

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

MOSAIC

Winter/Spring 2019



Is “stem cell” therapy right for your joint pain?

“Stem cell” therapy has become popular for people with arthritis and other degenerative joint conditions. Clinics offering the treatment seem to have popped up overnight. And you probably know someone who has had the treatment, with or without success.



Nicolas S. Piuze, MD

Stem cells in your body can multiply and become different types of cells, like cartilage. There are multiple sources of stem cells, including your own bone marrow and fat.

The thinking is that if stem cells were to be injected into an arthritic knee joint, for example, they will start making more cartilage, reversing the joint damage. But is it true?

Probably not, says Nicolas S. Piuze, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon and researcher at Cleveland Clinic.

“‘Stem cell’ therapies in orthopaedics are mostly unproven by medical research,” he says. “Most of the claims are based on anecdotal reports of patient satisfaction, not clinical outcomes or published data.”

While “stem cell” is the buzz phrase, the accurate and more inclusive term is cellular therapies or orthobiologics. Cleveland Clinic physicians offer cellular therapies as part of a treatment plan, integrating proper nutrition, health and weight management, inflammation and pain control, and physical therapy and rehabilitation.

Orthobiologics may include platelet rich plasma (PRP), bone marrow concentrate (BMC) and placental tissue matrix (PTM) injections. PRP and PTM do not contain stem cells but still could help reduce pain and improve function.

“The term ‘stem cell’ is often widely and inappropriately overused in orthopaedics to include all kinds of treatment with uncharacterized, minimally manipulated cells, and even therapies that do not contain stem cells at all,” says Dr. Piuze.

In short, be suspicious of advertised “stem cell” injections or “miracle cures,” he says. Rather, seek a doctor that can address your pain, function, strength and stability while helping you return to the activities you love.

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Interested in advertising in University Heights Mosaic Magazine?

Make sure to schedule your advertisement for the Summer 2019 issue. Call Marilyn Evans at (216) 342-5220 for more information.

University Heights Mosaic Magazine is a publication of the City of University Heights. We are looking for interesting University Heights people and places to profile in upcoming issues. If you have any story ideas, please share them with us by contacting Mike Cook at mcook@universityheights.com.



Welcome to “University Heights Mosaic” – your new city magazine

Our city celebrates diversity. The mosaic of University Heights is composed of educational and religious institutions, walkable neighborhoods, local eateries, shopping, and nearby amenities, all of which offer residents the opportunity to build a life by design, find their forever homes, and plant roots.

Each issue of Mosaic will showcase the people and places that make our city such a great place to live, work and raise a family. In our premiere issue, you will learn about our Community Reinvestment Area designation, and how that can help you invest in your home and save on your property taxes.

This issue will also include our Business Directory, and plans for our new logo. We will take a sneak peak at the Beautiful Homes winners. You will also meet our new Fire Chief, visit Rozita’s Fashion Boutique and Lox, Stock, and Brisket, and learn who won the “Name That Chicken” contest.

Your city magazine will be mailed to every single household and business in our city three times in 2019. This will be another way we will spread the good news about what’s going on in University Heights.

For decades we were known as The City of Homes, then The City of Beautiful Homes. As you look around our city today, you will see why University Heights is So Much More than Home.

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Mayor of University Heights

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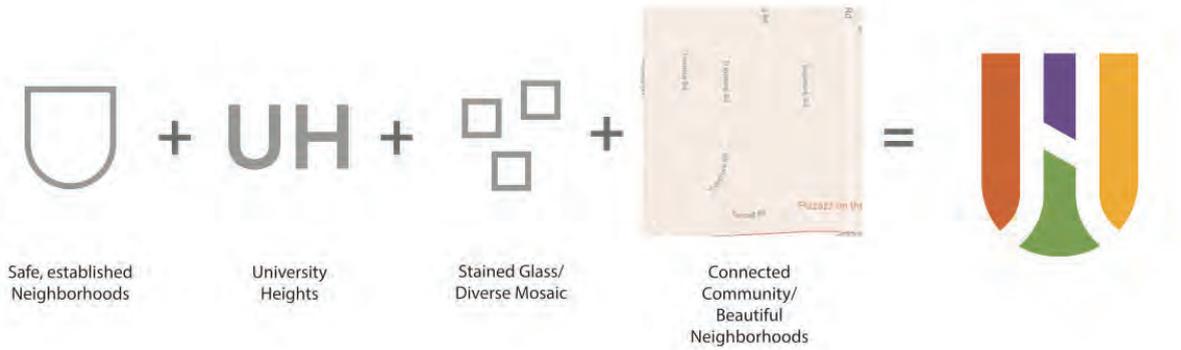
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Implementation of new city logo continues

