citizens came together in the city of East Cleveland. The purpose of the event was to discuss rebuilding this impoverished city and to provide information on various issues impacting the citizens. On the program were politicians from the county and city levels, past and present officials, judges, and police officers. The CEO of Eastside Citizens Empowerment Foundation (ECEF), EIAnee Barclay-Jones, served as Mistress of the Ceremony and was joined onstage by City Council members Juanita Gowdy of Ward 2 and Nathaniel Martin, council at large. Others who represented Eastside Citizens Empowerment Foundation included Elder Jacqueline Swails

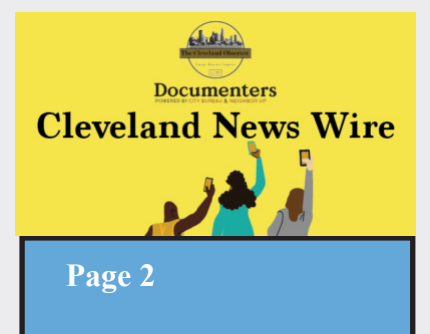


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Inside



“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”
- Maya Angelou
(April 4, 1928 – May 28, 2014)

Is Cleveland’s Drinking Water Safe?



CLE Observer News Brief

The Cleveland Water Department issued a tweet initiated by several inquiries about whether there’s any concern for Cleveland’s water quality following the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio.

Your drinking water remains safe.

Cleveland Water gets drinking water from Lake Erie. The Lake and its watershed are separate from the Ohio River and its watershed. There is no indication that Lake Erie or its watershed has been impacted by the train



derailment in East Palestine. The testing that is regularly performed would catch any changes to our source water, should any arise.

However, the Ohio river travels from Pittsburgh south to Kentucky through Cincinnati. Greater Cincinnati Water

Works (GCWW) detached the compound upstream and officials have closed the intake. Officials are continuing to monitor the chemical contaminants traveling down the Ohio River following the train derailment in East Palestine.

“We’re doing everything we can to make sure the water is safe,” said Jeff Swertfeger, GCWW superintendent of water quality. “Our intakes are shut down right now. . .to allow that chemical to go by in the river, and then we don’t even bring it into the plant.”

Source: WLWT Digital Staff and Danielle Dindak

Cleveland News Wire - City Council Highlights



35+ Hours of Cleveland Budget Hearings: Summarized

Feb. 13

Edited by Signal Cleveland's Rachel Dissell, Lawrence Caswell, and Mary Ellen Huesken

Compiled by Signal Cleveland's Doug Breehl-Pitorak

Budget Season: Opening Comments

Mayor Justin Bibb and City Council kicked off budget hearings on Feb. 14 by discussing their priorities for the city. The initial proposed budget known as the Mayor's Estimate asked for about **\$711 million** in spending from the General Fund. Bibb mentioned the following priorities:

- Revitalizing the East Side
- Developing the lakefront
- Public safety

Council Member **Brian Kazy** said he wanted to ensure the administration's budget priorities supported the whole city, **not just the East Side**. Bibb said he is mayor of the whole city but believes supporting the East Side will benefit the whole area. "I believe that a rising tide certainly lifts all boats and that a thriving East Side is in the best interest of West Park and Kamms Corner and Detroit-Shoreway and downtown Cleveland, as well."

Several council members touched on the **Department of Public Safety** in their opening comments. The department, which includes the Divisions of Police, Fire, EMS, and Animal Control, is set to receive about 53 percent of the budget. Though he said residents' safety is his top priority, **Bibb said more police won't solve the issues of violence**.

Ward 7 Council Member **Stephanie Howse** said the city should do something transformational on the issue of **home ownership**. Howse cited how the federal government created suburbs decades ago by insuring mortgages, an initiative that discriminated against Black people.

City Planning

Council wrapped up the first day of hearings by discussing the City Planning Commission (CPC) and its commissions and boards. The CPC reviews development

plans and potential changes to the zoning code. Its proposed 2023 budget is about \$3 million. Director of City Planning Joyce Pan Huang talked about a **vision for 15-minute walkable communities**, and also mentioned replacing the city's **outdated zoning code** with form-based zoning.

Ward 8 Council Member Mike Polensek said he would like to see the city build different types of housing, such as homes that can be built quickly, like tiny homes and homes built in a factory. He wants homes that can be built for under \$200,000.

Department of Public Safety

Council spent two days digging into Public Safety's proposed 2023 budget. Here are a few highlights of what officials discussed.

Retention and Recruitment

The administration is proposing cutting more than 150 vacant public safety positions. Those cuts will save the city about \$15-\$16 million, according to Cleveland Chief Financial Officer Ahmed Abonamah. Council members honed in on the department's recruitment and retention efforts. Director of Public Safety Karrie Howard mentioned a public safety ambassador pilot program. It would employ 18- to 26-year-olds in public safety roles while providing mentoring. Howard also mentioned using social media, job fairs, and the council's August 2022 approval of a 7% raise for police officers as tools for recruitment and retention.

Division of Police

The Cleveland Division of Police is requesting \$218 million for 2023, more than half of Public Safety's total proposed budget. Officials discussed police staffing levels. The budget would cut 142 vacant positions in the division. Chief of Police Dornat "Wayne" Drummond said he was "optimistic" about filling 180 remaining vacancies. Ward 16 Council Member Brian Kazy called it a "pipe dream." The budget would cover 1,041 employees within the division's protective services, which includes patrol officers, safety aides, trainees, and traffic controllers.

Officials also discussed ShotSpotter, a gunshot-detection company used by the city in a three-square-mile area in the Fourth Police District. In October, the council gave the city the green light to expand the technology to cover a total of 13 square miles using about \$2.75 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Drummond said the city hopes to expand by the summer.

Division of Animal Control

Chief Animal Control Officer John Baird said 2022 was a more demanding year for the division than the previous year. Calls for service were up, as were the number of animals trapped and removed from neighborhoods. "Our elderly residents are under siege," said Council President Blaine Griffin regarding nuisance animals like groundhogs that are damaging residents' homes and properties. The division is proposing a budget of about \$3.7 million in 2023, up nearly \$1 million from the year before.

Cleveland Housing Court

Toward the end of week 1, the council turned its attention to the proposed 2023 budget for the Cleveland Housing Court, which is about \$5.4 million.

A protest momentarily interrupted the hearing, with members of the audience chanting "Let Jeff go!" They directed their protest toward Housing Court Judge Moná Scott, who recently jailed 60-year-old Jeffery Ivey for 90 days because the home he owns near the Cultural Gardens had outstanding housing code violations.

