

FREE

"History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people." —Martin Luther King, Jr.

# The Cleveland Observer

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## Miseducation - The Forgotten Reason for Black History Month

By Margaret Adams

February is Black History Month. What better time to reflect on the reason for Black History Month, especially with the current rhetoric surrounding the teaching of Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Traditionally the month focuses on the achievements of Blacks who have made outstanding contributions to this country. Accomplishments and contributions that are most often not included in literature, science or history books. While this is important, it is not the only thing Carter G. Woodson, the founder of Black History Week, which later became Black History Month, had in mind.

Carter G. Woodson spent a great portion of his life promoting more balanced, and culturally sensitive education for Blacks in this country. Especially after spending the early part of his career as a school principal in the Philippines, and teaching in Europe and Asia where he observed the impact European/White influenced education had on people of other colors and cultures firsthand.

This led to the formation of the Association for the Study of

African American Life and History (ASALH) in 1915, whose mission is "to promote research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about Negro life and history and culture to the global community." This organization still exists today.



Woodson believed that education should be based on the child's circumstances. He felt that you can't teach a child from a stable household the same way as one from a single-parent household, and that people of different socio-economic circumstances require teaching that is more relevant to them.

Historically the United States has a questionable history when it comes to the education of

enslaved people. Some slaveholders forbid the teaching of reading to slaves. There was severe punishment, even death if one was caught trying to learn how to read. There was a fear that freeing a slave's mind might increase awareness of their inhumane circumstances

and the desire to be free. Regardless of the risk to life, many slaves did in fact learn to read.

Even after emancipation, the education of the formerly enslaved has been a perilous challenge. There is evidence of "fugitive pedagogy" (pedagogy meaning the theory and practice of education.)

In his book *Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching*, Jarvis Givens

gives the example of a student who remembers being taught by Tessie McGee, a 28-year-old Black teacher who taught history in 1933-1934 at the only Black secondary school in Webster Parish, Louisiana. She used a textbook that was more appropriate for her particular class, but had to hide it whenever an administrator came into the room.

<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/fugitive-pedagogy>

There are many examples of "fugitive" learning throughout the history of this country. Seen in the struggles to build black schools, obtain the right to attend previously segregated schools, and to obtain the right to an equal education.

The control of what is to be taught to Black students can be traced back to the United Daughters of the Confederate who after the Civil War felt it was their duty to write history books with a favorable slant towards the Confederates.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Daughters\\_of\\_the\\_Confederacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Daughters_of_the_Confederacy)

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## Minority Business Spotlight: Chanelle's Treatz



Chanelle Brown — Proprietor of Chanelle's Treatz

By Jazmin Johnson

Chanelle's Treatz was established in March 2018. Chanelle Brown started out as an at-home baker and catered to an online and word-of-mouth clientele.

In December of 2020, Chanelle's Treatz opened its doors in historic Shaker Square.

They have been featured on Spectrum News, Crain's Cleveland, and have received many other great reviews for their services, ranging from creating delicious desserts to custom-designed cakes catered to any special occasion.

**Q: What is your background as the owner?**

**A:** I am a self-taught baker and cake decorator. I take pride in being able to take my customers' visions of their ideal cake and bring them to life.

I have nieces that see what I do and are excited. My hope is that I can continue to inspire the next generation showing them that if you honestly believe in yourself and take the initiative to invest in yourself, you can do anything.

I am a single, Black mother that is truly doing what I can to give my kids, and every other little kid that looks up to me, the best view of what hard work and determination look like.

**Q: What was the inspiration behind Chanelle's Treatz?**

**A:** I was looking to get out of the administrative field of work and was going into nursing.

I was finishing my last semester of LPN nursing school, and for my class potluck, I brought in cupcakes: a bunch of different flavors that I had concocted from experimenting with box cake. Well, thanks to a fellow nursing student who loved them and then asked me to cater to her sister's birthday



Treatz' cupcakes are one of many popular custom selections.

party. I can say that it all started with her.

From there, it was numerous friends and family members who believed in my talent and challenged me to try different things and designs. This started me to teach myself different techniques and skills on how to decorate to the level I am at now, constantly challenging me with innovative ideas, flavors, and creations.

**Q: What brought your business to the Shaker Heights Community?**

**A:** I have lived in the Buckeye/Kinsman area for most of my adult life, so Shaker Square has always been my dream location.

When I started imagining where I wanted to take my business, it was a no-brainer that I wanted to be a part of that community. It is an iconic location; everyone knows Shaker Square.

Now that I am a part of it, I could not be happier. The community is amazing and supportive,

(Continued on page 14)

## Cleveland News Wire – January Highlights

By Cleveland Documenters



**Expanded referral policy boosts use of Diversion Center Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC)**  
**Agency: Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County**

*Covered by Documenters Brit Seward and John Bergin*

MHRAC members said the Diversion Center has had an increase in clients since the implementation of an expanded referral policy. The 2021 Annual MHRAC report, required by the consent decree, will be completed by the end of January. The Diversion committee members said they will look into the possibility of providing transportation to clients at the Diversion Center. At the conclusion of the meeting, MHRAC Community Advocate Rosie Palfy expressed frustration with the lack of discussion over CDP's removal of 17 words from an approved policy MHRAC had advised on. CDP Captain McPike said that this was a "human error."

**The panel discusses plans for the public and providers to year meet with CIT officers**  
**Agency: Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County**

*Covered by Documenters Juice McKenna and Daniel McCarthy*

The subcommittee briefly discussed sending thank you letters out to Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) officers for the Coffee with a CIT Officer event and getting CIT resource cards out to the Cleveland Division of Police for use in officers' vehicles. The committee is planning to distribute a survey to the general public to collect information about CIT. A Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC) discussion including Charles See, community advocate and member of the Cleveland Police Monitoring Team, and Jim McPike, Police Captain, will air March 8 on 95.9 WOJU Radio.

**Council supports name change for Cleveland-Marshall Law**  
**Agency: Cleveland City Council**

*Covered by Documenters Alyssa Bree, Shayla Ivezzy, and Keith Yurgionas*

In a short meeting, the council read several emergency resolutions including one urging a

committee at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law to change the name of the school to eliminate any reference to John Marshall. Resolutions, unlike ordinances, express the opinion of the council and do not become law when passed. Several council members also spoke during the meeting. Council Member Kevin Conwell said he is concerned about gun violence in his community.

**RTA looks to install electric-vehicle chargers at Rapid stations**

**Agency: Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority**

*Covered by Documenters Alicia Moreland and Bob Rotatori*

The Standing Committee's meeting is a meeting of several subcommittees, including the Operational Planning and Infrastructure Committee. That committee approved work with the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) to install public vehicle chargers at three Rapid stations: Louis Stokes at Windermere; Brookpark; and Green Road. Construction is scheduled to begin in July if approved by the full board. The committee also moved forward an item to replace the current CLE App with a more robust app, called EZFare, to be used regionally. RTA's goal is to have contactless payment devices installed by the end of the year.

**Committee reviews data for the 2021 annual MHRAC report**  
**Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC), Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services of Cuyahoga County**

*Covered by Documenters Brit Seward and John Bergin*

MHRAC members made recommendations about data and information that will be included in the 2021 MHRAC annual report, which is to be released at the end of the month. The Quality Improvement (QI) subcommittee will review a draft of the report by Jan. 25, and the report will be finalized by Jan. 31. Cleveland Police Capt. James McPike said he will reach out to Cleveland Legal Aid and other Ad Hoc Committee members about meeting to discuss the police department's diversion and crisis intervention policies.

**Joyce Pan Huang nominated for planning director; Fairfax Market design approved**  
**Cleveland City Planning Commission**

*Covered by Documenters Keith Yurgionas and Mildred Seward*

The City Planning Commission

approved the nomination of Joyce Pan Huang as Planning Director. The commission also approved the final design of the Fairfax Market project on Cedar Ave. and East 105th Street, as well as the design for two homes on a split lot on the near west side, which commission members agreed would help improve population density in the city.

**City official tells panel about state funds targeting brownfield Development, Planning & Sustainability Committee, Cleveland City Council**

*Covered by Documenters Daniel McCarthy and Kathryn Johnson*

Director of Economic Development David Ebersole told the council that there is \$350 million available from the State of Ohio for land remediation of government-controlled and private sector land. Of that, \$100 million is available for site demolition specifically. Applications and awards are made on a first-come, first-served basis. The state's pre-application deadlines are Jan. 31 for property remediation and Feb. 28 for demolition.

## Cleveland spent \$6.6 million to lease back Justice Center Police HQ

By Paul Rochford, Cleveland Documenters

After more than three years, the City of Cleveland has paid Cuyahoga County \$6,623,776 for use of the current Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) Headquarters (HQ) at the Justice Center downtown – a space the city sold to the county for \$9.25 million in October 2018.

This \$6.6 million figure represents the amount Cleveland paid the county for rent, parking and utilities from October 2018 to September 2021, according to public records Documenters got from the city.

Currently, the city is in its third renewal of what was supposed to be a year-long lease. The current lease, set to run from October 2021 to October 2022, is estimated to cost the city \$2,108,652 if CDP remains in its current home at the Justice Center.

The amount spent on leasing back the HQ space at the Justice Center could total \$8,732,428 by October 2022. If the lease is extended under similar terms, it would surpass the amount the county paid the city for the space.

Cleveland Documenter Daniel McCarthy took notes at a Finance Committee meeting on Oct. 18, 2021, where City Council members shared their frustration with the situation as

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the 2021-22 lease renewal was discussed. During the meeting, Council Member Brian Kazy said, "I think the city's getting bamboozled...by the end of this lease, we've almost zeroed it with nowhere to go."

When the city made the 2018 sale to Cuyahoga County, it expected to move CDP HQ into 1801 Superior Ave., the former home of the Plain Dealer, by spring 2019, but the city pulled out of the deal in fall 2018 and eventually gave up on buying the property.

The rent amount per square foot of space increased each time the lease was renewed. Starting at "no more than \$10/sq. ft." in 2018, the current lease's rate is \$16/sq. ft.

The initial agreement in 2018 projected that the city would reduce the amount of space CDP used as the renovated areas of the new HQ were completed, but because the purchase of 1801 Superior Ave. fell through, this transition never happened.

See the original lease agreement and the three renewals here. All agreements were passed by Cleveland City Council as emergency ordinances. CDP now has plans for a brand-new HQ building at the

*Continue on 11*

CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

# get more CHOICE

CMSD lets you choose your school. Select from arts, STEM and other options.



### more sports.

Live streaming of games lets you watch on any device, from anywhere. And 14 high schools have started esports so gamers can get into the action.

### more afterschool programs.

Through Say Yes to Education, programs like arts and tutoring are under way in 40 PreK-8 schools, with plans to add high schools in the spring.

### more for the future.

Community, college and career planning centers have begun operating in high schools, with PreK-8 schools to follow next year.

### more communication.

The District has hired Parent Ambassadors to strengthen relationships between schools and families.

### more to keep kids safe.

Voluntary COVID-19 testing is available in schools across the District.

Details at [ClevelandMetroSchools.org/GetMore](https://ClevelandMetroSchools.org/GetMore)

SUPPORT SERVICES/ SCHOLARSHIPS



FREE college and trade school tuition scholarships for four-year CMSD grads! Go to [SayYesCleveland.org](https://SayYesCleveland.org) to learn more!



## HIGH SCHOOL Choice Events

2022-2023

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9  
5:30 - 7:30pm  
West Side Community Fair  
John Marshall Campus  
3952 W 140th St, Cleveland, OH 44111

ENROLL at [ChooseCMSD.org](https://ChooseCMSD.org)  
Portal now open for High School Choice.  
PreK-8 opens on March 14.  
Call **216.838.3675** for more information.

## Celebrating Lunar New Year – Year of the Tiger!

By Ray Hom

Typically, around this time of year, the Asian community is busy preparing for the upcoming Lunar New Year.

However, again, due to the pandemic, many of the planned activities and traditions may be virtual. Community residents and businesses are resilient and will still celebrate the most important holiday of the year.

A listing of this year's events can be found here:

<https://ocagc.org/2022lunarnewyear/>

The Lunar New Year, most commonly associated with the Chinese New Year or Spring Festival, falls on Tuesday, February 1st this year. It's called the Lunar New Year because it marks the first new moon of the lunisolar calendar which is regulated by the cycles of the moon and sun.

