

the Westsider

SUMMER 2018

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Westside
Neighborhood
Association



WELCOME

Hello Neighbors!

Summer is almost here and the board is very excited for the events we're planning for the season. The neighborhood garage sale is coming up quick and it's sure to be another great event. If you haven't started your spring cleaning, get to it and sign up to be included on the garage sale map! See the Facebook event for details. In July we'll be holding our annual picnic in St. Joseph park. Invite your neighbors and meet some new ones while you're there!

We'll have lawn games for kids to enjoy as well. See page 10 for dates and times.

The WNA board has seen a lot of turn over in the past year and would love for some new neighbors to participate in this fun and easy way to make a difference in your community. Do you like writing or photography? Contribute to the Westsider! Love planning parties? Help with one of the four or more large scale events the board throws every year! There are so many ways you can contribute to the board for only a few hours a month. Contact me if you have questions or are interested in joining! Meetings this year are the 2nd Monday of every month.

Emily DeRushia, President, Westside Neighborhood Association Board of Directors
board@wnalansing.com



COREY & EMILY DERUSHIA



ANNUAL PICNIC

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Join the WNA Board! Our charter has room for six more board members. If you're interested in joining the board, or want to learn more about who we are and what we do, send an email to board@wnalansing.com today, and give back to the Westside!

WESTSIDE FAMILY

SEXTON STUDENTS WASHINGTON, D.C., BOUND

In mid-March the word went out. Sexton students who were planning to travel to Washington, D.C., in June received some very bad news. The deadline for their final payment on the trip was moved up two months and, if they could not come up with the money per the revised schedule, they would forfeit their \$200 deposits! Before you could even spell "Washington" or "District of Columbia," the neighborhood and Sexton faculty came to the rescue, contributing in three days more than the remaining payments, allowing a small reserve for additional expenses. We are truly one Westside family!

Teacher adviser Joshua Moulton was thrilled and promises to take lots of pictures so we can learn a little bit about the fun the students had in our fall edition. In the meantime, he and his students are beyond thrilled that the shortfall was made up before even the littlest bit of angst could creep in to ruin the fun! The trip, to include 18 students and Josh as faculty adviser, is scheduled for June 13th through the 18th, 2018. Happy travels!

Take Note: SEXTON HEALTH CLINIC

As previously described in the winter Westsider, the Ingham County Health Department and the Lansing School offer a health clinic that students can access during all school hours. The purpose of this updated article is to apprise all neighborhood residents that the Clinic remains open through the summer and offers services to students ranging in age from five to twenty six. These services include regular medical appointments, immunizations, and mental services. Services are provided by Nurse Practitioner Breton Blair N.P., and Social Worker John Thompson. Nurse Dianne Ankley R.N., also is available to help triage patients and assist where needed. Additional available services include: laboratory services and tests; health maintenance exams; treatment for acute and chronic illnesses; dental, vision and hearing screenings and follow-ups; specialty referrals; individual, group, family, and community education; pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease testing; substance abuse education, counseling and referrals; and physical/sexual abuse counseling and referrals.

All insurances are accepted; If a student does not have insurance Medicaid assistance is provided onsite. There is an income based sliding fee scale to determine co-pays and payments. Summer office hours are Monday through Friday from 7 am to 4 pm. Appointments may be made by contacting the Clinic at (517) 244-8041 during regular office hours.



Neighbor Spotlight:

ERICA ROBINSON

Erica Robinson has been a Westsider her entire life; her family has been multi-generational Westsiders! Both sets of grandparents lived just a couple of blocks apart in the neighborhood. One set, J.W. and Louise House, lived where Letts Community Center (Letts) now stands, and was across the street from Rudy and Dorothy Wilson. Rudy was head of the NAACP and Dorothy was one of the founders of Les Meres Debutantes of Greater Lansing. Westside Park will soon be named after this legendary couple. Erica's family even planted one of the pine trees that still stands next to the tennis courts at Letts. It was a family neighborhood and everyone knew you and your parents. If you got in trouble from a neighbor, your parents knew before you arrived home!

