

community view

WINTER 2009

a quarterly publication of community human services corporation

CULTURAL DIVERSITY



Community View is published quarterly by Community Human Services Corporation in partnership with Oakland Community Council, Oakland Planning and Development Corporation, Oakland Transportation Management Association and People's Oakland.

If you'd like to submit to Community View, please contact Genevieve at 412.246.1600.

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Printed by Typecraft Press.

Impress your friends with your knowledge of Oakland's history...

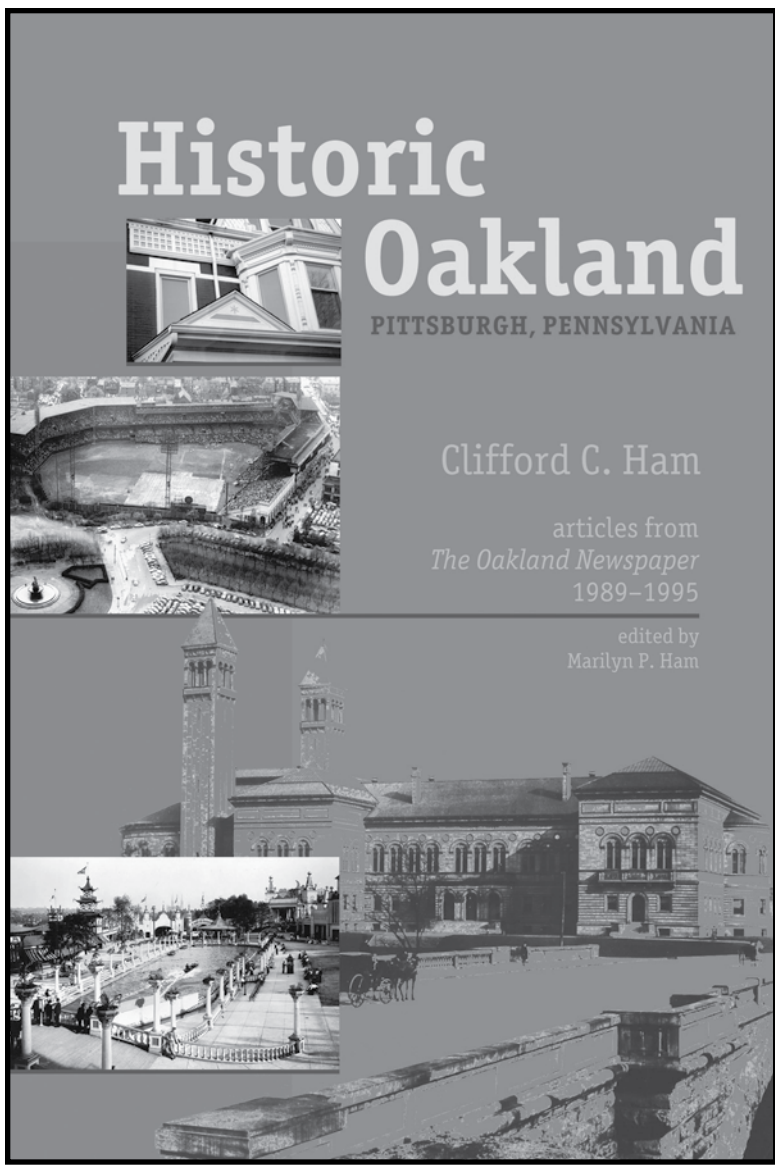
Historic Oakland
A collection of articles from The Oakland Newspaper
1989 – 1995

By Clifford Ham

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235 Atwood Street, Rear



ON THE COVER

Untitled (1608)- Lithograph, 2005

About the artist:

Genevieve Barbee has lived in Pittsburgh since 2003. Originally from Chesapeake, VA, Genevieve studied painting, drawing and printmaking at Carnegie Mellon University. She joined CHS last January after completing a mural for our afterschool program.



Interested in greening efforts throughout Oakland?

If you are interested in learning more about the community's effort to bring more trees and enhance the green space in Oakland, please contact Kelly Wawrzeniak of Oakland Planning and Development Organization (OPDC). (412) 621-7863 ext. 10 kellyw@opdc.org



What: A blog is a frequently updated website with entries about a variety of topics

What about: CHS's blog will focus on events at CHS, news & policies impacting our programs and participants, information about happenings around Pittsburgh, important resources, and spotlights on CHS

Who: Authors include CHS staff, interns & volunteers

Where: <http://chscorp.blogspot.com>

Interested in helping or seeing something written about? Please contact Breanna at byy@chscorp.org

Interested in fixing your sidewalk?

Want to learn more about the rental property registration?

What day of the week does trash and recycling get collected?

Where can I learn more about the community?

What are the public transit options?

Are there new businesses on Forbes and Fifth Avenues?

Want to volunteer in your neighborhood?

Contact

Pam Eichenbaum, Oakland Community Council Coordinator
412-687-8568; occ.pam@gmail.com

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Congratulations Everyone We Did It!

This year we had 90% employee participation in our United Way Campaign
A truly outstanding achievement!

Our employee's collective participation this years United Way Campaign demonstrates just how much each person here cares. It couldn't have been done without each and every person doing what they do best, - giving.

Please join us in saying Thank-you to the following buisnesses and institutions for their outstanding generosity.

Spaghetti Warehouse
2601 Smallman St.
Ph.: 412-261-6511

Heinz Hall
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
600 Penn Ave.
Ph.: 412-392-4900

Pittsburgh Panthers
University of Pittsburgh

A special thanks to
Father Don Fisher
for his donation of a bowl and a vase, both one of a kind creations.

