Carla Diamond and Concentrated Inspection Areas

By Kristyn Zollos, Development Specialist
Metro West Community Development Organization

Within the Metro West community, there are 16 Concentrated Inspection Areas (CIAs) that have been created to effectively ensure the upkeep of homes. Metro West staff inspect every home in four CIAs per year and send mandatory compliance letters to residents, either thanking them for their care of their homes or requesting specific repairs be made. Although results of this program are positive, reaction to receiving the program’s letters can certainly be mixed. Carla Diamond, who has lived in the Stockyard neighborhood over 20 years, was not initially pleased when she received a voluntary compliance letter from Metro West requesting that she fix the peeling paint and broken gutters on her home. But with the help of Metro West staff, Carla was able to make the necessary repairs, and now she can see the positive impact of the CIA program not only on her own home, but on her entire neighborhood.

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Clark-Fulton and Caribe Bake Shop

By Keisha Gonzalez, Economic Development Director
Metro West Community Development Organization

The Clark-Fulton neighborhood has a rich and long history of serving as “home” for newly arrived immigrants. Germans led the way in establishing this settlement pattern, calling Clark-Fulton home as early as the 1800’s. Shortly after, Czech, Slovaks, Polish, and Italian followed defining the labor force for breweries along Train Avenue and the industrial factories of the Flats.

These European immigrants prospered and moved farther south and west and to the suburbs by the 1960’s and 70’s. Amidst this transition Clark-Fulton saw a third and largest wave of Puerto Rican migrants. After World War II, single unmarried Puerto Rican men were recruited to work in the factories and greenhouses of Northeast Ohio. Many came to Cleveland in pursuit of manufacturing jobs. A majority initially saw the move as temporary, but many eventually called for friends and family to join them in Cleveland and set down roots.

Today, Clark-Fulton is the center of the most densely and contiguously populated area of Hispanics/Latinos in the State of Ohio. Of the 40,000 Hispanic/Latinos living in Cleveland, 24,000 live in a contiguous area on the near west and south side. Clark-Fulton has a 44% population of Hispanic/Latino and more than 75% of that ethnic group is of Puerto Rican descent.

The neighborhood is full of Hispanic/Latino-owned small businesses. Just off of Clark Avenue at 2906 Fulton Road is Caribe Bake Shop, the oldest Latino owned bakery in the city of Cleveland. Having recently celebrated the ribbon cutting of its brand new facility, Caribe reflects on its history and recently demolished mustard colored shack of a building that started it all.

Opened in 1962 by Francisco “Pancho” Morales, Caribe Bake Shop brought a sense of nostalgia and comfort to the waves of Puerto Rican migrants who were settling into the Clark-Fulton neighborhood. Prior to the old building being fully occupied by Caribe Bake Shop, the space was shared with Virtud Novelty (still located at 4305 Clark Ave.) and another business lost to time. Residents recall that combined, all three shops provided goods that allowed them to nest in their new environment.

Facing business challenges, Pancho passed ownership of the bakery to his son Angel...
her home. When asked her reaction to receiving the letter, Carla shared, “I was like, ‘Oh, no. How am I going to pay for this? Who will I hire?’ After getting in touch with Metro West, Carla fixed her gutters then spoke to her neighbor who recommended a family member and fellow community member who has a business to repaint her home. “Once I found someone and they started the process, I felt so good. I was tired of looking at my house. Seeing it get done, I realized how much [the disrepair] affects you,” Carla said.

Carla can now see the positive impact of the CIA program not only on her own home, but on her entire neighborhood as other residents have made improvements as a result of the letters. Also inspired by Carla’s repairs, her next door neighbor, Emma Jean Williamson, plans to hire the same local painter to redo the exterior of her home next spring. Adding to the improvements of Carla’s neighborhood are a freshly paved street and new garbage cans, which she notices have resulted in less trash along the road. In addition to the improvements, Emma Jean is planning to hire the same local painter to redo the exterior of her home next spring.