The protest happened at the conclusion of the Housing Court presentation, with protesters following Scott out of the room. Prior to that, Scott and Housing Court Administrator Samantha Coleman discussed staffing levels and plans for more kiosks for virtual court hearings. One kiosk opened in July 2022 at Cleveland Public Library's South Branch in Clark-Fulton. More are set to open later this year at the Mt. Pleasant Branch, Glenville Branch, and Carnegie West.

Feb. 6-8

Public commenters focus on poor conditions at Slavic Village house, rec center

Covered by Documenters *Charlestine Pride and Preeya Shankar*

What happened:

Public commenters discussed several quality-of-life



Sonya Sanders speaks to the council about conditions at Slavic Village's Stella Walsh Recreation Center (Credit: Cleveland City Council YouTube).

issues, including bad conditions and squatters in a Slavic Village home, the negative health effects of vacant homes and lots, and violence prevention strategies. One commenter, Sonya Sanders,

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discussed the state of the Stella Walsh Recreation Center, also in Slavic Village. "The ceiling is caving; they not looking up to this," Sanders said, gesturing to the ceilings in council chambers. "They looking up to paint falling on them while they are basketball playing."

Peacemakers get a new contract:

The Peacemakers Alliance, a group that sends outreach workers known as "violence interrupters" to assist families and communities after shootings, has received a new, hurried contract after an administrative error left the group continuing its work without guaranteed pay. Council approved \$300,000 to keep the program going.

Support for flavored tobacco ban:

Some public commenters also spoke in favor of a citywide ban on flavored tobacco products. City Council introduced legislation

Continued on page 3

Cleveland News Wire - Highlights

From page #2

that would do exactly that. It would also require tobacco sellers to obtain a special retail license. The commenters said they believe companies use flavored tobacco to market to youth.

Panel looks at cost of new police HQ, plans for Highland Park Golf Course

Municipal Services and Properties Committee, Cleveland City Council

Covered by Documenters Marvetta Rutherford and Giorgiana Lascu

What happened: The committee moved along legislation that would allow the city to purchase the **ArtCraft building** for the new police headquarters. The total cost of the project is about **\$90 million**, officials said. They estimate it to be about \$71 million cheaper than the long-planned site along the Opportunity Corridor. Ward 5 Council Member Richard Starr asked about plans for relocating the building's current tenants, many of whom are artists. Jon Pinney of TurnDev, a project partner, said the building was 80 percent vacant. He said they offered up to six months of free rent to relocate tenants and forgave 100 percent of past-due rent.

Highland Park Golf Course: The committee discussed legislation that would allow the city to pay the Highland Park Golf Foundation to manage the course for up to 30 years. Annual management fees would be about \$250,000, officials said. The course, located in the suburban village of Highland Hills, is owned by Cleveland. Historically, the course has been a preferred destination for many Black golfers. Committee Chair Kevin Bishop said that he supports the initiative but that he and other council members want more information. Council Member Mike Polensek said he would like to see the city consider a proposal from the Cleveland Metroparks to manage the course.

Insuring Browns Stadium: The committee advanced legislation allowing the city to pay about \$510,000 annually for insurance for Cleveland Browns Stadium. The stadium is worth about \$700 million, according to John Laird, assistant director of Public Works. City Council passed the legislation at its meeting that night.

Hopkins getting new floors, firefighters getting new boots

Cleveland Board of Control
Covered by Documenters Daniel McLaughlin and Mildred Seward

What happened: The board approved contracts with insurance companies to provide health benefits to city employees. The contracts could cost up to the following amounts per year:

- Anthem Blue Cross: \$45 million

- Medical Mutual of Ohio: \$80 million
- Delta Dental: \$5 million
- EyeMed: \$600,000
- Symetra Life Insurance: \$300,000

An official said the city's 2020 healthcare costs were about \$110 million. This resolution was not on the meeting agenda.

Third time's the charm, sort of: Fixes are coming to flooring at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. The city received bids for this work three times, and, each time, vendors failed to meet Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) goals, according to Interim Director of Port Control Dennis Kramer. But, this being the third round of bids, the department recommended going forward with Architectural Floors of Cleveland, Inc., a plan the board approved. An official said the approved vendor was only off from OEO goals by a small margin. The contract covers any flooring that needs repair, including within restrooms.

And also: The board approved the purchase of new safety boots for the Cleveland Division of Fire for \$219,937.

Schools seeking money for health clinics; 'Comebackers' group wants people to finish college

Finance, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Cleveland City Council

Covered by Documenter Carolyn Cooper

What happened: Finance Committee members approved spending \$300,000 to help reach residents who attended but did not complete college. Chief Education Officer Holly Trifiro said that includes as many as 60,000 Clevelanders, some of whom have debt getting in the way of their return to a college classroom. The money would be spent to promote the "Comebacker Campaign" designed to help people finish degrees and access millions in student-debt forgiveness assistance. Council voted to approve the legislation at its meeting that night.

And also: The committee approved dropping the city fine for fare evasion—not paying a bus or train fare—from a potential \$250 and 30 days in jail to \$25 and encouraging the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) to cite people under the city law instead of the state law. A \$25 fine would be closer to the cost of a parking ticket. Council later approved the legislation at its regular meeting, though the transit authority didn't commit to using the new law. Big bike lane projects on deck; new police headquarters moving forward

Jan. 17-20th

Plans for Superior and Lorain bike lanes move forward

Cleveland City Council Covered by Documenters Kellie Morris and Keith Yurgionas

A Superior bikeway: Committee members vetted legislation needed to pay for the Superior Midway bikeway. Committee Chair Anthony Hairston said he wants to make sure that the city has "robust conversations" with residents and business owners along the path of the project so they know what to expect when



Council Member Anthony Hairston asks questions during a Jan. 17 meeting. Credit: Cleveland City Council YouTube

construction begins in 2025.

More midways: Committee members also greenlighted the next phase of the Lorain Midway project. This plan would allow design work for a bike path on Lorain Avenue from West 65th to West 20th. It's a 1.8-mile section of a larger path expected to extend to W. 150th Street. The design the city prefers would include bike lanes that run down one side of the street, according to Annie Pease, the project's manager. The approximately \$30 million project is not yet fully funded. Council Member Kerry McCormack, who supports both bikeways, said he hopes that someday "kids can ride from Zone Recreation Center to 55th."

Cleveland schools bill elections board for custodial cleanup of polling places

Cuyahoga County Board of Elections

Covered by Documenters Mildred Seward and Giorgiana Lascu

What happened: The Cleveland Metropolitan School District attempted to bill the Elections Board for custodial work in school buildings used as polling locations in 2020, 2021, and 2022. Public buildings can't charge a rental fee for hosting polls, but they can charge custodial fees, officials said. Director Anthony Perlatti called the bills unexpected and said the board wants to work with the district for more timely billing. Board members considered and approved payment only for the three elections held in 2022. The cost was about \$180,000.