OPHELIA AND LAWN STREETS CLOSURE

As the Boulevard of the Allies Bridge re-opened on Monday, November 4, 2008, the access ramp from Forbes Avenue to Ophelia and Lawn Streets in Oakcliffe remained closed. Due to the overwhelming desire from community members for a safer and quieter neighborhood, the Mayor, City Council, the Department of Public Works, and the community worked together to achieve this great improvement for the neighborhood.

As of January 2007, the entrance from Forbes Avenue into Oakcliffe closed due to construction on Forbes Avenue in conjunction with the Boulevard of Allies Bridge project. The access from Forbes Avenue closed and forced commuters to use alternate routes towards the East End.



Where a community once stood, filled with blight and unsafe conditions for pedestrians and residents, now stands a stable community for community members. Since the closure of the access ramp off of Forbes Avenue, onto Ophelia and Lawn Streets in Oakland for the Boulevard of Allies bridge project, the overall quality of life in Oakcliffe improved immensely. This quality of life will remain for the Oakcliffe neighborhood.

Oakcliffe resident, Susan Fisher, explained life has certainly improved due to the closing of the once traffic plagued neighborhood entrance.

“Lawn Street is very quiet without the through traffic; but more importantly, it is safer for my children to play outside.”

The entire Oakland community is working towards a greater goal of creating a more qualitative community, where people can live, work, and play. Each of Oakland’s neighborhoods work together to understand and address the communal issues that affect the growth and progress of the entire neighborhood. The closure of Ophelia and Lawn Streets is a step in the right direction—the creation of a neighborhood dedicated to all its residents and the quality of life they each experience. Welcome to Our Oakland.

Pam Eichenbaum



2008 SLEEP-IN FOR THE HOMELESS: A NIGHT OF ACTIVISM AND AWAKENINGS

2008 Sleep-In for the Homeless; A Night of Activism and Awakenings

This past Oct. 17, on a cold and windy night in downtown Pittsburgh at the City-County building, over 300 local advocates joined to raise awareness and funds for those who are experiencing homelessness in the greater Pittsburgh area. About 100 participants camped out overnight on the porch of the City-County building to show support for the homeless. Their combined efforts resulted in \$20,000 being raised to support the health, housing, shelter and nutritional needs of 1,000 local homeless individuals and families served by Community Human Services.

During the evening, Mac McMahon, Director of Homeless Assistance Programs at CHS, stated that, “About 10 homeless people joined us. They came in ones and twos when the news got out that there were a group of people sleeping on the portico of the City-County building. It provided safety and comfort for those who joined us, especially when we went from vertical to horizontal [sleeping] positions. Other stories that I heard secondhand were that some participants had joined us to give back for assistance they had received in the past when they were homeless, others to create brethren with the homeless.”

Along with a group of 40 advocates from the community, the Sleep-In Planning Committee worked together to ensure that the event was a success. With key leadership provided by Chairwoman Senator Jane Orié and Pittsburgh Councilwoman Tonya Payne, the issue of homelessness was brought to the forefront at a time when the ongoing economic crisis threatens Pittsburgh’s most vulnerable citizens.

Beth Lawry, a dedicated planner from the Carnegie Library in Oakland, easily identified with the homeless situation, stating, “I hate to be cold. I don’t do well in the cold. My fingers and toes seem to go numb pretty quickly, and I tolerate it less and less with the passing years. So I wasn’t that thrilled to know that our first chilly night of the season would be one I would be spending outdoors, sleeping in unity with others to raise awareness about homelessness. Of course, I also had to acknowledge it was rather appropriate.”

A group of 20 Public Allies from The Regional Internship Center of SWPA Public Allies volunteered to oversee and facilitate the event. Both David King and the Raging Grannies provided riveting musical performances focusing on the crisis of homelessness. WDVE’s Sean McDowell and union activist Mike Stout, emcees for the evening, led the awards ceremony and rallied the crowd throughout the long cold night, marking the first official outside event rallying Pittsburgh’s support for the homeless.

Funds were raised through pledges collected by those who participated in the event, and by dedicated local sponsors, including educational leaders: the University of Pittsburgh, Carlow University, Point Park University, LaRoche College, Robert Morris College, Carnegie Mellon University and Duquesne University. Critical in-kind support was provided by the City of Pittsburgh, Councilwoman Payne, The Art Institute of Pittsburgh, Eat’n Park, Highmark, Doug Michaels and Wilkins Studio. Additionally, the Church Restoration Group and the PNC Foundation sponsored the event.

Diane McMahon

COMMUNICATING AND CONNECTING IN PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh is a wonderful example of America's expanding cultural diversity. In the past, each historic wave of immigrants brought people from all over the world to our city creating ethnic neighborhoods and other niches around the area. These neighborhoods are now blending more than ever, and while Pittsburgh still holds on to its 'old world' charm, it's also being infused with other types of culture. Evidence of this is seen in the South Side, where Schwartz Market abuts Slacker, an 'anti-fashion' counter culture clothes shop. While there is still a Sunday Mass in Polish at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Polish Hill, there is now Mass in Korean, Spanish and American Sign Language in Sharpsburg, Oakland and Mt. Washington respectively. Pittsburgh is peppered with old influences and new innovation that creates a diverse and welcoming setting for the students, long-time residents, young immigrant families and the hundreds of other populations the city hosts. This diversity is celebrated here in many ways.

Culture can be defined as a system of shared symbols and structures that are passed down, forming traditions. These traditions are a way of communicating individual beliefs and points of view others, both within said cultural groups and outside of them. Based on this definition, culture is not limited to an ethnic background or family tradition, but open to include varied groups of people and practices. Many in the deaf and blind communities define their lifestyle as a culture. Counterculture in its many forms- be it vegans, musicians, visual artists, or any other group- are not the converse of the culture from which they are born. Instead, they are marginal groups and subcultures that accent our society, making us more diverse.

