

The Cleveland Observer

Engage * Educate * Empower

Volume 4 - Issue 4

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April 2023

Parkinson's Awareness Month - Two Stories of Hope



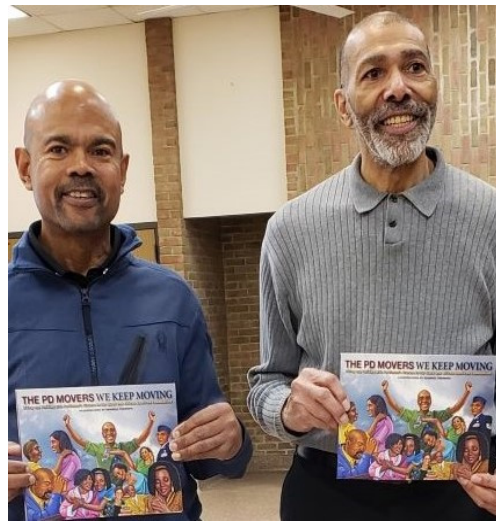
SCAN TO HEAR

By guest writer Richard Huckabee

The Month of April is Parkinson's Awareness Month and April 11, 2023, is World Parkinson's Day. Parkinson's disease (PD) is the fastest-growing progressive neurological disease that leads to impaired mobility, mental health disorders, memory and sleep issues, and more. Black and African American individuals with this disease are often misdiagnosed or diagnosed late.

Meet two Black American men living and thriving with Parkinson's Disease in the Cleveland Ohio area.

Richard Huckabee is a Black male with Parkinson's Disease. This year marks the 10th year anniversary of his diagnosis. Happily, he is thriving—although it took nine years before he received his diagnosis. Huckabee is a PD Mover, InMotion Ambassador, Parkinson's Foundation Ambassador, Parkinson's Research Advocate, Health Citizen Scientist, Speaker, World Traveler, Storyteller, and amateur Photographer, and always keeps God first.



Art McDaniel and Richard Huckabee, two Black American Men living and thriving with Parkinson's disease

Exercise continues to be his main medication! Married to a wonderful woman, Angela, Huckabee has two children and one grandchild. He and his wife love to hike, travel, and involve themselves in the community. His goal is to continue these things and to enjoy life.

Art McDaniel says "I'm a Black male diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in the Fall of 2016. It caught me by surprise and was not welcoming news." But instead of going into denial, not wanting to believe it, McDaniel says he embraced the diagnosis and started his own journey of learning as much as possible with the purpose of controlling the disease instead of the disease controlling him. "I have been married for the

past 44 years to my wife Cherie, and have two children, and five grandchildren. My objective is to be an active participant in the lives of my grandchildren while continuing to coach, teach and mentor students and others on how to achieve their life goals."

There are two resources these men use and recommend to live well and continue to thrive. One resource is an exciting new book, titled "The PD Movers - We Keep Moving." It highlights the stories of 11 people of color with Parkinson's disease, and/or their care partners. These stories are of faith, hope, and thriving with Parkinson's disease. Educational materials are shared throughout the book. What made this project so unique is that everyone involved with this project from the contributors, editors, illustrator, and printer is Black, African American, and people of color.

Another resource they use is InMotion, a community-based wellness center, free for people with Parkinson's disease and their care partners. InMotion offers Parkinson-specific exercise classes, healing arts, educational programs, support, and more. InMotion is located at 23905 Mercantile Road, Beachwood, Ohio 44122, (216) 342-4417.

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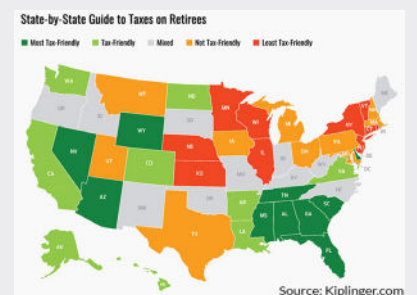
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"Senior Freeze" on Property Tax?



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3 Teams from NE Ohio High School Basketball State Championship

Trials For Hope Delivers to Those in Need



By Jennifer Carter

Trials For Hope is a non-profit organization that delivers food to the unhoused. This refers to those who are homeless, homebound, and infirmed: anyone without a house to live in or lacking permanent housing. They will also deliver food to shelters and shut-ins.

Jonathan Gray, founder of Trials For Hope, gave a tour of their pantry. This is where the magic happens. It is full of food, but also includes other essentials such as toothpaste, laundry detergent, and other hygiene products. In 2019, Trials For Hope provided 120,680 meals, fed 7,069 individuals, and provided 144,816 pounds of food. It is also one of the few pantries that provides meat, such as chicken and beef. Since the pandemic, the needs of the unhoused have increased dramatically. The end of the eviction moratorium and



SCAN TO HEAR



Jonathan Gray, Trials for Hope founder

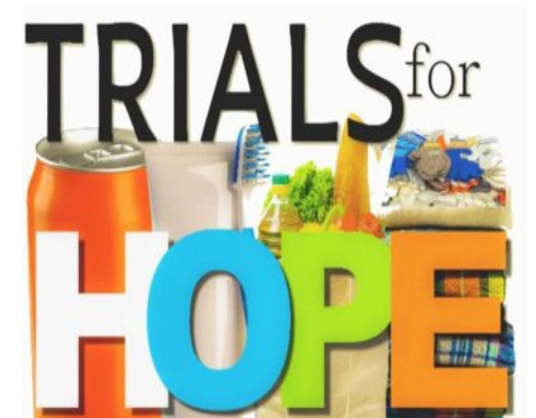
rising inflation rates have also left many more people in need. Trials For Hope does what it can, but it simply does not have the money.

Jonathan started Trials For Hope in 2010 when he got his first donation of hotel-size toiletries. He knew he could make use of these items, and the trial-sized products inspired the name. Those products helped bring dignity to people who no longer had to carry around large sizes of hygiene products, which can be hard to store.

Additionally, things like diapers, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and laundry detergent, aren't covered by food stamps. This can

create a financial burden on the unhoused. Another issue that creates food insecurity is *mobility*. A person who is health-challenged may not be able to get to the store to purchase food, and at times may not have anyone to go to the store for them. That highlights why programs like Trials For Hope are necessary. Jonathan and his team of dedicated volunteers operate with empathy and respect, something that the unhoused need but don't always get. It is such a beautiful thing to bring hope to those who need it the most.

Inflation and the pandemic have created a huge increase in the need for what these organizations provide. While donations help, many people are also in need of hygiene products, cleaning supplies, tents, and blankets—especially as Cleveland weather is unpredictable. The next article will explore how caring volunteers bring hope to these unseen citizens. If you would like to learn more about Trials For Hope, please visit their Facebook page or their website at trials4hope.org.



Cleveland News Wire - City Council Highlights



A 5-minute read on 30+ hours of Cleveland budget hearings

Meeting coverage by Cleveland Documenters | Compiled by Signal Cleveland's Doug Breehl-Pitorak | Edited by Rachel Dissell and Mary Ellen Huesken

Feb. 20

Department of Law

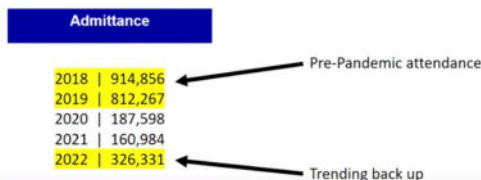
Council kicked things off last Tuesday by discussing the proposed 2023 budget for the Department of Law. The department is requesting \$18,623,670. The budget would cover 85 employees. Law Director Mark Griffin named the following priorities and goals for the department:

- Making progress on the federal consent decree and police reform
 - Stepping up housing code enforcement
 - Lead safety and nuisance abatement
 - Increasing staffing
 - Renewing multi-year lease for airlines at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport
 - Negotiating the acquisition and development of the new Cleveland police headquarters
- Griffin also highlighted the department's litigation successes, including recouping more than \$850,000 to date as part of a national lawsuit against prescribers of opiates.

Division of Recreation

Recreation Commissioner Sam Gissentaner discussed the division's proposed \$15,890,854

Management Discussion (Cont'd)



budget. He highlighted a lingering dip in attendance at Cleveland's 21 rec centers compared to pre-COVID attendance. Council members asked about programming at rec centers. He said residents can take programming ideas to their rec centers' directors and the division. Check this list for rec center contact info.

Annual Cleveland rec center admittance, according to a presentation from the Division of Recreation.

West Side Market

Jessica Trivisonno, senior strategist for the West Side Market, discussed a proposed 2023 budget of \$2,036,069. More than half of the vendors at the market accept federal food assistance benefits from patrons, said Trivisonno, who added that the market is set to turn 111 years old on Nov. 2. The market has a high vacancy rate and is looking to attract more vendors.

She also estimated the market needs \$20 million in capital repairs. Ward 15 Council Member Jenny Spencer expressed concern about that amount. "It's pretty sobering that we've already put nearly \$16 million into capital improvements thus far, including work underway, and there's still \$20 million more to go for basic stuff, not even upgrades that the public would really even be able to touch, see and feel."



Cleveland City Council President Blaine Griffin (Right) and fellow council members learn about offering property tax relief. Cleveland Neighborhood Progress' Ed Stockhausen (back) gave the presentation. (Credit: Documenter Rosie Palfy).

Community Development

While reviewing the \$2,561,665 proposed budget for the Department of Community Development, council drilled down into the city's Exterior Paint Program. In 2022 Cleveland Documenters reported on the program, which aims to provide residents with vouchers for free paint and supplies to paint the outside of their homes. Only 36 percent of the more than 1,000 approved applicants in 2020 and 2021 finished painting their homes. Residents cited the high costs and the physical demands of painting as challenges to completing the program.

In May 2022, council amended the program to also provide labor in "limited circumstances." Despite the change, Commissioner of Neighborhood Services Louise Jackson said in the budget hearing that only 78 homes were painted last year, good for about 27 percent of 286 approved applicants.

Maurer criticized the program, budgeted for \$521,232 plus any unspent funds from previous years. She also critiqued officials for presenting 78 completed homes as a success.

The department has five painting vendors lined up for 2023, according to Director of Community Development Alyssa

Hernandez.