Feb 1st marks the beginning of the Year of the Tiger and is a fifteen (15) day celebration. The Tiger is the third animal of the 12 Chinese Zodiac animals and is considered to be brave, cruel, and forceful. It is the symbol of power in Chinese the culture.

most important part of the Chinese New Year celebration. Relatives will travel long distances in order to attend their family dinner. It is estimated that there are 3.5 billion journeys within China. In addition, tens of millions of people travel to other countries making this the largest annual migration of people annually.

Certain foods are important to serve and eat during the Reunion Dinner because they represent a positive symbolic meaning for well wishes. These can include **whole fish (wealth), duck (fidelity), pork (strength), rice (luck & wealth), noodles (family harmony), and dumplings (prosperity).**

During the Reunion Dinner, it may be uncomfortable for many older singles when family members ask when they will get married. To avoid such conversations, it is becoming more common for older singles to hire boyfriends/girlfriends. Many Asians have socially conservative views, so some LGBTQ folk choose not to come out to their family. This sometimes makes for



happiness, beauty, vitality, good luck, success, and good fortune. Therefore, you will see red everywhere during this festive season, including decorations in homes and businesses. Red symbols are used to ward off evil.

**4. Tangerines and oranges** are displayed in many homes and businesses as a sign of luck and wealth. The pronunciation and character for these fruits resemble the words for luck and success, respectively. In addition, the fruits' bright color symbolizes gold bringing good luck and wealth. It is common when visiting relatives and friends to bring a pair of tangerines or oranges. In return, the host will give a pair when guests leave. Always bring a pair as odd numbers are believed to bring unhappiness.

**5. Lion Dance** - The lion is considered an animal that symbolized courage and determination. Watching the lion dance is believed will bring good fortune.

**6. Fireworks and firecrackers** are commonplace in major cities around the world during midnight.

**7. Many homes will be adorned with pussy willows** which represent the beginning of spring because they bear the furry buds from the late winter season. Again, the Chinese name of the plant, **yin liu**, sounds similar to "money flowing in."

**8. A favorite tradition in Singapore and Malaysia is Yusheng**, a raw fish salad. Both countries will argue the rights to the origin of Yusheng. It is said in Singapore that Cantonese immigrants from the Guangdong province in the 1940s brought it to Singapore. It was popularized by Singaporean chefs over the years.

Yusheng is a communal ceremonial New Year's dish where the ingredients are placed individually on a serving platter. Each ingredient represents various wishes. Once the ingredients are called out, the fun part is that guests will stand up and toss the salad up in the air with chopsticks while yelling out their good wishes. The higher the toss, the more prosperity in the New Year.

**9. In China**, the holiday period ends during the Lantern Festival.

On the evening of the 15th day of the first lunar month, the night of the full moon, families gather for dinner and go out to see fireworks and light lanterns. Lanterns are put up for decoration, let loose to fly, and floated in rivers.

**10. In the US**, Lunar New Year is not a federal public holiday. However, it is a legal observance in the state of California as of 2015. Hopefully, as more cities and communities have an increase in population of Asian Americans, more municipalities and states will consider doing the same as California.

During the Chinese New Year holiday, there are many superstitions. It may seem like Lunar New Year is a time when age-old superstitions are observed by households as festive customs & traditions. There are lots of little things you are supposed to do and not do, prior to and over the first 2 days of the holiday. Listed below is a sampling of the Do's and Don'ts:

**Do:**

- Wear new clothes to bring good fortune and health
- Wear red as the color represents good luck and happiness
- Only talk about good & happy things to set the tone for the year ahead
- Firecrackers are set off just after midnight to scare evil spirits. The flash and sound of firecrackers and fireworks scare away demons and evil ghosts.
- Dragon Dances are popular as it's believed that the loud beats of the drum along with the face of the dragon scare away evil spirits.
- Pay back debts before the new year.

**Don't:**

- Do not cut your hair during the festive period
- Do not sweep the floors or take out the garbage: Sweeping up and taking out the garbage symbolize removing the good luck from the house.
- Avoid wearing black and white on the first day as they are considered unlucky colors
- Do not give people mirrors as gifts - Mirrors are believed to attract ghosts. They are also easily broken, and anything that breaks is considered a bad omen.

If you have family, friends and/or colleagues that celebrate Lunar New Year, try saying this to them depending on their nationality:

**Gong Xi Fa Cai** (Mandarin)

**Gong Hei Fat Choy** (Cantonese)

**Chúc Mừng Năm Mới** (Vietnamese)

*To all who celebrate the Lunar New Year, wishing you a very Healthy, Happy and Prosperous New Year!*



The Lunar New Year is celebrated across many East Asian countries including, but not limited to, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, South Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia. Chinese and Vietnamese people around the world, including in the US, celebrate this holiday as the single most important holiday in their culture.

The Lunar New Year is a time for new beginnings and wishing others good fortune, happiness, and health. There are many activities surrounding the Lunar New Year, including the following, across various cities around the world:

- Lunar New Year parades including colorful costumes, floats, firecrackers, and other attractions Lion and Dragon dances and competitions
- Chinatown fun runs or walks
- Balls and pageants crowning Miss Chinatown
- Street fairs
- Fireworks

In addition to the events, there are many traditions associated with the festive season including:

**1. The fifteen (15) day celebration** kicks off on New Year's Eve with a **Reunion Dinner** with family members. This is the

interesting conversations, questions, and gossip among family members during the Reunion Dinner.

**2. Hong Bao, Ang Pao, or Lai See** are red envelopes with money that are handed out as a means to send good wishes and luck (as well as money!) Red envelopes are traditionally handed out by married couples to their parents, single adults, and children as tokens of good fortune and blessing. In addition, envelopes from bosses to employees can be considered a special New Year's bonus.

The Chinese are very auspicious and believe that good things come in pairs, so an even dollar amount is preferred. Having the number eight in the amount is considered lucky as it sounds like prosperity in Mandarin. However, don't give an amount with the number 4 as it sounds like the word death.

In the digital world we live in now, many red envelopes are now exchanged electronically, something that can be done via WeChat, China's most popular communications app.

**3. Red is considered a lucky color**, representing many positive things such as



## Does Trumpism's Empire of Lies Still Control America?



By Ron Calhoun

*Amazing! After the emails and text messages, disclosed, it should be the end of Donald Trump's political career*

With the recent exposure of the former President's deception and lies by the House Select Committee to the American people, the media chooses to focus on inflation and their opinion of how ineffective President Joe Biden has been thus far. Not to mention Over 40% of the American people are using Trumpism (White Ideology) as the reason to change the political landscape. Don't fool yourself there are many evil people hiding behind conservative values, faith, and pride that are in or will be in

positions of power by the next presidential election.

This is just another example of why the American people have no faith in a governing system that fights for those with power and money, and not for what is best for the people it is designed to serve.

The reality is that the government is a snapshot of America; a divided America that can now see that we are being played like an instrument to the desires of the master musician manipulators.

We now know that there was no authenticity in the rallying cry, "Make America Great Again." It was merely an empty slogan designed to gain money and power for a select few.

We've learned that many involved in the "Make America Great Again" movement had concerns, and from behind the scenes were recommending putting a stop to the hypocrisy.

In addition, we've learned that the **Insurrection on January 6, 2021**, was not just fueled by, but designed and orchestrated by the former president.

Was this selfish act a crime



of betrayal of one's country?

The Constitution specifically defines **treason against the United States**, and more importantly, limits the offense of treason to two specific types of conduct:

(1) **"levying war" against the United States; or**

(2) **"adhering to [the] enemies [of the United States], giving them aid and comfort."**

We are not "one nation under God." God would not approve of the so-called rights and entitlements corrupting today's political system. A political system where the agendas of special interest groups, those with money and power, outweigh what is best for all.

(But, that is another article.)

We are not "indivisible." We are very much divided, with

selfish agendas hiding under the guise of freedom. It is not freedom when preferences are exploited at the expense of the general public.

Our Declaration of Independence, at its very core, provides all Americans with unalienable rights intended to fight those who would otherwise oppress others. But, when your rights do in fact oppress others, it becomes an entitlement and not justice for all.

Today's American culture is awash in selfishness. The new religion is "Selfish-ism." This is when you possess a huge investment in yourself and do not think or care about the needs of others.

How's that working for us? Solution? Go back to the basics:

- Look for opportunities to do what is right for the community
- Look for an opportunity to serve one another
- Look for an opportunity to share your talent.
- Look for transparency and truth from your leadership.

## Cleveland Police Subject of Netflix Documentary: 137 Shots



By Ron Calhoun

*Law enforcement faces scrutiny as Americans demand justice after police violence claims multiple Black lives in Cleveland.*

The shooting deaths of **Timothy Russell and Malissa Williams**, two homeless Black Americans, occurred in East Cleveland, Ohio on November 29, 2012, following a 22-minute police chase which started in downtown Cleveland.

Thirteen police officers fired at Russell and Williams **137 times** while they were sitting in their car in a middle school parking lot, killing both.

In May 2014, one of the officers involved, **Michael Brelo**, was charged with two counts of voluntary manslaughter. On May 23, 2015, he was acquitted of all charges by Cuyahoga County Judge **John O'Donnell**.

Five police supervisors were also charged with dereliction of duty, a misdemeanor. Their trial was set for July 27, 2015. I

All charges were eventually dismissed.

The families of Russell and Williams filed lawsuits against the city of Cleveland. They received a settlement of **\$3 million** in November 2014.

On January 26, 2016, it was reported that six Cleveland police officers were fired due to their connection with the car chase. They have been identified as **Michael Brelo, Wilfredo Diaz, Brian Sabolik, Erin O'Donnell, Michael Farley, and Chris Ereg**. With the exception of Brelo, all were eventually re-instated to the Cleveland Police Department.

*The Documentary can be found on Netflix.*



## The Great Re-Investment Into Social Work



By Devon Jones

Social work students entering the profession often expect low pay for valuable hard work. This trend has been a part of the experience of social workers for quite some time. A symptom of this problem is seen in the phenomenon of **unpaid field practicums**.

Field Practicum is a field education program designed to integrate classroom study with practice in a social work setting. Students spend time in an agency while being supervised by a field instructor. Through the practicum, students translate knowledge from all areas of the curriculum into practical skills and competencies.

<https://www.wichita.edu/academics>

This process requires students to fulfill a certain number of hours in order to obtain the degree. Students are tasked with attending school and working with an agency. This component is key to making effective social workers, but is it fair that they gain this experience without fair compensation?

**Why does this matter?**

It matters to the social work students who are the next generation of frontline workers dealing with the challenges gripping our society. On average, field practicums for undergraduate studies require at least 150 hours, and 300 hours for graduate students. The rising cost of tuition and living expenses have become more subject to scrutiny. These issues disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, creating entry barriers to the profession.

In addition, it creates a culture of undervaluing the work of future professionals in the field. The current model requires students to pay in order to work and receive the experience required to graduate. This model is no longer sustainable.

The **National Association of Social Workers** has developed a project to raise awareness and address this issue. This project aims to advocate for a Great Investment into social work by seeking to develop and sustain paid field practicum opportunities. This would be a multi-pronged solution with schools, agencies, the government, and other stakeholders finding ways to work together. If you currently attend or have graduated from a social work program, here are a few ways for you to get involved:

1. Make a 1-2 minute video answering these questions:

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## Tips For Improving Communication Residents/City Government



By Gennifer Harding-Gosnell

Good communication is at the center of any healthy relationship, and with a new mayor, administration and council, what better time to look at ways to improve how city government and Cleveland residents talk to one another.

Effective communication increases the chance that legislators are willing and able to hear your thoughts and opinions, and the likelihood of getting action

**The Cleveland Observer reached out to individual members of City Council to get their thoughts and ideas on things the community can do to help improve communications with local legislators:**

### Get organized

Find support from other members of your community. “I always encourage residents to engage others in any project, initiative or cause,” says **Ward 15 Councilwoman Jenny Spencer**. “I hope that residents will choose to organize their community rather than feeling they have to shoulder something alone.”

Running a well-structured campaign can give your cause good momentum, similar to the way lobbyists work. “It can help to know that there is a citizen movement and/or a coordinated group of residents behind any resident outreach,” says Spencer.

**Online Users:** The Community Organizing 101 - Toolkit for Organizing is only 6 pages and provides community-organizing-for-beginners’. This article goes deeper into the concepts behind community organizing. For an example of a fully structured campaign, see the Clevelanders For Public Comment organization.