For more than 20 years, the two commercial buildings located on the corner of Fulton Road and Arnold Court stood vacant, and eventually fell into disrepair and became eyesores. Despite their architectural significance, renovation for these structures was cost prohibitive and after several incidents of arson, they ultimately were slated for demolition. After the site was cleared, many area residents called our office to express their appreciation, however they also inquired about what will become of these two parcels.

After receiving numerous suggestions, and considering the needs of the community, our office decided to create a visually distinctive place that would add to the neighborhood’s identity and character. Working collaboratively with the Metro West Community Development Organization and the neighboring Cleveland Public Library Fulton Branch, we decided a “reading garden”, could be utilized by library patrons and residents alike. Moreover, this project would create a much-needed pocket park with many new trees and a place where anyone could come and rest, gather with others, and enjoy their community.

In 2014, working with Metro West’s Green Space Manager, Sasha Ottoson-Deal, we were awarded a Neighborhood Placemaking Grant, one of only three projects selected throughout the city of Cleveland. The Reading Garden project received $15,000 in Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding, which was primarily utilized for soil remediation, the installation of a brick pathway, and landscaping of the site. The benches and stamped concrete wall were generously donated by Terrace Construction and the park would also be chosen as a site for the Reading Garden project.

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Our office is proud to have helped envision and carry out this project, an effort which transforms a once forgotten space and will build community.

A special thank you goes out to a number of residents that helped with this project as well as to our partners at Court Community Service, all of whom contributed the work needed to see this project completed. In addition, the staff at Cleveland Public Library’s Fulton Branch have agreed to maintain the lot and treat it as a natural extension of our neighborhood Library.

Our office is proud to have helped envision and carry out this project, an effort which transforms a once forgotten space and will help build community. The intention of the Neighborhood Placemaking Grant program was to fund projects that seek to create “great little places in our City’s neighborhoods” and foster a better sense of community. We hope this little corner lot has done just that, and the next time you pass, we hope you will stop and pay a visit.

Do you have neighborhood safety concerns?
Speak directly with your First and Second District Police Commanders McCartney and Stachow.

THE FIRST DISTRICT
Community Relations
FIRST THURSDAY of each month,
7:00 pm - St. Ignatius of Antioch Church,
10205 Lorain Avenue.

THE SECOND DISTRICT
Community Relations
SECOND TUESDAY of each month,
7:00 pm - Applewood Centers, 3518 W. 25th St.
(In the gymnasium that fronts onto Daisy Avenue)
Twenty-two residents of Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority’s (CMHA) Scranton Castle, Crestview and Manhattan Tower Apartments celebrated their new computer and Internet skills – and new home computer systems – at a crowded graduation ceremony in the Scranton Castle Community Room on October 19th. The graduates represented the first two classes of West Side CMHA participants in basic computer and Internet training, offered through a partnership between Ward 14’s Connect Your Community Center (CYCC) and CMHA’s “Connect Home” program. Each graduate received a diploma certifying his or her new skills along with a free, refurbished desktop computer system, donated to the CYC Center by CMHA’s Information Technology Department.

Several dozen neighbors packed into the Community Room for the ceremony, along with CYCC Executive Director Jeffery Patterson and members of his staff, Ward 14 Councilman Brian Cummins, and representatives of the CYC Center and its parent organization, the Asbury Senior Computer Community Center (ASC3). Bill Callahan of the CYC Center, lead trainer Richard Moseley and Center volunteer Tracy Bucher spoke briefly about the training the graduates had received and urged other neighbors to sign up for the next round of classes.

Director Patterson, Councilman Cummins and ASC3 Executive Director Wanda Davis each addressed the gathering about the urgency of closing Cleveland’s digital divide, before formally presenting their diplomas and congratulations.

The Connect Your Community Center, located in the Brooklyn Center Plaza at Pearl and Archwood, has offered free basic computer training and Internet connection assistance to Ward 14 residents and other West Siders since 2014. Councilman Cummins has supported the Center with Ward 14 funding since its inception with an interest to increase computer literacy in the surrounding neighborhoods. Neighbors interested in taking classes can call the Center’s voicemail at 216-548-8651, or check the website at www.cyccenter.blogspot.com/ for schedule information.