Growing up, Erica attended Humpty Dumpty Daycare at the corner of Kalamazoo and Huron, across from Wright's store. She next attended Main Street Elementary School and then on to Vivian Riddle Elementary School, where her father had played a role in the hiring process. Most of the Riddle faculty were female and African-American, including the principal, Dr. Ruby Helton. Other faculty included Mrs. Haley, who still lives on the Westside, and teacher's aide Mrs. Wilson, who gave Erica rides to school when it was cold. Erica attended J.W. Sexton High School, where she graduated in 1988, in one of Sexton's largest graduating classes! While at Main Street, Erica would look out her classroom window and see none other than Magic Johnson playing basketball! Magic lived around the block from Erica's aunt, Ophia M. Smith. Erica's cousin, Cornelius Robinson, lived next door to his mother Ophia, and became the only DJ for the first African-American radio station in town, a station that went off the air at sunset each day. His regular job was as a firefighter. Cornelius still lives in the Westside. Closer to St. Joseph Park lived another cousin, Mattie Robinson, who owned the historic Kilimanjaro Imports, located on Washington Square downtown.

Erica has remained a Westsider because the neighborhood is "family." Everyone says "hi" when she and her son stroll around the neighborhood and she knows who lives in most of the houses. Erica has witnessed one significant change: the kids have new play habits and no longer play outside until the street lights come on. When she was growing up, something was always happening! Union Baptist and Friendship Baptist churches held vacation Bible schools; Kingsley Center, now Letts, conducted a summer day camp; Jim Booth coached Westdale Realty girls' softball teams; Dick Lipscomb coached boys' football teams, a job now undertaken by his son Richard; and many churches sponsored basketball teams.

Erica and her son still love their home in the Westside. They enjoy walking around the neighborhood, playing in the parks, checking out the homes where family and friends used to live, and seeing and making new friends.



RACER TRUST

PROPERTY UPDATE

The Revitalizing Auto Communities Environmental Response (RACER) Trust continues its work with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) on cleanup activities—including development and evaluation of remediation options—at Plant 6 in Lansing and Plants 2 and 3 in Lansing Township.

That work includes investigations at Plant 3, north of Saginaw Street, to better characterize per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) on the site.

Remedial plans for the lower 1,4-dioxane groundwater contamination and several other areas are being prepared and should be presented to the MDEQ over the next several months. Once the MDEQ's questions have been addressed for the lower 1,4-dioxane plan it will be made available for public comment, which should be sometime later this year.

Under current conditions, contamination at the sites does not pose a risk to the community. RACER continues to monitor groundwater quality. In the event changes occur RACER will address them.

In the meantime Kansas City-based NorthPoint Development, which has all of RACER's Lansing area sites under contract, is doing the due diligence and planning necessary to develop a mix of manufacturing, warehouse and distribution operations for the automotive sector on the sites. The company will have to seek approvals from the city and townships for its project(s) before the sales close and construction begins.

Consumers Energy and the Lansing Board of Water and Light (LBWL) are installing a new gas main and added electrical transmission capacity on the RACER sites. Generally, their easements west of the existing rail line from Michigan Avenue to Willow Street in Lansing Township. The LBWL also has a temporary license to use an 18-acre parcel to stage equipment during construction, which is expected to last until August 2018.

Questions about RACER's Lansing sites can be directed to Sam Solomon at: ssolomon@racertrust.org or (248) 990-1042.



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IN THE COMMUNITY

LETTS COMMUNITY CENTER OPENS ITS DOORS TO THE AMERICAN RED CROSS TO SHELTER FLOOD VICTIMS

Letts opened its doors to the American Red Cross (ARC) in February to shelter victims of the "Big Flood." The ARC wanted to extend a "huge thank you" to the neighbors who made the shelter a reality. Residents included elderly and physically handicapped individuals; Letts' accessibility features were of considerable importance to these residents.

ARC volunteers could not say enough good things about the Letts' staff, who "could not have been more helpful and gracious in their guidance and support." A huge shout out also goes to Meals On Wheels and the Great Harvest Restaurant for their kindness in donating food to the ARC residents.