### Ask for something specific

Vague or broad comments and requests about issues are harder to address and don’t provide legislators clear directions on exactly what you want them to do. You can ask for them to introduce, back or oppose legislation, attend community events, and write letters of support on your behalf. Focus on the problem you want to solve and be specific with your request and why – legislators can’t govern just on emotional pleas.

### Utilize public comment

Public comments to City Council

can be made in-person at regular Council meetings or can be submitted as written comments online. **Ward 12 Councilwoman Rebecca Maurer** says there should be more: “We need to get public comment at council meetings. This will allow the public to engage in the nitty-gritty on substantive issues.”

**Actively support systemic changes both residents and council members are advocating that make civic engagement easier**

Encourage your legislators to educate residents on the how and why of their decision-making. This is transparency.

Support and participate in efforts to educate and engage other residents, like sharing educational resources on social media, or inviting a conversation at your local park.

On Council’s end, Maurer believes **they should make council meetings easier for the public to understand and follow**. “Right now they are very fast paced,” she says, “and if you don’t know how council works, they can be hard to follow.”

**“How do we expect the public to know first reading vs. second reading vs. journal, etc.** Even the voting structure can be hard to understand if you aren’t used to it. Council members don’t [speak up if they] vote ‘yes’, [only] if they want to vote ‘no’. We need to slow it down and explain what we are doing.”

To make it easier for residents to attend, Maurer also suggested, **“When it is COVID-safe, why not take council meetings to the public by holding them at parks and Rec centers.”**

### Become a resource

Make sure you are working with as much knowledge and information on your issue as is available to you before communicating about it with legislators. Know your topic or the re-telling of your experience inside-and-out. Leave information for your legislators (cards, pamphlets, etc.) so they have something tangible to use to look into your concern and follow up with you later.

Ward 17 Councilman Charles Slife says, “I appreciate when commenters offer specific resources that members can use to learn more about the topic.”

### Follow up

Set a reasonable timeline for responses and actions, and be ready to follow up with legislators when those deadlines hit. Ask for current status or if they need more information about your concerns.

Address communication shortcomings with them. “Residents should hold their individual member of Council to a high standard,” says Slife, “and if necessary, explain that their communications strategy is failing to get information out to residents expeditiously.”

### Meet your legislators half-way

Communication is a two-way street. It requires a messenger and a receiver, and both must be engaged for communication to occur. “My position has always been, if you care about your community then you need to participate in it on some level,” says **Ward 8 Councilman Mike Polensek**.

Don’t have the time or energy to organize a campaign or attend Council meetings? “I know there are many single moms and dads trying to raise their families and working at the same time, thereby making it difficult to participate in neighborhood evening meetings,” says Polensek. “That is why I encourage people to get a hold of me by [phone, email], whatever means they feel comfortable with.”

“Believe it or not, I still get handwritten or typed letters in the mail...I did today,” he says.

Make direct contact with your Council member, don’t rely on social media as a gauge for what is or is not known. Charles Slife points out “the importance of reaching out and making contact and not assuming that someone else has.”

“We live in an age of instant information,” he says, “but the day-to-day demands of the job don’t always let members of Council keep up in real time.

I tell residents never to assume that their Council member is up-to-speed on breaking news. Often information makes it to social media before we receive any sort of call or e-mail. There have been many instances where people are talking about an issue on Facebook, even criticizing me, and I was wholly unaware of the issue up to that point.”

### ... Social Work

From page 7

- What specialty or population do you work with or want to work with?
- What is/was your field practicum?
- What was the impact of not being paid?
- What is one thing you would like to see changed?

2. Fill out a survey aimed at gauging how current and future social workers feel about this.

3. Reach out to your field placement faculty member and field placement agency and begin a dialogue about this issue.

Go here to fill out a survey:

<https://www.naswoh.org/page/practicum>



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## Hough On The Rise – New Developments



By Bruce Checefsky

The City of Cleveland Land Reutilization Program (Land Bank) is one of five legacy land banks in the United States. It was established in 1976 to foster the return of nonproductive land in the City of Cleveland to productive reuse. The program acquires vacant land and markets it to individuals, developers, and non-profit organizations for redevelopment. Proposed improvements are subject to the design review process.



RENDERING - VIEW LOOKING NORTH  
EAST 82ND STREET, CLEVELAND OHIO



The City of Cleveland Land Bank, managed by City Hall, is different from the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corp., which is a private entity.

Over 13,000 parcels are for sale in Cleveland. The Hough neighborhood accounts for close to 1,000 land parcels of the total. The list includes properties that stretch along E. 71th Street to Chester Avenue, then north to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Land banks are located in areas with low or declining housing costs. In a development project, the land is vital. Developers invest in land that promises financial gain. Profits generally override neighborhood needs like grocery stores or service industries that help sustain residents. Hough is no different.

**The Allen Estates at League Park** will honor the rich history of Hough and the pioneers who have planted the seeds of its rebirth.

**Frontline Development Group LLC** envisions a neighborhood with a wide variety of housing product to serve a diversity of people and build the foundations of a socio-economically sustainable neighborhood.

This diverse neighborhood will intentionally create community through the placement of parks, plazas, and walkable streets that foster interaction among all groups of people.

Sheila Wright's Frontline Development Group acquired land for six homes on East 65th Street. The initial phases of the project, expected to start in spring 2022, would include townhomes and mixed-use apartments over the retail buildings. City Council approved a \$3 million forgivable loan for the project. The homes will consist of two layouts: 1,800 square feet and 2,200 square feet.

Jeff Crawford, President of Cleveland Custom Homes, purchased land near League Park to build 100 homes between 1,300 and 1,700 square feet, costing about \$250,000.

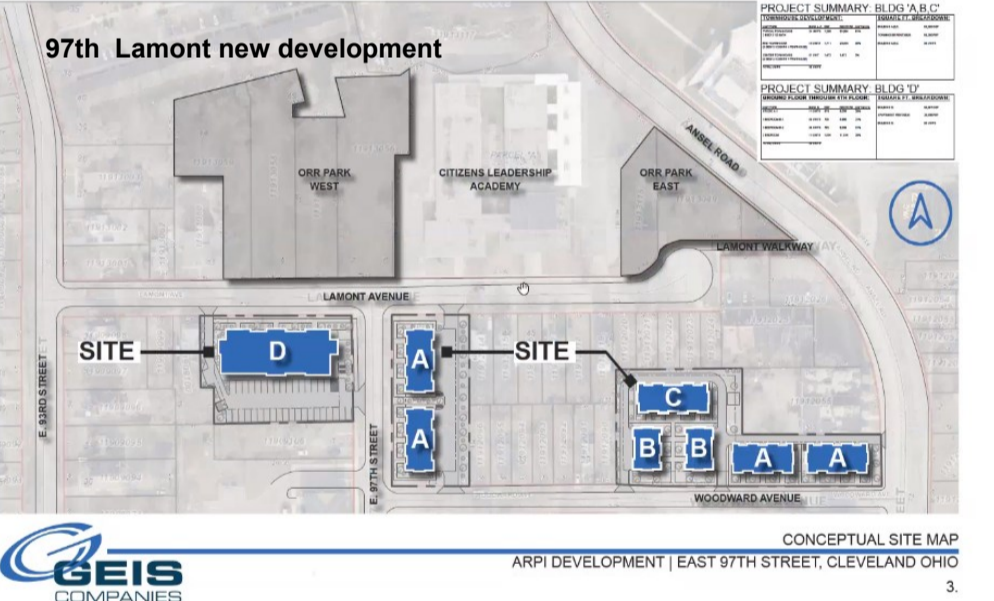
The \$12 million development, ARPI Apartments, 1865 E. 93rd St., will offer 42 units of mostly studio and one-bedroom apartments, with a small number of two-bedroom units. All apartments in the four-story building will have first-first-floor patios or upper-floor balconies. ARPI Development's second project in Hough is Lumos apartments at 1866 E. 93rd Street.

Critics argue that developers used to build homes and apartments for ordinary Americans. According to The Progress-Index, a neighborhood data tool developed by Cleveland Neighborhood Progress and the Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development at Case Western Reserve University, Hough poverty rate hovers around 49%. Life expectancy is 72 years, the Infant Mortality Rate is 18.2%, and Income is 75% below the national median household level.

Nearby University Circle rents increased in 2019 over the prior year by 44.28 percent, resulting in average rent for a one-bedroom apartment of \$1,853.

The spillover effect meant a 7.74 percent rent increase in Hough, resulting in average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the neighborhood of \$1,415, as recently reported by Rent.com.

"Development can be good. You have to do it in a way that is inclusive of those that have been in the neighborhood for years," said newly elected Ward 7 Councilwoman Stephanie Howse in an interview with The Cleveland Observer. "I look forward to ensuring that anyone who wants to live in the Hough neighborhood can live here, whether you have zero dollars or a million dollars."



Councilwoman Howse vowed to create new policies at City Hall to address tax abatement and rising property taxes for long-time city residents. She insists that banks need to lend homeowners money to repair their homes. "Financial institutions are not lending money to Black people," she said. "That is a major problem."



## Black History in Your Back Yard



Raymond Winbush aka Tikari Bioko - Director of the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University

By Ron Calhoun

**Raymond Winbush** is one of five children. The middle child born to Dorothy Winbush, and Harold Winbush, a Cleveland, Ohio steel worker.

At the request of his elementary school art teacher, Winbush was tested and scored high on the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test. Life changed for Winbush when he was bussed from his poor, Hough Avenue neighborhood to an accelerated school in a middle-class and predominantly Jewish neighborhood.

Much of Winbush's early childhood narrative is detailed in his first book, *The Warrior Method*.

Winbush's work has been recognized by many, especially in the area of understanding racism and its impact on the *Nine Areas of White Supremacy* as discussed by Neely Fuller and Dr. Frances Cress Welsing.

He was a guest on the Oprah Winfrey Show, with the stars of the critically acclaimed and Oscar-winning film, *Crash*, and a delegate to the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism.



George Peake was the first African American to settle permanently in Cleveland arrived in 1809

George Peake arrived in Cleveland with his wife and 2 sons in Apr. 1809. They were apparently well-off financially when they arrived. Peake's wife reportedly had a half a bushel of silver dollars, a remarkable sum at a time when most commercial activity involved barter and trade. Peake himself was also rather wealthy;

## Hollywood's First Black Movie Star-The Iconic Sidney Poitier

By Carla Calhoun

Sidney Poitier was a Bahamian-American actor, director, producer, and activist born on February 20, 1927.

He was born prematurely during his parents' vacation in Miami, Florida, thus giving him American citizenship.

Poitier grew up on Cat Island, Bahamas until the age of 14, when he returned to the United States to live with relatives. The move was a cultural shock to him.

During a CNN interview in 2008 on Larry King Live, Poitier stated that he couldn't shop at certain stores in the US but in the Bahamas he never had to ride on the back of the bus. "It was a big disappointment," Poitier said. (Reference: The Philadelphia Tribune writer Nicole Chavez).

At the age of 15, Poitier moved to New York City and found a job in a student production called, "Days of our Youth," as the understudy to up-and-coming, well-known actor Harry Belafonte. During one of the performances, Poitier replaced Belafonte who did not show up for the performance.

Fortunately, in attendance was a Broadway producer who recognized Poitier's acting abilities.

Poitier experienced challenges due to his heavy accent and was refused a place with ANT Productions. As a result, he studied American enunciation while listening to American



accents on the radio. He then reapplied and was hired by ANT Productions where he appeared in various movie productions.

Poitier broke the color barrier in the motion picture industry. He redefined roles for African Americans by rejecting racial stereotypical roles. In 1946,

Poitier made his Broadway debut in "Lysistrata," and the rest is history.

During his career, he performed in approximately 39

films. In 1964, Poitier became the first Black American to win an Academy Award for the box office film "Lilies of the Field."

Poitier was also known for his activism. In 1964, he attended the March on Washington and traveled to Mississippi to meet with activists following the brutal torture and murder of three young civil rights workers.

He was a dignified and beloved actor who was respected by millions. In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. paid tribute to Poitier by stating, "He is a man of great depth, a man of great social concern, a man who is dedicated to human rights and freedom." (Reference: International Civil Rights Walk of Fame.)