What the majority of these groups have in common is that they are not all well known or understood. Many people who would be interested in learning about them are unaware of different activities in their own back yard. Listed here are events, classes, and other information about a variety of Pittsburgh's cultural groups. This list encompasses a number of different items, so be daring and check a few of them out- you might discover your next favorite pastime.

This is not a comprehensive list. Instead, it is the beginning of a collection of resources. If you have anything to add, (events, classes, special occasions, etc.) please send an email with details to gbarbee@chscorp.org or call (412) 621-4706 x16.

Language Lessons/Resources

LBN, Inc

- Offers language instruction and commercial translation in a variety of different languages
(724) 643-5550 (412) 291-1359
<http://www.languagesbynicole.com/index.html>

Let's Speak English

Wednesdays 5PM - 6PM, Carnegie Library – Main

- A group that invites all non-native English speakers to practice speaking a comfortable setting
Contact Lisa or Karin @ (412) 622-3151 or newandfeatured@carnegielibrary.org

German Conversation Club

One Monday a Month 6PM - 7PM, Carnegie Library – Main

- This group meets to practice speaking German with beginner to fluent people invited
Contact Bonnie at (412) 622-3151 or newandfeatured@carnegielibrary.org

The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf

- Along with being a comprehensive K-12 school for deaf children, the school also offers lessons in American Sign Language, (ASL) for the community.
http://www.wpsd.org/asl_classes.html

The Agency for Jewish Learning

- Located in Squirrel Hill the AJL's mission is to "build the community's capacity to provide access to the highest quality Jewish learning experiences for the largest possible number of people." One great aspect of the center is their Hebrew lessons.
<http://www.ajlpittsburgh.org/index.html>

Community Activities/Centers

Pittsburgh Association for the Deaf

- This organization has events and other activities for those in the deaf community including the Pittsburgh Deaf Poker Club which meets every Friday at 8pm at their center on Forbes Avenue in Uptown.
(412) 566-7778 Videophone / TTY (For voice calls, use via the PA Relay Service @ 711) <http://www.pghdeafclub.org/>

Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands

- A branch of the Society for Creative Anachronism, this group participates in activities and study of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Dance, poetry, heavy weapons practice, fencing, archery, and other arts and sciences are enjoyed by members on a weekly basis.
<http://www.debatablelands.org/>

ComForcare in Eastern Allegheny County

- In the November 6th issue of the Pittsburgh Tribune Review Matthew Santoni highlighted a franchise of ComForcare here in Pittsburgh purchased by Anna Zaydenberg. Zaydenberg has used her experience as an immigrant from Kiev, Ukraine to reach out to seniors who find it more comfortable to communicate in their native language. She has hired many caregivers that speak a variety of languages including Russian, Turkish, and Spanish. To find out more about their services and job opportunities go to their website.
<http://www.comforcare.com/> Click Find an Office, select Pennsylvania, and then Eastern Allegheny County and Pittsburgh

Italian Sons and Daughters of America: i Campagnoli Dancers

The i Campagnoli has been performing in Pittsburgh since their formation in 1964. They have been traveling around the country performing traditional Italian dances and songs since 1975. Their vast collection of recordings and sheet music of traditional Italian folk songs that can be duplicated for sale – all proceeds of which go right back into the program.

To find out more about their performances, obtaining music, or their history check out their website: <http://www.italian-american.com/ifafa/campagnoli.htm> or contact Mary Ferrow at (412) 921-8328.

Bike Pittsburgh

This organization's purpose is to advocate for bike enthusiasts and promote bike safety here in Pittsburgh. It was started after David Hoffman was in an accident at the corner of Negley and Penn Avenues. After joining up with Scott Bricker the two founded Bike Pittsburgh in late 2002 early 2003. Since then they have worked to get more bike racks installed around the city, better bike route for the growing number of biking commuters, organized events surrounding bikes and bikers, and helped commuters cope with a possible Port Authority strike with a Bike the Strike guide.

<http://bike-pgh.org/>

Genevieve Barbee

OAKLAND: LIVING AND WORKING IN AN INTERNATIONAL METROPOLIS

Take a walk down Fifth or Forbes Avenue in Oakland and you will surely experience a unique and engaging blend of cultural diversity. In 1840, Oakland's two mile tract was primarily the farm lands of William Eichenbaum, recognized for its abundance of oak trees. The farm soon became a residential neighborhood after the great fire of 1845 in Pittsburgh. City dwellers relocated two miles down stream of Pittsburgh on the shaded and more secure bluffs of Oakland.

It wasn't until 1908, when the University of Pittsburgh relocated from the North Side that the neighborhood character began shifting from a residential neighborhood to an urban metropolis. The university's vision of creating an acropolis on the bluff overlooking Pittsburgh was soon realized. Today, Oakland is recognized as a world-renowned international hub of educational and medical expertise; attracting talented students, professors, and doctors from many diverse cultures and countries around the world.



A living witness to this evolving cultural diversity is Georgia Petropoulos; born in South Oakland, Georgia is now Executive Director of Oakland's Business Improvement District.

"My parents came to Oakland from Greece. My father, Stefanos Petropoulos came in 1951 and my mother, Vasiliki Beckas Petropoulos, came in 1965. Her brother, George Beckas, had met my father and arranged for the two to meet...the rest is history. At that time, Oakland had a strong community of Greeks that owned, operated and/or worked in the Greek restaurant businesses here. My father, Stefanos or Steve as he was known in Oakland, worked at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association for most his life; he was a banquet waiter there for 41 years. My mom Vasiliki, locally known as Betty, was a stay-at-home house wife, and a true community connector in our South Oakland neighborhood. Many people remember her for her welcoming personality. Together with my family, my first four years of life were spent on Kennett Square Street, just around the corner from Community Human Services' Lawn Street Community Center.