The local ARC chapter includes Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton counties. Volunteers came from four other Michigan chapters: Gratiot, Isabella and Clare; Hillsdale; Jackson; and Livingston. Opening a shelter involves a lot of work for example, sanitizing cots when a family is ready to return home. This small example demonstrates the back scene work that requires many helping hands to accomplish. By providing the shelter, the ARC was able to help those in need at the time of their disaster. This important service cannot be met without community partners and the ARC wanted to extend their thanks for sharing.

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Pet Spotlight: DESPEREAUX



Despereaux is a 2-year-old miniature poodle that was rescued from an Amish puppy mill in Ohio. When he was adopted he was a scrawny, terrified little pup with no toes, tail or confidence. Now he is sassiest dog on the block. His favorite activities are shredding the mail, barking at passers by, bothering his 14 year old uncle Cricket, and snuggling with his mom and grandma. He is also a certified therapy dog!

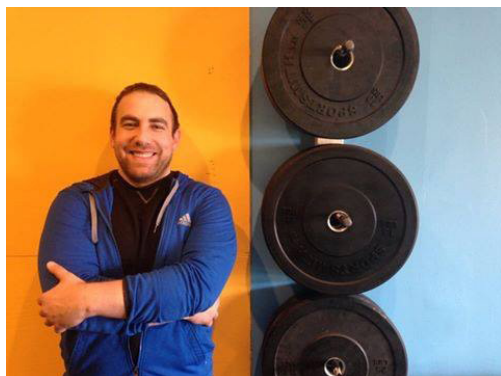
A great resource for pet owners in the neighborhood is the WNA Pet Registry. In the registry you can write your pet's name, physical description and other information, as well as your contact information. The goal of this document is to facilitate quick and safe return of lost pets to their parents. To add your pet to the registry please email lexyhecksel@gmail.com, or visit the registry at tinyurl.com/wnapets to learn more!

Business Spotlight:

WESTSIDE FITNESS

Clearly, exercise is associated with a myriad of health benefits. It's understood to improve memory, increase confidence, mitigate stress, normalize sleep habits, boost immune function, and somehow yield new energy. But for many, establishing an exercise routine is a recurring struggle often involving short-lived resolutions at the turn of each year; some don't even know where to start. If only there were a gym that provides effective fitness routines while supporting long term commitment and motivation – and preferably within walking distance from members' homes. Luckily, this ideal is an impending reality for Westsiders. Currently located near Delta Township, Westside Fitness has big plans on the horizon, all of which involve expanding and relocating to Lansing's beloved Westside Neighborhood.

Westside Fitness is a private training studio specializing in personalized fitness programs that support its members in accomplishing a range of goals including weight loss and toning, muscular development, athletic development, post-physical therapy functional training, and more. Goals are accomplished through one-on-one or small group personal training, large group metabolic conditioning classes, and customized nutritional coaching. The man behind it all is Anthony Lounsbery. Anthony achieved a Bachelor of Science in



Kinesiology from Michigan State University with a focus on Biomechanics, the fancy term for human movement. Since beginning his career as a trainer in 2010, Anthony has achieved over 10,000 hours of personal training and coaching experience. And, since opening Westside Fitness in 2016, Anthony has helped over 100 members reach their health and fitness goals, while fostering an inviting and empowering gym community.

Westside Fitness does not believe in fads, gimmicks, 6-week challenges, crash diets, cleanses, etc. Westside Fitness approaches health the old-fashioned way: regular exercise and eating right. Please welcome Westside Fitness to the neighborhood this summer located at 232 N Verlinde Avenue!

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Festivals & Events

JUNE

14

SEPT

4

June 14th-16th—Lansing Juneteenth. Three days of events, with live music, children's events, and baseball. Learn more at lansingjuneteenthcelebration.org.