Poitier is the father of six daughters, (which he described as his greatest legacy), four from his first marriage to black businesswomen Juanita Hardy (1950-1965), and two daughters from his second marriage to Joanna Shimkus, a Canadian actress. He and Joanna were married from 1976 until his recent death on January 6, 2022.

Poitier passed away peacefully of natural causes in his Los Angeles home.

The iconic Sidney Poitier, trailblazer, illustrious actor, and activist will be missed, but vastly remembered.

## Black Death – All Black Heavy Metal Band



The first all-Black heavy metal band, Cleveland's Black Death

By M. Swift -blackthen.com

Hailing from Cleveland, Ohio, Black Death was the first all-Black heavy metal band. This claim is contested by the band Sound Barrier but is often attributed to Black Death which formed in 1977 and whose demo predates Sound Barrier's full-length album "Total Control" by two years.

The band's original lineup consisted of Greg Hicks on guitar, Phil Bullard on drums, and Clayborn Pinkins on bass. They wouldn't find a lead singer until the following year when guitarist and vocalist SiKi Spacek joined.

The band existed without a name for almost two years before original members Greg Hicks and Clayborn Pinkins came up with "Black Death."

Pinkins wouldn't see what the band would grow into as he was murdered in early 1979.

The band would go through another bassist before Darrell Harris joined making up the classic lineup heard on its 1984 debut.

They would get to start recording music for the full length album after their early songs were well received in the Cleveland area.

First, they recorded a Cleveland heavy metal compilation which became a rare item.

The band would fall apart in the late 1980s with members going into other bands and activities. Before Black Death ended there were plans for a second full-length album called "The Black Assassin" of which a few songs were recorded.

<https://www.metal-archives.com/bands/>

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On December 30, 1811, he purchased 103 acres of land in Rockport, originally in Cuyahoga County.

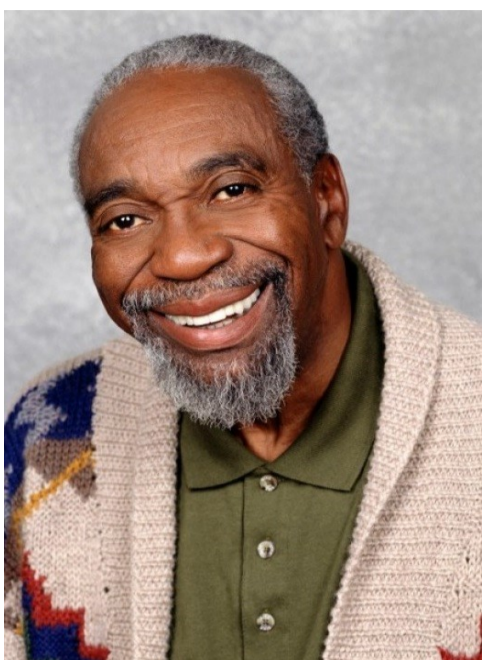
Peake's initial wealth was apparently ill-gotten; as a British soldier in the French & Indian War, he had served under Gen. Wolfe in the battle of Quebec, but later was reported to have deserted the army, taking with him the money he had been given to pay the other soldiers.

Peake endeared himself to his Cleveland neighbors by inventing a new hand mill, which was easier to use than the crude "stamp mortar and spring pestle" they had adapted from the Indians' process for grinding grain.

Peake's mill used stones that were 18-20" in diameter and that produced a much better quality of ground meal. He quickly gained the respect of the citizens throughout the community.

## Who Are These Black Clevelanders?

Staff Writer



Wilbert Francisco Cobbs, Actor aka Bill Cobbs

**Bill Cobbs** was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, where his parents were hard-working people, who instilled in him a sense of self-reliance and humility. As an amateur actor at the city's Karamu House Theater, he starred in the Ossie Davis play "Purlie Victorious."

Cobbs was an Air Force radar technician for eight years; he also worked in office products at IBM and sold cars in Cleveland. In 1970, at the age of 36, he left for New York to seek work as an actor. There he turned down a job in the NBC sales department in order to have time for auditions. He supported himself by driving a cab, repairing office equipment, selling toys, and performing odd jobs.

His first professional acting role was in "Ride a Black Horse" at the Negro Ensemble Company. From there, he appeared in small theater productions, street theater, regional theater and at the Eugene O'Neill Theater. His first television credit was in Vegetable Soup (1975), a New York public television educational series, and he made his feature film debut in The Taking of Pelham One Two Three (1974).

In his free time, Cobbs enjoys music, reading, and playing his drums. He lives in New York City and Los Angeles, California and continues acting.



Cora and Elmer Franklin Boyd. Founders of E.F. Boyd and Son Funeral Home

A native of Urbana, Ohio. **Elmer Franklin Boyd** came to Cleveland in 1898 and entered one of the few professions open to blacks at

the turn of the century. Operating a funeral home in Cleveland from 1905 until his death. He learned his profession at Clark's College of Embalming in Cincinnati and Meyer's Embalming School in Springfield; passed the state examination in June 1905; and that fall opened an office at 2604 Central Ave. in Cleveland. In April of 1906 he took on a partner, Lewis J. Dean, opening an establishment described as "a combination funeral parlor and haberdashery."

Today, the funeral home is run by Boyd's children and grandchildren, stewards of one of the oldest black-owned businesses in Ohio.

Boyd chaired the first Freedom Fund Dinner of the Cleveland NAACP in 1959 and served as vice president of the Cleveland school board in the turbulent 1960s.



Julia B. Calhoun Walker was one of the first four women to drive for the Cleveland Transit System (CTS) which is today the Regional Transit Authority. (RTA).

**Julia B. Calhoun Walker** was born in Wilcox, Alabama, on July 17, 1922. She graduated from Central High School in 1942. In 1943 she went to work for the Cleveland Transit System, now known as RTA as one of the four first Black female operators.

She retired from RTA after 33 years of service. Julia later worked as a shuttle bus driver for the Cleveland Clinic Foundation for 10 years.

Affectionately known as Mama Julia, her passion in life was cooking. She cooked for family friends and restaurants. She was best known for her seven-up cakes and rolls.

She was never able to say no to anyone or any cause. She gave generously of her time, energy, and resources.



Garrett Augustus Morgan, traffic light inventor.

An African-American inventor **Garrett Morgan** created the early gas mask and the first traffic device with a warning position. He was born Garret Augustus Morgan on March 4, 1877 in Claysville, Kentucky, to Elizabeth Reed, and Sydney Morgan, both former slaves.

Garret only received a 6th grade education and moved to Cincinnati, Ohio when he was 16 in search of employment. While in Cincinnati he hired a tutor and continued his education. He moved to Cleveland in 1895 and learned to repair sewing machines, which led him to learn how things worked, and laid the path for inventing.

### Interesting Facts:

- In 1907, opened his own sewing machine and shoe repair shop.
- Helped found the Cleveland Association of Colored Men in 1908.
- Both he and his wife opened a ladies' clothing store in 1909.
- In 1916 breathing invention helped him rescue workers trapped in a water intake tunnel beneath Lake Erie. He was featured in a newspaper. This smoke hood was completed in 1912.
- In 1913 launched the G.A. Morgan Hair Refining Company. He sold his own patented hair strengthening cream product, a hair straightening comb device, and hair color.
- In 1922 filed a patent for a traffic control device with a warning position. He sold his rights to the patent to General Electric for \$40,000.
- First African-American to own a car in Cleveland, Ohio.
- At the New York City Second International Exposition of Sanitation and Safety he was awarded the First Grand Prize Gold Medal.



Ulysses Dearing, restaurateur, 1st black man to own major Cleveland restaurant

Born June 25, 1903 in Washington, PA, **Ulysses Dearing** was named and raised by an uncle. Reared in poverty, Dearing received little formal education and left home when young to work odd jobs. At 15 he worked in the Carnegie Steel mills. By 19 he was a chef in Wilkesburg, Penn. At age 21 Dearing had saved enough money to open a small hotel and restaurant, but saw it destroyed by a flood.

He came to Cleveland around 1930 after a flood destroyed a restaurant in Washington that he had sunk his savings into. When he stepped off the bus in Cleveland, he had 98 cents, which he tossed onto the sidewalk.

"I just figured I needed a lot more than 98 cents," he said, "and maybe somebody else could use it more than me."

Dearing found work as a short-order cook and eventually became the manager of Cedar Gardens, where he could be seen chatting with Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington and Lena Horne.

In 1946, he opened the first of a handful of restaurants at 130 East 105th St., where he mingled with Joe Louis, Louis Armstrong and Count Basie. He later opened one of Cleveland's first takeouts, The Carry Out at East 97th Street and Cedar Avenue.

He was famous for his fried chicken, dapper dress and generosity, especially to children.

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## I Made My Public Comment...What Happens Now?



Gennifer Harding-Gosnell

Clevelanders were given the right to address City Council at public meetings beginning this past October. A movement fronted by the grassroots organization Clevelanders For Public Comment, and supported by several Council members, led to the implementation of a public comment rule that allows for up to ten people to speak for up to three minutes each at public City Council meetings, currently held Monday evenings at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

Cleveland Documenter Jennifer Chandler, who covered the first Council meeting featuring public comment, noticed there was no immediate response from Council members to the comments, and wondered, "Does council have a plan for reflection and action on the issues that were discussed?"

The Cleveland Observer went to Council and the community to find answers.

Public comment is considered a public record. Ohio "Sunshine" Laws require retention of these records for public use; Cleveland City Council will maintain any written comments, and spoken comments via the YouTube meeting live streams, for six years.

There is no mandate or rule that requires members of Council to follow-up with public commenters.

"Listening during the public comment period and engaging with commenters is the responsibility of each individual



Photos by Don Hill, Ward 17 resident

council member," says Ward 17 Councilperson Charles Slife.

"Each week I note the names of commenters and their comments. This has helped me contact them afterwards for follow up."

It is unclear how much reflection on public comment items will be done outside of what individual members choose to address. Council administration staff stated they were unable to answer The Observer's questions regarding the existence of any standardization or process for tracking, reporting, or analysis of public comment or the data it will contain.

Clevelanders For Public Comment [CPC]'s Nora Kelley, says the lack of obligation on Council members to follow-up is exactly why they believe having public commenters at their committee meetings, not just the whole Council, is so important, and why they will continue advocating to close gaps that remain in the public comment rule.

"In order to best advocate for policy solutions," she says, "we need to ensure that resident voices are heard early in the deliberation process."

"From CPC's perspective, the key deficiency in the council rule is the failure to address the committee sign-up process. Instead, this process remains opaque (and non-standardized) and, most concerning, at the discretion of the chair of the particular committee.

Throughout the campaign to secure public comment, council members repeatedly argued that public comment at the time of committee consideration was the most important point for residents to influence council deliberations. Inexplicably, the committee sign up process was ignored by the rule change."

Offering a solution for tracking and analysis could be Cleveland resident Angelo Trivisonno, who uses his technology skills to build interactive maps and databases of information, in particular the @CleBillBot page on Twitter that automatically tweets out legislation as it is uploaded to City and County websites.

Trivisonno has created a

library of all public comments provided at City Council meetings since the rule's inception on October 4th. "The Public Comment database includes the name, text, and video of each commenter at City Council meetings," he explains.

"It allows community members to browse, consider, and connect together the subjects and themes of previous comments, potentially in novel and non-obvious ways to spark change within systems."

So, what else can the public do, maybe the not-so-tech-savvy, to ensure public comment is a useful tool for communicating concerns between legislators and residents?



Photos by Don Hill, Ward 17 resident

Slife says, "I appreciate when commenters offer specific resources that members can use to learn more about the topic or to communicate important issues to residents, businesses, and other stakeholders."

Kelley says, "[At CPC] we believe that having active and structured campaigns is critical to successfully moving council on issues — we hope the CPC campaign builds momentum for other similar campaigns. And we believe we're seeing this happen already with efforts like Participatory Budgeting Cleveland [PB CLE] and the Guardians for Fair Work.

<https://cle4publiccomment.com/>

"The bottom line though, is that public comment is one tool and not a silver bullet. We believe a broader set of reforms are necessary to democratize the practices of council and help more residents actively engage in democracy-building efforts."

This article was written with information obtained from Documenters.org, a news service providing coverage of local government meetings, currently operating in Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland.

Judges in Ohio are elected into office every six years.