I believe my parents felt comfortable in Oakland. It had the same feeling as their villages in Greece; Epidauros and Tripoli. Back then there was no need to have a car; you could walk almost everywhere...school, the hospital, the market, and even to work. Everyone knew and cared for each other; Oakland was not just a Greek community, there were clusters of Italians, Slovaks, Russians, and Polish people all living in the same neighborhood.

My time in South Oakland provided a culturally enriched start to life;

cultural diversity was embraced and I was truly raised by a village of concerned adults looking out for my well-being. As Oakland attracted more students, many families chose to move out to more residential neighborhoods to raise their children. We moved to Morningside to be close to my mother's two brothers, John and George Beckas and their families, who to this day still reside there. All throughout my childhood, I remained connected with Oakland for I attended Greek school 4 days a week for nearly 6 years and my family attended the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Oakland.

Georgia remains close with her family and friends and with her brother John Petropoulos and his family, wife Tracy and daughters Alexis and Gina. Cultural heritage is very important to Georgia and her family: Alexis (6) and Gina (4) have also been learning Greek to keep up the tradition of their grandparents. Greek isn't

the only culture influencing her environment. Georgia's boyfriend, Jim Muir, also remains very connected to his cultural heritage, he is of Scottish, Irish and English descent. "Jim and I both enjoy retaining a connection to our family's background...I speak Greek, he speaks Gaelic, and that makes for a great combination". Jim also spent much time in Oakland while studying photography as a college student at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. Although they did not know each other then, they both crossed paths at the Upstage and at the Electric Banana, both popular clubs in the 1980's and 1990's.

Georgia studied at the University of Pittsburgh between 1986 and 1991. I returned to Oakland in 2004 when I accepted the job of Executive Director of the Oakland Business Improvement District organization. To me, it has been a real joy reconnecting to my past and building new relationships with a diverse group of people who originate from all four corners of the world. Since I started in this position four year ago, I have seen a substantial increase in new investments, cultural diversity, and green practices in the Fifth and Forbes business district.

Georgia remains active in the South Oakland community that she grew up in. She is currently volunteering her time as a mentor within Community Human Services Youth Mentorship Program. This program is designed to give youth an opportunity to meet with adults who are professionals and to learn more about how to prepare for fulfilling career paths. If you are interested in getting involved – please contact Matt Byrne at MByrne@chscorp.org.

Matt Byrne

IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR AFTERSCHOOL

CHS Youth Programs has space available in its After School program for students in K-6th grade. The 7th-8th grade class is currently full but there is a waiting list for interested families.

3pm-7pm Mon-Thurs.

3pm-6pm Fridays

Transportation provided from Greenfield, St. Agnes and Minedeo Schools

Transportation home provided for South Oakland and the Lower-Mid Hill District

Tuition fees are based on a sliding scale and range from \$1 - \$40 per week per child

A snack and hot, nutritious meal served daily

Activities include: homework help and tutoring, computers, arts and crafts, Nintendo Wii, movies, sports and games, FIELD TRIPS, mentoring, career exploration, drama, theater, guest speakers, free play on our giant playground and gardening in our nearby urban garden

Our partners include: Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, University of Pittsburgh Social Work and Theater Departments, Carnegie Science Center, One Vision-One Life, America Reads, Pgh Community Food Bank and Wireless Neighborhoods.

Contact Jessi Marsh, Director of Youth Programs for more information at 412-621-4706 or jmarsh@chscorp.org

MULTICULTURAL OAKLAND



Hongxhi Wang, the father of 6 year old twins, Mary and Carrie who participate in the after school program is a visiting Intensivist at UPMC. He and his daughters came to the United States approximately one year ago.

JM: When did you come from China to Oakland?

HW: I arrived in Oakland in November 26, 2007.

JM: What were some of your first impressions of the United States?

HW: The air is much clearer in the United States. The traffic is smooth most of the time, although there are so many motors. Americans are a very enthusiastic people.

JM: What were some of your first impressions about Pittsburgh/Oakland?

HW: When I first got to Pittsburgh, I thought that The Downtown of Pittsburgh was very small although it is considered to be a big metropolis in the United States. Public transportation in the city is not very convenient. Additionally, I found that some places are dirty in Oakland.

JM: What are some major differences between China and the U.S. from your experience?

HW: There are large differences in living style, consumption conception, education conception, economical level, political system and so on.

JM: What was most surprising?

HW: The high standard of medical care of UPMC and American's lavish lifestyles.

JM: How are your daughters, Mary and Carrie adjusting to the change of living here in the United States?

HW: They found some friends in school and in the After School program at CHS. They had studied some American English ahead of coming to US. McDonalds and KFC were usually used as rewards for some good behavior of children in china. Most children like eating hot dogs, hamburger, fries etc. So that had had some exposure to the American culture and lifestyle prior to arriving in the United States.

JM: What is the best thing about Pittsburgh/Oakland?

HW: The best thing about Pittsburgh is the advanced medical care and research. The initiator of the department where I study was a nominee of the Nobel Prize three times.



Huijie Sun and her husband Wentao Gao came to the United States about 7 years ago from China. They have a daughter, XiXi, who is in the CHS After School Program and a son, Michael who attends Head Start in the CHS Youth Programs Building. She is a Research Technician in the Immunology Department at the University of Pittsburgh.

JM: What were some of your first impressions of the United States?

