

Newsletter of the Center City Residents' Association

Vol. 10 No. 1 Spring 2019

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It's Academic

Trinity Playgroup Celebrates 50 Years in the Fidler Square Community

By Susan Souffie, TPG Board President

Walk by the corner of 22nd and Spruce in the 8 – 9 a.m. weekday hour and you're sure to see a child or two eagerly skipping up to that big red door, green lunch bag in hand, with parent, grandmom or nanny a few steps behind, waiting to be buzzed inside for another fun-filled day of learning and play. Much of what goes on inside has been precious preserved through a love of tradition and a mission to serve the community for the past 50 years.

A Brief Look Back

It all began in 1969, when five families from Trinity Memorial Church, together

with rector Charles Penniman, formed a small co-operative where children could play together. This early form of daycare was established as a program for the growing number of children in the neighborhood, and primarily served the families with a stay-at-home parent—in those days, moms. One of the main concerns of the founders was to provide a way for moms to get a break from their kids—a progressive idea for the time. It also gave children a chance to play together and form early friendships in the neighborhood rather than being isolated at home.

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Lynne K. Schimmel

The Rev. Charles Penniman, July 1970

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2018: A Year of Accomplishments, with Many Thanks to Our Members and Sponsors

By Maggie Mund, CCRA President

CCRA's board and staff would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to all who supported us in the past year of change and progress. It's hard to stay one step ahead of legislation, public safety and quality-of-life issues that impact our neighborhood, but with your help we had many successes. Below is just a short summary of accomplishments for the year.

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In May, CCRA held a public meeting addressing our residents' many concerns about the reassessment process and how to appeal. A panel consisting of Michael Piper (Chief Assessment Officer for the OPA), Salima Cunningham (Communication Coordinator, OPA), and attorney Stewart Weintraub fielded questions from a packed audience.

As part of the Crosstown Coalition, CCRA also distributed a handbook, *How to Appeal your Real Estate Tax Assessment*, and testified in favor of Bill 171009, which provides relief for taxpayers who appealed their reassessments in 2018. It suspends interest and penalties for those who timely pay their tax as computed on the prior 2017 assessment and also timely pay the assessment determined via the appeal process. The Bill passed after CCRA'er Jeff Braff, wearing a Crosstown Coalition hat, testified in the Bill's favor and Crosstown Coalition representatives visited 15 Council chambers last November in support of the Bill.

In response to neighbor complaints about a local non-compliant Airbnb, CCRA initiated a meeting with the city's Department of

Licenses and Inspections. Following the meeting, which included affected neighbors, L&I initiated efforts to stop the over-rental of the property and limit its use to those permitted by the Code. In 2019, CCRA distributed a survey for its members to assess any issues related to limited lodging.

CCRA teamed with the Logan Square Neighborhood Association to lobby local, state and federal officials to pressure CSX to reduce the frequency of trains idling next to Schuylkill River Park. CCRA worked with both U.S. Senators Pat Toomey and Bob Casey, the City's Managing Director and Law Office, and the federal Surface Transportation Board to pressure CSX to end its idling practices. As a result, the number and frequency of idling trains has been dramatically reduced, enhancing the quality of life for neighbors living by and near the Park, and allowing all to enjoy the Park free from train noise and obstruction.

CCRA has also been diligent in supporting neighborhood concerns about growth and development throughout 2018. CCRA's zoning committee heard 30 cases through September. Over 80 percent of their recommendations were upheld at the Zoning Board of Adjustment. This is an enviable track record and a testament to their professionalism.

CCRA joined with neighborhood groups (who are paying for legal fees), on legal appeals to the ZBA on two rulings, which were in conflict with existing provisions of the Zoning Code. One appeal was decided in CCRA and the neighbors' favor; the other is pending appeal.

CCRA has been active in ensuring we maintain the livability and character of Center City. CCRA initiated a Near Neighbors Pilot Program to allow applicants for zoning variances to meet with neighbors prior to making a formal presentation to CCRA's Zoning Committee. We are facilitating dialogue between stakeholders with the goal of increasing transparency, understanding objections from neighbors and reducing costs through better visibility of applications. After a Pilot meeting in October, we are refining the process to better serve the neighborhood.

CCRA worked closely with the Philadelphia Police Department to identify problems on 15th Street between Spruce and Chestnut. As a result of our cooperation, including hosting concerned-citizen forums, the Police Department increased the number of officers stationed along that part of the 15th Street corridor.

CCRA served on several Vision Zero task forces to discuss concerns and mitigate any issues related to the bike lanes on the following streets in our neighborhood: Spruce, Pine, Lombard, South, Market and JFK Blvd. CCRA also troubleshooted several issues related to the Big Bellies in the neighborhood, working with the Streets Department and local businesses.

In collaboration with the Bethesda Project, CCRA addressed homelessness in the City of Philadelphia. Last year, CCRA sponsored a successful Valentine's Day dinner, "Hearts for the Homeless," that fed over 40 men at St. Mary's Church, 18th and Bainbridge.

CCRA partnered with the Markward Recreation Center Advisory Council to host two free outdoor family movie nights at the recreation center. Audiences enjoyed screenings of *Inside Out* and *Black Panther* under the stars on beautiful October evenings.

CCRA administers the Schuylkill River Park Community Garden ((25th and Lombard), through a very active Steering Committee. With space in the garden dedicated to the City Harvest program, as well as more than 30 individual gardeners' volunteering space in their plots for C.H. produce, in 2018 we were able to donate 1,164 pounds of fresh vegetables, herbs, and fruit to help food-challenged Philadelphians.

Finally, CCRA's 2018 Annual Meeting featured a panel with Anne Fadullon (Director of Philadelphia Department of Planning and Development), Jon Geeting (Director of Engagement for Philly 3.0) and Paul Steinke (Executive Director of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia), to discuss growth and development in Center City. Pulitzer Prize-winning architecture critic Inga Saffron of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* served as moderator.

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¼ Page	\$ 375.00	\$ 450.00
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President's Report

A Brief History of My Life in Center City



*Maggie Mund
CCRA President*

When my husband and I moved to the Philadelphia area in 1986, we were determined to live in town. Both of us had grown up in suburban environments, outside of Chicago and NYC. Both of us revered city life from afar, venturing into our respective cities as teenagers and young adults for festivals, nightlife and sporting events. When I first saw Philadelphia, I fell in love immediately. I had never seen a city where the office towers and residential neighborhoods were so integrated. There were 12 movie theaters in Center City! Rittenhouse Square, historic neighborhoods, restaurants, clubs, department stores, and the Reading Terminal! And so walkable! I was in heaven.