If you're charged with a crime in Cuyahoga County, the judge you are assigned can have a **tremendous impact** on things like bail amount, whether your plea deal is approved, or how long your sentence is.

Some judges send people to prison X% more than other judges, for the exact same crimes.

Some judges sentence Black defendants to prison as much as twice as often as whites with similar offenses.

There's a mismatch between the people judges represent and the people whose lives they most strongly affect. We call this the **Judge Gap**.

Each year, thousands of people are charged with crimes and the majority of those people are from the **city of Cleveland**.

\* We know that people who live in the city are more likely to be Black, Brown and poor.

Yet most of the people who vote for judges live in the **suburbs of Cleveland**.

\* We know that people who live in the suburbs are more likely to be white and wealthy.

The Judge Gap is not inescapable. Of the people living in Cleveland who are eligible to vote, only a small percentage actually do vote. Even among people who fill out a ballot, **many leave the judge field blank**.

\* Some people have told us that they don't vote for judges simply because there's not a lot of information out there on judge records and how they make decisions.

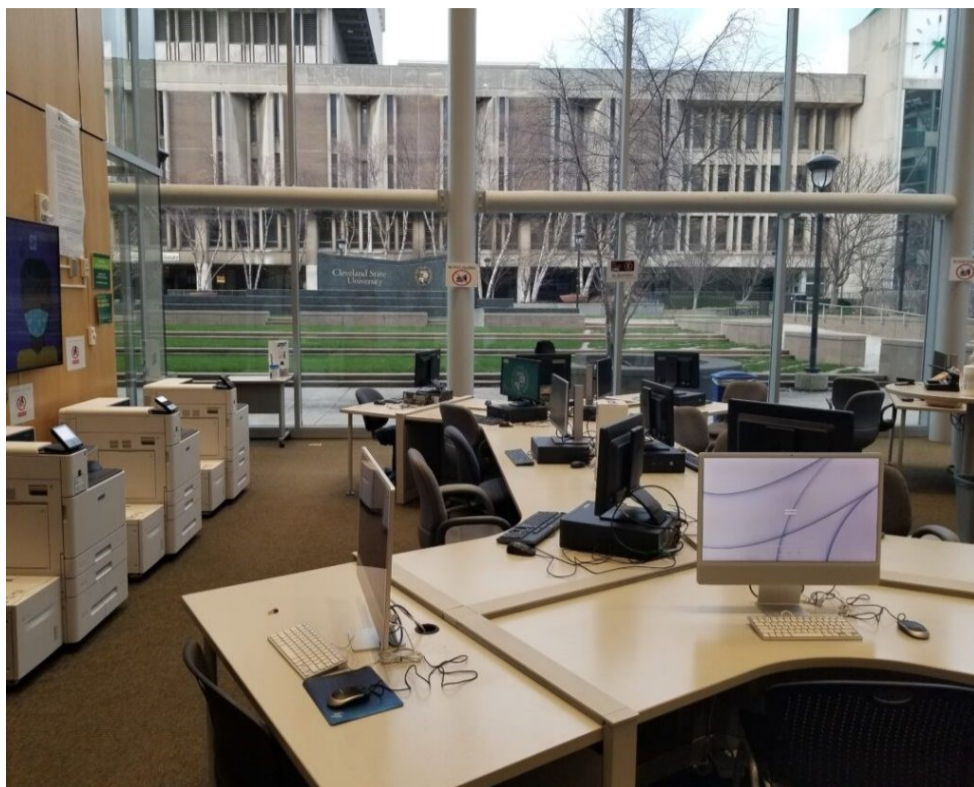
There are 1,235 million people in Cuyahoga County

- 100k of these voted in the last election
- 500k of these are eligible to vote
- 200k of these are registered to vote
- 40k of these filled out a vote for judge

There are so few votes for judges that most judicial elections can be swung without even getting more people to the polls — just by convincing the people who already vote **to also vote for a judge**.

\* In the 2020 general election, almost 190k voters left the judge field blank in a race in which William Vodrey beat Kenneth Callahan by fewer than 80k votes

## Higher Education: Learning and Teaching Through COVID



Cleveland State Media Lab.

By Tiffany Alexander

As the nation grapples with another variant of the Coronavirus, colleges in Northeast Ohio continue to find ways to keep students safe and classrooms innovative.

Though most campuses have resumed face-to-face classes – with some courses still offered

online or as hybrids – professors have found pros and cons to college in the time of Covid.

“The engagement was very different,” said Tina Hobbs, who teaches film studies at Cuyahoga Community College. “It’s difficult to get the same engagement virtually. They ask fewer questions, and I have to

call on students.”

Hobbs taught virtually during the fall 2021 semester and will remain online next semester.

“It’s safer,” she said. “It curtails the spread of the virus.”

At Case Western Reserve University, Michael Goldberg, associate professor at the Weatherhead School of Management, took advantage of his online class time by inviting guest speakers.

“Visitors don’t want to come into the classroom,” he said.

Fear of the virus keeps people at home. It’s also difficult to get experts to fly into Cleveland for classroom presentations. But inviting guests to participate via Zoom brings fresh, diverse voices into the fold.

“It enhances the students’ experience,” Goldberg said. “Even the busiest people can find time.”

Goldberg plans to teach face-to-face next semester, but he’s built a syllabus that makes room for online learning, just in case.

The greatest challenge at universities comes from courses that rely on hands-on learning.

Jay B. Johnson, who teaches cinematography at Cleveland State and Tri-C, had to both boost his students’ confidence and navigate Covid protocols.

“Students lost a year of being hands-on,” Johnson said. “They didn’t know how to check out camera gear, let alone use it.”

“They got better, but it was a challenge,” Johnson said. “They felt intimidated and scared, but once they got over that hill, things got better.”

Once the students were comfortable, Johnson made sure they followed film industry standards.

“We sanitized, masked, (and) quarantined the equipment just like in the real world,” he said.

Like Goldberg, Johnson plans to teach face-to-face next semester. Both think it will help the students going forward.

“In general, students are very grateful to be back in the classroom and interacting in person,” Goldberg said.

“Students become friends and eventually partners in filmmaking,” Johnson said. “They’ll create stronger bonds when they’re in the classroom together.”

## Academia Infected by COVID Virus: Students Weigh In



Cleveland State Media Lab.

By Erika Laboy - CSU Student

With the pandemic entering its third year, coping with the effects of the Coronavirus hasn’t been easy. This is especially true for college students.

Ohio has seen more than 1 million cases of the Coronavirus. The number continues to rise as colleges and universities continue to adapt to protocols such as mask mandates, online courses, and heavy restrictions around campus.

Tyrese Rushton, a junior at Cleveland State University, said his toughest moment during the pandemic was being “forced out of the dorm” during his freshman year and having to take his entire sophomore year online.

“I had to move back home with my parents. I had to start my job again and juggle all the school work that was loaded on me,” he said. “It was difficult to be outside of the classroom setting because it didn’t motivate me to do my work. I liked being on campus with my friends and being on my own. I struggled with the mentality of being a student outside of the proper setting.”

Switching to online classes was a huge challenge for plenty of students the past year. Many schools allowed students to choose a pass/fail option, which wouldn’t impact their grade point averages.

Jackie Harker, a sophomore physical therapy major at Kent

State University, found Zoom classes difficult. “It was harder to learn over a screen since they couldn’t get the full experience of labs in person,” she said.

Tutoring services also became harder to access. With grades dropping, students flocked to online zoom sessions with tutors. The sessions, however, were often crowded and didn’t allow time for everyone to seek help.

Kailee James, a senior criminal justice major at Youngstown State, said her experience through the pandemic has been a huge adjustment, but YSU did a great job of managing it.

“My professors did an outstanding job teaching remotely. I am incredibly lucky to have had such helpful professors through COVID-19. My professors made sure we knew we could contact them at any time with questions about the materials. They quickly replied and made sure we understood the concepts before moving on.”

Campuses in Northeast Ohio have now largely returned to face-to-face classes. Protocols have been put in place, including social distancing, masks, and encouraging vaccinations.

## Cleveland Spent \$6.6 Million to Lease Back Justice Center Police HQ

From page 2

building at the intersection of E. 75th and Opportunity Corridor. The city broke ground in December 2021, but construction is not expected to be complete until 2026. The new project is expected to cost \$107.5 million.

Cleveland Documenters asked city officials if there were plans to renew the lease at the Justice Center after October 2022 but have not yet received a response.

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## Action Needed! Ohio State Board of Education abolishes anti-racism and equity resolution.

By Meryl Johnson

I am an elected member of Ohio's State Board of Education, District 11 (representing parts of Northern Cuyahoga and Lake Counties), and a retired 40-year Cleveland teacher.

I have a special request for the Cleveland community. Please write a letter to Governor Michael DeWine!

Here is the issue.

The Ohio Board of Education has 19 members — 11 elected by voters and 8 appointed by the governor. In July 2020, a

resolution supporting equity and condemning hate and racism, written in response to the murder of George Floyd, passed 12-5 with one abstention.

The appointed members helped make the victory possible. You can read the original resolution here:

[www.honestyforohioeducation.info/sboe-res.html](http://www.honestyforohioeducation.info/sboe-res.html)

Some new members were elected in November 2020. New member Brendan Shea of District 10 led an effort to rescind the original resolution.

On October 13, after a four-

hour debate, the Board rescinded the original resolution 10-7, with two members absent. Appointed members were threatened by some legislators that if they didn't vote to rescind the equity resolution, they would be kicked off the Board.

Five appointed members were present for the vote: three voted to rescind, but two voted against it. Those two were forced to resign, including Board President Laura Kohler, who said that Governor DeWine had asked her to resign.

Kohler believed there were enough votes in the Ohio Senate (with its Republican supermajority) to remove her, and she decided to resign rather than engage in a "drag-out fight" with lawmakers.

Eric Poklar was the second appointed member forced to resign after the vote. He was originally appointed in January 2017 by Governor DeWine and reappointed in January 2020. Poklar said at the meeting, "You haven't told me what's wrong with the resolution, so I will not vote to rescind it."

The anti-racism resolution was replaced with one to promote academic excellence without "respect to race, ethnicity or creed." Some opponents of the resolution believe that systemic racism does not exist, so they blame poverty.

There are people who choose to believe that poverty is the problem, and it's quite clear in the research, that when you disaggregate the data, that children of color come out with lower scores than white children in Appalachia. We were supposed to have been elected to make sure that our children succeed. That is why we put that (original) resolution together

because there are children of color, and namely African American children, who are not succeeding, and they deserve to be successful.

They're not in the AP classes. They get suspended more than anybody else, even if it's the same violation of a rule as a white child. They're the ones being suspended and expelled. They're not graduating as often as white children.

When you look at the data, it's always, always the African American children who have the lower numbers.

Adding to the situation, Ohio Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria, who wrote the resolution's preamble, retired in September.

The Board is preparing to hire a search firm to help find a new Superintendent of Public Instruction. The current "go-along-to-get-along" mentality is not encouraging for genuine academic progress.

I am asking community members to write Governor DeWine.

Let him know you disagree with the "mobster mentality" on the Ohio Board of Education of "do what you're told or you're gone." As stakeholders, don't you believe that Ohio's students of color deserve the same opportunities as other students? To contact Governor DeWine by email use this link:

<https://governor.ohio.gov>

The address to write a letter:

Gov. Michael DeWine  
77 S. High Street – Suite 30  
Columbus, OH 43215

Please take the time to write to the Governor and express your disapproval. Let's support equitable opportunities for all students.



## Legal Aid Offers Free Legal Help with Tax Problems

By Tonya Sams

Tax season is headed our way faster than lake effect snow, and there are many community organizations helping Northeast Ohio residents with tax preparation.

The pandemic has affected how and when we file taxes, as well as what we file. One of the most recent federal tax policy changes in the Child Tax Credit. The Child Tax Credit gives up to \$3,000 for each dependent child under the age of 17 and \$3,600 if under the age of 6. Through this program, taxpayers may also qualify for a refund if the unused tax credit is larger than the total amount of their tax bill.

If you have questions, you definitely need to reach out for help! You can call 2-1-1 to find free tax prep help near you or visit [www.lasclev.org/taxhelp](http://www.lasclev.org/taxhelp) for a list of organizations that help you file taxes for free.