HS: There is very Fresh and clean air in the United States. I like the green space that is made by planting trees, flowers and other green devices. In the U.S., there is a sense of freedom on everyone's face. Chinese people have too much stress because of the long term of communist system. Also, most families have several kids (more than one). All kids are cute. All people speak English. When people meet, even they do not know each other, they say "Hi" to each other. That is very warm trait. Doctors and policemen are very nice. When I was in China, I was yelled at by doctors regularly.

JM: What were some of your first impressions about Pittsburgh/Oakland?

HS: Pittsburgh people must be very satisfied with their living here, since there are so many overweight people here. There were some impressive steel buildings in the Downtown area. Some parts of Oakland are very new and attractive, but some parts are quite messy and chaotic. Buses can go anywhere. I believe that a good community system can offer help to community residents. I'd like to see some buses have a slogan in Chinese: The community welcomes you!

JM: What are some major differences between China and the U.S. from your experience?

Government systems are very different. USA is a Democracy and free country. You do not need to worry that somebody may try to control and limit your daily life. You cannot imagine what life is like when you were limited by many organizations, many groups and many people you do not know. USA has great justice system to protect every single people's private life. Regular people can be involved in the government system, people can vote, and people do not need to respect their president.

JM:What was most surprising?

HS: The most surprising is trait in the U.S. has to be Christianity. I have been learning the Bible for many years. Learning the Bible changed the way I think, the way I treat people and the way I look at things. I am also surprised that most American people refuse and ignore Christianity.

Additionally, I was really surprised by how you can support your political candidate in your own way. You can go to candidate's rally if you like. You can shake hands with your candidate. The candidate has to tell you she (or he) needs your vote. This is impossible in China. Even now, most of the Chinese people have to accept their government, their leaders and even their own fate.

To my surprise, some American people do not appreciate the great system of this great country and waste the opportunities the country offers to them. the education system offers many choices to people; people should be happy to accept them, use them. I see some young kids that do not care about going to school, it is very sad and wasteful.

I see many teenage moms carrying their own kids. This is impossible in China. Sometimes this confuses me. Maybe Too many liberties is not such a good thing.

JM: Was Michael (her young son) born here or in China?

Huijie Sun from page 6

HS: Michael was born here at Magee Women's Hospital in Pittsburgh. He is a gift from God. If we were staying in China, we would not have had this baby. He has brought us so much happiness. He made Xixi a responsible big sister and made us fair and busy parents.

JM: How has XiXi adjusted to the change of living here in the United States?

HS: Xixi came here when she was 25 months. Her first English words: "That is mine!" (I knew she learned how to fight with friends over toys first.) She had no problem after staying in daycare for 1 month. We were pleased to learn English from her. When she turned 3 years old, she spoke typical American English and forgot all Chinese. After she turned 4 years old, she had her own views on us. We realized there were some conflicts between her and us, and then we had to admit the conflict was American culture and Chinese culture. For example, she complained about the way my husband and I argued. She thought the problem between daddy and mom was that we did not know how to show love to each other and say sorry to each other. Her big words I would remember forever: Even though you do not like each other, you should be nice to each other!

To be honest, I felt frustrated, since it is hard to change the way of life we have kept for more than 30 years. I started to think about how to adjust the way she was taking in the two cultures. It is difficult to say which is better, but trying to absorb good parts from both cultures would be the only way to raise my kids. So I sent her to Chinese school, it was heartbreaking for me when I saw she struggled and refused Chinese. Thank God, after 4 years, she can speak fluent Chinese and recognizes a lot of Chinese characters. She loves Chinese culture too!

JM: What is the best thing about Pittsburgh/Oakland?

HS: Both my husband and I are working at the University of Pittsburgh. We have lived in Oakland for more than 8 years. We can walk to work, walk to stores. The best thing for us is that we are living nearby to the community. Coming to USA, we had no relatives around us, but the community has offered us great help for taking care of the kids. My daughter has been involved in CHS Youth Programs for more than 4 years. The teachers are young, nice, full of energy and have been doing a great job in taking care of and teaching the kids.

Jessi Marsh

PNC FOUNDATION DONATES \$10,000 TO WOOD STREET COMMONS



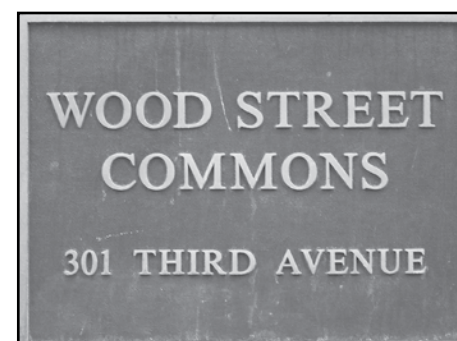
PNC has generously awarded \$10,000 to Community Human Services for client support at Wood Street Commons. Located in downtown Pittsburgh, Wood Street Commons provides single room occupancy housing to 258 low-income men and women, ages 18 and older.

PNC's magnanimous grant will allow for the purchase of new, and much needed, dining room equipment. This will benefit residents who dine at the Café Commons, Wood Street Commons' dining facility. Dinner here

opportunities. PNC's support will ensure that these programs continue as well as expand the building's ability to respond to individual resident needs, such as clothing, transportation and medical equipment.

PNC and the PNC Foundation have long histories of strengthening and enriching our neighbors' lives within the communities in which live and work. Community Human Services is thankful for the PNC Foundation's strategic investment in Wood Street Commons. Working together, we can fundamentally strengthen the lives of residents while adhering to a central focus of the foundation- "promoting the growth of targeted communities through economic development initiatives."

is only \$1 and breakfast is 50 cents. Wood Street, as it's known to many staff and residents, provides enriched social, recreational and career



Diane McMahon

PEOPLES OAKLAND AND THE COMMUNITY VIEW

Peoples Oakland has been a member of the Oakland community for more than 30 years.