Voter ID: Board members discussed the impact of House Bill 458, which was signed into law this month by Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine. It will require voters to present unexpired state-issued identification or federal identification such as a passport or military ID card. Elections

officials discussed concerns about how the change would affect the use of provisional ballots and whether there is enough time to educate poll workers and voters about the changes before the next election.

And also: Board Member Inajo Davis Chappell talked about a report by Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose's office that detailed 630 cases of potential voter fraud. Chappell asked how many have been in Cuyahoga County. The reports show most of the findings involved voters who had moved to other states.

Officials push Zenith Terminal to comply with rules on fuel leaks

Cleveland Board of Building Standards and Building Appeals Covered by Documenters Sarah Tan and Marvetta Rutherford

Fueling debate: City officials want Zenith Terminal to comply with regulations regarding potential fuel spills. Zenith is located in the industrial Flats alongside the Cuyahoga River and services 15% of the daily diesel, gasoline, and bio-fuel demand for Cleveland and the surrounding 10 counties. Zenith submitted plans to increase fuel transfer from ships to tanker trucks from 3,000 to 5,000 barrels per hour. Cleveland rejected the plans for several reasons, including a violation of a city code that dates back to 1949. The company disagreed. The board will make a decision on the appeal at a future meeting.

Property remand: The board voted to remand the Euclid Estates apartment building to the city after many property violations. The owner said a major cleanup was underway. But City Council Member Anthony Hairston, of Ward 10, said the property had been an issue for at least five years. City workers cleaned up the outside of the property at least once, he said.

Fire safety: The Cleveland Division of Fire urged the board to make sure properties meet fire-safety standards after the city approved plans for a building without a fire-suppression system. The builder of the Tremont Street property is requesting a variance, and the board needs to determine if the lack of a sprinkler system creates a serious hazard. The board held off on making a decision until it gathered more information. Board approves sale of land bank parcels for new housing.

Cleveland Board of Control

Covered by Documenter Karima McCree-Wilson

What happened: A city land bank property near the Cleveland Clinic was sold to B. R. Knez Construction for \$200. Director of Community Development Alyssa Hernandez said that property and others were priced below normal because the city is promoting new housing construction.

East Cleveland Art Show Celebrates Talent



By Marvetta Rutherford

19th (call the gallery for times). Their purpose is to bring the expressions of love that we call art.

If you're into handmade African and Esoteric art, Urizi Handcrafts owner John Omar has a wide variety of items and colors. Georgio Sabino III has great photography and other mediums to offer. From Joyce Morrow Jones

there are dolls in all shades, sizes, and costumes made from recycled items like corn husks and fabric. Gina Washington is a gifted spirit who has photos, clay, and other forms of artistic gifts. And of course, Edward Parker, the owner of Snickerfritz, has his artwork on display throughout the building.

Walter Roger Allen, 81, is the

mastermind of this collaborative venture. He has been featured in many known and unknown enterprises. Most notably, his artwork graced the cover of The Main Ingredients' Euphrates River album. He has works that hang in the United Nations, Xerox, West Point, IBM, Cleveland State University, the Cleveland and Philadelphia Public Libraries, and Dewey's Shaker Square coffee shop. As a photojournalist, Allen has been featured in the Cleveland Call and Post and inducted into the Glenville High School Hall of Fame. But his favorite place is where he started, the world-famous Karamu Theater in the heart of Fairfax.

The doors are open to all artists and art lovers with a like mindset. The current month is showcasing various talents and offerings—from the beginner to the professional, and you are welcome!



The city of East Cleveland has become, to the naked eye, a place that could be described as -- less than desirable. However, many positive things are going on in "the city of Rockefeller." Every month, seasoned artists like Walter Roger Allen and a host of others converge at Snickerfritz Art Gallery, 13240 Euclid Avenue in downtown East Cleveland, on the second Sunday of each month from 2-7pm. In March, the show is open on the 17th through the

Artist Anitra Frazier Building something New: Waterloo Arts Show Case



In the café space of Waterloo Arts, is "Back in the Day", an exhibition by Cleveland area artist Anitra Frazier. The artist explains that these paintings were inspired by family photos taken by her father with his Pentax film camera during her childhood growing up in Cleveland Heights in the 1970s and 1980s. The paintings are not only Frazier's way of preserving these family mementos, but also offer a nostalgic view of childhood through the lens of the adult, evoking simpler times and precious memories.

Frazier specializes in realistic acrylic paintings. Her work can be found in many private collections and has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Union Street Gallery in Chicago Heights, IL and at the Harold Washington



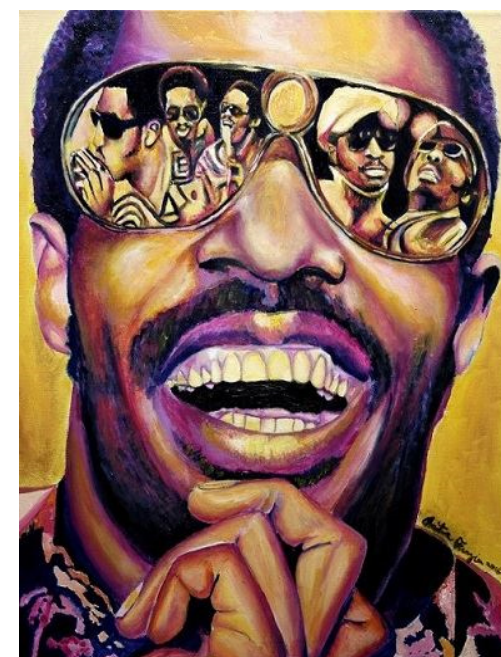
Library in Chicago, IL. Visitors to Waterloo Arts might remember seeing Frazier's work included in

the recent CAN Triennial 2022: You Are Here exhibit as well as DayGlo 9 and the 2020 Juried

Exhibition. Back in the Day will be on view at Waterloo Arts from February 3 through March 4.



Cleveland area artist Anitra Frazier



Understanding The Workplace Performance Appraisal



By Sheila Ferguson

DeChandra Ritter is new to the workforce. She just earned a Bachelor's Degree last spring and is now completing her first year as an outreach worker. Dee thought she was doing everything correctly. Throughout the year, she followed the prescribed procedures, responded positively to her clients, and kept timely records. Sadly, her first performance appraisal was disappointing. It made Dee question herself and her career choice. No matter where you are in your career, there is more to learn about achieving better results on your annual performance appraisal.