Department of Public Health

Council discussed the roughly \$14 million budget proposed for the Department of Public Health in 2023. Here are some topics officials discussed:

Spanish-speaking employees

While reviewing the requested \$2 million budget for the Division of Health Equity and Social Justice, Ward 14 Council Member Jasmin Santana asked about the number of bilingual staff members in the division. Commissioner Lita Wills said two bilingual Spanish-speaking employees work in the division, one who coordinates the Office of Mental Health and Addiction Recovery and another who works with MomsFirst.

Mobile health units

The Division of Health, asking for about \$6 million for 2023, will be using two mobile health units. The division wants to offer

reproductive health services and tests for chronic issues such as diabetes and high cholesterol through its mobile units, according to Commissioner Frances Mills. The city has not hired staff for the units yet.

Department of Economic Development

While discussing the proposed \$1.9 million budget for the Department of Economic Development, Director Tessa Jackson told council members she had concerns about the city's use of tax increment financing (TIF). Jackson called TIFs complicated, and she said the incentives the department has provided in the last 15 years – totaling about half a billion dollars and touching four or five wards – have not had the impact on Clevelanders that they should.

"When you look at historic poverty rates, historic unemployment rates, that money really hasn't moved the bar," Jackson said. "You can't spend half a billion dollars on economic development and not move the bar for anybody, for the people in this community."

Community Relations Board

While discussing the Community Relations Board's roughly \$2.4 million proposed budget, Ward 16 Council Member Brian Kazy said he wants the city to take

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a fresh look at the city's youth diversion program. He requested the recidivism rate – or the rate at which someone reoffends – of any child who has gone through the program since 2020. Council's Safety Committee discussed the program with the Community Relations Board at a Feb. 1 meeting. Ward 7 Council Member Stephanie Howse also asked for an update on the Cleveland Commission on Black Women and Girls, which City Council established in June 2022. The city hopes to have an announcement about it in March, Community Relations Board Director Angela Shute-Woodson said.

Around the block: Cleveland officials discuss spending \$34 million of federal community development grants.

Feb. 27

Last week's budget hearings dealt solely with Cleveland's

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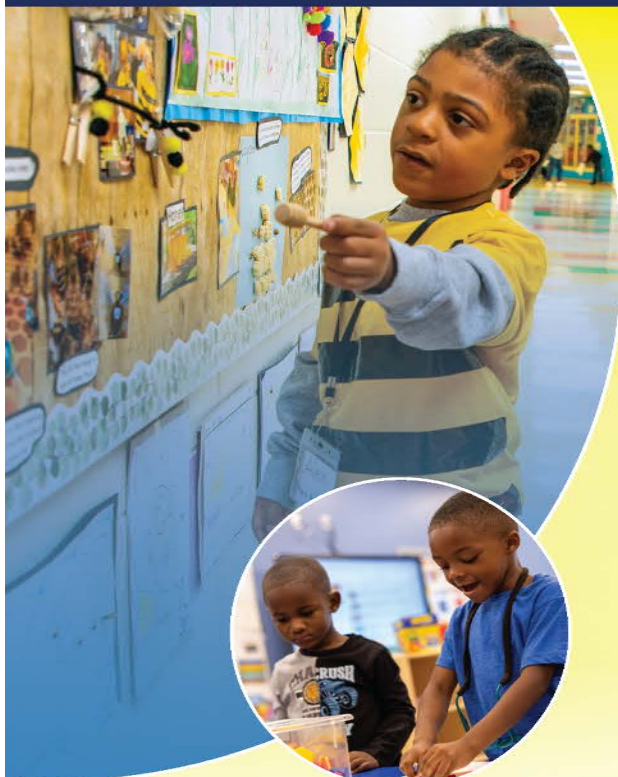
CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Cleveland News Wire - Highlights

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expected allotment of community development funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The total expected amount is roughly \$34 million. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money makes up much of that funding. Watch Documenters Jenna Thomas and Jack Brancatelli explain CDBG funds.

City home repair

The city recommends devoting \$3.4 million of federal funding for home repair programs, with the intention of addressing 100 housing units in the 2023 program year. Last year, about \$4 million was available for this work. The programs, run by Community Development's Division of Neighborhood Services, include:

- Repair-A-Home (RAH)
- Senior Housing Assistance Program (SHAP)
- Programs for gutter and furnace repair
- Furnace/hot water tank replacement

Louise Jackson, the commissioner of the division, said SHAP and RAH serve owner-occupants. Jackson said the division recently completed the following work on 61 homes and properties:

- 42 repaired roofs
- 29 repaired porches
- 12 whole-house electrical repairs
- Six whole-house plumbing repairs
- 18 interior repairs
- Five trimmed trees
- 15 pest-management projects

Ward 15 Council Member Jenny Spencer asked how those service numbers could increase, particularly with SHAP and RAH. Jackson cited concerns with the number of contractors available. She said the city is working with the Urban League of Cleveland to recruit more contractors.

Housing Trust Fund

Officials discussed Cleveland's Housing Trust Fund (HTF), which is set to receive about \$4.5 million in federal funds in 2023 compared to \$5.2 million the previous year. Anthony Bango, manager of Cleveland's Housing Development Office, explained that the city uses the HTF to help finance affordable-housing projects. Since 2017, the fund has supported work on more than 2,100 housing units with roughly \$500 million from state, federal, and private sources.

Ward 14 Council Member Jasmin Santana said HUD guidelines have kept housing dollars from helping all areas. She said some residents are vulnerable to displacement, and she wondered if the city could put caps on sale and rental amounts, specifically on projects supported with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Director of Community Development Alyssa Hernandez mentioned possible "LOOP legislation" that could address displacement concerns.

Vacant lots and gun violence

The city recommends directing just more than \$1.4 million of CDBG funds to Project Clean, compared to \$1.2 million the year before. The Department of Public Works program focuses on cleaning, cutting, and maintaining vacant lots.

Stephanie Howse, a council member for Ward 7, mentioned a recent presentation she and members of Circular Cleveland received in Philadelphia. Howse said Philadelphia contracts with an outside company to intentionally maintain lots, with research showing a correlating decrease in gun violence surrounding regularly maintained and transformed lots. She wondered if Cleveland has looked into that option. Tony Scott, the commissioner of the Division of Park Maintenance and Properties, said he does review best practices, including work done in Philadelphia.

How to fund Community Development Corporations

Council members and administration officials had a lengthy discussion about Community Development Corporations (CDCs), which are nonprofit organizations that aim to revitalize neighborhoods through housing and other services. They debated what council members called restrictive eligibility guidelines from HUD, as well as the best method to fund CDCs.

Community Development proposes giving a little more than \$1.5 million to CDCs for activity grants for housing and commercial development. The department set aside \$1.2 million for this purpose in 2022. Each council member is also set to receive \$435,294 of CDBG dollars, much of which they typically send to CDCs as supplementary funding.

Ward 3 Council Member Kerry McCormack and Ward 13 Council Member Kris Harsh - who both previously worked at CDCs - said funding the nonprofits with CDBG money is a bad idea. In effect, the strict eligibility rules hamstring CDCs, which they said are vital to Cleveland. McCormack named services that the CDC he worked at provided because the city didn't: safety organizing, running a rec league, and community outreach. CDCs get funding based on "accomplishments" in the prior program year. Jessica Trivisonno, a senior strategist for the city who used to work for CDCs, explained the process in this 2021 Twitter thread. In the budget hearing, Ward 12 Council Member Rebecca Maurer discussed the challenges

CDCs face. She confirmed that helping a senior install a bathroom rail for \$250 would not meet CDBG qualifications as a "substantial repair" accomplishment.

Land bank woes

Officials also discussed the city's estimated \$190,000 in federal funds to repurpose parcels in the city's land bank. Community Development officials said the city is in the midst of decoupling from CDBG funding, citing eligibility issues with HUD guidelines. Hernandez said the program has been without a manager for almost two years, though the city is actively trying to hire for that role.

There are more than 18,000 parcels officially in the land bank, and Hernandez said issues such as uncut grass and illegal dumping require an all-out response from the city. "I am incredibly frustrated by where we are in the program," she said, adding that it is her goal to transform it.

Hernandez also expressed disappointment with the city's pattern of selling parcels below market value, saying Cleveland has offered developers the "sweetest game in town."

Public commenters talk Police Commission budget cuts, housing issues; rec centers to get more security.

March 6 Cleveland City Council
Covered by Documenters Kellie Morris and Jenna Thomas

What happened: Commenters representing Citizens For A Safer Cleveland and Black Lives Matter Cleveland made public comments criticizing City Council's decision to cut \$224,000 from the proposed 2023 budget for the Community Police Commission (CPC). They said the CPC would use the money to hire more staff. Commenters argued that stripping the commission of additional funding ignores the desires of voters who supported Issue 24. The ballot initiative changed the city charter in 2021 to give the CPC final say over police discipline. The remaining 2023 budget of CPC -- about \$2 million -- meets the minimum requirement set in the charter.

Housing concerns in Ward 7: Public commenter Robert Rice represented the Greater Cleveland Housing Justice Coalition. Rice shared feedback he received from residents while canvassing on housing issues in Ward 7. He said he spoke with renters about tenant unionization. Homeowners near East 90th Street and Chester Avenue expressed concern about aggressive real estate agents trying to buy their property for less than market value, Rice said. "It is clear that the concerns around gentrification aren't abstract apprehensions of the future but



Clark-Fulton resident Robert Rice discusses gentrification at the March 6 City Council meeting. (Credit: Cleveland City Council YouTube).

a real material reality," Rice said. Kia and Hyundai in the hot seat: Council voted unanimously in favor of a resolution urging the mayor to join cities across the United States in suing Kia and Hyundai for damages related to local car thefts. Mayor Justin Bibb announced in a press conference Wednesday morning that his administration would, in fact, sue the companies for failing to install safeguards against thefts.

CFO explains changes to 2023 budget, committee OKs security services for rec centers.