The old University Heights city logo is as dead as, well, a door knocker. Long live the new logo, a bright representation of the diverse mosaic of the people who live, work and play in University Heights. The shield shape is symbolic for the safe and established neighborhoods. The shield can be read as “U” while the “roads” running through the shield form the “H.”

If the new logo looks familiar, it’s because it’s pulled straight from the map of University Heights. Fenwick, Tyndall and Saybrook form the shape of the U, while the H is formed by Traymore and Channing roads, with University Boulevard providing the crossbar in the H.

Overall, the color palette is bright, friendly and approachable, without being overly playful. The colors complement each other, and provide a creative way to communicate diversity in the community.

“University Heights will always be ‘the City of Beautiful Homes,’” Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan said. “But University Heights is so much more than home. Our new logo and branding reflect this.”

The new city logo was formally approved by City Council at its Oct. 15 meeting. Implementation of the new branding started immediately thereafter. The city website was redesigned, along with social media sites. The Service Department is looking sharp with the logo on their new winter hats. City employees have new business cards and stationary.

This spring, new signs and banners will begin going up across the city.

“Signage will play a big role in the rebranding process,” Brennan said. “It will impact how people get around University Heights, and identify important destinations and districts. Additionally, the signs



Mockup of proposed sign at newly renamed Walter Stinson Community Park.

and banners will be part of our community’s aesthetic and will be used as a tool for beautification and attraction.”

“We wanted our new logo to represent many things. We wanted it to be colorful, to represent a diverse mosaic. We wanted the logo to represent safe, established neighborhoods,” Brennan explained. “Once we saw how we could work the map into the logo, it all came together.”

A mayoral steering committee worked for months with consultants from Guide Studio on the city’s new logo and branding.

Brennan said Guide Studio outlined several objectives for a new city logo and brand, including that it:

- Highlight the quality of life in University Heights
- Differentiate the city from surrounding communities
- Demonstrate the city is going somewhere
- Elevate perception and awareness
- Improve and enhance communication with residents and businesses

“The process was thorough. I’m pleased we met all of our objectives,



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HEIGHTS

and we are all thrilled with the result,” Brennan said.

The process began with a review of the city’s current brand and marketing materials, followed by a survey sent to city stakeholders and leaders. From there, tours of University Heights were conducted, and workshops began. Data and insights were combined into a Brand Strategy Platform, which included identification of audiences and a positioning statement.

New logo coffee mugs are currently on sale at City Hall for \$10. Frisbees and water bottles will be distributed this summer at the Summer Concert Series.