Oakland residents started the program and continue to contribute to its vitality. Involved in many aspects of the community, Peoples Oakland participates in internship programs with local universities, partners with regional groups to achieve neighborhood goals and continues to volunteer its efforts to enrich Oakland. It is for this reason that the community plays such an important role in our program as well as in the recovery of our members.

As a mental health organization we believe in an empowering holistic approach that allows the member to grow and develop independence throughout the recovery process. Our programming includes social, recreational, and vocational services to encourage our members to become healthy active participants in the community. In future editions of the view we look forward to contributing articles from members ranging from poetry to Peoples Oakland events. The community is an integral part of our program and has always been intertwined with the staff and members of our organization. It is in this spirit that Peoples Oakland has joined other community groups in the Neighborhood Partnership Program to collaborate on ideas and initiatives beneficial to Oakland and its residents and everyone who visits and does business here.

Chris Irwin

NORTH SHORE CONNECTOR



Due to the large number of Port Authority riders that live and work in Oakland, The Oakland Transportation Management Association (OTMA) decided that they could not pass up the once in a lifetime opportunity to tour the construction site of the North Shore Connector project, or "The Bore to the Shore" as the Port Authority dubbed it. OTMA arranged with the Port Authority for representatives of Oakland institutions and community groups to strap on hard hats and orange safety vests and take a tour of the tunnel on November 11, 2008.



The North Shore Connector project is an initiative of the Port Authority of Allegheny County to expand the reach of the "T", or the Light Rail Transit System. The "T" will extend 1.2 miles from the Gateway Subway Station in downtown Pittsburgh underneath Stanwix Street and the Allegheny River. The project will consist of twin tunnels that will be bored under the river, connecting downtown Pittsburgh with the North Shore.

Oakland tourists began at the North Shore construction site at the opening of the first tunnel. They walked through the tunnel, under the Allegheny River and Stanwix Street, and partially into the second tunnel. They stopped at the drilling site, where the enormous apparatus was waiting to continue its hard work. Oakland tourists were thrilled to be given the chance to actually enter the tunnel and walk under the river.



Oakland participants in the tour were Jan Thomas of the University of Pittsburgh Parking and Transportation Services; Jen Layman of Carnegie Mellon University Community Relations; Louise Cavanaugh Sciannameo of Carlow University Community Relations; Jeff Besong, Chief of Police at Carlow University; and Katie Baurnes of OTMA. For more information on the North Shore Connector project, visit www.theboretoshore.com.

Katie Baurnes

GET ON THE BUSK



If you are ever walking down Forbes Avenue on your lunch hour near the little park by the Original Hot Dog Shoppe, keep your eye out for one of Oakland's musical talents- Josh Loughrey. Here, Josh can be spotted playing jaunty traditional Irish tunes for passersby. He is one of the few public performers in our streets, entertaining Oakland with his fiddle. After listening to him play in the park, I was able to sit down with Josh to talk about music, Oakland and playing for such a large, open audience.

About 11 years ago, Josh and a friend left their homes in central New York State for Pittsburgh. When asked what prompted the move he responded with another question- "Why not?" He plays a variety of different instruments including the guitar, bass, keyboard, violin, the dulcimer (a fretted string instrument in the same family as a banjo or mandolin,) and mandolin. He has experimented with electronic music. Josh has also been in a few different bands including Narse, Gallows Tree, Pancreatic Aardvarks, and the Good Neighbors.

When Josh performs in public it's known as busking. Busking, (musicians and performers playing on the street for tips,) is a century old tradition that found its origin in the Middle Ages.

Shop owners enjoyed an increase in patronage when there was entertainment for pedestrian traffic. Their website, [Busk Pittsburgh](http://BuskPittsburgh), defends the performances as a First Amendment right of expression.

When I asked him about playing out on the street, he said he started about six or seven years ago on Fifth Avenue. Upon discovering that the tips were a bit better on Forbes Avenue, he decided to move down a block. "I usually make enough to cover my lunch," he says with a grin. I wondered if he was concerned about comparisons of his activities to panhandling and he promptly disagreed. Josh isn't looking for a hand out. Instead, it's more of an exercise in performing and a great way to connect with people. He refers to his space of pavement as his laboratory where he is free to express himself as he pleases. Though Josh admits he has certainly gotten disagreeable comments, he simply turns the other cheek. To him, playing on the street isn't about finding a second job, but finding the strength to put yourself out there in front of strangers and challenging yourself to share something you love with other people.



What's most interesting is how visibly Josh loses himself in what he is playing. In a neighborhood dominated by iPod-clad students and professionals zoning out as they pound the pavement to their destinations, Josh brings people back to a time when city sounds mingled with live music. He remembers when there were a lot more performers on the streets- and always very little competition.

Though it may be unclear as to the legal status of such a practice, everyone watching Josh will forget about this while they enjoy his upset and folkie tunes. It's obvious that other people enjoy it as well when they stroll past from restaurant to shop. Josh's plans for the winter are uncertain, but hopefully on a clear day you can see him out there on the corner of Forbes Avenue and Bouquet Street living up the atmosphere.