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

Covered by Documenters Carolyn Cooper, Tina Scott and Nick Ventura

What happened: Committee members reviewed changes to the proposed 2023 city budget with Chief Financial Officer Ahmed Abonamah. The budget calls for spending nearly \$711 million from the General Fund. Some agreed-upon changes include:

- Addition of \$200,000 to the Office of Equal Opportunity
- Removal of \$224,000 from the Community Police Commission
- Removal of \$750,000 from the Division of Corrections
- Addition of \$600,000 to the Department of Building and Housing
- Addition of \$1.275 million for council's discretionary Capital Repair Fund

The committee approved the amended budget ordinance, and it was read a second time at the council meeting later that night. Learn more about Cleveland's process for passing a budget.

Rec center security: The committee also advanced legislation allowing the city to spend an estimated \$1 million on additional security at rec centers. The full council passed this proposal that evening as well. Sam Gissentaner, commissioner of the Division of Recreation, said the city wants off-duty officers who are good role models. Council President Blaine Griffin requested information about the officers' background and training. The city sometimes looks to the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office for assistance, Gissentaner said. The Cleveland Peacemakers Alliance also collaborates with

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rec center staff.

Union negotiations: The Ohio Nurses Association and Teamsters Local 507 unions have new agreements with the city. The committee approved the proposals, called collective bargaining agreements. Full council later approved them. Council Member Mike Polensek asked how many unions partner with the city and how many agreements the city was still negotiating. The city expects to complete negotiations with 11 of 33 unions by this week, said Chief Human Resources Officer Paul Patton.

Cleveland recently hurried a contract renewal with the Peacemakers Alliance. The city had left the group working without a contract for months. Board approves contract for maintenance of surveillance cameras, new prices for police escorts

March 8 Cleveland Board of Control

Covered by Documenters Karima McCree-Wilson and Marvetta Rutherford

What happened: The board approved a contract worth \$250,000 with Paladin Protective Systems, Inc. to maintain citywide surveillance cameras. Larry Jones II, the deputy commissioner who focuses on information technology projects, said maintenance of the cameras has improved. Of the 2,300 across the city, 85 are down, many due to construction projects, he said.

Price changes for police escort: Board members discussed a change in the amount the city charges for police to do escorts through the city. It's a service used for funeral processions and trucks pulling oversized loads. Mayor Justin Bibb asked how much money the city makes on police escorts. Director of Public Safety Karrie Howard wasn't sure. The new fee schedule, which the board approved, starts at \$52.69 per hour for a patrol officer to provide an escort. Prices vary based on the rank of the personnel needed, and they increase for overtime. The new hourly rates are up slightly from previous rates for all personnel except traffic controllers and dispatchers. Overtime rates increased across the board.

Committee discusses plans for new city park, management of Highland Park Golf Course

Municipal Services and Properties Committee, Cleveland City Council

Covered by Documenter Christina Easter

What happened: Council approved legislation last week about the management of Highland Park Golf Course. This

committee discussed the new law, which allows 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 city will also provide funds for capital improvements for five years. Officials confirmed that the city can end the contract if the course isn't producing the desired revenue. Cleveland owns the course, located in suburban Highland Hills. Historically, it has been a preferred destination of many Black golfers.

The 161st city park: A new park is coming near the Clark Recreation Center. The city will accept a roughly \$461,000 grant from the National Park Service to develop Clark Avenue Park. It will be the city's 161st park. The proposal requires the city to match funding equal to the grant amount. Full council passed the legislation at its March 6 meeting.

Commenters address displacement of residents, stalled start of city commission; council committees advance plans for new police HQ

March 13 Cleveland City Council
Covered by Documenter Chau Tang

What happened: Andre' Dailey of Collinwood made a public comment about the displacement of more than 100 residents of the Euclid Beach Mobile Home community. Western Reserve Land Conservancy plans to create a new park along Lake Erie. Some residents who live on the property along Lakeshore Boulevard have been told they need to leave by September 2024, according to News 5 Cleveland. "Everybody should be able to age in place," said Dailey, who urged the council to ensure those residents are taken care of.



Chinenye Nkemere addresses Cleveland City Council (Credit: Cleveland City Council YouTube).

'Do you believe in Black women?': Chinenye Nkemere, co-founder of Enlightened Solutions, asked about the status of a new city commission her firm consulted on. City Council approved the Commission on Black Women and Girls by law in June 2022. But officials have not formally established it. Angela Shute-Woodson, director of the city's Community Relations Board, said last month that interviews were ongoing, and the city hoped to make an announcement in March. The commission will advise on improving Black women and girls'

well-being. A 2020 Bloomberg report ranked Cleveland last among major U.S. cities for Black women overall, considering health, education, and economic outcomes. Nkemere asked the city to accelerate the process and fund the commission. "I believe in you," she said. "Do you believe in Black women?"

And also: Council passed an ordinance approving Tax Increment Financing for the Bridgeworks project in Ward 3. Documenter Christina Easter has more on that project from an earlier committee meeting.

Caucus looks for ways to improve community development corporations.

Covered by Documenters Von Farowe, Rosie Palfy, and Karima McCree-Wilson

What happened: Council members expressed their concerns with Community Development Corporations (CDCs) in a discussion with reps from Cleveland Neighborhood Progress (CNP). Issues included accountability for CDC board members, the services CDCs provide, and how the city should fund the nonprofits. CDCs receive much of their funding through federal grants issued to Cleveland. Those grants carry strict eligibility restrictions, which council members criticized in February budget hearings. CNP President and CEO Tania Menesse said the federal funds provide operational support but not the capital for actual projects. CDCs are often left fundraising, Menesse said.



Council member Richard Starr shares the feedback he received from residents. Council member Anthony Hairston seated right and behind Starr. (Credit: Cleveland City Council YouTube.)

Not just 'bricks and sticks': Ward 10 Council Member Anthony Hairston pushed back on the idea of CDCs needing to limit their work to "bricks and sticks," or work centered on construction. There is a place for social services, too, he said, adding that CDCs often fill gaps in city functions. "If the CDC in my neighborhood didn't have a food program, some people wouldn't eat," Hairston said.

Flat tax getting flak: Council also received a presentation about a potential response to Ohio House Bill 1 (HB 1). The proposed state law would create a flat income tax. CNP's Ed Stockhausen discussed the draft of a different bill intended

to offset the effects of HB 1 by providing property-tax relief for low-income homeowners. Ward 7 Council Member Stephanie Howse, a former state legislator, asked for a study on HB 1's projected financial impact on Cleveland.

Committees advance plans for new police headquarters

March 15 - Joint Committee, Cleveland City Council
Covered by Documenters Collin Cunningham and Gennifer Harding-Gosnell

What happened: City Council's Safety, Municipal Services and Properties, and Development, Planning, and Sustainability Committees advanced legislation for the new Cleveland Division of Police headquarters (CDP). Officials from the Mayor's Office of Capital Projects said moving the headquarters to a refurbished ArtCraft building would cost \$90 million. The original proposed site for constructing a new headquarters along the Opportunity Corridor would have cost an estimated \$161 million, with the city already having spent \$9 million on it.

Powered by CPP: Council Member Brian Kazy asked what company would provide electricity to the building. Jon Pinney, a managing partner with the project's developer, told him FirstEnergy is the current provider. Officials are looking into expanding Cleveland Public Power (CPP) service north of Payne Avenue so that it can power the building. Council Member Michael Polensek said, "I'm serious as a heart attack on this one. If we're gonna own a building, it better be on CPP."

'A lot of horse feed': Council members questioned the decision to move CDP's mounted unit stables from downtown to the Central neighborhood. Council Member Richard Starr said he spoke with residents on Thackeray Avenue who don't want the stables in their backyard. Polensek said it was unclear why they should move the stables outside of downtown since that is where the mounted unit does the majority of its work. The stables have to move from the current location when the state transportation department straightens out Dead Man's Curve. The estimated cost for the new stables is \$13 million. The mounted unit currently consists of seven horses and three assigned officers.

Visit Documenters.org for all Documenters coverage, and bookmark our Meeting Briefs page for more short summaries.

Where is Evenfall?



By Melvin Twigg Mason

The Atlas Lakeshore Cinema in Euclid was the host of the theatrical premiere of Dustin Lee's epic movie, "Evenfall." The film is a post-apocalyptic offering from his label, Maple Films Ltd., with help from Amos Productions and A Last Resort Productions. Written, produced, directed, shot, and edited by Lee, a Cleveland native and graduate of Kent State University, this indie film is the story of one mother's efforts to find and retrieve her abducted son from the hands of a quasi-governmental organization known simply as "The Hands."

Set in the year 2071, after several wars, uprisings, and pandemics, widowed mom Claire is desperately trying to establish a safe homestead for herself and her son, David. But an agent working for The Hands decides David is needed elsewhere for the continued existence of

humanity. What ensues is a search and struggle between the fierce expectations of a mother and the needs of a place called "Evenfall!"

Sarah Carleton plays Claire, a hard-nosed mom fighting bandits and bear traps in her quest to survive and retrieve her son. Unfortunately, because her character is predominantly angry & anxious in this overcast world, Sarah's performance is much less nuanced than other characters in this film. The lovable and sometimes heroic Reggie is well-played by Morgan McLeod. Rachel Anderson is the agent ("Trisha Forster") who you're not always sure whether to love or hate. And Rick Montgomery Jr. as Garrett the backwoodsman brings the warmth and comic relief necessary



Rick Montgomery Jr., Morgan McLeod, and Sarah Carleton in the theatrical premiere of Dustin Lee's epic movie, "Evenfall."

to complete the audience's three-hour emotional rollercoaster ride.

What's remarkable about this independent project is that despite Evenfall's \$33,000 budget, its quality rises to the level of other productions with higher budgets, such as AMC's "The Walking Dead," Syfy Channel's "Z Nation," or ABC's "Revolution," thanks in part to the wonderfully plotted music score provided by 24-year-old Jake Weston, also a former Cleveland native. Once you get past the slow-moving opening scene (say, 14 minutes in), the action & pacing of the story pick up dramatically and keep your attention all the way to its heart-pounding and heartwarming conclusion. The choice of drab costuming for



Director Dustin Lee

the characters provides a stark contrast to the glimmers of beauty & color that Lee found at various film locations like the Hoover Dam in Nevada, Lake Mead, and the Cuyahoga Valley. The lighting (Scott Morrison, Jon Jivan), sound (Chris Mack), and makeup are all well-balanced in this work of love. Some stock footage and technical consultation were even provided by technicians from the NASA-Glenn Research Center here in Brookpark.