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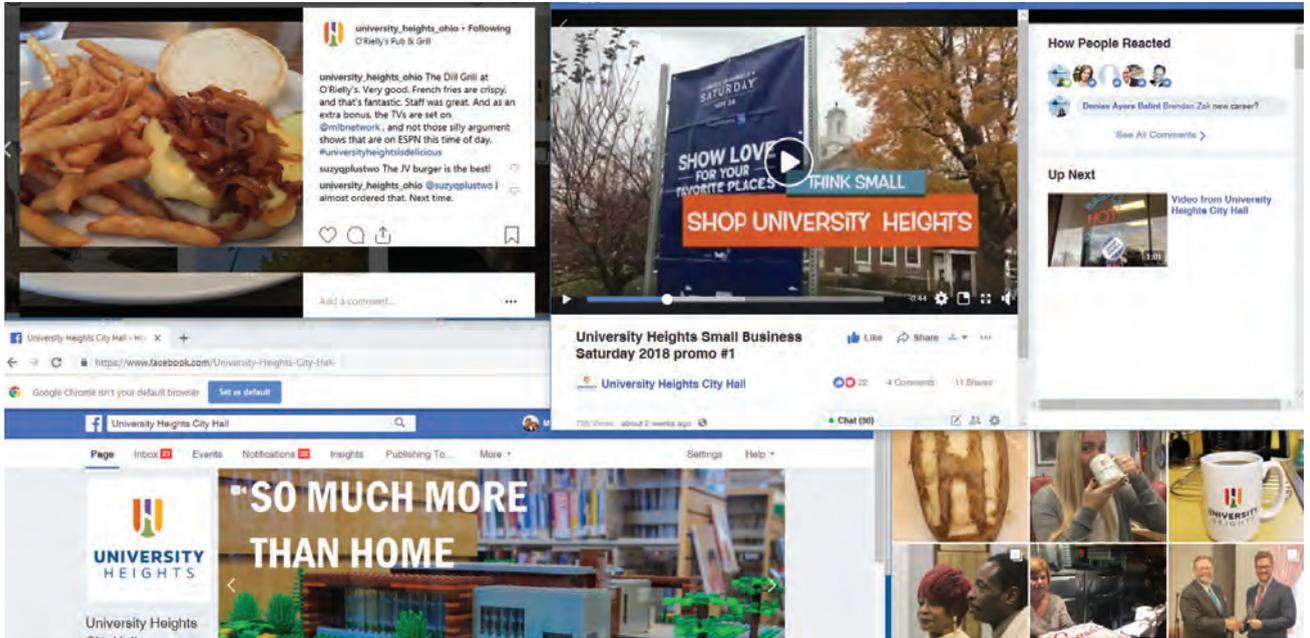
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University Heights is very social

University Heights is becoming more social. The City recently added an Instagram account to go along with its Facebook page. Content is produced on an almost daily basis, and much of it has a sense of fun.

“We want residents to pay attention to what we’re saying on social media,” Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan explained. “And to get their attention, we try to create content that is entertaining.”

The more mundane the announcement, the more fun City Hall tries to have with the social media post. For example, there’s the pool video that started it all.

Communications and Civic Engagement Coordinator Mike Cook explains, “Last August, nobody knew what the revised hours were for the city pool on Labor Day weekend. We could have posted a simple boring announcement on Facebook, but most people would have missed it.”

So, the University Heights City Hall Players were born. “The Mayor and I grabbed all the staffers we could find, dragged them into his office and filmed a skit,” Cook said. “The message was that it’s still summer, stop acting like it’s fall already, put down your pumpkin spice lattes and go swimming instead.”

Over 1,200 people watched the video.

“That’s all the encouragement we needed,” Brennan said.

Next up was a video from Councilwoman Pam Cameron announcing that University Heights City Hall would be open on Columbus Day. Cameron called out other local governments by name, jokingly dismissing them as “slackers” for being closed.

Three videos were produced to promote the University Heights Civic Awards, starring local Spanish teacher/comedian/emcee Maggie McPhee. “Small Business Saturday” was hyped with two promos styled after Hollywood movie previews. A Home Shopping Network parody helped sell University Heights coffee mugs and winter caps before Christmas. And a new holiday tradition was started when Brennan read, “The Night Before Christmas,” to the City Hall interns.

The City also has fun with the Instagram account. Creative photo interpretations of the new city logo are all over the page – the logo carved into a potato, made from snow, and designed with sprinkles on a cookie.

Most Instagram sites are oversaturated with selfies and photographs of food. While the University Heights doesn’t include a lot of selfies, it does embrace the Instagram tradition of food pictures. “Any time we go out to lunch, or order Geraci’s pizza for carry out, a picture ends up on Instagram,” Cook said. “On a certain level, I think we’ve created a parody of Instagram accounts.”

Brennan said the social media accounts run by the Cleveland Indians were a source of inspiration to City Hall. “The team’s sites have a huge following, not just because of the popularity of the Cleveland Indians, but because the sites are well done and funny,” Brennan said. “We’re trying to create something similar in University Heights.”