June 15th-16th—Michigan Pride. March to the Capitol, Rally and Festival on Saturday, featuring Starfarm! facebook.com/michiganpride

June 16th—Westside Neighborhood Garage Sale

June 17th—Lansing Beer Fest. Reo Town. lansingbeerfest.com

June 22nd-23rd—Summer Solstice Jazz Festival in East Lansing. eljazzfest.com

June 26th—Westside Second Annual Historic Neighborhood Walk

July 5th-9th—Common Ground Music Festival, featuring Halsey, Gucci Mane, Kip Moore, Logic, Borns, DJ Jazzy Jeff, T-Pain, and Tone-Loc. commongroundfest.com

July 13th-14th—Old Town Scrapfest. Old Town. iloveoldtown.org

July 18th—Westside Annual Picnic, 6:00 p.m.

July 21st—Taste of Downtown in Downtown Lansing, with live music and food from over 40 area restaurants. tasteofdowntown.org

July 28th—Cap Capital Auto & Bike Show at the R.E. Olds Museum downtown. www.carcapitalautoshow.org

July 30th-August 4th—Ingham County Fair. www.inghamfair.org

August 3rd-4th—Lansing JazzFest. Old Town. jazzlansing.com

August 11th—Armory Smooth Jazz Fete. The second year of the all-day outdoor festival features Phil Denny, Oli Silk, Steve Cole, and more. smoothjazzfete.com

August 16th-18th—Renegade Theatre Festival. renegadetheatrefestival.org

August 18th—Art Feast, Old Town. iloveoldtown.org

September 4th—Crossdown Showdown: Lansing Lugnuts vs. MSU Spartans at Cooley Law School Stadium. lansinglugnuts.com



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COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

SEXTON PARENTS ON PATROL SQUAD

A Parents on Patrol (POP Squad) program has been proposed by Joy Gleason, parent of a Sexton High School junior. Joy learned about the program after a Communities in Schools (CIS) worker solicited volunteers from her church to assist at Averill Elementary. The proposed POP Squad program is modeled after the parent involvement work there. Meeting with the Averill CIS coordinator, Karen Sturdevant, Joy learned that POP Squad is a collaborative effort. At Sexton, this would include the Sexton Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), Sexton administration, and CIS. Joy hopes that neighbors from the Westside Neighborhood Association (WNA) would also volunteer their time, as able.

CIS became involved at Sexton this academic year. CIS is dedicated to giving students the tools they need to ensure successful graduation from high school and a positive entrance into the labor market by, among other things, helping them meet their daily physical needs, decreasing the truancy rate, and establishing a mentorship program. Earlier this year, the WNA partnered with CIS to help build and stock the very successful Sexton clothes closet. It is hoped that WNA collaboration with the POP program can help ameliorate the truancy problem and integrate the neighborhood more directly into the school. The idea is to show students that the parents and neighbors care about all of the Sexton students and are eager to see them succeed.

After being screened by the Lansing School District, adult volunteers would patrol Sexton's hallways to help encourage students into their classrooms and otherwise provide an adult presence in the schools. The "POP Squad" could also assist outside at Sexton's start and end times. While the POP program would benefit Sexton students by encouraging class attendance, it is also hoped that this program will prompt increased parent participation in the PTO and other Sexton activities. In March, Joy and WNA Board member Merry Rosenberg met with Glenn Stevens Sexton principal to pitch the program. Dr. Stevens was very enthusiastic and had multiple suggestions regarding where he would place willing and available parent/neighborhood participants. Volunteers would be readily identifiable in the school by wearing a vest, pin, or some other unifying and easily recognizable attire. To that end, Joy has received two \$10 Meijer gift cards and \$50 in seed money to be used as incentive money to encourage parent participation. Additionally, WNA Board member Nancy Hartman has donated two orange vests for POP volunteers to wear. Joy is seeking money from the Sexton PTO to purchase additional jackets and incentive gift cards.

Joy hopes there will be at least twelve parent/neighborhood volunteers. Anticipated stints would be in either thirty minute or one hour increments, according to the parameters established by Dr. Stevens and the volunteers' availability. Dr. Stevens indicated that the greatest need begins at the first lunch at 10:30 am and continues throughout the rest of the school day, which ends at 2:40 pm. Volunteers would pick up and return their vests at the school front office. Scheduling would be coordinated by the PTO.