Though it actually only took 30 working days to film (over a 3-year period), "Evenfall" is a must-see. You can find the seven podcast episodes, which combine to make the feature-length film, on YouTube.

New Strict Voter Rule for Ohioans



By Kellie Morris

(Ohio Secretary of the State press release 1/6/2023)

It is very important to be engaged in polls and surveys in order for your voice to be heard. Speaking up in community meetings, making one phone call, or writing letters or an email could make a difference when legislation is being considered. New Ohio voter laws will go into effect on April 8. The deadline to register to vote in the May primary elections is April 3.

In January, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed HB 458, legislation to strengthen Ohio's elections by requiring stricter photo ID for voting, among other actions.

You will ONLY be permitted to vote if you have a driver's license, state identification card, passport, or military identification card. Utility bills will no longer be accepted at the polls as proof of residence. You still have to register to vote 30 days before an election. The deadline for

the May Primary elections is April 3, but other changes have been made including:

Eliminates early voting on the Monday before Election Day. Eliminates August special elections. Shortens the deadline to apply to cast absent voters' ballots by mail.

The Governor takes his actions based on his constituent's response.

NPR/PBS Newshour/Marist: 79% of voters believe government-issued photo ID should be required, including majorities of Democrats (57%), Republicans, Independents, whites, and nonwhites.

Pew: 76% of voters, including 61% of Democrats, favor "requiring all voters to show government-issued photo identification to vote."

CNN: 64% of voters, including 65% of minority voters, 69% of Independents, and 65% of moderates believe requiring photo ID would make elections fairer.

Honest Elections Project: 77% of voters, including Republicans (92%), Independents (75%), and Democrats (63%), support requiring voter ID 64% of Black voters, 77% of Hispanics, and 76% of low-income voters reject the notion that presenting a form of ID at the ballot box is a "burden."

Monmouth University: 4 in 5 Americans (80%) support requiring voters to show photo ID.

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE.

We are working with When We All Vote to make sure every eligible person is registered to vote. Join us to shift the culture around voting!

Grinnell College: 56% of voters oppose eliminating state laws that require photo ID.

Fox News: 77% of voters believe a state or federally-issued photo ID should be required.

Rasmussen: 75% of voters say showing a photo ID is necessary for a "fair and secure election process," while 85% of voters said it is "common sense" to require a photo ID.

**This information is published on the Ohio Secretary of the State Website. LAROSE RELEASES STATEMENT ON THE SIGNING OF HB 458*

Be engaged in the political process to create effective positive change. Make your vote and your voice count.

REGISTER TO VOTE BELOW



SCAN TO REGISTER TO VOTE

Be the Change: Financial Wellness in Your Community



By Ray'Chel Wilson

April is National Financial Literacy Month, a time to focus on the importance of financial education and improving our financial literacy skills. With the impact of the pandemic still affecting the economy and many individuals struggling to make ends meet, it's more crucial than ever to prioritize financial wellness.

Here are three actions you can take to advocate for and improve your financial wellness:

1. Educate Yourself on Financial Literacy

Financial literacy means having the knowledge and skills to manage your money effectively, make informed decisions about spending, saving, and investing, and avoid financial pitfalls. However, studies show that many Americans lack basic financial literacy skills, leading to poor financial decisions and high levels of debt.

Take the time to educate yourself on financial literacy, regardless of your income level. Start by understanding the fundamentals of budgeting, debt management, credit scores, and investments. There are plenty of free online resources and tools available that can help you improve your financial knowledge, such as personal finance blogs, podcasts, and books.

Consider taking a financial literacy course or workshop at your local community college or community center. Many

organizations offer free or low-cost financial education programs, and you can learn valuable skills that can help you achieve your financial goals.

2. Practice Good Financial Habits

Once you've gained some financial literacy, the next step is to put that knowledge into practice. Good financial habits can help you build wealth, avoid debt, and achieve financial stability over time.

Here are some key financial habits to cultivate:

Create a budget. A budget is a spending plan that helps you manage your money and track your expenses. Start by calculating your monthly income and expenses, and allocate (divvy up) your money accordingly. A budget can help you identify areas where you can cut back on spending and save more money.

Pay off debt. High levels of debt can be a significant obstacle to achieving financial wellness and freedom. If you have credit

card debt, student loans, or other forms of debt, make it a priority to pay off your balances as quickly as possible. Consider consolidating your debts or negotiating with your lenders to lower your interest rates.

Build an emergency fund. Life is unpredictable, and unexpected expenses can derail your finances. Having an emergency fund can provide a safety net when you need it most. Aim to save at least three to six months' worth of living expenses in a separate savings account.

3. Advocate for Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is not just an individual issue; it's a societal one. Lack of financial literacy can contribute to economic inequality, as those with lower incomes and less education are more likely to face financial hardship.

Encourage financial literacy in your community by:

- **Supporting financial education programs.**

Encourage local schools, community centers, and organizations to offer financial education programs. Attend workshops and classes, and share your knowledge with others.

- **Engaging with policymakers.** Contact your elected officials and advocate for policies that support financial literacy and economic empowerment, such as increasing funding for financial education programs and regulating predatory lending practices.
- **Volunteering with organizations** that promote financial wellness. Many nonprofit organizations offer financial education and counseling services to low-income individuals and families. Consider volunteering your time and skills to help others improve their financial literacy and achieve their financial goals.

Financial literacy is a critical skill that can help you achieve your financial goals, build wealth, and avoid debt. By educating yourself on financial literacy, practicing good financial habits, and encouraging financial wellness in your community, you can make a positive impact on your own finances and the lives of those around you. Let's celebrate National Financial Literacy Month by taking action toward improving our financial futures.

Affirm: I can be the change I desire.

P.S. - Did you know Cleveland will have its own Wealth Wellness Weekend this summer?

Mark your calendars for July 21-23! Visit www.phebefoundation.org or follow @thephebefoundation on Instagram to stay up to date.



Homestead Exemption: Code for Lower Property Tax!



Courtesy of the Ohio Department of Taxation

The homestead exemption allows low-income senior citizens and permanently disabled Ohioans to reduce their property tax bills by shielding some of the market value of their homes from taxation. The exemption, which takes the form of a credit on property tax bills, allows qualifying homeowners to exempt up to \$25,000 of the market value of their homes from all local property taxes. For example, through the homestead exemption, a home with a market value of \$100,000 would be

billed as if it is worth \$75,000.

Ohio Revised Code initially established a maximum Ohio Adjusted Gross Income (OAGI) for the applicant and the applicant's spouse of \$30,000. This maximum is to be indexed for inflation each year. OAGI can be found on line 3 of the Ohio Individual Income Tax return. With indexing, the 2022 income threshold is \$34,600.



The 2021 income threshold was \$34,200, the 2020 income threshold was \$33,600, the 2019 threshold was \$32,800, the 2018 threshold was \$32,200, and the 2017 income threshold was \$31,800. For source and more information, including the average tax saving, please click [here](#).

What is the Homestead Exemption for Disabled Veterans? As U.S. Senator Charles Schumer observed, property exemptions are intended to let military veterans "afford a home and live stable civilian lives" when their service is over. A property tax exemption protects a portion of a home's value from taxation. In Ohio, for disabled veterans, the homestead exemption protects the first \$50,000 of a home's value from taxation.

For example, if a qualifying veteran owned a home that was valued at \$125,000, the application of the full homestead exemption would mean that the house would be taxed as if it were worth \$75,000: the value of the house minus the \$50,000 exemption.

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A GREAT WAY TO INFORM THE COMMUNITY

E. 66th Street's Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative



By Bruce Checefsky

The East 66th St. Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) plan, completed in the summer of 2020, seeks to promote life along the corridor between Euclid Ave. and Superior Ave. by improving streets, sidewalks, lighting, and communication systems. The plan is currently in preliminary engineering where the ideas are refined, including utility surveys, geotechnical investigations, and environmental studies.

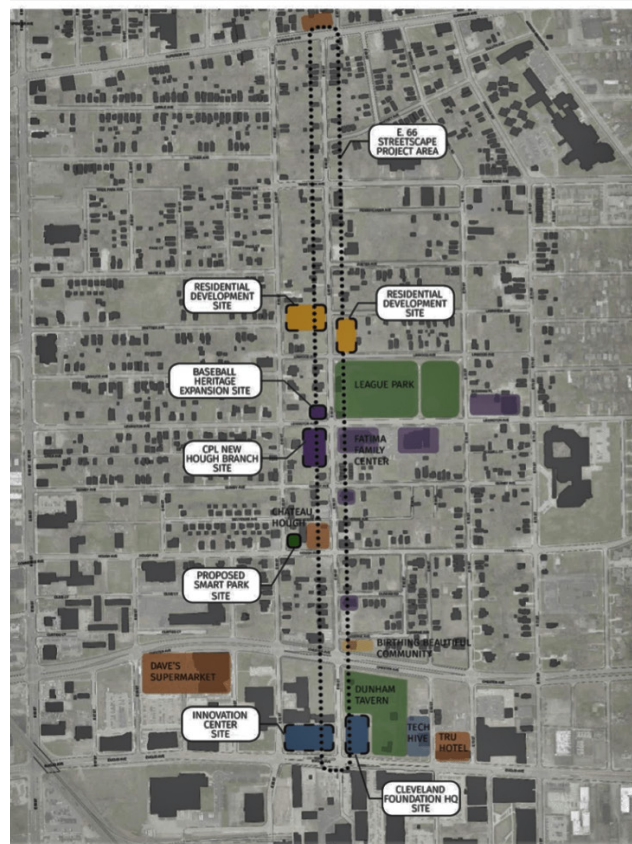
Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris, an urban planner and designer with City Architecture, outlined the project at the recent midtown community meeting

held at the Hough branch of the Cleveland Public Library.

