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# the Wilkinsburg

# SUN

VOL. 17 NO. 6 March 2024

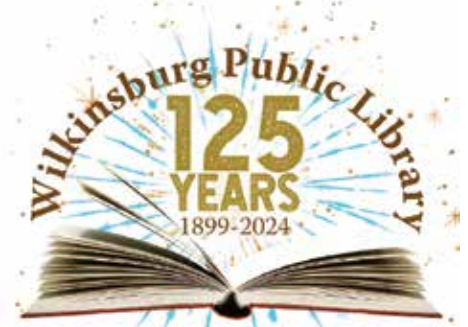
A FREE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER BRINGING YOU GOOD NEWS ABOUT WILKINSBURG

Kelly Elementary recently celebrated the 100 day of school mark with creative activities and fun.

See more news about the school district on page 5.



## Get Ready to Celebrate a Big Borough Birthday!



2024 will be an exciting year for the Wilkinsburg Public Library, which is celebrating its 125th anniversary.

They have just started planning a celebration for this coming September 14.

The library started out as a branch of the Carnegie Library of Braddock which was opened on September 11, 1899, in one room of the McNair School.

It was opened by Fred Evans. The library had 1,500 books and circulated 104 books the first day it was in operation. In the first year 58,225 books were circulated.

In 1900, a second room and a second staff person were added.

In 1921, the Braddock librarian notified the Wilkinsburg Borough Council that the Carnegie Library of Braddock could no longer endow the branch libraries and maintain their own. They were willing

## Jeanne Drennan: Making Wilkinsburg a Greener, Sheltered Place



Jeanne Drennan (left) at a tree planting on Laketon Road last year.

Next month, the Wilkinsburg Shade Tree Committee will recognize Jeanne Drennan for her long-standing dedication to the health and success of our Borough's shade trees. The committee will host a tree planting dedicated to Jeanne, in recognition of her work over the past decades.

In 1993, Jeanne was invited to serve on the newly formed Citizens' Advisory Committee on Shade Trees, informally known as the Wilkinsburg Shade Tree Committee, and the new committee soon drafted the language for the Borough's

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### Parks and Rec

The Parks and Recreation Board in Wilkinsburg has openings for residents, especially neighbors of Turner, Park Avenue, and Ferguson parks, who can keep an eye on those sites.

Parks and Rec runs a summer recreation program, and advocates for improvements and maintenance of our parks.

Participation doesn't take a lot of time, but helps keep parks safe and up-to-date for our kids. Contact Mike Milberger, at [jmm54@verizon.net](mailto:jmm54@verizon.net) if interested.

### Garbage Cans More than 35 Gallons Prohibited

The Borough reminds residents that as of last summer, the City of Pittsburgh sanitation stopped picking up garbage cans larger than 35 gallons.

Receptacles that are larger than 35 gallons will *not be collected* by City garbage crews. While the vast majority of residents are now compliant with this requirement, there are still residents who persist in placing cans over 35 gallons on the curb for pick up. The city will not collect garbage in those cans.

Please contact the Department of Public Works with any questions at 412.244.2959.

**Editor's Note:** As we go to press with this issue, we have learned with sadness of the passing of longtime vice president of *The Wilkinsburg Sun* board, Linda Law-Kirkland. Linda was a beloved member of the Wilkinsburg community, and a valued voice of wisdom at *The Sun*. We will have a longer tribute to our dear friend in the April issue.



[editor@wilkinsburgsun.com](mailto:editor@wilkinsburgsun.com)

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*The Wilkinsburg Sun* is a free, monthly community newsletter published by the volunteer Wilkinsburg Community Newsletter Board, with the support of the Wilkinsburg Borough, the Wilkinsburg School District, the Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce, and the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation. *The Sun* is printed by Knepper Press. Please submit all articles and calendar events to: [editor@wilkinsburgsun.com](mailto:editor@wilkinsburgsun.com), or by mail, P.O. Box 86064, Wilkinsburg, PA 15221. Please submit articles 5 weeks before publication and calendar events 3 weeks before publication. To advertise, e-mail [adsales@wilkinsburgsun.com](mailto:adsales@wilkinsburgsun.com), or call 412.680.1381. *The Sun* accepts submitted articles provided they are related to Wilkinsburg and are civic-minded. *The Sun* reserves the right to withhold articles from print. Please note that *The Sun* does not publish political or opinion pieces.