The Corporate World is Changing

In the U.S., performance appraisals have been used



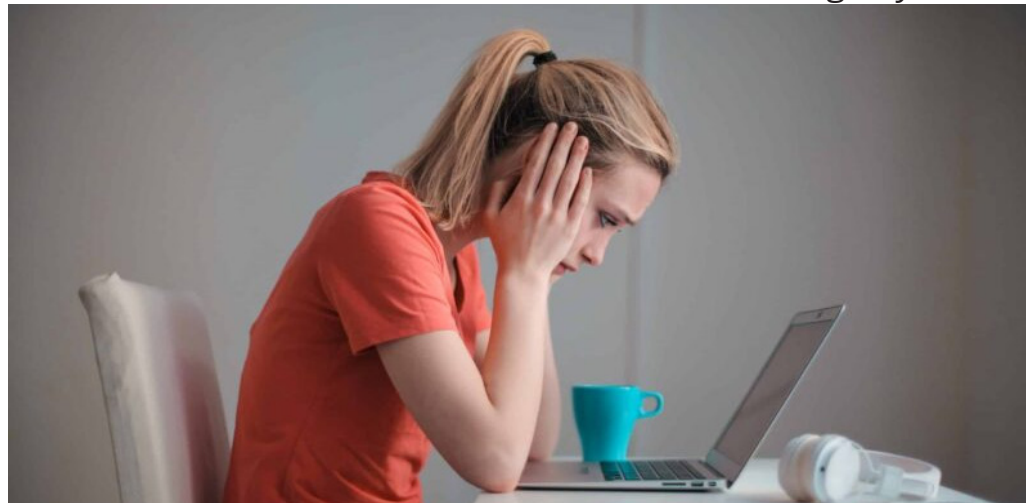
for over seven decades. In today's workforce, the annual performance review is steadily disappearing. Worldwide, management consultants and HR Managers are convinced that there is a mismatch between an organization's goals with worker performance and the bottom line. Today, many Fortune 500 companies no longer do

performance ratings. Instead, they focus on better ways to align organizational goals with worker performance. Organizational behaviorists suggest that poorly drafted performance reviews can affect:

- employee engagement,
- morale,
- motivation, and
- the bottom line.

Where Companies Fall Short

Negative reviews harm a worker's brain health and emotional stability. These types of reviews are reflections of



organizational dysfunction. Flawed and unsatisfactory reviews do workers and the organization a disservice. It is a problem when supervisors cite:

- Past missteps,
- Broad generalizations rather than particulars about the job performance of the last year,
- Ranking you in comparison to the more seasoned workers.

Companies want to keep employees

To improve staff outcomes, most corporations are committing to talent retention, growth, and high performance. The pathways to success come through weekly coaching, real-time assessment, and problem-solving activities. Since most companies are not overhauling their performance

management systems, employees must take action. If your last annual review was successful and you received a 3% raise, you are one of the lucky ones! In these cases, it is likely that your supervisor:

- Reserved an uninterrupted hour to meet with you on a regular basis.
- Created a two-way process of communication.
- Gave you a fair and balanced appraisal of your work performance of the last year;
- Framed the positives first before outlining any needed

- Closed the meeting with "doable" strategies for enriching your job performance.

Self Help

When you know you have performed quality work, do not throw in the towel, storm out, quit, or hold on to rage. Allow yourself to recover by stopping the elevated levels of adrenaline and cortisol coursing through your body, and then activate a plan of self-care. Try:

- Venting and talking with family, friends, and trusted colleagues about your feelings.
- Using meditation and aromatherapy to breathe in and expel tension.
- Exercising; and

- Using positive self-talk and affirmation.

Take action by asking yourself the right questions. Ask: Am I too new and need more time to experience the organizational culture? Will management become angry with me for asking questions? Is it appropriate to file a grievance to gain resolution? Should I just prepare for next year? Either way, you have the right to:

- Disagree with the review.
- State your disagreement, cite your reasons, and ask for a revision that is more favorable and balanced.
- Keep a log of accomplishments across the year.
- Talk about those elements of your work that you are most proud of.
- Link your own performance to the company's mission.
- Negotiate respectfully, and
- Arrive at a joint agreement with your supervisor on those elements to be modified. Your grievances should be prepared in writing for a response from your Manager's Supervisor and the Vice President of Human Resources.

Finally, talk with your human resource director, and learn more about the company's performance review process. Consider creating a committee aimed at revising the performance appraisal template. Remember, when advocating for yourself, you also support your co-workers and organizational progress.

List of Books on Performance Appraisals:

Abolishing Performance Appraisals: Why They Backfire and What to Do Instead, 1st Edition by Tom Coens and Mary Jenkins

Catalytic Coaching: The End of the Performance Review by Garold L. Markle

A Closer Look: Dedicated Senior Medical Center



By Marvetta Rutherford

Dedicated Senior Medical Center is a facility located at 5264 Lee Rd. in Maple Heights, with other locations in the Collinwood and West Park neighborhoods of Cleveland. Faith Hairston, Outreach Executive at the Center, explained a few things that she felt separated them from typical medical practices. One factor is that they operate

with a different set of principles; a focus on TLC, which takes on a new meaning for their facility:

- Trust is earned—more face time with your doctor.
- Love is our priority—fewer inpatient admissions in hospitals.
- Convenience matters—fewer emergency room visits.

Onsite services include:

- Primary care
- Cardiology
- Podiatry
- Labs and testing
- X-Rays
- Door-to-doctor transportation
- Exercise and social events



When needed, referrals to some of the following specialists occur:

- Gastroenterology
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Oncology
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopedic
- Pulmonology
- Rheumatology

A dispatched health unit treats minor injuries and complex illnesses at your home (if you're 55 or older), such as:

- Bronchitis
- Headache/migraine
- Covid-19 symptoms
- Nosebleeds
- Respiratory issues
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Shortness of Breath/COPD
- Dehydration
- Skin infections
- Fever
- Strains, sprains, and minor fractures
- Flu
- Urinary tract infections

Procedures performed include:

Continued on page 6

St. Patrick's Day: A Celebration of A Saint



By Sheila Ferguson



The Tradition

St. Patrick's Day is more than shamrocks, leprechauns, and green beer. On March 17, the day of his passing, we commemorate the life of Ireland's Patron Saint. He was born in the fourth century A.D., long before the Catholic Church's formation of the canonization process in 1643. St. Patrick is one of their most famous figures, and a saint by popular acclaim. Since 1842, Cleveland has hosted Ohio's oldest St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The History & Lore

In keeping with the Irish custom, the day has a deep spiritual meaning connected with St. Patrick's love and sacrifice. He was born to a wealthy family. At 16, he was taken prisoner by Irish raiders who attacked his family's estate. They held him in Ireland's County Mayo area for six years. During captivity, he was awakened by God's voice telling him to leave Ireland. To escape, he walked two hundred miles to the Irish coast. Once back home, an Angel told him to return to Ireland as a missionary. Soon after, he engaged in religious studies and

service for more than 15 years. (History Channel Vault, 2023).