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- Facebook at “University Heights City Hall”
- Instagram at “university_heights_ohio”



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The Beautiful Homes Commission recently selected the 2019 Beautiful Homes winners. Awards will be given to over 40 homes categories such as Curb Appeal, Best Front Door, and Best Kept Secret.

The ceremony will take place on March 11th at 7 p.m. at the Donahue Auditorium on the campus of John Carroll University.



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Nominee for best curb appeal



Nominee for best front door



Nominee for best front door



Nominee for best kept secret

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JCU alumnus enjoys 'Meet the Press' experience

Each year, a graduating JCU senior is selected to serve a nine-month term as the NBC/JCU "Meet the Press" Fellow, in honor of Tim Russert, class of 1972. This month, Ryan Brown '18, the current NBC/JCU "Meet the Press" Fellow, reflected on his first few months working at the program.

"When I walked into the NBC News Washington, D.C., Bureau last September, I couldn't help but think, 'How did I get so lucky?'" It was my first day as the NBC/JCU "Meet the Press" Fellow and I was overcome with nervousness, gratitude, and excitement, all at the same time.

"Being the NBC/JCU Fellow means you are tasked with many different responsibilities throughout the week. The main jobs are research for the producers, helping produce one of the panel segments, and green room manager on Sunday mornings. These jobs, although challenging, have offered so many opportunities to learn what it takes to put on not just any TV show, but the longest-running television program in history. My time at John Carroll, in many ways, prepared me for all of these tasks. Whether it was working late on The Carroll News, or walking families around campus as a tour guide, I can honestly say I would not be able to do this job if not for my time at JCU.

"My life the past few months has been full of 'pinch me' moments. My desk is just a few feet away from Chuck Todd's office, and every time I talk about sports or politics with him is a 'pinch me' moment. Walking acclaimed columnist and ex-Ronald Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan to the green room early Sunday morning is a 'pinch me' moment. Honestly, every time I walk into the newsroom of 'Meet the Press' is a 'pinch me' moment.

"One of my favorite, smaller tasks as a fellow is the last



Ryan Brown and "Meet the Press" host Chuck Todd.

thing I do on Saturday nights, the night before the show is taped. It's a simple task, really. All I have to do is deliver some folders to the studio right before I leave for the day. It's my favorite thing because often times when I walk onto the set late Saturday night, there is no one else there, the set is dark, all of the seats are empty, and it's shockingly quiet.

"It is the true definition of calm before the storm, because by 6 a.m. the next day the set will be bustling with people and action. Chuck will be in his chair going over some last minute details of the show, the executive producer will be off to the side making last minute decisions with the people in the control room, the stage manager and other behind-the-scenes folks will be running around making sure the cameras are all in the right spot, along with a million other things that have to get done before we tape live at 9 a.m. It is in those crazy last few hours and minutes that, when I get a minute, I stand back and can't help but think again to myself, 'how did I get so lucky?'"

University Heights kids team up to 'Name That Chicken'

Thanks to Clare and Jackson, the University Heights chicken has a name.

Of all the new University Heights logo swag items for sale at City Hall, the most popular by far is the plush chicken. Inspired by the new local ordinance allowing residents to keep chickens, the chicken proudly models the new city logo on his dark blue T-shirt. In a few short months, the chicken has become the unofficial city mascot.

However, the chicken needed a name. Thus, city officials invited local kids to 'Name That Chicken.'

"There were many proposed names submitted," Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan explained at a recent City Council meeting. "Names like Patty, Tender, Nugget, Curry, Piccata, Cordon Bleu, Extra Crispy, Marsala and Lincoln Park – these delectable names were all submitted by adults and thankfully were not valid entries in the contest, as we accepted entries only on behalf of children."

There is one winning name, but two winning entrants, as two children nearly simultaneously submitted the winning name.

Thanks to Clare Dolan (age 13) and Jackson Lovato (age 9), the University Heights chicken will be named "Cooper."