EASTER—MARCH 31

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## Learn about the trees in your neighborhood!

Want the benefits of healthy trees in your community, for your community?

Learn how to plant and care for trees with us at this FREE Tree Tenders Course!

**Saturday, March 9**  
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
Covenant Fellowship Reformed Church  
1300 East Swissvale Ave  
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To register, contact Maeve Rafferty at [maeve@treepittsburgh.org](mailto:maeve@treepittsburgh.org) or call 412-781-8733 x214



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## Borough Looks to Spring with GA Cleanup, EVs And New Parking Lot

The Borough is prepared to welcome Spring in March, accepting delivery of the Borough's first electric vehicles (EVs), announcing the date for this year's Great American Cleanup, and completing two projects that were part of Phase I of the Borough Building rehabilitation initiative.

### Great American Cleanup, April 20

The Great American Cleanup will be on Saturday morning, April 20, a few days before Earth Day on Monday, April 22. Last year's clean up was rained out so the Borough hopes to make this year's Great American Cleanup event the biggest yet, topping past events in number of participants, projects, and volume of trash collected.

Cleanup Day is a great way to spend time with neighbors, meet new friends, and help improve our neighborhoods.

Residents can participate as individuals or as part of a group—two or more people—who want to register a project. A project can be as focused as a pair of neighbors working for a few hours to clean up their block or even just a street corner.

We encourage residents to call the Department of Public Works now at 412.244.2959 to learn more about how to be involved this spring.

The Borough will also host its next Electronics Recycling day on Saturday morning, April 20, at the Department of Public Works.

### EVs Join Borough Vehicle Fleet

At the December 20, 2023, Council meeting, Council authorized purchase of the first electric vehicles to join the Borough vehicle fleet.

In January, the Borough took possession of three Hyundai Ioniq sport utility vehicles.

The three EVs will replace 2009 and 2014 Ford Focus sedans that were due for replacement in the Code Enforcement Department fleet and provide a vehicle for the Police Department social workers.

The vehicles were purchased using American Recovery Program funds. Working in partnership with Duquesne Light's Fleet Advisory team, the Borough was able to benefit from grants and rebates that reduced the net cost of the EVs to less than comparable vehicles with internal combustion engines.

As the Sun went to press, the vehicles have been outfitted with Borough livery and only wait receipt of license plates to begin service. You should see them on Borough streets in early March.

### Borough Parking Lot Complete

Purchase of the EVs was one of the significant benefits of the Borough Building parking



The new parking lot entrance

lot reconstruction project, which was completed in mid-February. The project was begun during the summer and resulted in a total reconstruction of the lot.

The lot serves as parking for the Wilkesburg Police Department and Code Enforcement Department vehicle fleets and for Borough staff parking. The lot is also the location of the external entry into the police station.

The project included installation of the Borough's first EV charging stations, purchased with grants and rebates provided by the state and by Duquesne Light. Duquesne Light's Fleet Advisory team provided essential guidance to the Borough to purchase and install the charging stations.

The lot's surface and parts of its base had badly deteriorated over the decades it has been in operation, and the lot's layout did not make optimal use of the space, impeding traffic flow through the lot.

The reconstruction project regraded the lot, optimizing the space to accommodate significantly more vehicles and enabling more efficient traffic flow.

The new treated aluminium fence (pictured above) is both decorative and provides a level of security that had been previously lacking. The reconstruction project also included new LED lighting for the lot.



New electric vehicle charging stations.

## WCDC's Youth Mini-Grants Accepting Applications

Each spring, Wilksburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC) hosts its annual Youth Mini-Grant Program to provide funds to local organizations that support the academic and civic endeavors of Wilksburg youth.

Thanks to support from the Howard & Nell E. Miller Foundation, TriState Capital Bank, Highmark, and Dollar Bank, the WCDC is able to provide grants of up to \$3,000 to Wilksburg organizations for summer youth activities.