Genevieve Barbee

the Current *Question*

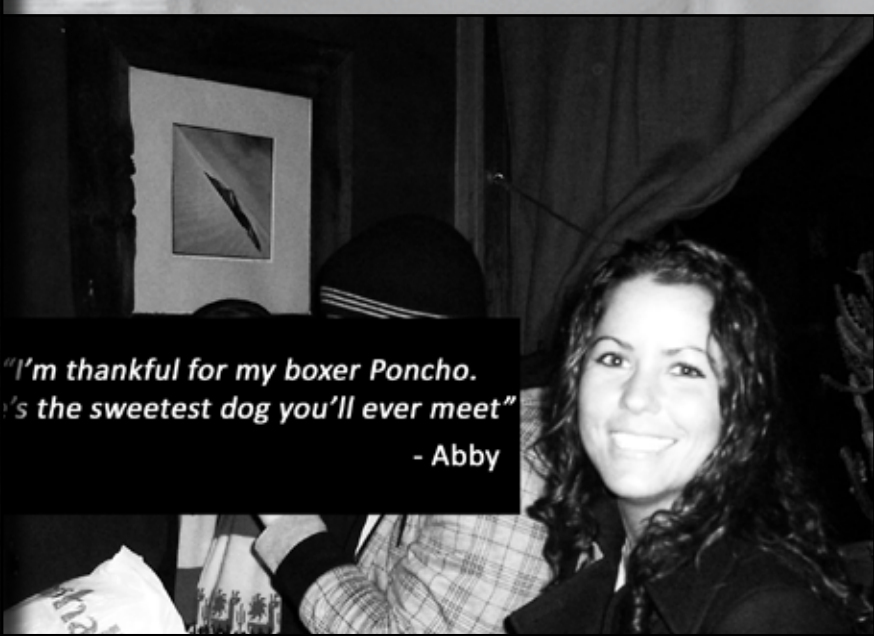
WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?



Kevin is thankful that he is surrounded by great friends on a regular basis



I am definitely most thankful for this past November's election results. - Paul



"I'm thankful for my boxer Poncho. He's the sweetest dog you'll ever meet" - Abby



Inner Peace - Tina



I am thankful for almonds. They're just tasty! - Jim

OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND



The Residential Housing program here at Community Human Services worked all year to earn money for a vacation for some of our consumers. Participants in our Residential Housing Programs are eager for this trip and it's such a joy to make it come true. Fifteen people participated in the vacation including three staff members. They left on September 8th to begin a five day vacation filled with sun, surf, and shopping.

The accommodations were located only a block from the shore and from the balcony one could see the ocean. Each day, everyone ate breakfast together and a different activity was presented to the group. The first

day was a free day where folks could take advantage of the great shopping or just lay about on the beach all day long. The rest of the week was filled with trips up and down the boardwalk, a night out at a seafood buffet, and a boat ride to Assateague Island to visit the wild ponies.

This trip meant a lot to those who went. Our program at CHS strives to create an environment where everyone can be themselves and cultivate their personal gifts that they bring to the world. To illustrate the events that we have for our residents and how they feel about them here are some essays from three individuals that participated in the trip.

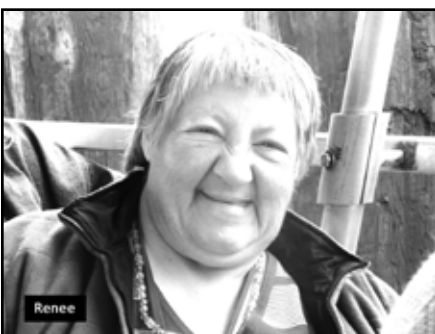
"My Trip to Ocean City"

By Renee

Last Monday, I went to Ocean City, Maryland, and I had a good time. The weather was beautiful. I went to the beach, but I didn't go in the water. I went on a boat ride one day, which was nice.

The first day, they ordered a pizza for us. The second day, we had spaghetti for dinner. I went shopping one day. The third day, we had hamburgers and hot dogs for dinner. And the fourth day we went to the seafood buffet for dinner. And the next day, we came back home. On the way back home, it rained.

The ocean was breath taking. We took pictures. We stayed in townhouses. I slept in the living room, on the couch, because I wanted to see Conan O'Brian. And some of them watched Conan with me, to keep me company. And we watched "America's got Talent" earlier in the evening.



We had a good time it was a real nice trip, and it was worth it. We all got a \$40 rebate to spend as we pleased. I recommend this trip to everybody. Only 15 people went on this trip. I was tired when I got home.

"My Wonderful Time in Ocean City, Maryland"

By Richard

I want to say first of all, it was the vacation of my life! In all my years, I've taken quite a few vacations in the Eastern United States, but this one topped all of them-by far!!

We left just over an hour later from Lawn Street [than planned.] We made our way south east until we saw the Bay Bridge – and what a sight it was! You can see the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean for miles! It seemed like the ride might take forever but we finally arrived at our townhouses. The girls were in one house and the guys were right next door.



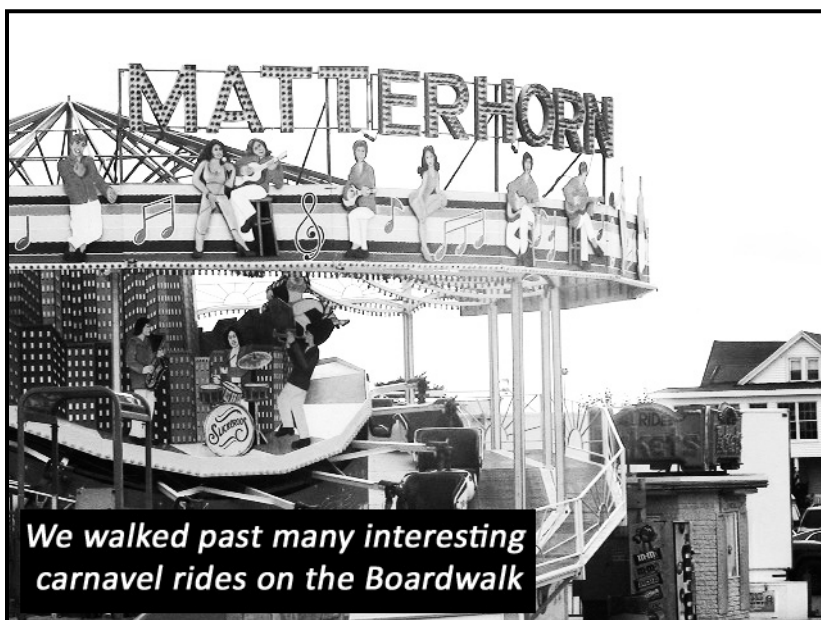
The best part of Ocean City Trip was taking 195 pictures with five single-use cameras with 39 pictures per camera, going out to breakfast Tuesday through Thursday morning, and the buffet dinner at Phillip's Buffet Restaurant on Thursday night. That was the best night of the vacation. The crab cakes and the blackened broiled fish were especially good as was the peel and eat shrimp and red skinned mashed potatoes. I even had some bread pudding with strawberry sauce for dessert.