Clare Dolan and Jackson Lovato are the winners of the Name That Chicken contest. The winners are pictured with University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan

Clare and Jackson were presented with their very own swag bag, including their very own Cooper.

Cooper the Chicken toys are on sale at University Heights City Hall during regular business hours for \$10.

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Small Business SPOTLIGHT

Rozita's Fashion Boutique brings fashionable modest clothing to University Heights

By Diane DiPiero Rodio

Rozita Weiss and her daughter-in-law Esti Weiss want to make it enjoyable and convenient to shop for modest clothing. Their new store, Rozita's Fashion Boutique, located at 2243 Warrensville Center Road, brings boutique shopping to women who crave quality, fashionable clothing within reach.

"Usually, people have to order clothes online or they go to New York twice a year to shop for modest clothing," Rozita says. "That gets very expensive. We knew there was a demand for a store like this."

"We wanted clothing to be more accessible and reasonably priced," Esti adds.

While the shop fills a void for Orthodox Jewish shoppers, the offerings at Rozita's are meant for anyone seeking modest clothing with flair. "Sometimes you just need a special occasion dress," Esti says. In addition to dresses, Rozita's carries skirts, tops and accessories.

Rozita's was temporarily located inside Chocolate Emporium while the permanent space was being renovated. Now settled into the spot previously occupied by Heights Frame and Art, Rozita's is designed to be open and inviting for shoppers. Wide spaces between clothing racks mean customers can browse with ease. Jewelry and other accessories hang neatly on display racks near the cash register. Fitting rooms are tucked away to allow privacy.



Rozita Weiss, right, with her daughter in-law Esti Weiss and granddaughter Hadassah.

"It's a nice environment," Rozita notes. "It's organized and clean, and not cramped."

Rozita says that the response to the permanent store location has been extremely positive. "Even if they don't buy something, customers will say, 'We're so happy that you opened up this store.' They say that the clothes are beautiful, affordable and of good quality." And that makes the owners happy because those are the attributes they look for in every item of clothing they purchase.

"It's a lot of work," Rozita says of their shopping trips to New York. "We want to try everything on to make sure it's not itchy or uncomfortable. We want to sell clothing that makes customers happy to be wearing it, without breaking the bank." Most of the clothing at

Rozita's is made in the United States, Israel and Canada. The clothing companies with whom the owners have created relationships "take pride in their work," Esti says. "You can ship something back if you're not happy. The clothes shouldn't be falling apart."

Rozita and Esti will make two large shopping trips a year to purchase clothing for upcoming seasons. They'll also be ordering new items along the way. "Every week, we'll have something new," Rozita says.

Rozita's Fashion Boutique is on Facebook and Instagram.

Diane DiPiero Rodio is a freelance writer, editor, and blogger. She is also a copywriter at The Adcom Group.



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University Heights residents offered tax incentive to improve their homes

Regardless of a new city slogan, University Heights will always be known as “the City of Beautiful Homes.”

In an effort to help homeowners invest in their homes and businessowners in their storefronts, the City of University Heights applied for and was awarded a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA). A CRA is a designated area where qualified investment in your home or business can result in a tax savings.

For example, if a homeowner spends over \$25,000 putting an addition on their house, 100% of the increase in property taxes because of the addition are removed, or abated, for 15 years. “This status gives us another tool to promote economic development,” Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan said. “It will encourage reinvestment in current housing stock, and promote new construction in the City.”

“The City has high-quality, desirable housing stock. This tax incentive encourages current residents and prospective residents to design and invest in their home to make it their own and meet the needs of their family” said Patrick Grogan-Myers, Housing & Community Development Director for the City.

“This will allow us to maintain our beautiful homes, and even make them more beautiful.”

All of University Heights has been designated as a CRA, except for University Square. The University Square parcels will be addressed separately for redevelopment.

“If a homeowner wants to expand and improve their home, they’ll receive a tax abatement on the increased value of their home,” Brennan explained. “Business owners are being offered the same incentive.”

The CRA is a direct incentive tax exemption program benefiting property owners who renovate existing, or construct new, buildings. This program permits municipalities or counties to designate areas as a CRA where investment has been discouraged, to encourage revitalization of the existing housing stock and the development of new structures.