He returned to Ireland as an ordained priest who committed to ministering to Christians and converting the pagans. Knowing the Irish language and culture helped him incorporate traditional rituals into his lessons on Christianity rather than attempting to eradicate native Irish beliefs. He honored the Irish practices of a nature-based pagan religion. In "The Lives of Saints" (1954), he is credited for using bonfires to celebrate Easter and creating the Celtic Cross. Finally, the Catholic Church praises him for opening the way for the legions of missionaries to come.

Cleveland's Parade

Author and historian

John Kuntz offers accounts from Cleveland's Irish American Archives Society about the parade's history. It indicates that the early celebrations began with Mass at St. Mary's on the Flats and continued with a parade organized by the Catholic Temperance Society.

Cleveland's 2023 Celebration

In keeping with tradition, our city's 181st St. Patrick's Day Parade will take place on Friday, March 17, 2023. The festivities will begin at 1:04 p.m. at the intersection of Superior Ave. and East 18th Street. The parade will commence after hearing the American and Irish national anthems in honor of St. Patrick and Ireland. It is expected that there will be over 10,000 participants

and two hundred volunteers in bands, marching units, floats, drill teams, dance troupes, and bagpipers, along with men donning kilts. (United Irish Societies of Greater Cleveland, 2023).

Finally, author Ana Andrukh details some of the 2023 St. Patrick's Day Parade's best-in-class sightlines as Superior Avenue between E. 9th Street and 12th Street. She says its endpoint will be at the corner of Rockwell and Ontario Street. Afterward, many parade-goers will join family and friends for a traditional home-cooked meal of corn beef and cabbage with soda bread, or perhaps lamb chops, mashed potatoes, peas, or an Irish stew. Others will join merrymakers at the local bars.

Additional References:
How St. Patrick's Day Was Made in America
Saint Patrick: The Man, The Myth on HISTORY Vault
Crawley, John J. (1954) Lives of the Saints (1954) New York p. 113-121 f



Friends celebrating St. Patrick's Day



A Closer Look: Dedicated Senior Medical Center Continued from page 5

- EKG advanced blood testing
- IV fluids
- Urinary catheter insertion
- Stitches
- Rapid infectious disease testing
- Splinting
- Lancing of abscesses

Dedicated Senior Medical Center is in network with most health insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicare Advantage. Out-of-pocket expenses are determined by your insurance plan. They are open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week, including holidays—but they will also come to your home (for those 55 years or older) to treat your needs. Simply call in [(216) 294-4440] and explain your symptoms and a team will dispatch to you. Your insurance processing is done by the staff.

One feature of the structure of the practice is patient capacity. There are four doctors who see only 300-450 people. The doctors' offices are without doors. They work in a cubicle setting. For this Center, the patients are more than a medical record number.



A very important amenity is the In-House Pharmacy. Over 300 different medications can be filled while you are in the Center. This eliminates travel time and waiting at outside pharmacies. Laboratory results are available within 24 to 72 hours.

An added feature that you won't find in most practices of conventional medicine is acupuncture therapy. This ancient Chinese treatment is a component of their medical traditions. The Cleveland Observer met Dr. Hoang Phung, an Internal Medical specialist, who spoke of the HIPPA regulations that they adhere to in this Center.

The calendar of events in the month of February included:

- Line dancing
- Bingo
- Chair aerobics
- Barbershop
- Birthday celebrations
- Produce giveaways
- Pantry and cleaning supplies

One striking feature of the Center is their "Wall of Testaments," where patients leave their simple, handwritten notes: genuine heartfelt expressions of gratitude for getting their healthcare needs fulfilled with the staff of this Center.

For anyone who is not satisfied with their current healthcare or is looking to get treatment, this might be the place for you. Take a look and make up your own mind.



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Sundays at Sylk's



By Nicole D. Miller

Cleveland once again knocked it out of the park by attracting Chicago native Sam Sylk. A true fan of the then-known "Indians" baseball team (now The Guardians), he reports that the city's successful sports team is one of its many assets. After solidifying his spot at radio station Z107.9, he hunkered down, digging deep roots into the small business and urban cuisine sectors. Several food-based establishments, such as Doc's Fish and various Sam Sylk's Chicken & Fish locations, can be enjoyed throughout the city, courtesy of Mr. Sylk. But it wasn't until the Covid-19 pandemic hit in 2020 that another opportunity for expansion arose. While many were reeling from job losses and financial setbacks, Sam spearheaded an endeavor



Photo Credit: Freddie Bryant

mental health stats nosedived and depression stats bloomed during the pandemic. According to the CDC, in the first half of 2020, over 40% of respondents reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder associated with Covid-19. But knowing that laughter serves as a great buffer to grief, Sam implemented comedy shows as a tool for healing. It wasn't long before he partnered with comedic giant Big Rich Greene, who produces and presents a seven times sold-out phenomenon at Sylk's called "Funny Sundays."

Unlike many shows that present more mainstream comics

"Sylk's is the next Black Improv," Gaines adamantly stated. "There's no other comedy spot, with that level of notoriety, that exposes local artists to success." Mr. Sylk confirms Gaines' observation when divulging that Sylk's has even served as a sort of "gateway entry" into Cleveland's beloved improv scene.

So, what keeps the "Funny Sunday" show packed? In short, the comics do. Big Rich empowers performers to sell tickets and promote, and they bring the audience. Now that it's been a consistent happening, the show has taken on a life of its own. One

Sunday, a reported 25 walk-ins (vs pre-sold tickets) showed up looking for laughs.

"Sylk's is a beacon for Black comedy," Big Rich advises. That beacon starkly shone its light by producing income for the hardworking comics of Cleveland, all while inducing laughs from each attendee.

Sam accredits his ability to succeed, when the odds seem stacked against him, to his faith. When larger facilities couldn't bring in revenue, he capitalized on the intimacy of his lounge, making him a key player in the comedy hub of Cleveland.

More laughs are in store at Sylk's as "Funny Sundays" will run at least once a month indefinitely. Tickets are available on Eventbrite.

Add'l source: City Journal

"Grown Folks Playground"

that breathed life back into the city's nightlife. His vision to merge a live audience with good music, good food, and lots of laughs skyrocketed sales at his newly opened lounge, Sylk's.