But for those of you who were here, you know Philadelphia was hardly heaven back then. I looked at the city with lover's eyes, overlooking the many flaws. The crack epidemic was rampant, broken windshields, the homeless on desolate sidewalks. Corrupt city officials. A neighbor was mugged walking home. Friends with children left when they reached school age.

But we persevered. Joining a religious community, volunteering at the Fitler Square Fair, enrolling our children in Trinity Play Group and then Greenfield and Masterman. Organizing book fairs and town watches, Taney Soccer and Baseball. Joining CCRA, then the board. The playground at Schuylkill Park. We built a community of like-minded city dwellers who were here, not going anywhere soon, thank you very much.

So much has happened over the years in Center City sometimes it's hard to believe the transformation. Much credit goes to Ed Rendell, who as mayor and governor poured money into Center City and public schools, giving hope to many. The birth of the Center City District, with its emphasis on cleaning and greening, was transformational. So much development, housing, offices and an explosion of retail and the restaurant scene! The Schuylkill Banks. And of course, CCRA played its part, ever vigilant, pushing and prodding the elected officials and others to do what's right for the neighborhood.

I tell my story not because it's unique, but because it is so universal. Everyone who has lived here for any length of time has fallen in love with our neighborhood. Visitors who walk our streets marvel at the history, beauty, community, and pride that many residents take in their surroundings, evident in the beautiful façades, street trees, and window boxes.

Under my leadership, CCRA will continue to advocate for our neighborhood. The board recently identified priority issues—Historic Preservation, Neighborhood Redevelopment (zoning, re-mapping, Zoning Board of Adjustment), Property Taxes, Public Safety (crime, homelessness, panhandling), and Streets (potholes, bike lanes, congestion, deliveries, trash and Big Bellies). More corruption. It's a long list and we can't do it alone. We need the time, treasure and talent of our members, and the development of effective partnerships with the many other neighborhood-based associations. Together, I hope we will continue to build community through our advocacy for what's right for the neighborhood.

WANTED: Board Member Candidates

CCRA is looking to fill several Board seats for our fiscal year beginning July 1. Board members generally serve a term of three years. As a working Board, we are seeking CCRA members with a passion for living in "CCRAville"; an interest in quality-of-life issues and community service; and a commitment to active Board participation. Successful candidates must serve on at least one committee and agree to fulfill the responsibilities set forth in our Board Pledge, which includes devoting at least four hours per month to CCRA activities, over and above time spent attending, and preparing for, monthly Board meetings. See website for full Pledge and list of committees.

Interested members are encouraged to forward a resume or summary of qualifications **by April 2** by mail to CCRA, 1900 Market St., 8th Fl., Phila., PA 19103 or by email to centercity@centercityresidents.org, with "Board Candidate" in the subject line.

Continued from p. 1

Initially, parent volunteers supervised and acted as a steering committee to guide the group, chaired by Rector Penniman. Soon the co-op was providing care two mornings a week to nearly 15 children, aged just a few months to three years, for about \$1.50 per day. Children played under the watchful eyes of Anna Quinn, the playgroup's first employee, and a rotation of parent volunteers.

By the early '70s, the Toddler room was at full capacity, and expanded to include classes on the second floor (where they briefly shared space with the newly founded Wilma Theater). As the school continued to grow, new rector Louis Temme turned the steering committee chair over to a parent volunteer. Rector Temme wished to pursue his goals of growing the church community and felt the parents were well equipped to take on full responsibility of the playgroup.

From Co-Op to Corporation

The mid '70s saw the end of the parent co-op model. More mothers were entering the workforce, which left fewer hours to volunteer. A Board of Directors was formed and a part-time administrator was hired to develop a Preschool. Nancy Havens, then a lead teacher, was the first administrator and became president of the Board. With the blessing of Trinity Memorial Church, Trinity Playgroup (TPG) incorporated as a separate nonprofit, retaining the name "Trinity" to reflect the school's origins and history.

Trinity Memorial Church continues to view TPG as part of its overall community-outreach efforts, and as one of the oldest and most significant ways it serves the neighborhood. A member of the Church Vestry remains an appointed member of the TPG Board, and strives to support TPG as an outstanding preschool. Providing space for a high-quality preschool enhances the quality of family life, whether or not the families are TMC members, which speaks directly to the church's mission.

Today TPG serves 60-70 children each school year. Twelve teachers oversee three classrooms for children 18 months through Pre-K. It operates from 8 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., five days a week, for families desiring full-time care. The original two-mornings-per-week schedule remains an option, keeping alive the founders' vision of providing that much-needed break for stay-at-home



Courtesy of Trinity Playgroup



Courtesy of Trinity Playgroup

Halloween Parade Tradition—Then (1980s, top)... and Now (2017, above)

parents, and the chance to make first friends in the neighborhood.

A Very Special Place

It's a phrase often said of TPG. But just what makes it so special? "There is a warmth to this place, like home, where you want your children to be and know they will be happy and cared for," says Abbie Kinzler, who sits on the TPG Board as the appointed Church Vestry member. Both her children attended TPG in the '80s, as did her grandson in 2012. "The teachers are so professional but also so personal; it's a fine line and they hold it very well. So many of them have been here so long—for decades—and you just don't find that

everywhere. They are connected to each other, to this place and the traditions and that makes them feel differently about their work. It's amazing!"

Louis Temme was not just the church rector during a pivotal time in the school's history, but also a parent and grandparent. He believes the physical space and location of the school are what make it so unique. "It's so open, light and airy. And yet there is a warmth; of course the teachers set that tone. The best thing about incorporating the school back when I was rector was that it allowed us to create stable employment opportunities and that helps with the

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longevity of the staff. It's a testament to how well the Board has operated to maintain such a good working environment."

Lead Pre-K teacher Heather McDermott, who this year celebrates her 35th anniversary, says, "We have parents who were students send their own children here, and I regularly bump into parents and grandparents of former students and hear all about their accomplishments and how Trinity helped start them along their journeys in life. How fortunate are we to be part of that?"