In 2015, City Architecture worked on a TLCI for East 66th St. around League Park. As the park was redeveloped and

restored, the larger district became important as an asset for the community. Investments in the new library and new headquarters for the Cleveland Foundation on Euclid Ave. sparked

interest in the City of Cleveland and Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA). Five years later, a streetscape plan brought together current
Continued on page 9



NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

The East 66th Street Corridor is home to many important community spaces and places, including:

- Historic League Park and Baseball Heritage Society
- Fatima Family Center
- Chateau Hough Winery
- Fannie M. Lewis Community Park
- Birthing Beautiful Communities

Several projects are planned along the corridor, providing additional investment in the neighborhood. These include:

- New Cleveland Foundation Headquarters at East 66th and Euclid
- Midtown Innovation Center at East 66th and Euclid
- New Cleveland Public Library branch at East 66th and Lexington
- Allen Estates residential project
- Neighborhood smart parks network
- New linear park connection to Dave's Supermarket
- Expanded park area at Dunham Tavern

Traffic Safety Check



By Margaret Adams

Many people are concerned about safety on the streets of Cleveland, specifically in relation to traffic and the behavior of drivers. On Mayor Bibb's website (article dated 2/2/23), it reported 45 traffic deaths in 2022 in the city of Cleveland. This number was down from 74 in 2021. It also reported that every two weeks, an average of 13 people are seriously injured or killed in the city because of traffic incidents. The television station WOIO reported that speed was a factor in 40% of the traffic deaths in Cuyahoga County, and half of them were due to operating a vehicle while intoxicated (OVI).

The city has implemented the Vision Zero program, whose aim is to eliminate serious injuries and deaths from automobile crashes. The mayor believes slower streets are safer streets. Safer streets should lead to an improvement in the quality of life for the residents. To accomplish this, the city has started a pilot program that uses speed tables. Speed tables are vertical bumps placed across the streets that cause drivers to slow down in order to drive over them. Operating a vehicle under the influence (DUI, DWI, or OMVI) all mean the same thing: driving a car while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It is always recommended that a person who is drinking or has had too much



Credit: Ono Kosuki.

to drink either have a designated driver or call a service such as Uber or Lyft to drive them home safely. Drivers should know Ohio's open bottle law, which states it is illegal to have an open bottle of alcohol in the car. This includes the driver and passengers. Drivers also need to become aware of Ohio Law regarding marijuana: while medical marijuana use is legal, the law regarding driving while using it is something users need to become aware of. Drivers may find it costly to get an attorney to explain their use in court.

Another major violation that drivers commit is not following the law when it comes to driving through school zones and driving around school buses. Drivers are expected to drive the posted school speed limit or follow the flashing lights stating that the speed in school zones is 20 miles per hour during the school hours posted. Ohio law states that cars are to stop 10 feet away from a stopped school bus when the red lights are flashing and the stop sign arm of the bus has been extended. Drivers on both sides are to wait until the extended arm is retracted and the lights stop flashing before continuing. So many people are observed not following these laws. By not

following these laws, children are in danger of being injured or killed.

Another violation that has been observed is people pulling out ahead of a line of traffic stopped for a red light or stop sign and making a turn that causes an accident. Is this type of driving worth the risk of being ticketed or causing injury?

As the weather gets warmer, this usually leads to more people out driving. Let's be more considerate of one another. We all like to listen to music we enjoy in our car, but let's not play our music so loud that everyone on the street and in their homes has to listen to it. The city of Cleveland has a noise pollution law: let's not give law enforcement any more reasons to stop cars than they already have. Also, make sure you periodically check and make sure all the lights on your car are



Kampus Productions.

working and that you are using your turn signals when making turns. These are some of the reasons police use for stopping cars and we all know those stops have sometimes become deadly.

Let's be safe and respectful of others and the law while driving on our city streets.

For further information: mayor.clevelandohio.gov/city-cleveland-seeking-resident-feedback-speed-table-pilot-program www.visionzeroCLE.org/



Photo: Furkan F. Demir

Things Not Seen



By Larry Frazier

Our lives are full of invisible things that affect us daily—some have more influence on us than others. The technology of today is almost indispensable while spiritual things sometimes receive lesser importance. Ever since the electron was introduced to the world by Joseph Thomson, a British physicist, the invisible atom has taken a position of great prominence.

The part of the atomic theory that is more familiar to the average person is electronics. From the time we are born and throughout life, the invisible elements of electronics are all around us. It seems that we are almost



Photo credit: Pexels.com

totally dependent on what that invisible, powerful electron can do.

Somebody once humorously said, “If it weren’t for electricity, we’d all be watching television by candlelight.” We take technology for granted. We trust it faithfully and without question even though we don’t fully understand it.

According to the way we use and accept this mysterious science, we can borrow a verse from the Bible: “We live by faith and not by sight.” Taking some liberty with that verse, we can say that some people live with more faith in the unseen electron than faith in the visible Word of God, the Holy Bible. Like most people, I appreciate today’s technology and use it regularly on computers, cell phones, cars, and all around the house. We must, however, keep in mind that electronics and all the sciences are gifts from God for sustaining our lives.

Invisible things are known by the results they bring about. Like the workings of electronics, some invisible things in life are only known by what they do. The “Fruit of the Spirit” that comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.

He brings about the invisible qualities of love, joy, peace, patience, faithfulness, and self-control in a person’s life & actions (Galatians 5:22-23). So that we keep the proper mindset about things in our world, the Apostle Paul writes about Jesus Christ in Colossians 1:15-16, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him, all things were created,

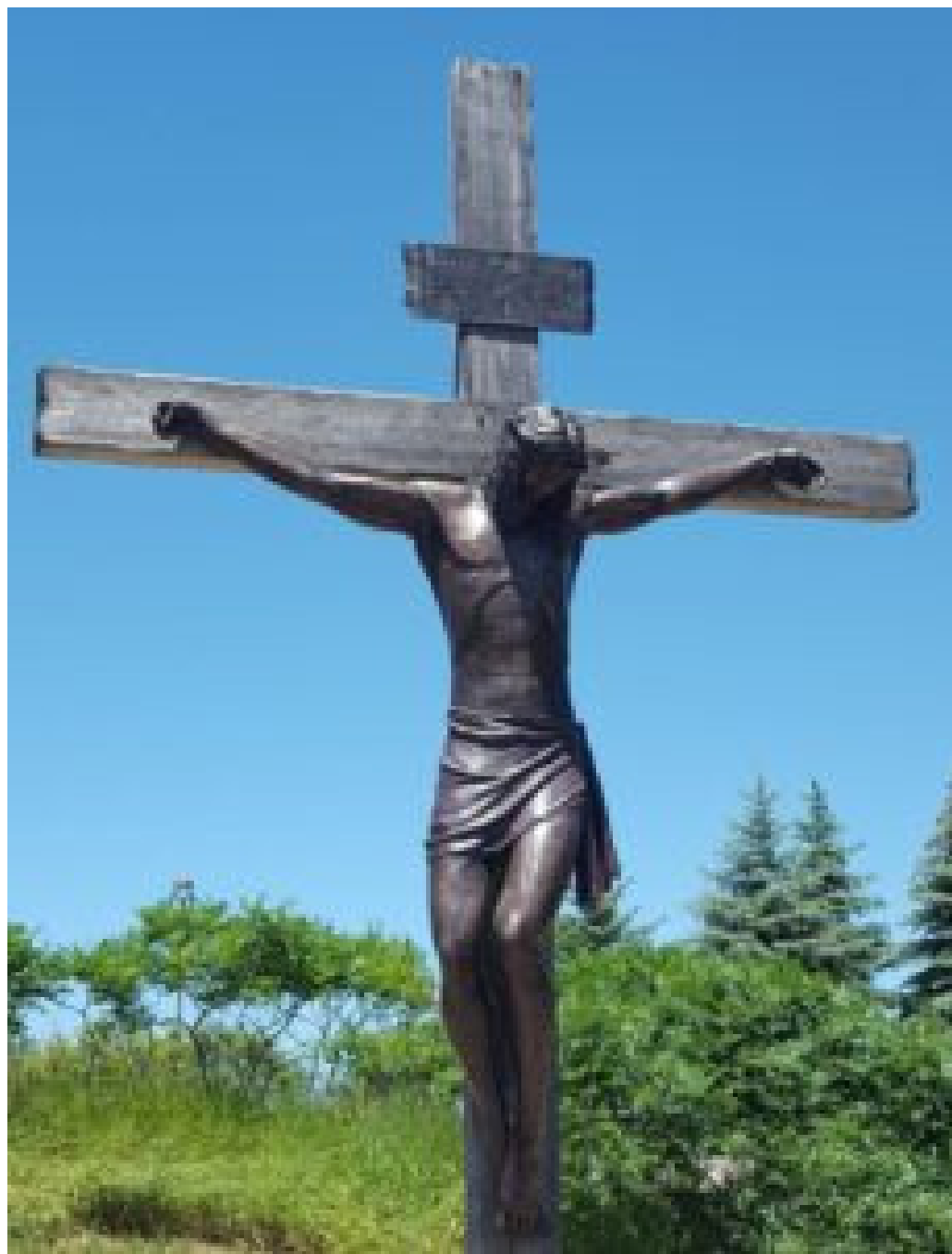


Photo credit is L Frazier.

in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created by Him and for Him.” Jesus says in John 10:10 that He has come so that we may have life to the full.

Kirk Franklin reminds the Children of God that they can sing,

“I can do the impossible; I can see the invisible because I got faith, yeah yeah!!” Hebrews 11:1 informs us that faith “...is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

E. 66th Street’s Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative

Continues from page 8

investments to encourage future investment in the neighborhood.

“We looked at that as an opportunity to develop a plan to represent a new standard for the development of city streets,” said Bandy-Zalatoris. “Through that process, we looked at opportunities to think about streets differently, from the process through construction, that places people first and raises the voices of the community.”

East 66th St. is home to the historic League Park, Chateau Hough vineyard, a new public library, the future expansion of the Baseball Heritage Museum, and the site of the Allen Estates project, the first project of Frontline

Development, a company headed by Shelia Wright and Angela Bennett.