"Youth-focused programs play a vital role in the fabric of the Wilksburg community, especially during after-school hours and throughout the summer," emphasized Tracey Evans, Executive Director of WCDC. "Over the past decade, we've witnessed the transformative impact of these initiatives. We're delighted to continue our support by offering mini-youth grants to another round of deserving organizations. Together, we can empower and uplift our young people, ensuring a brighter future for Wilksburg."

Now in its 14th year, the WCDC has provided over \$100,000 in support to 25 organizations, reaching more than 3,000 youths who participate in local summer and afterschool programs.

In 2023, WCDC funded seven groups and supported hundreds of children in the Wilksburg area. Grant recipients include:

- Creative Balance 4 Empowering People | Rhythmic Movement Through Arts
- Creative Kidz | Summer Arts Program
- Ethnan Temple | Summer Enrichment Program
- Grow Pittsburgh | Urban Farmers in Training
- Lilleshall Soccer Academy | Summer Soccer Camp



Students participated in Meshwork Press's grant-funded annual summer program, Growing Creative Entrepreneurs.

- Meshwork Press | Growing Creative Entrepreneurs
- Westinghouse Youth Wrestling | Summer Youth Recreation Program

Do you have or know of an organization that supports the academic and civic endeavors of local youth?

If the answer is yes, then the WCDC encourages you to apply for the 2024 Education & Youth Initiative Mini-Grant Program at [wilksburgcdc.org](http://wilksburgcdc.org).



WCDC  
Wilksburg Community Development Corporation  
**CORE FOUR**  
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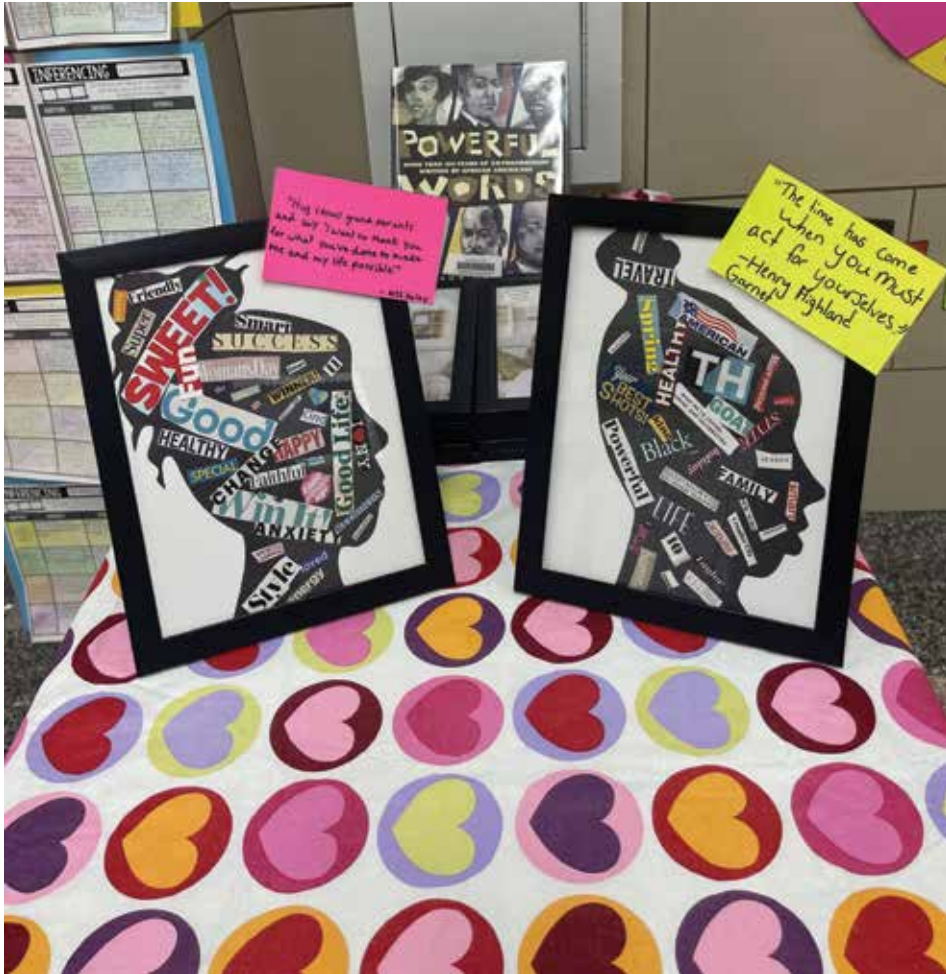
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By Lydia Richardson—Public Relations Officer for Wilkinsburg School District