Parents like Giovanna Chiti whose three boys all attended TPG. Carlo Makarechi, 26, graduated from McGill University and lives in DC working for Patients for Affordable Drugs. Bijan Makarechi, 24, graduated from Yale, lives in Vancouver, and works for Hootsuite. Julian Makarechi, 22, is a senior at Temple. Chiti lives in their family home near the school and recalls, "Trinity was a place where I felt my boys were safe and surrounded by warm and loving teachers. My fondest memories are of the annual Halloween parades around Fitler Square. And the

Trinity mothers! I am still friends with them now after so many years."

Director Christa Cywinski, who last year celebrated her 20th anniversary alongside teachers Angela Esposito and Marie Matlock, cites the many ways generations of parents have made lasting impressions on the school. "They've built the log cabin in our side yard, donated books, toys, puzzles, blocks and trains, made dance party mix tapes. These donations are still loved and played with today! They've helped with renovations, organized the annual Halloween Parade, cared for classroom fish over breaks, volunteered on the Board and Fundraising Committee, read and shared talents in the classroom. Contributions like these have created a culture of support and stability over the years and serve as TPG's backbone."

Celebrating 50 and Beyond

TPG hosts its Golden Gala Auction, a tribute to families, friends and faculty, past and present, on May 3. The Gala is a chance to celebrate this special school and the place it holds in the hearts of hundreds of Philadelphia families. Do

you have photos of your little ones standing in front of that iconic red door? Are you an alum just passing by and feel inspired to snap a pic? If so, please upload at <https://trinityplaygroup.org/tpg-at-fifty/> You can also find more information about the auction, share a fond memory or leave a testimonial about what makes TPG special to you.



It's Academic

Philanthropy Blooms in Greenfield School: Students Raise Thousands for Six Nonprofit Organizations

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Led by the Student Voice Club, the students of Albert M. Greenfield School, at 22nd and Chestnut, raised over \$3800 for nonprofit organizations providing services in six categories of need. An after-school club consisting of 12 middle school students in grades 6 through 8, the Student Voice Club stands for philanthropy, leadership, community, and voice. Members believe that even small acts of kindness can make a big difference in the world. Teacher John Neary, leader of the club, teaches them: "Like a pebble dropped in a pond, our actions create an expanding, outward wave."

Earlier in the school year, the Student Voice Club ran a schoolwide charitable campaign called "World of Change," a multi-state project founded by Matt Hoidal in Maine. The Club gave each classroom six empty mason jars, each one representing an area of need: Hunger, Housing, Health, Literacy,



Teacher John Neary (l.) with members of Greenfield Student Voice Club and recipients of donations.

Recreation, and Financial Literacy/Employment. The Club nominated three organizations for each area of need. For two weeks, Greenfield students collected and donated coins to the jars of their choosing. The entire Greenfield community—students, teachers, staff and parents—voted on which organization would receive the money in each category.

On Monday, January 7, Neary presented checks to five of the six nonprofit organizations. Each organization accepted the check and gave a short presentation about what they do. Four of the winning organizations were Philadelphia-based: MANNA (Food/Hunger, \$815.88); Philadelphia Reads (Literacy, \$464.77);

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Project HOME (Housing, \$686.62); and the Center for Literacy (Financial Literacy/ Employment, \$410.85). The American Red Cross (Health, \$996.28) is international with a local office right near the school. Child's Play (Play/Recreation, \$494.94) is international, based in the state of Washington, and did not attend.

MANNA provides free, medically tailored nutritional meals for people with serious illnesses in the Philadelphia area. **Philadelphia Reads** runs the Reading Olympics and provides books and literacy programs to underserved Philadelphia children, families, teachers, and schools. **Project HOME** helps homeless people in Philadelphia by providing affordable housing, employment opportunities, education, and health care. They also run the Hub of Hope, located in the Suburban Station concourse, a walk-in engagement center for homeless people, offering showers, laundry service, and medical care. **The Center for Literacy** teaches reading, writing, math, technology, life and work skills, including financial literacy,



Bonnie Eisenfeld

Five of the six nonprofit organizations that received donations from Greenfield School students. From left: Representatives from Project Home, American Red Cross (2), Philadelphia Reads, Center for Literacy, MANNA.

to a diverse population of adult learners to help them achieve their personal and employment-related goals. **The American Red Cross** collects blood, provides support and communication to armed-services families, offers training including

first aid and CPR, and provides clean water, safe shelter and hot meals to victims of all kinds of disasters, from small house fires to multi-state natural catastrophes. **Child's Play** provides toys and games to children at over 100 hospitals worldwide.

Save the Date for a Celebration of Center City Living

CASINO NIGHT

May 9, 2019
 6-10pm at The Philadelphia Ethical Society
 for more information go to centercityresidents.org

Poet in the Park

Bonnie Eisenfeld



Bonnie Eisenfeld

Marshall James Kavanaugh, "Dream Poet for Hire," set up shop in Rittenhouse Square on a sunny day in February to write "personalized, spontaneous, typewritten poems about absolutely anything," for a small donation. You can request a poem at marshall.kavanaugh@gmail.com and he will send it to your mailbox.

A Treasure Hunt for Quiet Spots to Dine and Talk

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Good news, restaurant patrons: you do not have to resort to texting to have a conversation with your dining companions. With a bit of research and planning, you can find a table where you will not be assaulted by loud music and shouting diners.

Some restaurants have bucked the trend toward loud noise. Spice Finch, a modern Middle Eastern restaurant, at the Warwick Hotel on 17th Street near Locust, has a quieter back room. When we were seated under a speaker, restaurant manager Jen Enright thoughtfully turned it off for us. Still, it's best to dine early because it will get loud later in the evening if a large party is seated nearby.

Estia, a Greek seafood restaurant at Broad and Locust, is quieter than most for both lunch and dinner, with a cheerful ambience, large windows, lots of space, and just-right background music. At Seafood Unlimited (270 S. 20th), owners David and Judy Einhorn have installed special sound-absorbing ceilings.

An elegant restaurant with a Fifties-retro ambience is Prime Rib, also at the Warwick. Drapes, carpeting, and

tablecloths absorb sound; tables are spaced at a comfortable distance from each other, and loud music is absent. A piano player performs American songbook favorites starting at 6 p.m. and is not offended when people continue their conversations. If you are not a meat-eater, other options are available for you to enjoy.

My favorite French restaurant in Philadelphia is Bistrot La Minette (6th and Bainbridge). Offering excellent food and service and a real Paris bistro ambience, the restaurant never plays loud music, allowing for a consistently delightful dining experience. There is a back room available for large parties. Zinc, a small French restaurant (246 S. 11th), also has very good food and usually plays background music like Frank Sinatra. The place is quietest on weeknights but a large party in such a small place will ramp up the decibel level.