In addition to great community

resources that help you file taxes, Legal Aid is here to help with legal problems related to taxes. Legal Aid has a tax practice that works closely with community organizations not just during tax season, but throughout the year. Legal Aid's Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) is a free legal service that helps to resolve taxpayer disputes with the IRS regarding federal income tax matters.

Legal Aid helps resolve legal issues related to tax issues. For example, Legal Aid attorneys can help people negotiate with the IRS to settle a debt for less than the full amount owed, or lower/eliminate taxable income from debts that were forgiven by banks and credit card companies.

Legal Aid also helps:

- Prevent the IRS from taking property, wages, and social security benefits;

- Solve identity theft problems;
- Correct tax preparer fraud;
- Help H-2A workers file taxes (an important step towards gaining citizenship);
- Help people obtain income tax records;
- Protect against spousal abuses in connection with tax returns;
- Advise taxpayers on their rights and obligations regarding the health care marketplace;

Legal Aid recently helped "Thomas" with a tax problem that needed an attorney's help (name changed for privacy.) He owed the IRS five years' worth of taxes. The liens affected his credit report, creating a domino effect. Employers conducting background checks and saw the tax liens, they didn't want to hire Thomas, and financing companies wouldn't loan him

money for much-needed repairs to his home.

Thomas sought help from Legal Aid. The Legal Aid attorney discovered that the IRS had failed to release the liens it had filed, although the 10-year collection statute had expired.

The attorney then reached out to the IRS as Thomas's legal representative, requesting that Thomas be released from the liens. The IRS granted the request and Thomas moved forward with his job search without the worry of past tax issues destroying his chances at a new and better life.

Learn more about our tax practice at

[www.lasclev.org/get-help/work/tax-problems](http://www.lasclev.org/get-help/work/tax-problems).

Call Legal Aid at 216-687-1900 or apply for help online 24/7 at

[www.lasclev.org](http://www.lasclev.org).

Tonya Sams is the Development and Communications Assistant at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.

Issue 24: Where We Are Today With Mayor Bibb's First Steps



By Yugan Sakthi

**This is the first in a series of monthly articles about the implementation of Issue 24 and how you can become involved in the fight for our public safety.**

On November 2, 2021, Clevelanders made it clear: the police department needs reform. With a 60/40 margin, voters overwhelmingly passed Issue 24, which overhauls the way the Cleveland Department of Police (CDP) handles police misconduct; and it was East Side voters who made it happen.

Now into the first month of his position in the office, Mayor Justin Bibb bears the responsibility of implementing the new amendments to the City Charter. Yet, the details of the amendments and the specifics of their implementation are complicated and murky. We as community members, interested in our public safety, have a right to know what the city is doing to make sure the amendments are implemented in full.

**Background**

Clevelanders do not need to be reminded of CDP's history of violent misconduct. In 2015, after a two-year-long investigation of the CDP, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) found that "CDP engages in a pattern or practice of using "excessive force" on community members. The city was then thrown into an agreement with the DOJ known as the "Consent Decree," a multi-year plan aimed at reforming CDP practices until they became constitutional.

The Consent Decree set up monitoring teams and remains in place to this day. Since the Consent Decree took effect, CDP has been under the watchful eye of the DOJ and of US District Judge Solomon Oliver Jr., who oversees the agreement. Change under the Consent has

however, has been slow and unproductive. Cleveland community members, especially those most affected by police violence, demanded more. Issue 24, written in the aftermath of the nationwide protests in 2020, seems to be the first concrete product of these demands.

**Key elements of the amended charter**

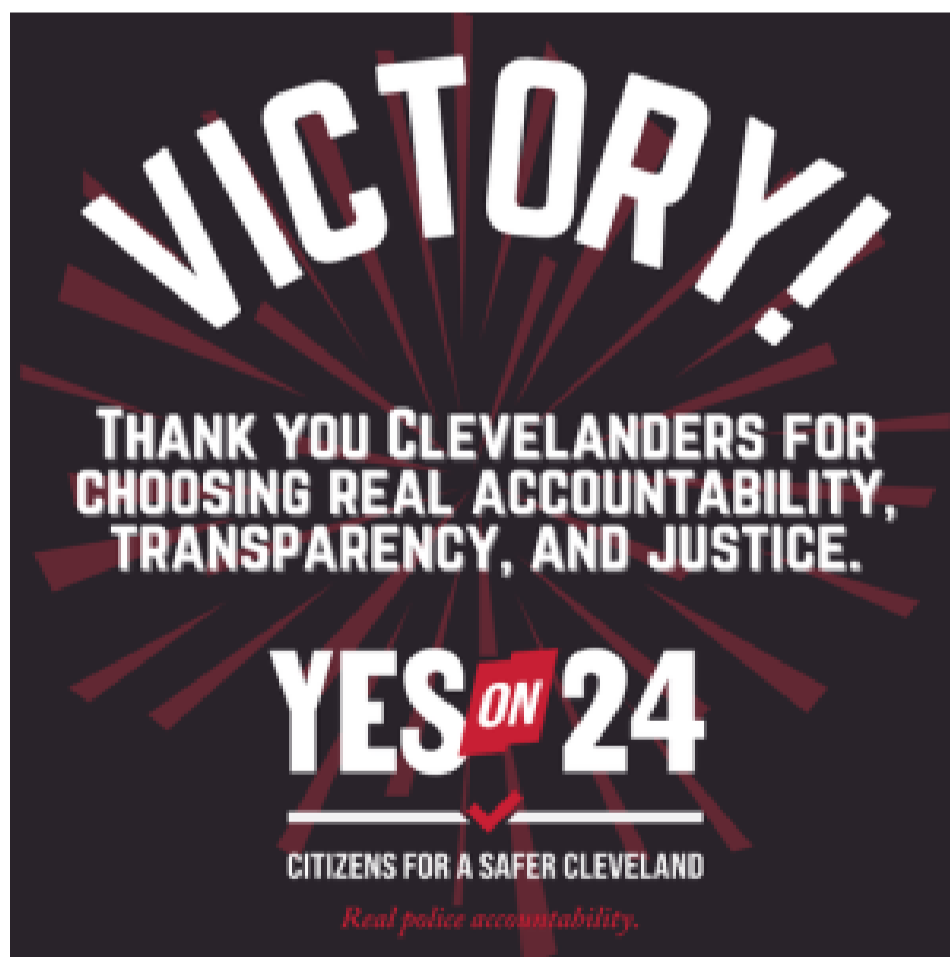
When misconduct is alleged against an officer, CDP has shown that it will go to great

lengths to find him or her innocent of any wrongdoing. In the few cases where officers are found guilty — based upon an investigative process hidden to the public — the punishments are weak.

will police the police. This will occur in two ways. First, the independent Civilian Police Review Board (CPRB) is granted the authority to investigate all police misconduct allegations.

The disciplinary actions it recommends must be complied with by CDP. This is a major reform of how Cleveland Police are held accountable: no longer will they be investigating themselves.

Second, the Community Police Commission (CPC) is



established as a permanent commission. The amended charter gives it a wide range of duties and authority. CPC will have the final say on officer discipline and has the authority to further increase disciplinary action if it determines CPRB's recommendations to be insufficient. It will also establish an audit of CDP's recruitment and training policies, participate

in community outreach, make out grants for community programs, and more. Just as important as the roles of these two agencies is the way their members will be chosen. The amended charter makes it clear that members will be "broadly representative" of the "overall demographics of Cleveland residents," including by race, gender, sexuality, age, faith, business, and other communities. CPRB will have at least two attorneys "with experience representing victims of police misconduct or criminally prosecuting police misconduct." Neither CPRB nor CPC will allow a current or former CDP employee, but the CPC will allow three police association representatives.

Implementation updates

Implementation of Issue 24 reforms falls on Justin Bibb and his administration, who are hoping to bring much-needed change to Cleveland and City Hall for the first time in 16 years. Though not much has happened yet, three important updates are worth noting.

First, the Consent Decree needs to be modified so that it can co-exist with the new policy. In December, Barbara Langheny, the Director of Law under Frank Jackson, filed a motion with Judge Oliver to achieve this. Langheny's motion detailed all the ways in which Issue 24 is in conflict with current law, with the Consent Decree, and with police unions' collective bargaining agreements. "The city did not suggest remedies or any other options for the court," writes Ideastream reporter Matthew Richmond. It was a bad-faith and last-ditch effort to demonstrate the Jackson administration's distaste for Issue 24. Subodh Chandra, an Issue 24 author, says it "[undermines] the will of Cleveland's voters."

In response, the DOJ also filed a motion on December 15, asking the court to give DOJ and the City until February 18th to work out a plan to modify the Consent Decree.

The second update of note is Bibb's appointment of a public safety task force. The group, which includes members like former councilman Zack Reed, is tasked with starting the implementation of Issue 24. Calvin Williams, former Cleveland Chief of Police, stepped down to start the new year. His replacement must be found. Bibb is also tasked with naming members to the 13-person CPC. These are all tasks he aims to undertake in the coming month.

Third, and finally, the Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association (CPPA — Cleveland's largest police union) contract is set to expire in March of this year. Issue 24 will

(Continued on page 14)

## Miseducation - The Forgotten Reason for Black History Month *front page*

Source: <https://hqudc.org/>

This “policing” of what will be taught to Black students is still in effect today—in the form of school boards, the people who determine the curriculums, and the people who make the decision of which books will be published and available to which schools.

In today’s politically charged environment much is being done to resist the inclusion of Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asians in textbooks and classrooms, and diminish their roles and contributions to the growth of one of the most powerful nations in the world.

We find that the education of our children is being used by politicians to influence votes for a particular candidate. We have people vying for seats on school boards in order to influence what will and will not be taught in schools, and politicians threatening to withhold funding



to schools that promote an inclusive and true history of this country.

At the heart of this heated controversy is Critical Race Theory. CRT is not a course to be taught in school grades K-12. It is also not a recent phenomenon. CRT was developed at Harvard Law school under professor Derrick Bell in the 1980s and grew popular among legal scholars. Its focus is on understanding and rectifying the ways in which a regime of white dominance and its subordination of people

of color in America has had an impact on the relationship between social structures and professed ideals such as the “rule of law” and “equal protection.” It is taught in law schools and schools of higher education. There is no truth that it is being taught in grades K-12. According to an article on cleveland.com in January of 2022, Governor Mike DeWine is quoted saying he opposes CRT, but supports teaching “ugly parts of American history.” DeWine deflected when asked if CRT was actually being taught in grades K-12 schools in Ohio. CRT is being used as a political strategy by Republicans to gain voters, especially voters they lost because of Trump. In Ohio, Republicans have introduced bills prohibiting teachers from promoting divisive topics and also a list of topics that cannot be taught.

What is at issue is whose



Dr. Carter G. Woodson – The Founder of Black History Week

interpretation of the history of this country will be taught in public schools, the true history or one that serves the needs of the dominant society?

For a current consideration of the issues, you might want to read the hotly contested new book *The 1619 Project*, by Nicole Hannah-Jones, released in August 2019.

During Black History Month, let’s not forget that the driving force behind its inception was the right to a fair and honest education.

## Issue 24: Where We Are Today *from page 13*

inject a new layer of bargaining into agreement talks this year since police unions are often fiercely protective of their investigative and disciplinary procedures.

Jeff Follmer, president of the CPPA, has vowed to file a lawsuit at the first instance the CPPA feels that CPRB or CPC is treading upon the police’s investigative and disciplinary territory. Watchful eyes will be

kept on these organizations and the moves they make in the coming months.

**What can you do?**

Issue 24 was the first major policy action regarding CDP misconduct since the Consent Decree in 2015. While the amended charter has the potential to create positive change within the CDP and its culture of violence, its

implementation does not fall on City Hall alone. **Community members have an important role.** Many are hopeful for change, yet many are skeptical, and rightly so.

As community members, you can continue to **communicate with our elected officials and ask for transparency.** It is important that you **file complaints** whenever we witness acts of police misconduct

If you know community leaders and organizers who would make an impact serving on the CPC, you can contact your councilperson and make a recommendation.

*If you have any questions or would like to request specific information to appear in next month’s Issue 24 update, please do not hesitate to reach out to The Cleveland Observer at :*

[info@theclevelandobserver](mailto:info@theclevelandobserver)

## MB Spotlight: Chanelle’s Treatz *front page*



**Q: What makes Chanelle’s Treatz different from the others that serve desserts?**

A: I have a natural talent and a creative mind that sets me apart from my competition. My customers get a piece of me with

each item they buy from me because I take pride in my work.