A brief training program was held on May 17, 2018 to explain the program and sign up volunteers, and new volunteers are always welcome. The plan is to get the program off the ground for the 2018-2019 academic year.

WESTSIDE WEE ONES

This winter brought many new babies to our neighborhood. This insurgence of new Westsiders caused many parents to inquire about a Westside Neighborhood Association Parent Group. A new Facebook group was created for parents, "Westside Wee Ones." Please join if you are a Westside parent.

We hope to plan some summer events for children as well as coordinate group play dates. Now is the time to join so you can help craft what the parent group should be for its members.

Questions? Contact group administrators Sarah Middendorff smiddendorff@gmail.com or Ann-Marie Mapes annmariemapes@gmail.com.

tinyurl.com/WestsideWeeOnes



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POINT WEST ART AND TRAIL PROJECT UPDATE

CITIZEN VISION BECOMES REALITY IN LANSING

Historically industrial cities across America are challenged to develop a dynamic, vibrant character for the 21st century. This challenge is daunting in some towns, but here in Lansing, Michigan, residents and government are working together to find creative ways to modernize their City. Lansing local government has partnered with Cities of Service to support several citizen-led revitalization efforts, including the Point West Art and Trail Project. This large, visionary plan aims to connect several vibrant neighborhoods with biking-walking trails, activities, and art displays. It will serve as a gateway to the City from the West, a community gathering place, and a landmark unique to Lansing.



The project was conceived when resident volunteers and members of the Old Oakland Neighborhood Association, the Westside Neighborhood Association, and the Saginaw Oakland Commercial Organization realized that there was no clear feeling of entrance into Michigan's capital City, and visitors could hardly tell the difference between the suburbs and Lansing itself. The organizations and interested citizens formed a team and devised a plan to connect several parks in Lansing via a biking-walking trail that would include fitness areas, gardens, and a public art display with large sculptures created by local artists.

The team knew that this would be an enormous undertaking with many moving parts, but they tackled the project one step at a time. They knew funding was a major factor, so they contacted a public art-focused nonprofit organization to acquire grants for the sculptures. The funder required grantee cities to have a public art ordinance in place—which, at the time, Lansing did not have. After campaigning tirelessly for two full years, the team got the ordinance passed, and secured a grant for the planned art installation.

They did not idly wait for the ordinance to pass, and used their time wisely. The team leveraged a \$5,000 Love Your Block mini-grant and launched a successful crowdfunding campaign to bring in additional funding. They raised more than

\$13,000 from nearly 100 individuals in the community. This crowdfunding was matched by the Michigan Development Cooperation's Public Spaces Community Place Program, bringing the total funding for the project to \$26,000.

The team also laid the physical groundwork for the Point West Art and Trail Project while waiting for the public art ordinance to pass. With the help of Cities of Service Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTAs, volunteers installed signage, crosswalks, and other street features in preparation for the larger project.

The project is moving forward. As highlighted in the last *Westsider*, a 14-foot tall stainless steel sculpture called "Prosperity" by Michigan-based artist Fritz Olsen was installed in November. Lansing municipal government departments are working with the Michigan Department of Transportation to sort out traffic laws for the path. Once completed, the Point West Art and Trail Project will encompass more than two square miles of Lansing.



Lansing's Neighborhood Resource Coordinator Andi Crawford believes that volunteering initiatives like the Point West Art and Trail Project remind citizens that they can help shape the identity of their City. "It's not about the project, or the garden, or the park bench," explains Crawford. "It's about people recognizing that they have an opportunity and the support from the City to dream about what their place in the world can look like, and then make it a reality."



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WNA Board meetings are on the second Monday of each month at Letts, Crime & Safety meetings are the last Tuesday of each month at Letts, and Westside Wednesdays are the second Tuesday of each month at Harry's. Neighbors welcome!

CREDITS

Edited by John K. Addis and the WNA Board.
Design & layout by AE (aenow.com).

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