Alleyway Responsibility

By Kris Harsh, Housing Director
Metro West Community Development Organization

Per ordinance 375.08, Rear Yards Abutting Alleys, it states: where the rear yard abuts and is parallel to an alley, one-half (1/2) the width of such alley may be assumed to be a portion of such rear yard.

The City of Cleveland is not responsible for the maintenance of our alleys, with the exception of the pavement surface and lighting. It is in fact the responsibility of home-owners to ensure maintenance of their property to the halfway point in the alley behind their home.

This area includes the portion that extends past your fence line or garage, should you have one, and additionally past your grass/tree line. This means that often residents will need to walk behind their fences to access and trim vegetation. Trees should have branches trimmed back far enough to allow easy passage of cars, and bushes, weeds and other vegetation should be neatly maintained.

If you are for any reason physically unable to maintain your portion of the alley, and you are unable to secure help in doing so, please contact the Metro West’s Office so that we can work out a way to assist you.

Clean alleys are a vital part of a safe and secure community.
 Councilman Cummins’ office and Metro West works together with Court Community Service and the City to conduct various alley clean-ups throughout the year, as well as reporting illegal dumping and pavement repair needs. Do your part, help us maintain our alleys!

Marilyn Weiczorek’s Model Block

By Kristin Zulka, Development Specialist
Metro West Community Development Organization

Marilyn Weiczorek, a senior resident of the Jones Home Historic District (Jones Home), moved into her home with her parents in 1944 when she was just five years old. Through the years, Marilyn has taken great care of keeping up her residence, but with a limited income there were some improvements she had not considered, such as replacing her time-worn roof. This year, thanks to a community-wide effort between the neighbor who saw Marilyn’s need and informed her of the program, funds from the City of Cleveland’s Model Block program, the generous services of Absolute Roofing and support from Metro West Community Development Office, a new roof was installed on her home for a small fraction of the approximate $11,000 cost.

While the Model Block program is a city-wide initiative, participation within the Metro West community was available to Jones Home owner-occupants with an urgent need of exterior improvements to the roof, windows, porch, painting or siding of their homes. Through the program, residents like Marilyn can spend up to $4,000 on an exterior renovation and the city provides an additional $8,000 for the project. Metro West supported the program by advertising the opportunity to community members and by encouraging the residents most in need of these services to participate. Metro West is also the only community development corporation fronting the city’s portion of the funding to contractors, as it can take months for the funds to be reimbursed. Marilyn is one of the first of 10 homeowners that will receive Model Block funding in the Jones Home Historic District. Two other residents have already received new roofs and seven other homes are in the process of repair. In total, the Model Block program is an $80,000 investment into the neighborhood. This program not only positively impacts the residents receiving the services but our community as a whole, as neighborhoods are transformed and neighbors are inspired by the positive change happening around them.

Clark-Fulton and Caribe Continued

in hopes that he could revive the bakery. In 1999, after working a few years at Caribe, Luis Burgos (a native of Corozal, Puerto Rico, and warmly known as Carlito) took on the ownership of the bakery. Armed with a vision to expand the variety of traditional Puerto Rican food, Carlito and his wife Sandra (co-owner and manager) revolutionized the concept of a Latino bakery in the city of Cleveland.

Carlito brought a long entrepreneurial history to Caribe Bake Shop, allowing him to put into place best practices for creating an experiential visit for his patrons. After sixteen years of operating inside of the iconic mustard colored shack, Caribe has opened its doors to its brand new facility, presenting its patrons with a mastery of nostalgia for “La Isla De Encanto” (Puerto Rico – island of enchantment or love).

Upon entering the bakery you are welcomed by the warm rich scent of freshly baked sweet bread and the constant crunching sound of water bread being sliced for sandwiches. A lively staff of long standing employees chat with the regulars, while showing newbies a vast array of dishes available at the hot prepared-food-bar. The new facility doubles the business’s capacity and provides patrons with a spacious sitting room. A Party Center is in the works as part of a phase II plan that has already gained community approval.