Councilwoman Michele Weiss introduced legislation last year, and Grogan-Myers authored the successful housing survey and application to the State Department of Development. The City applied to the Ohio Development Services Agency and was notified recently that University Heights was granted the status as a Community Reinvestment Area.

Applications for the program may be made through



Friedman



Socher



Weiss

the Building Department following a final inspection of construction projects. More information about the CRA, eligible projects, amount of investment and tax abatement terms, and the application are available on the City’s website and at the Building Department.

Weiss says the inspiration for the legislation came from city residents. “So many residents love living in University Heights, but they said they could benefit from a financial incentive,” Weiss said.

“The CRA is our response to the concerns of residents,” Weiss said. “Our message is this – We hear you. We value you. Let this be your forever home.”

Brennan said the CRA designation will help increase median housing value in University Heights and slow population loss. “This is a tax decrease for homeowners who invest in their property,” Brennan said. “Live in the home you always wanted, right here in University Heights.”

More than 80 percent of University Heights homes were built before 1960. “The need for enhanced maintenance is apparent,” Brennan said. “While the vast majority of houses are in good condition and well maintained, there are houses that show signs of deferred maintenance and declining condition.”

“In order to encourage residents to stay, and to encourage others to move into the City, we needed an attractive offering,” Weiss said.

Under the CRA, University Heights homeowners can receive up to 100% abatement on improvements made to their home on the value added by the improvement.

For example, if a home has a taxable value of \$150,000, and the homeowner adds improvements that increase its value to \$200,000, they would receive 100% abatement on the \$50,000 difference.

For improvements valuing over \$25,000, the tax abatement is for 15 years. Improvements valued at less than \$25,000 will receive a 10-year abatement.

Continues on page 18

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Continues from page 16

"People are so excited," Weiss said. "They've told me they considered leaving, but now they've reconsidered and they're staying in University Heights."

Sharon Friedman, a native of University Heights and a real estate agent with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices, is a fan of the CRA. "University Heights has always been a viable inner ring suburb," Friedman said, "and the new CRA only will make living here more desirable."

Friedman said excellent City services is a selling point for University Heights, and the new tax abatement makes the City even more attractive. "For improvements and additions to be tax abated for the ten or fifteen years... this will be a boon for residents," Friedman said. "It will be an investment for the next generation!"

Shoshana Socher, a team leader with Keller Williams Realty of Greater Cleveland agreed, saying the strong real estate market in University Heights will only im-

prove with the Community Reinvestment Area designation. "The CRA will encourage residents to continually improve their properties, and will contribute to overall economic growth, and an increase in value in the area," Socher said. "We anticipate this will make our City that much more attractive to incoming home buyers."

Even residents who do not take advantage of the tax abatement could benefit, Brennan explained. "When it comes time to sell your home, potential buyers will know that they can add on to these homes and receive a tax abatement," Brennan said. "As a result of the CRA, homes in University Heights will become more desirable and more valuable."

Brennan said credit for the CRA designation belongs to Weiss and Grogan-Myers. "Michele wrote the legislation, and Patrick took care of the proposal to the state," Brennan explained. "Without their strong work, this CRA doesn't happen for University Heights. We owe them a debt of gratitude."



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The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God 2018



Lincoln Park at Lox, Stock, and Brisket lives up to the hype, and then some

A few weeks after we started dating, Michael realized he'd first met me years earlier through my review of Mallorca restaurant in downtown Cleveland. I interned at Northern Ohio Live magazine in the summer between my junior and senior year at Case, and reviewing for its restaurant guide was a great way to meet my new city, not to mention a welcome break from eating instant noodle packets in my dorm room, with box fans rattling in the windows.

Michael read the review at a doctor's office. He hadn't eaten at Mallorca in some time, and wanted to be sure it was as great as he remembered. My review reassured him. As it happens, we met. And as it happens, dining out is one of our favorite pastimes.

Which brings us to this new column, and a cold, snowy Saturday afternoon in January when we walked a few blocks over to Lox, Stock, and Brisket, located next to K's for Men.