"I call it the 'Grown Folks Playground,'" says Sam when describing the ambiance of the smooth, cozy venue. "I wanted to create a place where grown folks could come and just be, you know, grown."

One of the vital needs of any community is to find joy amid adversity. This is especially true in urban sectors where poverty, crime rates, and racism slaughter the underprivileged daily. The Bureau of Justice Statistics confirms this in the 2021 National Crime Victimization Survey. This survey reports the chilling increase in crime in urban areas compared to the unchanged rates in suburban ones. The need for laughter was even more dire, as

from other cities, "Funny Sundays" intentionally showcases local talent, thereby also putting money back into the pockets of northeast Ohioans.

"Cleveland has the makings of becoming a mecca for other artists and is on its way," says Big Rich. He believes the city is busting at the seams with talent but needs more platforms to highlight it.

Sylk's platform takes a whack at the outdated belief that one man's gain is another man's loss. Today, comedians like Big Rich share the stage of opportunity with up-and-coming artists. Tyrone Gaines, who headlined in January for "Funny Sundays," is one such recipient of this generosity. Gaines adequately dominated a stage previously graced by heavy hitters Capone, Dominique, Kenny Howell, and Damon Williams, just to name a few.



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Celebrating Women's History: Black Women in Financial History



By Ray'Chel Wilson

March is Women's History Month, a time to celebrate the many accomplishments of women. When it comes to personal finance and wealth building, there are many Black women who have made a big impact. Despite facing discrimination and challenges, these women have worked hard to manage their money and build wealth. Let's take a look at three amazing women who made history in the world of personal finance, and what we can learn from them.

Maggie Lena Walker

Maggie Lena Walker was born in 1864 and was the first Black woman in the United States to start a bank. In 1903, she founded the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank to help Black Americans who couldn't access traditional banks. Her bank offered savings accounts, loans, and even life insurance policies. Under her leadership, the bank became very successful.

Maggie Lena Walker's determination and resourcefulness show us that it's important to work hard and create opportunities for ourselves and others. If we face obstacles, we can think creatively and come up with new solutions to help us achieve our goals.



Maggie Lena Walker and her St. Luke Penny Savings Bank.

Madam C.J. Walker

Madam C.J. Walker was born in 1867 and became one of the most successful businesswomen of her time. She started out as a laundress and cook, but then she created hair care products

for Black women. She started the Madam C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company in 1906, which became one of the most successful Black-owned businesses in America. Her success allowed her to help other Black women improve their financial situations.

Madam C.J. Walker's



Madam C.J. Walker

story shows us the power of entrepreneurship and taking risks. If we have an idea, we can work hard to turn it into a successful business that can benefit ourselves and others.

Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou is famous for being a poet and author, but she also made important contributions to personal finance. In the 1970s, she worked as a market analyst for a stock brokerage firm. She was one of the few Black women in the industry at that time. Later on, she taught women, especially Black women, about managing their finances and building wealth.

Maya Angelou's journey shows us that we should always be learning and expanding our knowledge. If we want to improve



our financial situation, we can read books, attend classes, and seek out experts who can help us learn and grow.

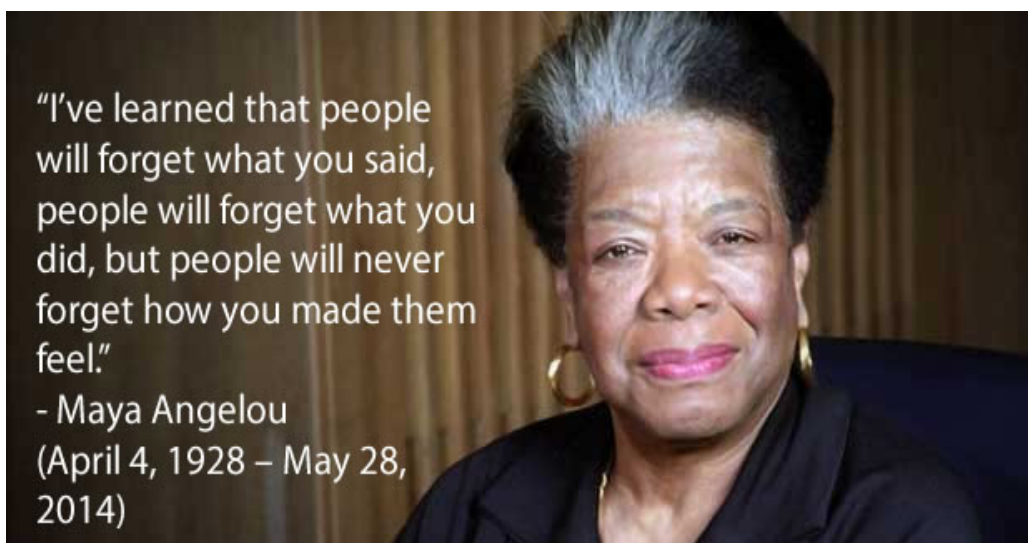
These women are just a few examples of the many Black women who have made significant contributions to personal finance

and wealth building throughout history. Their legacies continue to inspire and empower women to take control of their finances and build a more secure financial future.

Affirm: I can create an impact for my last name and #ForOurLastNames.

Ray'Chel Wilson, CFEI®, a Toledo

native, the author of the *Black Wealth Freedom* series, and CEO of *Raise the Bar Investments*, all things minority-friendly personal finance, #ForOurLastNames. Ray'Chel is an advisory board member of the Phe'Be Foundation, a Cleveland-based nonprofit fighting financial illiteracy across age ranges.



Federal Deficit What it Means to You



By Margaret Adams

It seems that congress is gearing up for another fight about the federal deficit. We have been experiencing this budget fight between the Republicans and the Democrats more intensely over the last three to four administration cycles. It seems that both parties are less willing to cooperate and work together for a common cause. The Republicans want to cut spending and balance the budget, and the Democrats are accused of spending more funds than are available. Debt is when expenses are more than income. A deficit is when debt keeps accumulating. Budgeting for the country is definitely not like budgeting for the average family's household. The biggest difference is most households have a set income and will have to work more to increase that income or do without some luxuries or necessities to decrease expenses. The government can increase its income through several options, such as increasing taxes or printing more money. Decreasing federal expenditures affects many people and many areas of the economy.

The federal budget's income consists of taxes, fees,

and investments. The government collects almost 50% of its income from individual taxpayers and around 9.2% from corporations (figures obtained from the Peter G. Peterson foundation).