In general, traditional Asian restaurants like Shiroi Hana (222 S. 15th) and Square on Square (1905 Chestnut) do not blast loud music, and are calm, quiet places to dine. Although Modern Asian restaurants have gone trendy, Suga (1720 Sansom),

offers semi-private dining rooms which tend to be quieter.

Some tips for getting the quietest table in noisy restaurants: Request a table near a window and dine early. These tricks have worked well for me at Melograno (2012 Sansom); Caffe Casta Diva (227 S. 20th); Audrey Claire (20th and Spruce); 20 Manning Grille (261 S. 20th); Gran Caffe L'Acquila (1716 Chestnut); Marathon on the Square (19th and Spruce); Farmicia (15 S. 3rd); Charlie Was a Sinner (131 S. 13th); and the bar at Zama (128 S. 19th). At minimum, you will get noise only from one side, and in nice weather when the windows are open, the noise is dissipated. It is even possible to dine in semi-quiet at Parc near an open window.

Speaking of lunchtime, XIX at the Bellevue (Broad and Walnut); Chops, at the Comcast Center; and the Garden Restaurant at the Barnes are delightfully quiet, spacious, and bright.

Now that you know some tricks to finding a quiet place to talk and dine, only one thing remains to do: have something interesting to talk about!

City Lit

Philadelphia City Institute Library Annual Book Sale To Be Held in May

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Friends of Philadelphia City Institute Library on Rittenhouse Square, 1905 Locust Street, will hold their annual book sale to raise funds for the library over two days: Friday, May 17, from 2 to 4 p.m. and Saturday, May 18, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Prior to the sale, you are invited to donate used books, DVDs, and CDs on these specific collection days: All Fridays in March; Saturday, March 30; Friday, April 5 and 12; Saturday, April 13 and 27; and Friday, May 3 and 10. Hours of collection each day are 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Books must be in excellent condition; DVDs and CDs must not be scratched. Please do not bring the following types of books because they do not sell: textbooks; medical, computer science and information technology; finance; travel guidebooks; outdated topics; foreign language; worn, tattered, or discolored books, or books with writing on them. Please separate books into bags marked Fiction and Non-Fiction. Thank you from the Friends of PCI!

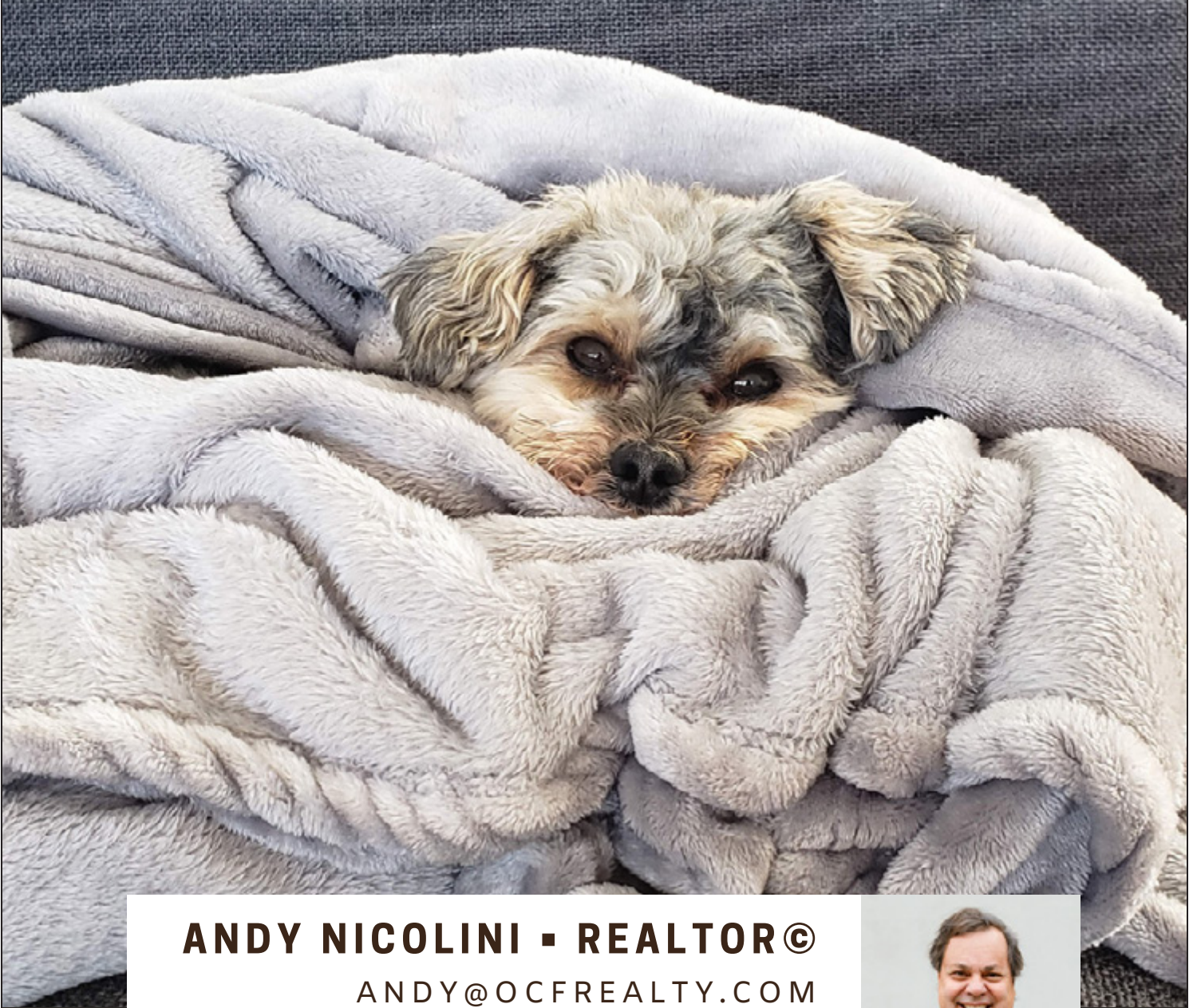
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City Kids Go to Camp for Free, Thanks to the Philadelphia Ethical Society

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

The Philadelphia Ethical Society on Rittenhouse Square operates Camp Linden, a six-week summer children's program for kids from low-income city neighborhoods, on their property in Chester County. In 2018, 250 kids attended free of charge, sent by eight community organizations, six from Philadelphia and two from Wilmington, Delaware. Each organization brings the same group of children to Camp Linden on the same weekday throughout the camp season.