## Celebrating Black History Month in the Classroom

photo by Lydia Richardson



In February, the school district celebrated Black History Month. Mr. Shawn VanMastrigt, the general music teacher and theater director at Turner Intermediate, dedicated months of preparation to the Black History Month concert, which took place on February 28. The concert educated both the students performing and the audience about the significant contributions of Black musicians to music over the years.

Another teacher at Turner Intermediate, Ms. Kelly Polosky, had her fifth-grade students collaborate with the art teacher, Ms. Alison McVay, to create silhouettes of themselves. They filled them with words that describe who they are, using cutouts from magazines, newspapers, and other forms of mixed media.

### School Calendar

#### MARCH

- Wed. 13, Early dismissal for students
- Wed. 27, Early dismissal, students and staff
- Thurs. 28–Tues. April 2, Spring Break
- Wed. 14, Early Dismissal

#### APRIL

- Mon. 2, Half clerical, half inservice day for staff
- Wed. 3, Students return from break

## Metro Community Health Center's School-Based Mobile Clinic Program

Metro Community Health Center (MCHC), a non-profit organization serving people of all ages and backgrounds, has partnered with Wilkinsburg School District (WSD) to better integrate healthcare services into Wilkinsburg's schools.

The purpose of this partnership is to provide not only basic medical care and preventive services, but also to emphasize the link between health and academic success.

Integrating health services into the school system helps to reinforce the idea

that healthy students perform better academically and can reach their full potential.

Through this collaboration, students and their families will have access to a range of medical services including dental care, state-mandated screenings, comprehensive health care, and mental health support.

This initiative also aims to reduce absenteeism by providing convenient access to healthcare for students, relieving parents and guardians from having to take time off work.

MCHC's mobile clinic, "Heals on Wheels" (HOWie), makes accessing these services easy. HOWie, a 38-ft RV, features two private fully-equipped exam rooms, a small waiting area, a bathroom, a wheelchair lift, and a lab area.

It functions like a regular doctor's office, assisting with scheduling and post-appointment care.

HOWie will visit Kelly Primary and Turner Intermediate alternately.

For more information, contact MCHC's Project Manager, Patrick Buehler, at pbuehler@metropgh.org.

## March at the Library

### Main Library Adult Program

*Movie Matinee, Tuesday, March 12, 2 p.m.—Aquaman 2.*

### Children's Library

#### • Parent Events

*Parent Bash, Saturday March 2, 2 p.m.*—A shared discussion event for parents and caregivers within the Wilkinsburg Area and/or school district. All welcome to share experiences, voice concerns, and peer support.

*Parent Self-Help Book Club, Saturday March 23, 1 p.m.*—Parents and caregivers discuss helpful books in this bi-monthly parent group. The book for this event is *Fair Play* by Eve Rodsky. Request a copy from the catalog or ask the children's library staff for a copy. Hosted by Sarah Morgan and the library.

#### • Children's Events

*Read Across America, Saturday, March 2, 2 p.m.*—Celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday with a storytime, games, and craft. Children attending will receive a free book!

### Eastridge programs

*Eastridge Book Club, Wednesday March 20, 6:30 p.m.*—*True Biz* by Sara Novic.

*Tea & Inspiration, Saturday March 16, 11–12:30 p.m.*—Have engaging conversations over tea.