I'd heard legends about the Lincoln Park sandwich, its buttermilk chicken schnitzel, the slaw, the aioli just so, even the roll.

By the time we stamped the snow from our boots and shook out coats and hats, I'd met owner Anthony Zapola and our order was in: Lincoln Park sandwich, matzo ball soup, potato salad, and the Uptown; a LS&B take on the patty melt with Cleveland cheddar, grilled onion, and secret sauce on sourdough bread. And because it was Saturday with Snowzilla 2019 bearing down, we fortified with a Victory Storm King for me and a Thirsty Dog Citra Dog for him.

I have a weakness for matzo ball soup. I will eat it wherever and whenever, and have even tried to concoct my own veggie version. After our snowy walk,



LS&B's matzo ball soup was an elixir. A velvety matzo offered on tender veggies, all in an inviting broth with the right balance of savor and salt. Michael's Uptown was tall and juicy, enclosed in buttery bookends of grilled sourdough.

The space is modern and spare, yet not deafeningly loud as such places can be. It's a neighborhood place through and through, with comfortable seating, exposed brick, and an eye-catching chandelier of chain-link strung with bulbs. By the time we finished our lunches, we were planning our return to try their breakfast.

Oh. I almost forgot. The Lincoln Park?

Reader, I would marry it.

Gina Ventre is a clinical research editor at the Cleveland Clinic Heart and Vascular Institute. She has an MFA in creative writing from The Ohio State University and is currently working on fiction and nonfiction projects. And she's the First Lady of University Heights (even though she won't let anyone call her by that title).

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Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools update

What's happening in your neighborhood schools

By Cathan Cavanaugh

Gearity Fifth Graders Lead Yoga Classes

"You can't turn down a determined fifth grader full of ideas." That's what Dr. Fiona Connor, physical education teacher at Gearity Professional Development School, had to say about giving up her lunch periods twice a week to help fifth-grader Abigail Burkle lead 30-minute yoga classes for fourth graders.

Abigail and her classmate Miriam Haufe lead the sessions in the gym during recess. They use videos projected on a screen to demonstrate the physical techniques and model all the moves themselves.

Student Dylan Rogers likes that "it's relaxing and helps me calm down and focus for the afternoon."

Ganley Subaru Donates Science Books to Gearity

A longtime supporter of science education at Gearity, Ganley Subaru has stepped up again with a donation of 150 science-related books. Sales Manager (and former Gearity student) Jeffrey Rosen and General Manager Major Harrison delivered the boxes of books to Gearity's fifth-grade students. The fifth graders then served as "special delivery ambassadors" to share the books with the rest of the school's classrooms.

Heights Middle School Hosts Area Schools for Power of the Pen

Heights Middle School welcomed more than 200 seventh and eighth graders from 22 area schools for the Power of the Pen writing competition on Dec. 8.

After a get-to-know-you scavenger hunt, students participated in three rounds of intense competition. Groups of six students had 40 minutes to respond to one writing prompt. The stories were judged on



Ganley Subaru donates books for Gearity students

creativity, voice, grammar and spelling, and adherence to the assigned topic. HMS students did impressively well, as they have for decades, with several students advancing on to the regional tournament in April.

Monticello Ladies of Leadership Collect Winter Clothing Donations

Monticello at Heights Middle School's Ladies of Leadership shared with others this holiday season by collecting new hats, gloves and scarves from classmates and teachers for a local women's shelter. The young ladies chose the shelter following a lesson during National Domestic Violence Awareness month in October. The group of 16 seventh- and eighth-grade girls exceeded their goal of 100 items by collecting and donating 150 hat and glove pairs and 10 scarves.

Canterbury Learns About Local Communities

Kindergartners at Canterbury Elementary School are learning through exploration. They enjoyed field trips this fall to Lake Farm Park and the Children's Museum of Cleveland, to learn about different types of communities and how they're built. And of course, they



Yoga class at Gearity

focused on the community they know best: their school. Along with studying the various roles of each space, they took photos to create a large-scale map.