No matter if it is a cheesecake jar, a brownie, or a custom cake, we make all of our items from scratch. Sugar-free, gluten-free, and vegan options are available to order, and we even make special treats for our four-legged companions.

**Q: How has Chanelle’s Treatz been able to survive the pandemic, and are there different ways you market to your customers now?**

A: It has been tough. I survive by leaning on my loyal customers and referrals a lot. Repeat customers are important at times like this.

I also have used this time to strengthen my online presence.

Social media is a great platform to showcase my work and connect to people who otherwise would not know I am available.

**Q: How does it feel being a minority with your own business and investing back into yourself and the company? What led up to opening your own business?**

A: Being a minority and running your own business is hard, but inspiring at the same time. I have no background in running a business.

Although I have managed other people’s businesses and companies, running my own is different. Decision-making is different when it’s more personal, and puts more pressure on every decision you make. I have worked in a few

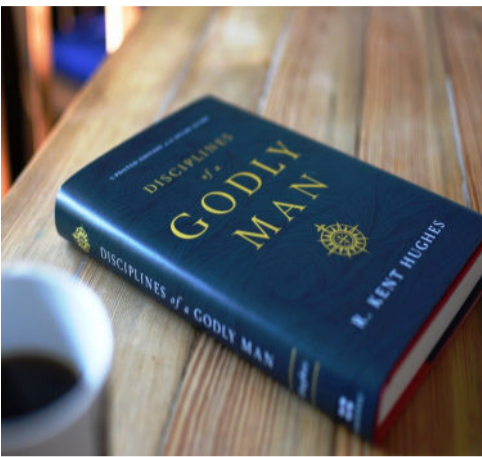
different fields, from waiting tables to a secretary in a law firm to managing departments in higher education. In the end, all signs have pointed to this is where I should be. It was not an easy decision to make either. It was extremely scary to walk away from my comfort zone to commit to something that was not guaranteed.

It took a lot of faith and for me to strengthen my belief in myself. I can do this. I will be successful. And, it is because I have a strong community behind me to keep me grounded, that I know I will achieve everything that I set out to do.

*Chanelle’s Treatz is located at: 13204 Shaker Square, Cleveland, OH 44120. To learn more, call 216-505-0083 or visit:*

<https://www.chanellestreatz.com>

## Act Like A Man! Part 13



By Melvin Twigg Mason

**Stick-to-it-iveness.** It is a colloquial word that means to persist, maintain, or continue in pursuit of something; to keep on keeping on. Another synonym of it is “perseverance.”

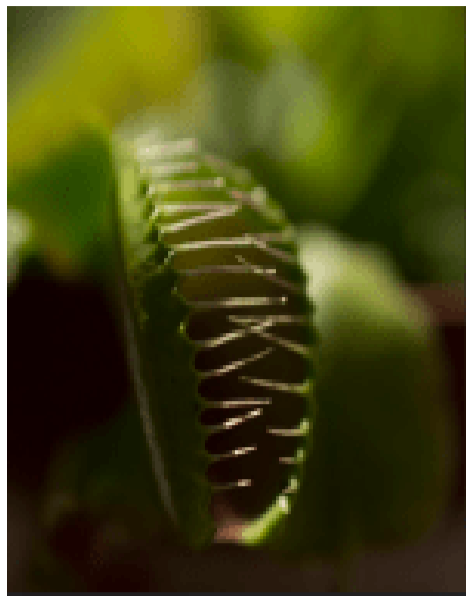
In the case of his book “Disciplines of A Godly Man,” R. Kent Hughes is calling for us to stick to our Christianity. In Chapter 13 he deals with the Discipline of Perseverance, which according to principles he uses from the book of Hebrews, requires each of us to strip down, run, focus, and consider!

- **Strip Down** – to rid yourself of:

1. **Hindrances** that get in the way of your pursuit. Things or people that are not necessarily bad, such as a hobby, an event, a place, or a pleasure, but that stagnate your continuing progress and growth in the faith. Hughes says these things may be okay for others, but wrong for you because they distract you from spending your time and energy on what is important.
2. **Besetting** (heavy, clinging) **Sins** that easily stick to you, e.g., jealousy, anger, pride, lust, or pessimism. Hughes describes them with this horrifying scenario:



*A fly sets down on a leaf to taste the sweetness that grows there. Instantly, three crimson-tipped, fingerlike hairs bend over to touch the fly’s wings, holding it firmly in a sticky grasp. The more the fly struggles to get free, the more hopelessly it becomes coated with adhesive. Soon the fly relaxes, extending its tongue to continue to feast on the sweetness... just like when we chow down on our besetting sins. The captive fly is entirely at the plant’s mercy. Two hours later, the fly is an empty, sucked-out carcass, and the hungry plant unfolds its delectable mouth for its next easy entanglement.*

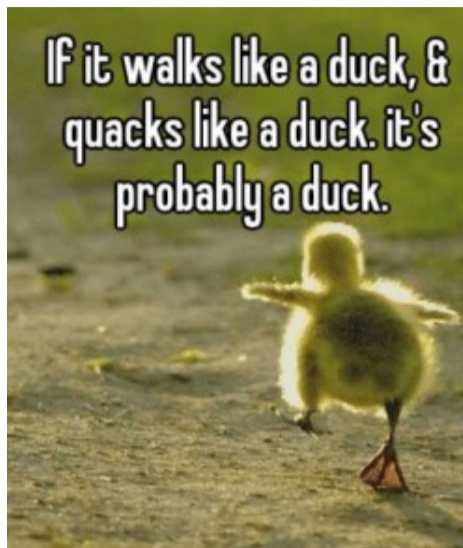


- **Run** – Hughes asserts that you have a “race” mapped out by God, just for you. It is specially designed and unique, to match your specific gifts, skills, and personality! Because of this, you can finish your race well, if you rely on the strength and guidance of your Creator.
- **Focus** – Hughes indicates that just as Jesus finished His race by looking to the joys and not the agony set before Him, so you and I would do well to concentrate on “the Author & Finisher of our faith,” and the unspeakable joys He sets in view before us (Rom. 8:14-18).
- **Consider** – Hughes says the message of Hebrews 12 is clear. Consider all the hellbent, sinful men that Jesus had to face – or rather, overlook -- before His crucifixion in order to set His sights on the finish line. We, likewise, must look beyond the hardships that the world will bring our way and push through our race to the finish!

The author summarizes this way: “If we are to finish well in the faith, we must lay aside every weight and the sins that so easily cling to us. The kind, knowing faces of those who have run this race before us (Hebrews 12:1) beckons us to do so.”



## Trust Your Perceptions and Get Real With Yourself



By Sheila Ferguson

*It is what it is! If it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck*

Self-deception and denial are two of the biggest barriers to our personal development, fulfillment, purpose, and happiness. Getting real with yourself may be challenging, but it is one of the most important tasks you will ever undertake. It is a game-changer and will make you ask, “why didn’t I do this sooner?”

The sooner you learn to size up a situation and make constructive choices, the better. Stop making excuses or making poor choices because it is easier.

You must take command over your life. Practicing the art of optimal choice-making and truth-telling involves gaining confidence in the belief that you deserve the best.

- 1) Choosing to be conscious and aware.
- 2) Accepting only the truth about the people and situations in your life, and whether they feel right for you.
- 3) Listening to both your head and your heart to guide you through what is suitable for you.
- 4) Being clear about the people and behaviors you will not tolerate.

My Mom used to say that whenever you tell a lie you only hurt yourself. We lie to ourselves because the truth hurts, or because we are disappointed by another person. When we become aware of the need to change, it is easy to deceive ourselves and get stuck.

### Backfiring in Your Brain?

Some of you may wonder what is going on in our brain that makes accepting truth and reality so difficult. Emotions are controlled by the brain’s frontal lobe, the largest section of the brain. This area also controls reasoning, problem-solving, decision making, language, and personality traits. In humans, it develops in strength as we move into our late twenties and early thirties.

We’ve all had moments when we dismiss the seriousness of

an issue and delay taking action. In those instances, we play a game of self-deception that may be based on fear or pure denial. In this mode, it is easy to brush things off with comments like, “Oh, I think I will wait and see; I am sure that things will get better, or I am just being overly sensitive.” Often, we are simply denying that something in our lives is out of order. Most of us at one time or another have denied:

- Aches or pains that require urgent medical attention
- Signs that our child’s behavior is out of control
- Jobs that do not feed our soul or seed our growth
- Unequal relationships where you are the only one giving time, talent, energy, care, and money with no return
- Spaces that are either too big or too cramped and do not meet your needs
- Patterns of accepting less than we deserve.



Whenever things are not working out, do not delay in taking corrective action. Remember that the need to change could mean leaving behind people, places, and things that hinder your growth. Either way, swift and immediate action can make the difference between remaining stagnant for a lifetime or fulfilling your potential!

Taking action opens new windows and doors to your life. Break the cycle of self-deception by giving yourself quiet time to reflect and examine those areas of your life where you have the most success and satisfaction.

Identify what you want out of life. Focus on removing the barriers to achieving your goals for love, health, peace, happiness, and career success.

*I wish you all the best in 2022!*



## COVID 19 – The Bad and the Not So Bad



By Jeremiah Al-Aljeleel, Cleveland School of Science and Medicine

Covid has had a big impact on the lives of everyone.

It has also impacted education in the Cleveland schools. In this article, I will discuss the challenges a few of my peers and I experienced when having to adjust to this new learning environment.

First, Covid took me out of a classroom environment. I was always used to being in a physical classroom with posters of the material we were learning on the wall. I was used to having my classmates next to me.

When the school district decided that we would switch online, I realized I wouldn't be in a classroom anymore. I had to go to school using whatever technology I had.

It was a big adjustment to make. For one, I didn't have the proper technology to do a virtual school year. The school district was aware of this. As a result, they provided as many students as they could with laptops and hotspots, which helped a lot. I could now stay connected with my teachers. Now, instead of having to catch the bus to go to my school building, which is on the other side of town, I could just go to school from my bedroom.

Covid took away the fun of going to school. Being in a physical school environment allowed for a lot of different activities to be held such as pep rallies, school dances, and after-school events, like fundraisers. These were nearly impossible to do online.

It lowered the morale of myself and a lot of my peers because every day was mostly the same.

We logged on to our class and sat there for hours in our own homes. We listened to a screen talk. It was also hard not to get distracted by the many things in my house such as my dog or a family member who needed help and didn't realize I was in school because it was online.

Lastly, Covid affected the way I was learning. I have always preferred to learn by reading a book or having the material in hand. Having a virtual class meant that a lot of material was going to be online. So, I had to take more notes than I usually do.

I had to find a way to make the learning more interesting by adding more interactive opportunities. This enhanced my creative abilities. I found that making virtual study groups with my friends, printing out the materials from my own printer, and going into more depth on the material helped. I could now be better prepared for the class.

Overall, I will say that Covid has had a big impact on my education – some bad and some not so bad. It made it more difficult to learn and disconnected me from my peers, but it also helped me adapt to difficult situations and to become a more well-rounded individual who can educate myself when I have to and make learning fun.



## High School Student Says Education System Needs Reform

By Kayla Blake, Cleveland School of Science and Medicine

Many people agree with me when I say that the education system needs to be reformed.

As a high schooler, I can honestly say most of what we learn doesn't prepare us for the real world. I have been very active in high school and taken many advanced courses and most of them have not given me materials that will prepare me for the "real world" overall. If we want to have a better curriculum, it has to be inclusive of more social-emotional learning, home economics, and financial literacy.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is extremely important because life is all about interacting with other people. Whether you are in college, working, or even going to the grocery store, it's very social. SEL is used to target the core problems including bullying, depression, and more. These are some of the biggest problems among youth in the US. Large percentages of teens have depression and/or have attempted suicide. Way too many middle and high schoolers have experienced bullying.

These occurrences are proof that students need to have more SEL instruction; its scarcity devastating the youth. By investing just a little more time in

this, we will improve our community and nurture young people. SEL has also been shown to improve attendance and academics.

Another thing I believe we should be learning more about is Home Economics which is also known as "Home Ec". This includes basic skills that you will need to live on your own such as cooking, cleaning, housing design, etc. These are skills that everyone must learn to live a happy and healthy life. Everyone should know how to maintain a house and take care of themselves. It would be beneficial for everyone to be required to take this course. I wish that I had Home Ec because I would feel more prepared to go out to college and live on my own. This type of addition to the curriculum would aid kids and give them basic life skills.