Next time that you are in the market for pastries, cakes and cookies, paired with Latin street food, swing by Caribe Bake Shop and discover a little piece of the Caribbean.

Winter Snow Removal Policy

Snow and Ice Control

During a snow and ice event, service is provided to the primary main/secondary thoroughfares throughout the City. Service is provided until the primaries are fair but passable, allowing for service to the residential streets as soon as possible.

As snow plow drivers report conditions are fair and passable and supervisors verify conditions, trucks are ordered into residential streets. The goal is to plow all streets within 24 to 72 hours after the event ends, depending on the actual amount of snowfall. Residents that normally park on streets should find off-street parking in advance of a significant snow event and before snow bans are enforced so that plows can service curb-to-curb. This will not only keep cars from being buried in plowed snow but will keep streets passable for emergency vehicles.

For more information or to report hazardous snow conditions on your street, call 664-2510.
By Jo Steigerwald, Development Officer
Seeds of Literacy

When we think of education, we usually think of children learning the basic foundations of math, reading, science, and social studies in school. They graduate from high school and go onto college or jobs and the wider world. But that picture leaves out a whole group of people: adults with low literacy levels.

Cleveland has an adult literacy crisis. According to a study from the Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development at Case Western Reserve University, 66% of Cleveland residents are considered to be functionally illiterate. That’s two out of three residents who have reading or math skills at or below a 4th grade level.

Not all neighborhoods have the same literacy levels. According to the same study, a high percentage of these residents have low literacy levels: Clark-Fulton – 72%; Stockyards – 70%; Tremont – 64%; Cudell – 63%; and, Brooklyn Centre – 61%

With low literacy levels, adults are limited to understanding short, simple texts and one-step math problems at best. They struggle with simple tasks most of us take for granted – reading job postings, instructions on medicine bottles or nutrition information on food packages. Their handicaps even keep them from helping their kids with homework or deciphering a bus schedule.

This is because literacy means not only the ability to read, but the ability to read well, to process information and solve problems. Adult literacy helps people overcome poverty. It is the first step to economic self-sufficiency, better health, and the academic success of children.

Economic Impact: According to a ten-year longitudinal study of adults by the National Institute for Literacy, literacy proficiency affects both the level of initial earnings as well as earnings growth.

Health Impact: Adults with low literacy often experience more medication errors, longer hospital stays, healthcare costs that are four times higher, and increased mortality rates.

Generational Impact: A National Institute of Health study of 3,000 families showed that a mother’s reading level is the greatest determinant of her children’s academic success, outpacing family income and neighborhood.

Adult students, and the need for improved adult literacy, need our attention and efforts because all people deserve the opportunity not just to survive, but to flourish.

Seeds of Literacy has been at the front of Cleveland’s adult literacy crisis for nearly twenty years. Its year-round program is FREE to students, based on customized instruction for each student and features one-to-one tutoring in basic education and GED preparation. Each year, over 200 volunteer tutors help nearly 1,000 students improve their knowledge and their lives. Seeds has won local, regional, and national recognition, and is the only nationally accredited literacy program in Ohio.

Seeds is located at 3104 W. 25th Street, at the corner of W. 25th and Clark Avenue. Support of Seeds through community funders and Councilman Cummins, and the mayor has enabled the organization to expand services, as well as open an East side location.

For more information about classes – for both students and tutors – call 216-661-7950 or visit seedsofliteracy.org.

EDITOR’S NOTE: In addition to Seeds of Literacy’s programs, the Ward 14 Council office also supports the May Dugan Center’s Education & Resource Center (ERC), which was started in 2010. The ERC is located at 4115 Bridge Avenue and serves as another hub for literacy training, where computers, coaches and education come together to encourage learning, community education and skills building. In addition to providing GED and ESL, other programming has evolved to meet the growing needs for residents and local employers.

The Community Education Classes offer a full-spectrum of adult learning options. Resources are available in the day and evening. Please call 216-631-5800 ext. 122, or visit www.maydugancenter.org for information on classes, registration and other learning opportunities.