Kids learn to swim, experience nature, plant a garden, wade and float in Brandywine Creek, and hike on a trail. They learn how plants grow and which insects are helpful and which ones are harmful, all while having fun. They feast on produce from their garden, celebrate Planet Earth with music and games, and learn about Native American culture. Camp Linden also teaches ethical behaviors including valuing yourself, valuing other people, and valuing the Earth.

The camp runs on a low budget because much of the work is done by volunteers, including Jeffrey Dubb, MD, Committee Chair; Leonard Weeks, Camp Manager; Sharon Wallis, Program Director; and Joe Dubb, Head Counselor. Volunteers also plant the garden; help clean up, set up and prepare the property for the camp season; and conduct the fundraising. The paid staff includes a year-round resident caretaker, and counselors and lifeguards hired during the camp season. Last summer the staff also included two counselors-in-training and a part-time social and emotional learning consultant.

Most of the cost is covered by individual contributions through "Friends of Camp Linden," a fund of the Ethical Society, supplemented by financial support from the Ethical Society and other organizations and foundations. You can contribute in three ways: volunteer, donate items, and make a financial contribution. Volunteers carpool to Camp Linden on designated Saturdays in April, May and June to plant the garden and perform other maintenance tasks. To participate, please email sharonkwallis@gmail.com. Camp Linden



Courtesy of Philadelphia Ethical Society

Catching butterflies



Courtesy of Philadelphia Ethical Society

Camp Linden vista

needs bathing suits, foam clogs or other water shoes, and life jackets sized to fit children ages 6 through 12. If you have any of these items to donate, you can drop them off at the Ethical Society building, 1906 S. Rittenhouse Square.

If you wish to make a contribution to Camp Linden for the upcoming summer program, please send it care of the Philadelphia Ethical Society, 1906 S. Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia PA 19103. For more information, go to <https://phillyethics.org/camp-linden/>



Courtesy of Philadelphia Ethical Society

Counselor teaching

Getting from Here to There: Transit First in Philadelphia

By Bill West

I finally got around to reading SEPTA's recent report on redesigning Philadelphia's bus network, and I'm very glad I did. The *Philadelphia Bus Network Choices Report* was introduced to the world in June.

When it came out, *Network Choices* received insightful coverage from Jason Laughlin of the *Inquirer* and Jim Saksa of PlanPhilly.

The report was prepared by consultants Jarrett Walker + Associates. This well-known firm also consulted on the redesign of Houston's bus network, which was rolled out in 2015.

What struck me most about the Walker report was that, at its base, it was a short course in geometry, as applied to transportation in cities.

The Geometry of Cars

Since the arrival of cars a little over a century ago (the Ford Model T was introduced in 1908), there has been a strong tendency to concentrate on cars for all of our transportation needs. This approach has had support from the car industry and its allies. Unfortunately, when it comes to cities, the push for an essentially monomodal transportation system based on the private automobile runs up against the laws of geometry. (See *Network Choices*, page 9.)

Cars are big. It takes a lot of space for cars to transport people, which defeats the purpose of cities to bring people together; the effect of cars is to push them apart.

We can see this effect in Center City Philadelphia, where the Vine Street Expressway is essentially a moat dividing William Penn's original city from points north. Market Street and JFK Boulevard are too wide for pedestrians to be comfortable, so the interesting stores tend to show up on the side streets and Walnut and Chestnut to the south, which are human scale.

Cars are also very convenient. They can get you anywhere there's a road, something trains on tracks and buses on fixed routes do not do. There are reasons why people have loved cars since they were invented, and it is a simple fact that cars are not going away.

However, it seems fair to suggest that we are over-reliant on cars. Unlike some parts of



Bus station, Marion, Ohio. Ben Shahn/Farm Security Administration, 1938.

Credit: Library of Congress

the country, Philadelphia has a functioning multimodal transportation system, with a variety of rail transit and a large bus network; many parts of the city are very walkable, and certain sections are heavily bicycled, despite the utter inadequacy of the city's network of bike lanes. Still, you need only to look at Chestnut Street in Center City to see that there are too many cars, both moving and parked, and they are taking up too much space.

How do we cut down on the number of cars being used every day in this city? People tend to focus on commuters, many either coming from or going to places inaccessible by anything but a car. Fortunately, there is a silver lining. Many of the car trips in Philadelphia are actually quite short—under two miles. And in many cases these trips could be done easily, and possibly more pleasantly, by walking, biking, or taking the bus.

Unfortunately, all of these modes have been neglected, and if you want them to fulfill their potential, they need to be upgraded. As for buses, this means we need to rethink the network.

The Geometry of a Bus Network

The older parts of Philadelphia were laid out on a grid, which the bus network in those areas generally follows. In the newer parts of town, where street layouts often feel very suburban, the bus network is more radial.

The Walker firm really likes the grid, which dovetails with the firm's basic design approach of short, straight routes, high frequency, and good connections. Free transfers are crucial to the success of this approach, which involves a lot of hopping on and off buses, but because of the high frequency does not involve much waiting time.

Let's look at South Philly. It's basically grid heaven, but that does not mean there are no improvement opportunities. The east-west routes have comparatively wide spacing (about half a mile apart), while the north-south routes are spaced about a quarter-mile apart (*Network Choices*, p. 73).

The north-south routes are too close together and effectively steal passengers from one another. Who wins? The most-frequent routes. Poor little Route 2, for instance, is stuck between the much more frequent Broad Street Line (aka the subway) to the east, and Route 17 to the west. As the report puts it, "The pattern of boarding activity and route productivity is clearly showing that many people prefer to walk to higher frequency service." (p. 73.)

Route 47M

South Philly's overcrowding of north-south streets reaches its apogee with route 47M on 9th Street. To quote the report,

This is a highly specialized route that primarily serves the Italian Market on 9th Street. Until 1993, SEPTA operated all Route 47 buses via 9th Street, but the busy Italian Market meant that many buses were stuck in traffic during their trip through South Philadelphia. In May 1993, northbound Route 47 was shifted to 7th Street to improve speed and reliability. But the 47M was also added to maintain service on 9th Street.

Route 47M operates northbound only and is effectively using one bus from the

northbound 47 every 20 minutes to run through the Italian Market on 9th Street. This is done so that people going to the market do not have to walk two blocks from 7th Street to 9th Street.