The culminating activity was the creation of 3-D models of the various places around town, everything from the library to Whole Foods Market. According to teacher Lisa Stewart, "they had a wonderful time learning about the places we live, work, play and learn."

Cathan Cavanaugh is the communications administrative assistant for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

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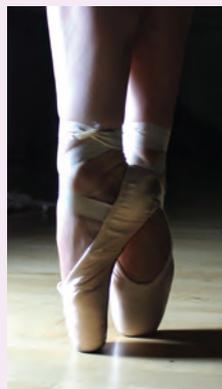
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GETTING TO KNOW...

FIRE CHIEF ROBERT PERKO III

Bob Perko is like every other Fire Chief you know. Except he's younger, cooler, and has a lot of ideas.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON. Fire fighting is the Perko Family Tradition. Bob's dad recently retired after 36 years with the Seven Hills Fire Department. He's still working, however, now as the Fire Safety Officer for University Hospitals.

THE RIGHT THING TO DO. In 1994, Bob watched his dad save a man's life while at mass. "This man was in cardiac arrest. He was technically dead. Dad sprung into action, and immediately performed CPR with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. I remember dad spitting out the man's vomit.

"Even at a young age, it seemed so risky and disgusting to me. Dad told me it was 'the right thing to do,' and that's what firefighters do. 'Service Before Self' is what both my parents practice every day."

THE CALLING. As a student at Padua Franciscan High School, Bob was taught to expect "The Calling" about a career path. Bob anxiously waited to be called, until it struck him one day... while he was mowing the lawn. "I remember cutting our lawn, and a fire engine roared past our house. It made me think of how as a little kid, me and the neighbors would run to the sidewalk and watch the fire trucks and ambulances.

"I knew my Dad was known in our community as 'The Fireman,' but it was then I realized what he really did for a living. I immediately related with all of it. It resonated with me, and I realized what 'The Calling' was. I stopped cutting the grass."

HAIL TO THE CHIEF. In 10 short years with University Heights, Bob became Fire Chief at age 36. Thanks to his leadership, the UHFD has received almost \$1 million in grants. Perko has led efforts to open the Fire Prevention and Education Bureau, and has made much-needed improvements to department equipment, vehicles and training.

COOL JOB, COOL HOBBIES. When he's not at work, Bob can often be found working in a garage on cars or motorcycles. An avid rider, Bob has driven from the East Coast of Florida to the West Coast, and back.

"Bob is a motorcycle enthusiast and he owns a souped-up sports car," said recently retired Firefighter Keith Kanner. "There's really no outdoor activity that he doesn't enjoy.

"But really for me, the coolest thing about Bob is that he cares so much about the job and about the community he serves."



A young Robert Perko sits on the lap of his father.



Jessica Martinez pins the Fire Chief badge on Perko.



The Perko men in Cleveland's St. Patrick's Day parade; Perko and Martinez in Florida.

University Heights police now armed with stuffed animals

Police officers in University Heights are now armed with teddy bears and other stuffed animals.

The toys will ride along with police officers every day. The plan is for officers to give them to children experiencing a traumatic event.

“It is our hope that when a child is put in a distressing situation, we can offer even just a little extra comfort to them to help them cope,” University Heights Police Chief Dustin Rogers said.

Ben Feltoon became a police officer to help others and he has a soft spot for children. “I think it’s important to be prepared to comfort kids,” Feltoon said.

“We’re now carrying stuffed animals in cars for times when there’s a kid involved, whether it’s a vehicle accident or we get called to a domestic situation,” Feltoon said. “We want them to know that we’re here to help. We want them to feel like they’re protected and what better way to do that than give them a stuffed animal?”



Officer Ben Feltoon and the University Heights Police Department hope stuffed animals will help comfort kids during a crisis situation.



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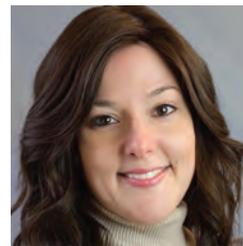
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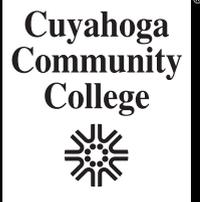
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