Bandy-Zalatoris said the community input was rigorous, especially during the pandemic when meetings were online. “There is a commitment to do the entire corridor, from Euclid Ave to Superior Avenue, a street of 1.1 miles,” she said. “We can do a lot here.”

The community asked for walkability, and with nearly 40% of sidewalks in the corridor broken or missing according to Bandy-Zalatoris, it impacts the ability of people to get around the neighborhood. A 10-foot, multi-use path is under consideration, using material that supports

bicycles, wheelchairs, walkers, and runners. Street trees are in the plan. The safety elements like crosswalks and bump-out curbs reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians. New street lamps and furniture are also in the proposal.

The preliminary engineering phase needed funding after it was adopted. In 2021, City Architecture began the initial process, working with Osborne Engineering. The early design and planning process, tested with engineering standards, wrapped up in 2022.

The next step involves final engineering and refining the design, including streetscaping. Utility lines can be underground, giving more pedestrian

access along the corridor.

“These infrastructure projects take a long time,” Bandy-Zalatoris explained. “I appreciate the community’s continued patience with the project and perseverance. We are committed to keeping their voice at the table as decisions every step of the way. We will have better streets and public spaces for our community.”

The final engineering will start soon, dependent on funding. Earlier this year, the city of Cleveland sent an application to the US Department of Transportation that would fund the construction of the project.

“This is a very political process where high scores do not necessarily mean you get it,” said Bandy-Zalatoris.

A community event, with interactive opportunities, is planned for April to discuss priority details for the street, and to meet with the engineering and design teams and the city team to answer questions and gather information.



Legal Aid's Upcoming Estate Planning Clinic



By Tonya Sams

Most people hope to live a long, healthy, and happy life. But what do you do when the unexpected occurs, such as injury, sickness, or even death? One way to prepare is through estate planning. An estate plan can provide peace of mind by addressing important aspects of your medical and financial life, ensuring that your loved ones have the tools they need to comply with your wishes. Here are a few areas that you may need to consider:

Advance Directives: These documents instruct healthcare providers on what to do if you are unable to communicate due to injury or illness. Examples of advance directives are the durable power of attorney for healthcare and a living will.

When creating a durable power of attorney for healthcare, you are naming a person to make decisions regarding your medical needs if you are unable to.

A living will is a document that states the medical treatment that you would like to receive in the event that you are unable to communicate, are terminally ill, or are rendered unconscious. This includes stating if you would like to have life-sustaining treatment. You can also use this document to declare if you would like to be an organ or tissue donor.

Because both the durable power of attorney for healthcare and the living will specify different areas regarding medical care, it is a good idea to have both documents.

Durable Power of Attorney: This document differs from a durable power of attorney for healthcare. A durable power of attorney (durable POA) names a person, referred to as the "attorney in fact", to be responsible for a person's affairs if they are unable to. This could

include decisions about taxes, housing, banking, benefits, and more. The person creating the durable POA still has the power to make decisions, but the "attorney in fact" is there to assist them in carrying out those decisions.

Last Will: A will is different from a living will. While a living will addresses medical issues, a will addresses the other aspects of your life if you were to die. This would include who would get custody of your children, who would be named beneficiaries, who would inherit your property, how your assets would be distributed, and more. Without a last will, the court would

make these decisions which, at times, can be a long process.

Need help with estate planning? The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland will be hosting a free Brief Advice Clinic focused on Estate Planning on April 29 from 9:30-11 a.m. at Fairhill Partners, 12200 Fairhill Road, Cleveland, OH 44120.

At the April 29 event, there will be a brief advice clinic in which attorneys and volunteers will be on hand to answer questions regarding basic wills, financial and healthcare powers of attorney, living wills/advanced directives, transfer on death paperwork, foreclosure, public benefits, consumer/debt problems, and other civil legal issues.

Cannot attend this event in April? Legal Aid hosts many other free legal advice events and you can bring your questions to any upcoming Brief Advice Clinic. Visit laslev.org, go to the "Events" tab, then "Clinics" and pick a date good for you. Have other questions? Call Legal Aid at 888-817-3777 or seek help 24/7 at laslev.org.

Tonya Sams is the Development and Communications Assistant at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.

ESTATE PLANNING CHECKLIST

No matter how modest, everything you own is considered your estate. Taking stock of what you own is the first step in understanding how best to protect it.

ARE YOU PREPARED?

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 01 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Will | 04 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Living Will | 07 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beneficiary Forms |
| 02 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trust | 05 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical Powers of Attorney | 08 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Life Insurance |
| 03 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health Care Directives | 06 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial Powers of Attorney | 09 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estate Tax |

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Get it while it lasts!

COVID-19 resources FREE until May 11th

Vaccines are still the primary way to fight COVID. No cost COVID test kits and vaccinations are available at Cuyahoga County Board of Health and Cleveland Department of Public Health Community Health Clinics until **May 11**. After May 12, you will have to pay out-of-pocket or with insurance.

You have choices. Minimize your risk of COVID-19 infection by getting vaccinated **TODAY**.

Cuyahoga County: Call 216-201-2000 for more information or visit <https://ccbh.net/>
 Cleveland: Call 216-664-2324 or visit <https://www.clevelandhealth.org/>

Western Reserve
 Area Agency on Aging
 If you have questions about long-term care and support services, visit www.areasagingsolutions.org

How About a “Senior Freeze” on Property Tax?



By Ron Calhoun



Senior citizens, along with permanently and totally disabled middle-class Ohioans (Income of \$30K+), are unfairly left out of any program that aids them in maintaining their homes. For some elderly people, it is a matter of potentially losing their homes. When Black flight followed redlining and white flight, these residents dug in and stayed put in Cleveland, while others of those middle-class and wealthy Black families moved to the suburbs and rural areas of Greater Cleveland. The list for Black flight includes Solon, Twinsburg, Hudson, and Macedonia.

Although Ohio has the Ohio Homestead Exemption program, it is not enough.

The Ohio Homestead exemption allows low-income senior citizens and permanently and totally disabled Ohioans to reduce their property tax bills by shielding some of the market value of their homes from taxation. The exemption, which takes the form of a credit on property tax bills, allows qualifying homeowners to exempt up to \$25,000 of the market value of their homes from all local property taxes. For example, through the homestead exemption, a home with a market value of \$100,000 is billed as if it is worth \$75,000.

The Ohio Revised Code initially established a maximum Ohio Adjusted Gross Income (OAGI) for the applicant and the applicant’s spouse of \$30,000. This maximum is to be indexed for inflation each year. OAGI can be found on line 3 of the Ohio Individual Income Tax return. With indexing, the 2022 income threshold is \$34,600. The 2021 income threshold was \$34,200, the 2020 income threshold was \$33,600, the 2019 was \$32,800, 2018 was \$32,200, and 2017 was \$31,800.

Cleveland also has a new tax abatement initiative for first-time home ownership or new construction development for those who want to purchase or build a home.

The Cleveland / Cuyahoga County Down Payment Assistance (DPA) Program provides up to 10% of the purchase price (or up to \$16,600) for Cuyahoga County residents whose income is in the low to moderate range.

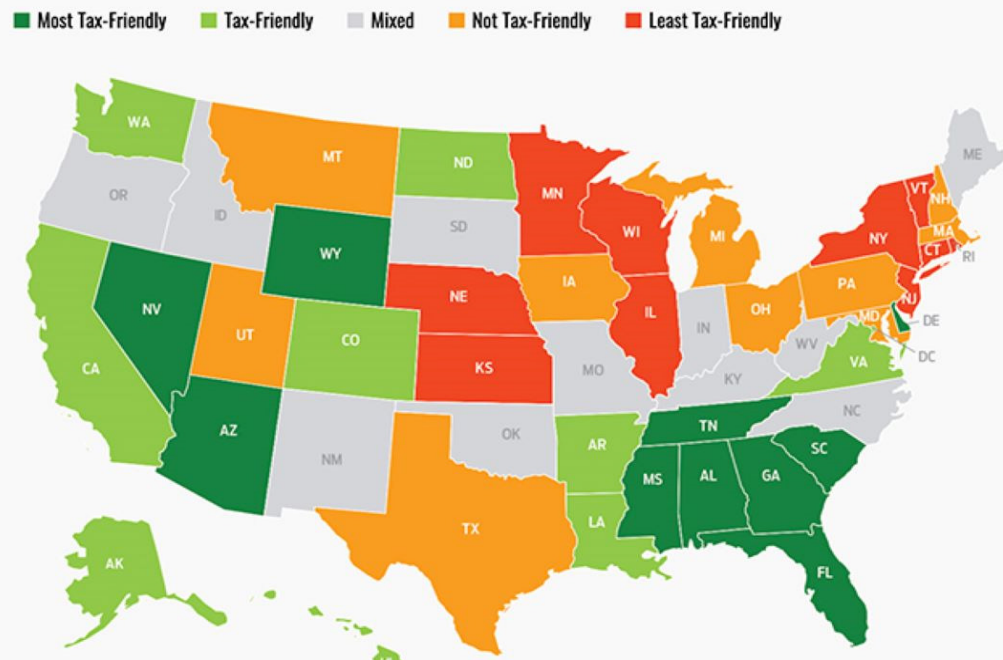
What about those who make over \$35,00 but less

than \$50,000 and have been a resident for 20 years or more? Several other States have Tax or Assessment Freeze programs for senior citizens, along with permanently and totally disabled middle-class homeowners.

Here is a list of 13 States with no property tax for seniors (people over 65).

It’s nearly impossible to avoid paying some form of property tax, especially if you own real

State-by-State Guide to Taxes on Retirees



estate. But some states are nicer than others regarding local tax exemptions for specific demographics, like senior citizens.

The majority of states across the U.S. require homeowners to be age 65 or older in order to qualify for property tax exemptions, with a few exceptions. If you’re married and jointly own your primary residence, only one spouse must be older than 65 to qualify for certain senior exemptions. The following states offer friendly property tax exemptions for seniors in order to ease their overall tax burden.

#1: South Dakota
Tax-wise, South Dakota is one of the best states for retirees. In addition to no state income tax, retired homeowners may also qualify for the state’s property tax relief programs. For low-income South Dakotans over the age of 70, a homestead exemption allows delaying payment of property taxes until the home is sold.