This kind of response to specialized demands takes frequency from the most productive north-south route to reduce walking distance for a few people.

And guess what. Hardly anybody gets off the 47M at the Italian Market. "Most people riding Route 47M get off at Market Street." (p. 84.)

I can hear the howls of protest already, as the keepers of South Philly's many "peculiar institutions" (like parking in the crosswalk) rise up in opposition. But if you're robbing Route 47 of significant frequency so people don't need to walk two blocks to the Italian Market, and virtually nobody is getting off at the Italian Market, perhaps sweet reason will prevail in the end. Who knows? I happen to agree with this insight the Walker report offers: "the point of transit is to provide an alternative to driving, not an alternative to walking." (p. 93.)

Chestnut Street

In addition to examining the big-picture geometry of routes, the Walker people also spent time going through their toolbox of hyperlocal solutions to specific problems. They clearly took a close look at Chestnut Street in Center City, a transit nightmare I've been writing about for a while, and they've come up with a bunch of deft, often minor, adjustments that could have very positive effects. (See page 46.)

Mayor Kenney has already started the ball rolling. In September he introduced a package of steps to increase enforcement of existing traffic regulations on the most heavily congested parts of Chestnut, which lie just east and west of Broad. And it has had some effect.

However, the increased enforcement is temporary, and even now it's not solving the whole problem. Random people parking in the bus lane has declined substantially, but Fed Ex, UPS, and the USPS still stop when and where they choose. And of course Uber and Lyft stop wherever their next passenger is standing.

I've suggested before that a big part of the solution lies in the third lane on Chestnut Street—the parking lane. Much of this lane

is given over to loading zones in the early morning, but at 10 a.m. those spots generally revert to being regular two-hour parking spots. Not coincidentally, the phenomenon of delivery trucks unloading in the bus lane explodes right after 10 a.m. It seems only logical to extend the time of the loading zones further into the day. I do think this simple and incremental move would help a lot.

That still leaves the problem of drivers filling the bus lane, on the right side of the street, while they try to turn right and go south on a numbered street. The right turn from the bus lane was never an ideal design, and I actually recall that when this first went in, the right turn from Chestnut onto 17th was prohibited. There was a big sign indicating No Right Turn. Basically, everybody ignored it, and after a while the sign quietly went away.

Drivers do queue regularly to make the turn on 15th and 17th, which I have observed personally. A lot. I'm told this also happens elsewhere. The issue is twofold. First, pedestrians walking along on the south side of Chestnut are often crossing 15th and 17th in great numbers, blocking the drivers who want to turn right. Second, cars headed south on 15th and 17th frequently back up into the intersection and even beyond, to the north. What can I say? It's a busy area.

The basic problem for a bus driver is that the bus stop is at the corner, just before the intersection. If turning cars back up at all, the bus can't get to the stop. The Walker folks suggest a number of changes that would likely make things, not perfect, but I think much better.

First, what would happen if we just moved the stop to the far side of the intersection? Then the bus driver could swing out into the left lane, drive around the queue, and stop at the stop.

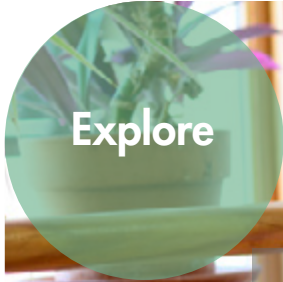
Alternatively, we could simply eliminate the bus stop at intersections where cars turn right—in other words, space the bus stops every other block, placing them at intersections where there is only a left-hand turn.

But, but, you splutter. Take a deep breath. Stops in Philly are much closer together than they are in other comparable cities. The typical Philadelphia block is about 450 feet long, so stopping every other block would give you 900 feet between stops, putting Philly on a par with Boston (p. 93).

Continued p. 13



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And often a bus rider would not have to walk any further than at present. Take the William Penn House on the 1900 block of Chestnut. It's located midblock, so a resident currently has a choice of two stops half a block from the apartment building's front entrance. Removing one of those stops would still leave you with the same half-block walk to a bus stop.

Implementation: All at Once or Bit by Bit?

So, should we redesign the network over a couple of years, and then implement the changes all at once? Or should we put the improvements in gradually, as they become available?

I'd do both. My thought on the 47M is that eliminating it is pretty much a no-brainer, but I've seen this community in action. I'd wait on the 47M and roll it into a much bigger ball with things like Route 2, just west of Broad. This would encourage people to take a broader view.

On the other hand, I'd do Chestnut Street now, especially since it's already started and may fail if we don't keep going. I'd even do it in several slices—expand the hours of the loading zones in the parking lane, and then later deal with the bus stops and the right-turning traffic.

The problems on Chestnut are widely recognized in the community, which doesn't mean the changes will lack opposition. However, Chestnut Street is low-hanging fruit, and it might be possible to convince a City Council member or two that the results are almost certain to be very positive, and the blowback transitory.

Also, it wouldn't hurt to get some successful pilot projects out there fairly early. They could show people that these changes actually do work, right here in Philadelphia, and possibly increase public confidence in the overall project.

To Your Health

Penn's Village Health Pals Support Members as They Navigate the Healthcare System

By Marianne Waller

Ranked by Kiplingers (2016) as one of the best cities in the country for retirement, Philadelphia has a lot to offer its older citizens. As they reach retirement age, many folks from the suburbs decide to join longer-term urban neighbors in embracing city living. An active, engaged and interesting life in their central Philadelphia homes is an appealing prospect for all. Penn's Village, a member-based nonprofit organization, offers seniors in Center City the support of a team of enthusiastic and caring volunteers committed to enriching the experience of living at home in the city.

Interest groups, along with robust cultural, educational, and social programs create unique opportunities for discovery, learning, contact, and engagement. A phone call or email can enlist help for needs as diverse as transportation, assistance with chores and errands, companionship, and help with electronic devices.

Yet, no matter how active and vibrant one's lifestyle, advancing age may bring challenges to navigating the healthcare system effectively. Oral explanations by medical providers may be difficult to understand; stress, poor hearing, or other declining physical abilities may impede the ability to understand or remember new information and instructions; and the need for additional specialists, more frequent appointments, and complicated medication regimens can become overwhelming.