The Treasury sells debt such as treasury notes, bonds, and savings bonds to raise income and is the largest holder of domestic debt. Debt sold by the Treasury is purchased by investment funds (mutual funds and pensions), commercial banks, insurance companies, corporations, state and local government, the public, and other countries. According to debt.org/government, in the year 2012, approximately half of the federal debt held by the public was owned by foreign investors (China and Japan being the largest). By the end of 2021, debt held by foreign countries decreased to around 33%. There is an old saying that whoever holds the purse strings controls how the money is going to be spent. Taxpayers should ask who influences how the money collected by the U.S. government is being spent. Is the spending of money being controlled by corporate and foreign debt holders who may have influence over politicians?

There are three categories of spending (expenses) by the government per National Priorities Project.org. Mandatory spending includes Social Security, Medicare, safety net programs like Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, and infrastructures like highways. Mandatory spending makes up about 60% of the Federal Budget's expenses. Discretionary spending makes up around 30% and pays for things like the military, education,

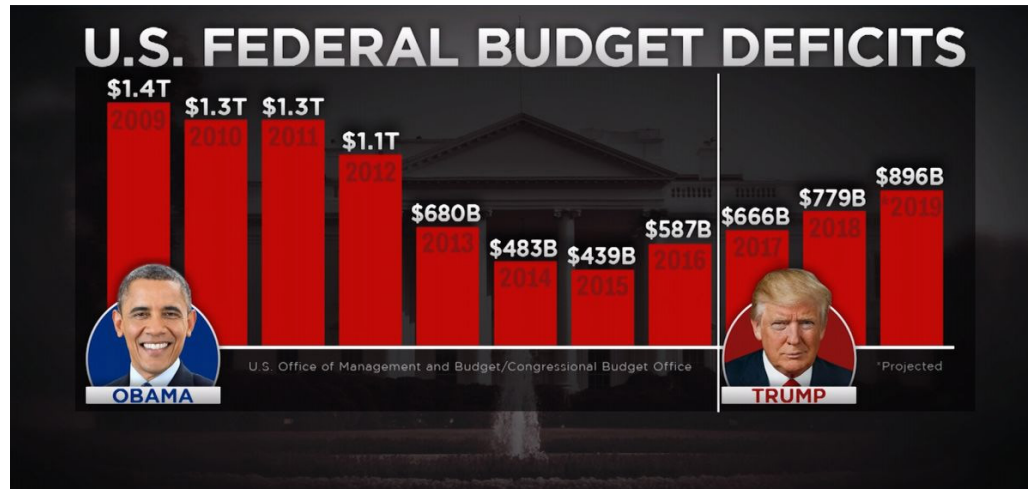
Continued on page 9

Federal Deficit...What it Means to You

From page 7

VA hospitals, transportation, food and agriculture, energy, and the environment, and includes federal employees and other items that can be added or taken away by congress. The cost of government investigations and special counsels and hearings are under the discretionary category and therefore it's taxpayers' money that pays for them. The third category consists of the interest payments the government is required to pay on its debt.

Politicians claim they want a balanced budget, but there is no constitutional law that states the budget must be balanced. As of yet, politicians have not taken the steps to put into law that



the budget must be balanced. Republicans complain about the deficit, but research done by the A-Mark Foundation.org over the past 40 years shows that the deficit increased the most under Republican administrations. Republicans tend to promote

tax cuts, while Democrats are against cuts stating they benefit the wealthy. In reality, it depends on whose research one relies on as to who has benefited the most from the cuts. Tax cuts take away money needed for the country to operate. Less money leads to

cuts in public services (safety net programs).

Elbridge Gerry, a representative from Massachusetts (1789-1791) believed that Congress, specifically the House of Representatives, should hold the purse strings because they were more representative of the public. Today, voters must question this representation and keep an eye on their elected politicians to make sure they are being good shepherds of their tax dollars. Voters will need to look past the banter and infighting witnessed on TV and start researching just how our representatives vote on how to spend taxpayer's money..

Nicole D Miller's Birthday Book Launch!



Join me as I celebrate my 40th birthday along with the release of my debut novel, When Love Wins.

When Love Wins is a fast-moving urban tale filled with thought-provoking topics such as grief recovery, childhood trauma, mental health struggles, and more!

It also takes a nosedive into this generation's world of slang, contemporary clothing, and modern music while exuding encouragement and faith in every chapter. To learn more, visit

whenlovewins.love.

You can grab your signed copy from me between 6-7 p.m. There will also be a short reading, a live R&B music band, drinks, and dinner.

See you soon, and tell a friend to tell a friend—the more the merrier.

Legal Aid Helps with Rental Housing Questions

By Tonya Sams

If you are having tax issues, you don't have to navigate it alone—Legal Aid is here to help! Legal Aid's Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) is a free legal service that helps to resolve taxpayer disputes with the IRS regarding federal income tax matters.

Legal Aid attorneys can help taxpayers avoid going to court because of unresolved tax issues in a number of ways, including negotiating with the IRS to accept less to settle a debt than the full amount owed, and lowering or eliminating taxable income from debts that were forgiven from banks and credit card companies.

Legal Aid attorneys can also help prevent the IRS from taking property, wages, and social security benefits, help with identity theft and tax preparer fraud, help obtain income tax records, protect against spousal abuses in connection with tax returns, advise taxpayers on their rights and obligations regarding the health care marketplace, and more.

Legal Aid was able to help Joel (name changed to protect privacy) with his tax issues. Joel received a letter from the IRS saying he owed a significant amount. Joel lives with his long-time girlfriend and her three young grandchildren and claimed all of them as dependents on his taxes, but the IRS letter informed him that this was against the rules because he was not related to them and did not have custody.

Joel was referred to Legal Aid. With Legal Aid's help, Joel was able to demonstrate his eligibility for the child tax credits, avoid trial, and negotiate a settlement with the IRS.

If you need help resolving a tax issue, call Legal Aid at 888-817-3777 or seek help 24/7 at lasclev.org.

Free resources are available to help Northeast Ohio residents with tax preparation.

Contact 2-1-1 or find resources at

lasclev.org/taxhelp.

Making the Most of Women's History Month



By Sheila Ferguson



SCANTO LISTEN

may not get to attend a national women's march or national celebration, but you can make your own women's history celebration closer to home. Honoring women during this month helps acknowledge women's social, historical, and workplace contributions. Celebrating Women's History Month can create a more inclusive workplace culture that values diversity and encourages collaboration. Understanding and accepting women's contributions in all fields helps to break down gender barriers and empower future generations of women.