#2: Washington
Washington State offers property tax exemptions to senior residents 61 years of age and older.

#3: Florida
Not only do Florida residents enjoy great weather and beautiful beaches, there are also some property tax breaks for seniors. Certain residents may qualify for 100% property tax exemptions or a significant reduction.

#4: Alabama
In Alabama, homeowners over the age of 65 are exempt from all state property taxes.

#5: Alaska
If you are a homeowner in Alaska and over the age of 65, you’ll get a municipal property tax exemption on the first \$150,000 of your home’s value.

For example, on a \$250,000 property in Alaska, you would pay \$3,000 annually, at a tax rate of 3%. \$250,000 minus \$150,000 equals \$100,000 times 3%.

#6: South Carolina
Non-military retirees in South Carolina will enjoy a homestead exemption for homeowners over 65.

#7: Georgia
Retirees in the Peach State may qualify for property tax exemptions or deferrals.

#8: Hawaii
In Honolulu, Hawaii, residents age 65 and older qualify for an exemption of \$120,000 of their home’s value. In 2022, the exemption for seniors will increase to \$140,000.

#9: Mississippi
The effective property tax rate in Mississippi is one of the 10 lowest in the nation. And, anyone over the age of 65 can enjoy a homestead exemption on the first \$75,000 of the home’s value.

#10: South Carolina
Non-military retirees in South Carolina will enjoy a homestead exemption for homeowners over 65.

#11: New York
New York offers a Senior Citizen Exemption of 50% of your home’s appraised value. Homeowners must be over the age of 65, with an annual income of \$29,000 or less. Qualified residents are only required to pay property taxes on half of their home’s value.

Note: If a deceased spouse was over the age of 65, New York allows you to continue claiming your exemption.

#12: Texas
In Harris County, Texas, better known as Houston, the majority of seniors over the age of 65 don’t have to pay property taxes. Residents in the Houston area are exempt up to \$160,000 plus a 20% reduction off home values.

Note: Like New York, if the deceased spouse was over the age of 65, you may continue claiming your exemption in Texas, however, only if the surviving spouse is 55 or older.

#13: New Hampshire
The state of New Hampshire will increase property tax exemptions year for seniors 65 and older.

STATES WITH NO PROPERTY TAX FOR DISABLED VETERANS
In all 50 states, disabled veterans are eligible for some sort of property tax exemption. However, 18 states offer the maximum exemption: no property tax whatsoever on a veteran’s primary residence. This exemption is available to disabled veterans and their unmarried surviving spouses. Veterans should contact their local municipal tax assessor’s office for information on exemptions.

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- California
- Florida
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Maryland
- Michigan
- Nebraska
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- Oklahoma
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Texas
- Virginia

Source: <https://realwealth.com/learn/states-with-no-property-tax/>

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It's Parliamentary -- or Is It?



By Kellie Morris

“All in favor say yea, and all opposed say nay.” You have likely attended a meeting and heard the leader make this statement when a vote was taken. From Girl Scout troops to church and board meetings to the chambers of Congress, whenever individuals meet to accomplish the business of the organization, rules are necessary for a productive meeting. However, who sets the rules for those meetings, and what is parliamentary procedure? Parliamentary procedure is not law, and the strict application of such rules can result in frustration for the body. The frustration can be avoided through education, patience, and a diplomatic exercise of the procedures.

Meeting rules are applied with small groups and large conventions. Organizations can determine the level of specificity that they want to apply in their

meetings. The size of the meeting may be a determining factor in the level of detail utilized in the rules. Robert's Rules of Order, Atwood's Rules for Meetings, and The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure are 3 resources that outline meeting guidelines. All three are similar, but there are some differences. For example, they all allow for members of an organization to participate by offering motions saying, “I move...” and then allowing discussion and a vote. Differences may be found in when a vote is needed, or in the language used. Robert's Rules of Order is considered the most complex, now in its 12th edition.

Bill Lavezzi and Viola Catledge advocate for the importance of parliamentary

procedure. They both currently serve as officers of the North Coast Unit of the National Association of Parliamentarians. Lavezzi says that in his role as president or presider of a meeting, it is his goal to help people feel more confident working in their own organizations. Catledge shared that she became involved with parliamentary procedures to gain more knowledge about how to correctly record the minutes for an organization that asked her to serve as secretary. She said, “I know that it [parliamentary procedure] is important because it provides structure. I like orderly.

It teaches you to use an agenda. I wish I had learned earlier.” As membership chair for the unit, Catledge said, “I am still learning.” Learning the rules to govern a meeting is a skill set that anyone can use. Lavezzi said, “learning parliamentary procedure can empower you as a member of your community and organizations to contribute to the organization as a member and a leader.”

While knowledge of meeting rules does not require formal education, The National Association of Parliamentarians

Continued on page 13

Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Ed.)

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
(77) Close meeting	I move that we adjourn	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
(75) Take break	I move to recess for	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
(72) Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
(68) Lay aside temporarily	I move that the main motion be postponed temporarily	No	Yes	No	No	Varies
(65) Close debate and vote immediately	I move to close debate	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
(62) Limit or extend debate	I move to limit debate to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3
(58) Postpone to certain time	I move to postpone the motion until ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
(55) Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
(47) Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
(p.32) Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

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Prioritizing Black Maternal Health



By Lily Stuart

As Women’s History Month comes to a close, April brings its own week of recognition. Every year, April 11-17th is dedicated to Black maternal health, a crisis that continues to marginalize Black women and their children.

A study conducted by the National Institute of Health found that Black women are three and a half times more likely to die during childbirth than non-Hispanic white women. But mothers aren’t the only group at risk—their children are too. The Center for American Progress also reports that African Americans have the highest infant mortality rate of any racial or ethnic group in the U.S.

African American women are past the precipice of disaster. Black women and children continue to be at the highest health risk, yet are consistently under-publicized. It is vitally important to our community—to Black women and Black infants—to get educated and spark awareness. Doing so begins with understanding the root causes of this inequity in healthcare.

Firstly, the social determinants of health are major proponents of Black maternal mortality. These are the non-medical factors that influence public or personal health, including the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age. They also account for the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. Despite the common claim that lifestyle choices are more important in determining health, the World Health Organization affirms that social determinants account for between 30-55% of health outcomes.

Structural racism, especially

within the healthcare system, is one of these “forces and systems” that impact Black women. Simply put, this inequity means that Black women often receive poorer quality care than white women and that Black women are denied care when seeking help and enduring pain. It means that health and social service providers fail to provide care with dignity, recognition, and respect.

Secondly, as a result of social determinants, being denied access to adequate and equal healthcare—and basic human empathy, in many cases—becomes a significant stressor for Black women, and in particular, for Black mothers, who are concerned not only with their own safety but with the safety of their infant. These troubles, combined with the cumulative stress of structural racism and sexism, can trigger a series of biological processes that



photo: SHVETS Productions

undermine women’s physical and mental health. When considering that Black mothers face not only these but other structural and social inequities during sensitive developmental periods, the resulting health impacts become apparent. The long-term psychological toll of racism and sexism puts Black women at higher risk for a range of medical conditions that threaten both their and their infants’ lives, including preeclampsia (pregnancy-related high blood pressure), eclampsia (a complication of preeclampsia characterized by seizures), and embolisms (blood vessel obstructions).

Black maternal mortality is not merely a national issue. It is planted here, in Ohio, and even within our own city of Cleveland. According to a study done by City Lab, Cleveland is one of the worst cities for Black women to live in for health outcomes and overall. More specifically, the Ohio Equity Institute’s annual report found that Cuyahoga County’s infant mortality rate was 7.6 per

1,000 live births in 2020. They also found striking racial disparities: the infant mortality rate is 3.2 per 1,000 for white infants compared to 14.6 per 1,000 among Black infants.

Reading brutal statistic after statistic makes progress and resolution seem bleak. It is in these moments that finding community, addressing the reality of these issues, and working towards solutions are imperative. Thankfully, that is exactly what members of our community are doing!

In February of last year, the Village of Healing Center officially opened its doors. Its mission is to “deliver quality health care services that meet the social and cultural needs of patients, improving health outcomes and quality of care that eliminates racial and ethnic health disparities.” The center continues to serve patients in the community and hosts a multitude of community events. This year, they celebrated their one-year anniversary.

Strides are also being made in the realm of medical research. Recently, the Cleveland Clinic launched two different initiatives. The first of which, the Center for Infant and Maternal Health, is a project created to expand and coordinate services at existing Cleveland Clinic locations, partnering with local community resources to find new solutions to the crisis. The second is a student-driven initiative called Minority Maternal Health Initiative. Established by Case Western Reserve University’s School of Medicine students, this project connects medical students with pregnant patients of minority backgrounds to assist them in navigating their pregnancy. They also attempt to connect patients with community resources to help them meet their needs.

Despite valiant efforts by students, community, and individuals alike, holding our representatives accountable for Black maternal mortality rates is one of the most effective means of change. Eliminating racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality cannot and will not be successful without prioritizing Black women and infants and addressing inequality within America’s institutions.

For more information contact the Village of Healing Center: 216 815-HEAL(4325)

For more information on the Cleveland Clinic Initiatives: search, newsroom.clevelandclinic.org/2023

The Cleveland Clinic Media Contact: Jenna Homrock 216.386.9628

References Black maternal mortality: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/eliminating-racial-disparities-maternal-infant-mortality/>

MacDorman MF, Thoma M, Declercq E, and Howell EA. Racial and ethnic disparities in maternal mortality in the United States using enhanced vital records, 2016-2017. American Journal of Public Health DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2021.306375 (2021). <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-funded-study-highlights-stark-racial-disparities-maternal-deaths>

It’s Parliamentary -- or Is It?

Continued from page 12

and the American Institute of Parliamentarians offer individuals the opportunity to become credentialed as registered or certified parliamentarians on two levels. Individuals may take tests to either become regular registered/certified parliamentarians or professional registered/certified parliamentarians. The titles vary according to the organization of the association. Learning the guidelines for meetings will help you to know if it is parliamentary or not.