The Health Pals Program

Five years ago Penn's Village volunteer Patricia Harner spearheaded the concept of a Health Pals program. A trained Health Pal volunteer would accompany a Penn's Village member to a physician or procedure to help them become more proactive and confident as they navigate the healthcare system, thus encouraging them to become their own advocates. The first Health Pals training class was held in 2014; six volunteers were matched with Penn's Village members interested in trying the service.

As with all Penn's Village volunteers, extensive background checks are conducted for each Health Pal volunteer. A comprehensive training course covers procedures, role-playing, boundaries, and confidentiality rules. Also emphasized is what the Health Pal volunteer does *not* do, including making or advising any medical decisions, handling medications, nor providing hands-on care.

How the Program Works

Above all, the Health Pal volunteer is there to provide emotional support and assistance; the patient is the one in charge. Prior to each medical appointment, volunteer and patient meet to discuss needs and concerns about the appointment (including whether the volunteer should be present for any physical exam), formulate questions/observations the patient wants to share regarding symptoms, side effects, etc., and review the medication list.



Penn's Village member Elaine Nettis and volunteer Health Pal Marianne Waller discuss follow-up with Dr. Steven Brecker.

During the appointment, the Health Pal volunteer serves as a "second set of ears," taking notes, encouraging the patient to address any needs/concerns they may have forgotten, and making sure that communications are clearly understood.

After the appointment, the Health Pal volunteer and patient compare notes to ensure that both have heard the same thing, and the volunteer sends the patient a written summary. Between visits, the Health Pal volunteer may chat with the patient to provide additional emotional support and track any additional appointments.

If you would like more information about Penn's Village or the Health Pals Program, please contact Penn's Village Executive Director Jane Eley, at 215-925-7333 or info@pennsvillage.org. The website is www.pennsvillage.org.



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Philadelphia School Partnership Offers an Array of Programs and Services to Support Education in Our City

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

All families want their children to benefit from education at the best schools with the best educators. To make that happen, families need information to assist them in evaluating, selecting and accessing schools.

The Philadelphia School Partnership (PSP), a nonprofit organization, provides free school rating information to families on their GreatPhillySchools website <https://greatphillyschools.org/> and in booklets in both English and Spanish. Public district, public charter, parochial, and private schools are rated on 10-point student performance scales, overall and on specific factors. Standardized test scores are used when available. High school ratings include college matriculation.

In 2018, GreatPhillySchools rated 55 Philadelphia schools 8 or higher on the 10-point scale. Albert M. Greenfield, our local public elementary school (K-8), received an overall rating of 8, with individual factor scores of 7 for math, 8 for reading, 8 for science, 9 for attendance, and 10 for school incidents.

GreatPhillySchools provides additional information about each school's mission, points of pride, safety and culture, and accreditations and honors. (Some parents argue that schools should not be rated only on quantitative student performance scores; they recommend talking to other parents about schools to supplement the ratings.)

Annually, 130,000 people access the information resources published by the Philadelphia School Partnership. In 2018, nearly 16,000 parents and children attended the GreatPhillySchools K-8 and High School Fairs, where they connected with representatives from over 190 schools to find the one that best fit their needs.

Not just a rating service, the Philadelphia School Partnership invests in supporting and expanding quality schools of all types (kindergarten through 12th grade). PSP pools donated funds from national foundations, local foundations, businesses, and individuals to support its projects.

"PSP is the largest public charity investing in Philadelphia K-12 public schools," says David Saenz Jr., Manager of Public Affairs. "Since 2011, PSP has invested over \$75 million in 66 schools: 42 public charter; 14 public district; seven parochial; [and] three private. PSP start-up and growth grants to schools range from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million."

In 2018, PSP created over 2,000 new educational opportunities for students by supporting five schools, including the opening of new schools and the expansion of existing quality schools. PSP helped open Deep Roots Charter School, whose model places two co-teachers in each classroom, and next year will help open Hebrew Public School; both are charter school operators new to Philadelphia.

In the future, PSP wants to spend more money on career and technical education, as opposed to an exclusive focus on college prep. Saenz reports, "PSP has invested in schools and programs that offer career and technical education, industry apprenticeships, internships and training, including the Finishing Trades Institute, Cristo Rey High School, Roxborough High School, and Big Picture Vaux High School."

To see Philadelphia School Partnership's portfolio of schools go to <http://philaschoolpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/PSP-MAP.pdf>

PSP's third mission is recruiting and training principals and educators. Last year, over 170 school leaders attended PSP's K-12 Leadership Conference, where experts taught them how to develop educators' methods to increase students' achievement in math. Since 2013, PSP has provided grants to Philadelphia Pathways to Urban Leadership (PhillyPLUS) to recruit, select, and prepare nearly 100 urban school principals to lead and coach teachers. PhillyPLUS offers a two-year principal-certification program that includes intensive summer training, a year of hands-on practice in a local school, and support from a mentor principal and leadership coach.

PSP attracts new qualified teachers and provides educational opportunities for teachers who want to improve their skills through TeachPHL, a new website with access to job openings and professional development opportunities. PSP Executive Director Mark Gleason called TeachPHL "a collective endeavor to attract the best possible teachers to our city and then to keep them here, working in schools, feeling supported, feeling challenged, feeling rewarded."

For more information about Philadelphia School Partnership, visit <https://philaschoolpartnership.org/>. To help meet the educational needs of Philadelphia students, donate online or send a check to Philadelphia School Partnership, 150 S. Independence Mall West, Suite 1200, Philadelphia, PA 19106.

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215-665-8030 | www.jasonmatthew.com



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CCRA Spring Calendar—Get Out!

CCRA Board Nominations

Deadline for submissions
Tuesday, April 2
Email to centercity@centercityresidents.org
Mail to CCRA, 1900 Market Street., 8th Fl.,
Phila., PA 19103

Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival

Cherry Blossom 10K & 5K
Fairmount Park
Saturday, April 13, 7:30 am
<http://japanphilly.org/?event=cherry-blossom-10k-5k>

Sakura Sunday

Shofuso Japanese House and Garden,
Fairmount Park
Sunday, April 14, 10 am
http://japanphilly.org/?event=sakura-sunday&event_date=2019-04-14

Dining Out for Life

Thursday, April 18
Proceeds benefit AIDS/HIV organizations
<http://www.diningoutforlife.com/philadelphia>

Philadelphia Science Festival

Friday, April 26 to Saturday, May 4
Science Carnival, Benjamin Franklin Parkway
Saturday, April 27, 10 am – 4 pm
<https://www.fi.edu/psf>