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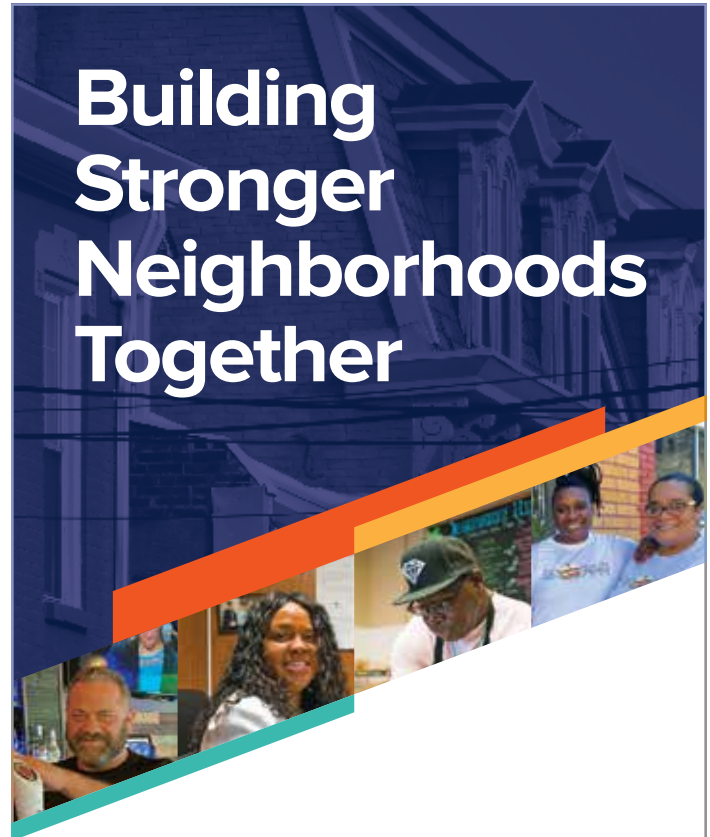
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# Metro Community Health Center



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# ▶ SAVE THE DATE

## Flourish, Prosper, Thrive and Rise It's All About You, Ladies

Women's Health Fair/Shopping Event

**Saturday May 4, 2024**

10:00am - 2:00pm  
Hosanna House

### Health Care

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JEANNE DRENNAN from page 1

shade tree ordinance.

Over the past decades, Jeanne and others have overseen the Shade Tree committee, spearheading numerous tree plantings, coordinating maintenance work with the Borough's arborist, collaborating with outside organizations, and engaging Borough residents.

Though the Borough has faced many challenges in maintaining the urban tree canopy over the past thirty years, there have been many successes.

Wilkinsburg now takes pride in its recognition as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation.

Jeanne recently stepped down from her involvement with the Shade Tree Committee.

The current committee members are devoted to preserving the vision and hard work that she fostered by continuing to assess and maintain the canopy, plant new trees, advise and educate the Borough government and residents, and generate interest in our urban trees.

Look for more details about the April tree planting dedicated to Jeanne in recognition of her work. For more information about tree plantings or to get involved with the committee, please contact the Shade Tree Committee at wilkinsburgshadetree@gmail.com.

LIBRARY BIRTHDAY from page 1

to give Wilkinsburg the 10,000 book collection, the library equipment, and the operating staff, which consisted of three people at the time.

The Wilkinsburg Council gratefully accepted the offer, and since August 1921 the library has been administered by the Borough of Wilkinsburg. The name was officially changed to The Wilkinsburg Public Library on October 15, 1926.

Look for more information about your community's library in the upcoming issues of *The Sun* and prepare for the celebration coming this September.



# WILKINSBURG WALKING ROUTE

## Family Focused Workouts



Please join Healthy Baby Zone for our last instalment of the Winter Remix schedule! Join our Walking Route Champion and Community Health Advocate, Tina Fulton, and Fit Mom, Kayla Henderson.

**March 2, 2024**

**12:30 PM - 2:30 PM**

Wilkesburg Borough Building  
605 Ross Avenue  
Wilkesburg, PA. 15221

The Wilkesburg Walking route was developed in 2019 and is led by Healthy Baby Zone Wilkesburg (HBZ). HBZ collaborated with the American Heart Association, Walk Works, LiveWell Allegheny and the Wilkesburg Borough, to develop this walking route. Gateway Health and PNC are sponsors of the Walking Route.

This program is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$1,122,899 with 85 percentage financed with nongovernmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.



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