For educational resources, please visit www.channingbete.com and search parliamentary procedure to request up to four (4) complimentary brochures on this subject. To learn more about the North Coast Unit of the National Association of Parliamentarians, email meetings@lavezzi.us.

This Unit will be hosting a public program workshop for Parliamentary Law Month on Monday, April 17, 2023, at the Independence Branch of the Cuyahoga County Library at 6:00 pm.



photo: SHVETS Productions



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Parkinson's Awareness

Continued from front page

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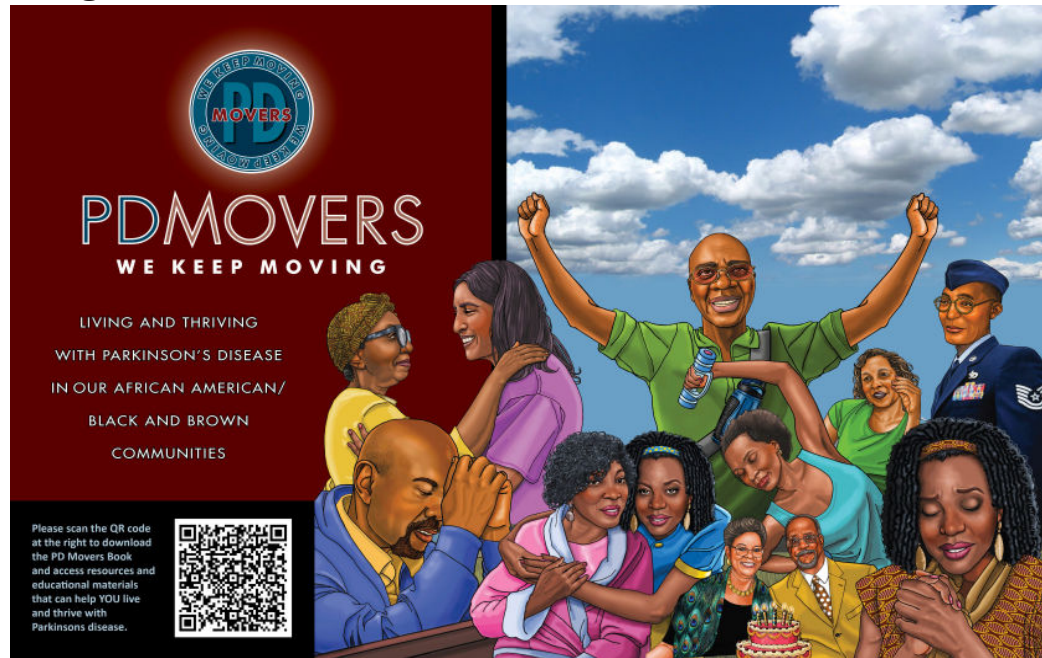
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A Brief Introduction To The World of ChatGPT



By Lily Stuart



ChatGPT is only as good as the information that it is fed. Therefore, its results are often biased and sometimes flat-out incorrect. It also struggles to stay up to date on current events and their repercussions. That being said, strides with each iteration of the tool have been made to make its data more accurate. ChatGPT-4 is said to be "40% more likely" to produce factual responses than its predecessors.

Teachers and professors largely resent its creation, however. Fears of student plagiarism in the classroom through the utilization of AI programs existed prior to ChatGPT, but are certainly amplified now. Other software is being developed to detect the use of the tool in higher education and high schools alike.

Who is using it?

At the moment, investment companies like Morgan Stanley are using the AI tool to organize wealth management data. Social media companies, like Snapchat, have introduced Chatbot services that allow users to ask prompts ranging from dinner recipes to plans for a weekend trip. In the future, it will likely be added to Microsoft's search engine, Bing.



Since its release a mere four months ago, ChatGPT, a new and abundantly powerful artificial intelligence (AI) tool, has altered the world as we know it. The program has sent labor markets into a spiral, sparked worry among educators, and is being utilized by dozens of companies. But what is ChatGPT and how is it being used? Here's what you need to know:

The Name

ChatGPT is in its fourth iteration of the software, dubbed ChatGPT-4. The "Chat" is self-explanatory, but the GPT stands for "generative pre-trained transformer."

What does it do?

Put simply, the software analyzes vast amounts of information from across the internet and then utilizes this input to generate human-sounding text and answer questions. This means it can write essays, provide answers to questions, or summarize material. ChatGPT-4 also has the ability to analyze pictures through "multimodal technology."

What are its flaws?

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Three N.E. Ohio Teams make Boys High School Basketball State Championship



Lutheran West High school Boys Basketball team(24-4) is the Ohio High School Division II State Champion Runner-Up Photo Credit Lutheran West Website



Courtesy of the Ohio High School Athletic Association

Three teams from Northeast Ohio are finalists for the Ohio High School Association Boys Basketball Statewide Tournament. The 2023 Division II Championship will feature Lutheran West from Rocky River, the Division III Championship game will feature Lutheran East from Cleveland Heights, and the Division IV Championship game will feature Richmond Heights High School, located in Richmond Heights.

Lutheran West (24-4)

Propelled by an 18-2 run, the Longhorns established a 29-10 halftime lead en route to beating Van Wert 53-37 in the regional final to punch the program's first state tournament ticket since 1998. Lutheran West beat Sandusky 71-55 in the regional semifinal. The Longhorns district title was their first since 2007. Junior **Jayson Levis**, who surpassed 1,000 career points in the regional semis, dropped 18 against Van Wert, which matches his season average. Levis, who also averages five rebounds, four assists, and three steals, is the only Longhorn to average double-figures. Junior

Derek Fairley had 15 points against Van Wert. He averages 9.7 points and 8.5 assists, which ranks second in Northeast Ohio (behind Richmond Heights' De'Erick Barbe). Senior **Clay Noble**, junior **Junior Kambomba** and sophomore **Matt Meyer** (9.74 points, 6.3 rebounds) round out the starting five. Key reserves include seniors **Lewis Smith** and **Shamari Richard**, junior **Dylan Bartchak**, and sophomore **Josh Meyer**. Lutheran West had

eight underclassmen in its top 10. **Coach Sam Liggins'** team always lines up against the best during the regular season and this year was no different. The giants on the schedule included Africentric, Glenville, CVCA, Emmanuel Christian, Cleveland Heights, Richmond Heights, Lakewood St. Edward, Combine Academy (NC), Dublin Jerome, St. Ignatius, Shaker Heights, Brush, Lutheran West, and Akron SVSM. The Falcons, without question, can stake a claim for the most challenging schedule in the state. Lutheran East was able to win 20 games against that gauntlet, which is why it's not surprising the Falcons entered Dayton winning their tournament games by an average of just over 36 points per game and none closer than a 24-point victory over South Range. Following the district final against South Range, there was thought the regional games would be closer but the Falcons didn't agree.

state champions lost several key pieces from a year ago returning just two regular performers. Though, those two pieces were significant in sophomores DeErick Barber and **Dorian Jones**. Barber, who is a throwback lead guard, holds a handful of Division 1 offers, and the talented Jones already holds offers from Arizona State, Cincinnati, Georgia Tech, Houston, Michigan State, Ohio State, Texas A&M, and Xavier among others. Classmate **Demarris Winters Jr.**, a lethal shooter from behind the arc, has stepped into a more significant role for the Spartans. Additionally, **Coach Quentin Rogers** inherited two quality move-ins in juniors **Hosea Steele** (Cleveland Heights) and **Jeremy Wilson** (Solon). Richmond Heights can argue for being the best team in any division with regular-season victories over Harvest Prep, Beachwood, Hilliard Bradley, Brush, Lutheran East, Fairfield, and Lakewood St. Edward. In a highly anticipated



Lutheran East High school Boys Basketball team(21-5) is the Ohio High School Division III State Champions Photo Credit Lutheran East Website

impressive wins this season over D-I stalwarts Cleveland St. Ignatius and Mentor.

Lutheran East (21-5)

Lutheran East is going to be charged rent for as often as it shows up at the state tournament. The Falcons will make their sixth appearance in as many years. What's scarier? This team features

"The Lue" dismantled Mentor Lake Catholic 61-36 behind seven bonus goals from junior **Ronald Taylor** (21 points). Junior **Anthony Bruce** added 15 points and highly-touted freshman **TJ Crumble** chipped in 10. The Falcons, a program eyeing their fourth state championship, had little trouble with a 23-win Cuyahoga Heights team in the regional final. The Cleveland Heights-based school jumped out to a 39-11 halftime lead and cruised to an 84-50 victory sending the Falcons to their eighth state semifinal. Crumble paced the winners with 18 points, while senior **Cody Head** and talented junior big man **Jesse McCulloch** each added 16. McCulloch is a Big 10 priority recruit but also has offers from the Atlantic 10, Big East, Big 12, and SEC.

Richmond Heights (28-0)

The Spartans arrived in Dayton as one of the most talked about teams in the state. The Cuyahoga County school, currently owning a 47-game winning streak, is one of only two unbeaten teams in the field of 16 and will make its fourth straight appearance on the big stage. The defending Division IV

tournament encounter, the Spartans used a 38-12 advantage in the 3rd quarter to blow the doors off Cornerstone Christian en route to a 93-52 triumph. Wilson paced the Spartans with 26 points, Winters followed with 22, and Jones and Steele added 20 and 15 respectively. The following tilt was slightly more entertaining, but in the end, Richmond Heights blew past Dalton by an 81-48 count. The Spartans faced foul trouble in the 1st half, but Wilson was able to shoulder some of the load. The junior scored 11 of his 21 points in the opening half and also collected 11 rebounds in the contest. Wilson's classmate, Steele, also enjoyed a big night totaling 17 points and 12 boards. Winters chipped in 17 as well. After seeing their lead dwindle in the 2nd period, the Spartans started the final 16 minutes on a 10-0 run pushing the lead back to 21 and the rest is history. To say Richmond Heights has been dominant in its five tournament games would be an understatement as the favorite is defeating its opponents by an average of 43 points per game. Statistics taken from OHSAA data.



Richmond Heights High school Boys Basketball team(27-0) is the Ohio High School Division IV State Championship and has a 47 game winning streak. Photo Credit Richmond Heights Website

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