Philadelphia Chinese Lantern Festival

Franklin Square, 200 N. 6th Street
Wednesday, May 1 to Monday, July 8
<http://historicphiladelphia.org/chineselanternfestival/>

Protect&Elect

Gun Violence: What Can Be Done? - Educational Forum
Philadelphia Ethical Society
1906 Rittenhouse Square
Thursday, May 2, 5 – 7 pm
Free and Open to the Public
protectelectphilly@gmail.com

Trinity Playgroup Golden Gala

Celebrating 50 Years
2200 Spruce Street
Friday, May 3, 7 – 10:30 pm
www.trinityplaygroup.org

Blue Cross Broad Street Run

Sunday, May 5, 8 am
<https://give.backonmyfeet.org/broadstreet2019>

CCRA Celebration of Center City Living

Casino Night!
Ethical Society, 1906 Rittenhouse Square
Thursday, May 9, 6 pm
www.centercityresidents.org

Fitler Square Spring Fair

23rd & Pine Streets
Mother's Day weekend
Friday, May 10, 10 am – 6 pm
Saturday, May 11, 10 am – 4 pm
www.fitlersquare.org

Pennsylvania Guild Fine Craft Fair

Rittenhouse Square
Friday, May 10, 11 am – 6 pm
Saturday, May 11, 11 am – 6 pm
Sunday, May 12, 11 am – 5 pm
<http://www.pacrafts.org/fine-craft-fairs/may-2/>

Aberdeen Dad Vail Regatta

Schuylkill River
Saturday, May 10 and Sunday, May 11
www.dadvail.org

Rittenhouse Row Spring Festival

18th & Walnut Streets
Saturday, May 18 at noon
<https://www.visitphilly.com/things-to-do/events/rittenhouse-row-spring-festival/>

Rittenhouse Square Fine Art Show

Friday, June 7, 11 – 7 pm
Saturday, June 8, 11 am – 7 pm
Sunday, June 9, 11 am – 5 pm
<http://www.rittenhousesquareart.com/>

Odunde Festival

23rd & South Streets
Sunday, June 9
<https://www.odundefestival.org/>

Little Friends Festival

Friends of Rittenhouse Square
Wednesday, June 19, 5:30 – 7:30 pm
<http://friendsofrittenhouse.org/events/all/little-friends-festival/>

Ball on the Square

Friends of Rittenhouse Square
Rittenhouse Square
Thursday, June 20, 7 pm
<http://friendsofrittenhouse.org/events/all/ball-on-the-square/>

Young Friends Ball on the Square

Friends of Rittenhouse Square
Friday, June 21, 7:30 – 11:30 pm
<http://friendsofrittenhouse.org/events/all/young-friends-ball-on-the-square/>

Bloomsday

Readings from James Joyce's *Ulysses*
Rosenbach Museum & Library
2008-10 Delancey Place
Sunday, June 16, 11 am – 8 pm
<https://rosenbach.org/events/bloomsday-2019/>

Curtis Institute of Music

Free student recitals
1726 Locust Street
<http://www.curtis.edu/performances/>

To get the latest news about events in Philadelphia, go to VisitPhilly at <https://www.visitphilly.com/>

To get the latest news about events in Center City, sign up for (IN) Center City, the e-newsletter of the Center City District: <http://www.centercityphila.org/incentercity/signup.php>

City Lit

Lives of Libraries – Complex, Evolving, Essential

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

In *The Library Book*, Susan Orlean starts by writing about the true story of the devastating 1986 fire in the Los Angeles Public Library. She details the damage caused by the fire, the long and expensive process of restoring the building and the books, and the attempts to discover what or who caused the fire. She weaves in lively stories and anecdotes about the library's patrons, managers, staffers, and architects.

Orlean broadens her scope, going on to describe the amazing range of collections housed in public libraries, the unusual types of information people search for, the changing needs of the public and how libraries are serving them, and a myriad of other interesting and entertaining tidbits, collectively illustrating the important and useful role public libraries play in the lives of ordinary people.

Editor's note: for a local account of the evolution of the Philadelphia Free Library and its wide-ranging efforts to adapt to the changing needs of its patrons, see the recent article in The Philadelphia Inquirer, published January 28: <https://www.philly.com/news/free-library-millennials-pew-20190128.html>

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Tuesday, April 2

CCRA Board Nominations due
(See Page 3 for information)

Thursday, May 9, 6 pm

CCRA Celebration of Center City Living
Casino Night!
Ethical Society, 1906 Rittenhouse Square
www.centercityresidents.org

Out & About

Bet on Us! Casino Night in CCRAville

By Barbara Halpern

**Save the Date: Thursday, May 9
at 6 p.m. at the Ethical Society,
Rittenhouse Square**

Get ready for something completely different, yet oh so familiar. This year, CCRA is hosting a fantastic Celebration of Center City Living – our annual fundraiser, but with a new twist. Not only are we offering the usual schmoozing, light drinks and heavy hors d'oeuvres, but we're also adding in a new way to play in Center City—a Casino Night, with professional dealers, casino games and better odds of winning than in Atlantic City!

Naturally, we'll still have live music and a few other theme-related happenings. Watch our weekly eNewsletter for peeks at what to anticipate. The action starts at 6 p.m. at the Ethical Society on Rittenhouse Square. Bring your friends, neighbors and relatives (leave the kids home) for a night

of gaming, excitement and prizes, right here in the 'hood.

The fun will include all your favorites: blackjack, roulette, craps, Texas hold 'em and three-card poker. Casino-style tables and professional dealers will enhance the atmosphere of an actual casino, and you'll get to shake hands with a real pit boss!

No worries if you don't know how to play: there will be lessons for all who want to learn (or a short refresher for those who want to win). Your event ticket will include lots of play money to gamble with, and you can buy some more if your partner in crime loses it all! And when you win, you'll get raffle tickets for some great prizes. Early raffle prizes from members include a 24"x 24" framed, original Peter Max painting of a heart and a painting party at Painting With A Twist, which you can win for yourself and your



Courtesy of Ace & Jack Enterprises

Enjoying yourself is no crap shoot when you come to CCRA's Celebration of Center City Living.

friends. Of course, we expect to have lots of gift certificates to local restaurants and merchants for winners to enjoy.

CCRA will gladly accept your donations or gift certificates from local stores, vendors or restaurants. Support your local vendors and/or your own business by donating an item for the raffle. To donate any items, please contact Travis at 215-546-6719.

So get ready to have some fun, eat some munchies and celebrate when you win big!