What are the benefits of celebrating Women's History Month at work? It raises awareness about the achievements of women, promotes gender equality, and highlights the importance of diversity in the workplace. It can also help create a more positive working environment for women and increase motivation and productivity. These activities can also strengthen relationships between coworkers and improve team communications. Consider making one or two women-focused special events each March. These activities may turn out to be so much fun that you want to engage in them all year round. An array of entities including SnackNation, the Women's History Association, and HR professionals recommend

Before Women's History Month, there was Women's History Week in March. In 1982, Women's History Week became the first national celebration of women. A few years later, it expanded into a whole month of honoring women's roles and contributions to society. In 1995, Congress passed public law 100-9 to designate March as "Women's History Month." Soon after, a petition from the National Women's History Project led to the presidential proclamation for March of each year to be celebrated as Women's History Month.

On Aug. 23, 2022, the National Women's History Alliance invited Author Gloria Felder to herald in the 2023 theme of "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories." (nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org). It gives the nation a chance to spotlight the contributions of women, both historical and contemporary, who are authors and keepers of the oral tradition.

Why celebrate Women's History Month at work? You



the following. Tips for Celebrating Women's History Month At Work

- Lead a professional development training on March 1st to kick off the festivities.
- Have a female guest speaker visit either in person or on Zoom.
- Go to a gallery showing to support women's art and artists.
- Create a book club dedicated to female authors.
- Stock your kitchen with women-founded snack brands.
- Play women's history trivia games & quizzes with your team.
- Plan a team Shark Tank event.
- Make a Spotify playlist of up-and-coming female artists.
- Shop and eat at local women-owned businesses.


- Profile a women's history-themed podcast.
- Plan an office event to give back to your community.
- Contribute to a woman's charity philanthropy.
- Don't let March pass by without celebrating Women's History Month!

References and Resources

<https://www.womansday.com/life/a34908026/womens-history-month-facts/>

"Women's History Month." Jackson Advocate, vol. 83, no. 26, Jackson Advocate, 25 Mar. 2021, p. 2A.

11 Unique Women's History Month Ideas For Work [March 2023] (snacknation.com)



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Utility Assistance Resource Fairs



By Bruce Checefsky



SCAN TO LISTEN

Ward 7 Councilwoman Stephanie Howse, Ward 10 Councilman Anthony Hairston, and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) hosted a Utility Assistance Resource Fair to offer eligible customers financial assistance on water, sewer, gas, and electric bills. The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, City of Cleveland Division of Water, CPP, Dominion, FirstEnergy, CHN Housing Partners, STEP FORWARD, and Community Housing Solutions were on-site at The East Professional Center on E. 79th St.

Eligible customers signed up for assistance programs, including the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District Affordability Program which provides a 40% reduction on sewer bills, and Crisis Assistance Program which provides up to a \$300 credit on sewer bills.

“We are here to help people,” Howse said, crisscrossing the large sports hall where the event took place and greeting residents as she went along.

Constance Haqq, Director of Communications and Community Relations at the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, said that the purpose of hosting the resource fair was to create an opportunity for a one-stop shopping experience where residents can talk to all of the utility companies at one location and submit their applications for financial assistance.

“They might apply for a payment program or get a hold placed on a disconnection notice. We have discount programs for which they can apply,” said Haqq. “They can leave the fair with a complete application and get assistance from the various agencies to take the next step in the process.”

Customers with incomes 250% above the poverty line—about \$65,500 annual income for a family of four—are eligible for the sewer program.

The city of Cleveland and NEORS also offer the Homestead Discount Program, which provides reduced water and sewer rates for people earning \$34,500 or less, who are 65 years or older, or permanently disabled. Unlike the affordability programs, Homestead applicants fill out a single application. A note from their doctor is required if the applicant has a disability. “We want the services to reach the people,” Haqq added.



Residents attend the Utility Assistance Resource Fairs

Nichole Harvel Phot Credit

Haqq said the rising cost of the economy, sickness, and unplanned expenses make it difficult for some people to pay their utility bills. The process for assistance is laborious, making it a challenge to apply. “At the fair, we can print supplemental information like birth certificates of everyone in the household and social security cards. We want to make certain that people are qualified for the programs, but we tend to make it onerous for them. We want to create a better balance in our community with fewer barriers.”

Haqq said her staff called the Bureau of Vital Statistics at City Hall and were surprised to find out they were closed at 4 p.m., and checking online, the cost of a single certificate was \$25. Multiply that by four or five, or even six people in a household, and the birth certificates alone

could cost hundreds of dollars. Add the cost of parking at city hall, and it becomes unaffordable to people struggling to meet ends.

People unable to attend the resource fairs, which will take place around Cleveland throughout the year, can contact the agencies individually. It will take longer if their needs include water, electricity, gas, and sewer as separate entities.

Last year, Ohio utility companies asked state regulators for permission to raise home gas, electric, and water costs. The investor-owned utilities were asking for an additional \$400 million in yearly charges. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio [PUCO] accepted a rate settlement agreement in October, with prices expected to increase in 2023.

The Golden Rule Is Lacking Today



By Larry Frazier



SCAN TO LISTEN

Whether positively or negatively expressed, many of the world’s religions have some form of the Golden Rule. Five centuries before Jesus Christ, Confucius gave a negative injunction saying, “That which you do not desire, do not do to others.” (The Analects of Confucius). Jesus Christ gave a positive command, “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.” (Matthew 7:12). Although they use opposing language, both statements express a sincere concern as to how we should treat one another. Our world today seems to have a fading interest in reciprocal humane and peaceful interaction among people.

A rule tells us what to do and what not to do. It is no wonder that the “Rule” is called “Golden”

because anything of gold is held in high regard. What could be more important than people respecting each other and trying to get along? I have heard it said that the least you owe anyone is the time of day which means acknowledging their presence. Older people used to say that the one entering a room should speak greetings first. It used to be that a man would stop another man from cursing around women and children. Aretha Franklin was not wrong when she sang about R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

A community activist once said that adults should not walk past young people on the streets and not acknowledge their presence. You never know when someone just may need to be recognized and see a friendly face. After all, according to national song leader Kirk Franklin, you look so much better when you smile. If you are having a good day, then share the joy. Proverbs 15:13 says, “A glad heart makes a cheerful face.”

As we think of other conditions in the world today, the words of the Bible ring true: “In the last days, people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive,



disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5); not top mention creating “wars and rumors of wars” (Matthew 24:6).

The Golden Rule is a guide for godly living, but the “ruler” of knowledge and correction is in the hand of the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, that Jesus has given to those who believe and receive Him.

Is the Golden Rule the

solution to all that is wrong in the world? Of course not. The Golden Rule is God’s Law and we cannot correct nor save ourselves by keeping the law. By ourselves, we don’t have the power—but there is ONE who has the Will and the Power to help our lost situation. Through faith in Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven and we become His disciples. Jesus then says to us, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35)

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