One awesome night, "Awesome" Autumn made some equally awesome spaghetti. I was on the boardwalk twice but the weather didn't always cooperate. However we did go on a boat ride to Assateague Island and we saw the horses. I stayed on the boat, and it was still fun.

At 9:15 AM [on Friday] after we got cleaned and washed up it was time to say "Adios Ocean City – thanks for the memories!" As I rode back to Lawn Street I said to myself "Wow!"

What a vacation! Three cheers for awesome Autumn, Genevieve, and Maurice – they made this vacation possible and may God bless Lawn Street CRR and Supported Housing!

Genevieve Barbee



PIZZA SPY

Pizza Bellagio



Pizza Bellagio is located on North Craig Street in north Oakland. Their listing on Campusfood.com describes themselves as having “Cheap Eats, Drunk Food, Free Delivery, Late Night, Open 7 Days, Vegetarian”. This description is a reflection of its location which is within a one block radius of three bars, a beer distributor, and student dominated rentals.

As we entered we noticed the amount of light and space in the front of the house and a large screen television to watch. However, this area cannot actually accommodate large groups. The little patio tables in the restaurant were too small to comfortably hold a large pizza, plates, and drinks. We grabbed an extra table to ensure enough space for everyone in our group. This lack of decent sitting area made us think that Pizza Bellagio is a predominantly take-out and delivery place.

The menu was extensive and we were very excited about the variety of offerings on the menu. This included a Rancho Pizza, (“Our special sauce covered with chicken, bacon, tomatoes, provolone, mozzarella & cheddar cheese”), and a Vegetable Pizza, (“Broccoli, spinach, mushrooms, red onions, green peppers, tomatoes, garlic covered with provolone, mozzarella & Romano cheese”). We settled on a Veggie, Chicken & Broccoli, and a standard Cheese pizza. Other offerings include lots of different salads and sandwiches – but that’s not what we were there for.

The Veggie turned out to be the most disappointing. It offered so many toppings yet so little flavor. On top of that the crust was nothing to write home about. Its function was limited to merely holding the pizza toppings together. The cheese pizza was also disappointing as the cheese didn’t stay on the mediocre crust and the sauce didn’t add much to the flavor.

The Chicken & Broccoli concoction was the best of the trio we tried and saved Pizza Bellagio from an entirely negative review. While the crust was pretty basic and not particularly interesting, the toppings were great. A mix of mozzarella, cheddar, and possibly provolone went perfectly with the flavor of the grilled chicken, slightly charred fresh broccoli, and a hint of garlic. We enjoyed this pizza and would definitely order it again. As for anything else on the menu... we’ll leave it for the late night crowd.

Overall Rating: 2.5 pepperonis

Sciulli’s

Sciulli’s is located on the western end of Oakland at 3404 Fifth Avenue, far from the central dining areas in Oakland but right across the street from Presbyterian & Montefiore Hospitals. When we entered the place we should have known immediately that the pizza would be good since almost all of the tables were taken by a mix of hospital employees, students, and construction workers from immediate area even though it was well after the normal lunch hour. The décor was wood paneling ornamented with photographs of dated Italian soccer teams, University of Pittsburgh football posters from the mid-nineties, and a large mounted swordfish

A crew of young men works the front desk, taking orders, filling drinks, taking out deliveries, and helping customers. The back was manned by two elderly gentlemen spinning dough and dressing pizzas. Hoagies and pizza dominates the menu. The pizza is a do it yourself affair where you choose from a number of toppings instead of premade combinations.

One thing we have noticed in the past is that the better the shop, the harder it is to get a hot pepper and a parmesan cheese shaker. This shop was no different – you have to ask to get them and even then you must share with the entire dining room. One of the pizza spies accidentally went overboard with the hot pepper flakes, so beware – they pack a punch!

The Pizza Spies ordered a plain and a pepperoni pizza and both were excellent. The cheese and sauce were very flavorful on both pies. The cheese was actually very high quality and the best we’ve had in a while. The crust was thin but firm and the pepperoni was generous but not overly greasy. It’s obvious when you get your pizza that these folks know how to construct a great pie.



At each table, there is enough space for a small group to eat together without crowding. The service was fairly quick and the price was right. The largest coffee is under a dollar, a large cheese pizza is only \$9.00, and cans of soda are \$0.75. Over all this was some of the best pizza we’ve had.

Overall Rating: 4 pepperonis

Ongoing Events at the Lawn Street Center									
	8 AM	11 AM	11:30 AM	12:30 PM	2 PM	4 PM	6 PM	6:30 PM	7 PM
Mondays		Lunch							Exercise
Tuesdays		Lunch		Bingo			Family Practice Clinic		
Wednesdays	Wednesday Wanderers	Lunch				Wednesday Social			
Thursdays		Lunch	Arts & Crafts			Yoga		Bingo	
Fridays		Lunch							
2nd and 4th Monday					Podiatry				

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