The last thing is financial literacy. A lot of the reason why many people struggle financially is that they've never had anyone to teach them about how it works. I think this is something I should learn more about. It would be great to know how to manage money and be financially educated and for my peers to have the same opportunity. People who learn financial wellness and money

management are more likely to be smarter with the way that they spend and invest. This would give us more information on how to maneuver through the real world.

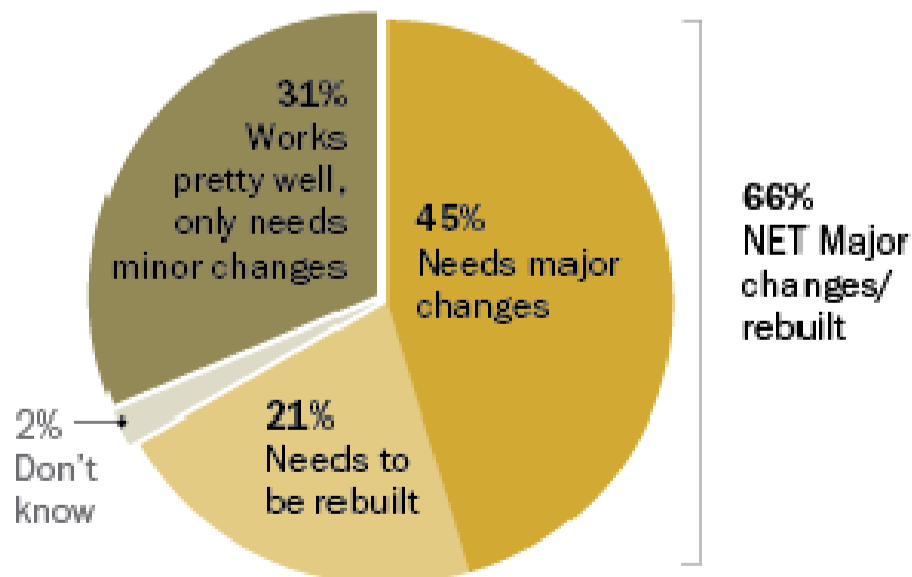
In conclusion, students like myself should be spending less

time on meaningless classes and learn how to step into adulthood after high school no matter the path they want to take afterward.

I wish to see these changes made as I believe it would improve my generation and set us up for success.

## Views of the Education System

% saying the education system ...



PEW RESEARCH CENTER May 1-5, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

## What to Know About Who Picks Judges in Cleveland (And Why It Matters)

Published in partnership with The Marshall Project. To read more, go to <https://testify.news/>

By Rachel Dissell, Ilica Mahajan, Anna Flagg and Wesley Lowery

Few people in Cuyahoga County wield as much power over as many lives as the 34 elected judges who preside over felony cases. These **Common Pleas Judges** consider the cases of thousands of people a year, making decisions about bail, plea deals and sentencing. **They determine who feels the full weight of the law and who receives leniency.**

But when it comes time for residents to vote those judges in — or out — of office, **the people with the most at stake often don't cast ballots.**

Attorneys, academics and people who have experienced the system firsthand offered fundamental reasons for low turnout: a **glaring lack of useful information** about how the courts operate and the individual track records of judges themselves, compounded by a **deep distrust of the entire criminal justice system.**

Black residents of Cuyahoga County are **arrested and sent to prison at disproportionate rates.** To understand what role the court system — and its elected judges — play in these lopsided outcomes, **The Marshall Project** collected and analyzed more than **six years of court data.** Here's what we found

- **Court outcomes worsen existing racial disparities.** Though Black people make up only about 30% of the county's residents, almost two-thirds of the people who are arrested by police and charged with felonies by prosecutors are Black. Then, after judges impose sentences, state records show **three-quarters of people in state prisons convicted in Cuyahoga County are Black.** Individual judges make a big difference — for example, some judges almost never send defendants to prison

for common charges like theft and low-level felony drug possession, while others incarcerate 30% or more.

- While Cleveland residents make up two-thirds of defendants in the court, votes from the city account for just a quarter of those cast for judges. That means the vote in the predominantly **White suburbs in judges' races effectively carries three times the power of the vote in the majority Black city.**
- Voters have more power than they may think. If everyone who showed up to

patterns have resulted in mostly **White judges deciding the guilt or innocence of the county's mostly Black criminal defendants.** Of the 34 judges currently on the bench in Cuyahoga County, **30 are White and four are Black.**

The disparity in power between county and city voters creates a big problem because **few judges on the ballot understand the experiences of people who appear in court** — often people of color living in the city, said **Erika Anthony**, who co-founded Cleveland VOTES. “Essentially, our bench is dominated by White, Westside Irish Catholic



Cuyahoga County's voting patterns have resulted in mostly White judges deciding the guilt or innocence of the county's mostly Black criminal defendants. People lined up to vote early at the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections in 2018. MADDIE MCGARVEY

vote had cast ballots for judges as well, that could have swung the outcome in 9 of 15 contested judicial races since 2016—without turning out a single additional voter.

**Judge Brendan J. Sheehan**, administrative judge of the Court of Common Pleas, said there's no straightforward way to determine the role of judges in sentencing disparities. “Simply put, **there is a unique story behind each sentence that raw data cannot capture,**” he said.

Cuyahoga County's voting

individuals,” Anthony said.

In Ohio, like most states, voters elect judges. **But many races in Cuyahoga County aren't contested** — 20 of the 35 county-level criminal court judicial races since 2016 had a single candidate.

“It's almost impossible to vote out a judge,” said Jerry Primm II, who has managed judicial campaigns and said there is an **unwritten rule among local Democrats to never challenge a sitting judge.** “They know they have that job for 30 or 40 years, depending on what their age is.”

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Every voting precinct in the county sees a drop-off in voting in judicial races. In **November 2020, 29% of county voters marked their ballot for president, but not for judges.**

It just isn't possible for many voters to track the number of candidates and races necessary to participate in judges' races, experts say.

“Voters kind of lose heart after a while,” said Lawrence Baum, emeritus professor of political science at Ohio State University. **The sheer number of judicial races and the fact they fall to the bottom of the ballot increases fatigue, he said.**

State and local groups have stepped up efforts in recent years to give voters more information on judicial candidates, Sheehan said.

“We should pursue all avenues to get those voters the information they need to make informed choices,” he said.

**But more than half of the 46 city and county residents interviewed by Cleveland Documenters said there wasn't enough relevant information available to help vote in judicial races.**

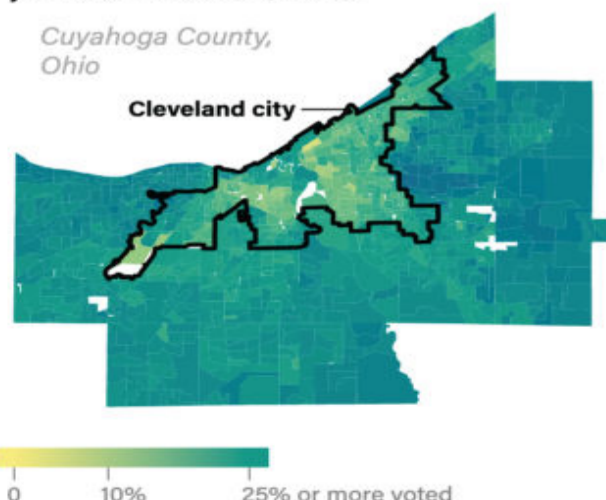
Those who voted for judges said they used campaign ads, news articles or websites like [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org)

or [Judge4Yourself.com](http://Judge4Yourself.com), which rate candidates based on interviews with local bar associations. Those sources didn't answer specific questions they had about candidates or measure how current judges were doing their jobs.

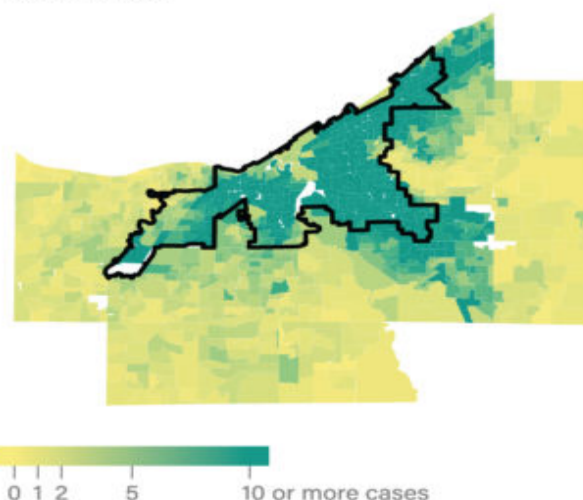
“I would like to know their records of how they sentence, and how strict they are, or how lenient they are, or if they are more prejudiced one way or another way,” said Sara R. Jackson, 79, of University Circle.

Reporting contributed by: David Eads, Cleveland Documenter Kellie Morris, Michelle Pitcher, and Nicole Lewis. Additional development by Aaron Williams.

Voter participation in contested judicial elections, 2020



Court cases per 100 adults, 2016-2021



Source: Cuyahoga County Clerk of Courts, Cuyahoga County Board of Elections.

## Goals From Each City Council Member

By Staff Writer

Cleveland City Council is the elected legislative body of the City, responsible for **writing and enacting City laws, known as ordinances**. Ordinances govern the actions, responsibilities and tax dollars of residents, businesses, organizations, city departments and visitors in Cleveland. Ordinances can be written and passed to address issues about housing, safety, public services, employment, the City budget and economic development. Many ordinances authorize the City to spend money on contracts and projects that support the mission of the City of Cleveland.

### Who writes legislation?

Legislation is usually drafted for Council Members by Council staff lawyers and for the Mayor's administration by the city's Law Department. Every piece of

legislation is sponsored by one or more members of Council, or by the Mayor.

Directors of the City departments can request an ordinance be sponsored on their behalf.

### Legislation Introduction

The Council Clerk and her staff prepare all legislation for introduction and first reading at a council meeting. A small amount of legislation introduced is passed under suspension on first reading. The rest are sent to appropriate City department's for review.

### Public Hearing

After administrative review, the ordinance is returned to Council for consideration in a public hearing before the appropriate Council Committee (s). Council Members and City departments can recommend

changes, or amendments to the legislation during the hearing process.

After the review is complete and any amendments have been made, the legislation is read a second time at a Council meeting. A second reading allows Council Members and the public to hear what changes have been made to the law. Amendments cannot be made after the second reading of the legislation.

### Passing Legislation

Under the Charter, legislation cannot be passed until it has been read on three separate days unless this requirement is dispensed with by a two-thirds vote of the Council.

This is known as passing legislation "under suspension". Ordinances and Resolutions may be passed or adopted under suspension after either the first or the second reading. If legislation is not passed under suspension

after the second reading, it is scheduled for third and final reading and consideration for passage. A simple majority is needed to pass legislation. All legislation is signed by the President of Council, the City Clerk and the Mayor. Ordinances and resolutions are effective 30 days after passage, unless a piece is declared an emergency measure by a two-thirds vote of the Council, in which case the legislation will take effect immediately upon the Mayor's signature or 10 days after passage if not signed by the Mayor, unless a different effective date is stated in the legislation.

### Mayoral Decision

The Mayor does have the power to veto an ordinance. Council must reconsider any legislation vetoed by the Mayor and, if two-thirds of the Council Members vote to override the Mayor's veto, then the law is considered passed.



Joseph T. Jones  
jjones@clevelandcitycouncil.org  
Office: 216.664.4944

### Ward 1 Council Member

**Joseph T. Jones** was reelected to represent the neighborhoods of Lee-Harvard, Lee-Seville, Union-Miles, and part of Mt. Pleasant.

**Goal**  
Did not Respond

**Priority**  
Did not Respond

**COMMITTEES**  
Mayor's Appointments - *Chair*  
Safety - *Vice Chair*  
Development, Planning & Sustainability - *Member*  
Municipal Services & Properties - *Member*  
Workforce, Education, Training & Youth Development - *Member*



Kevin L. Bishop  
kbishop@clevelandcitycouncil.org  
Office: 216.664.4945

### Ward 2 Council Member

**Kevin L. Bishop** was reelected to represent the neighborhoods of Mt. Pleasant, Union-Miles and Mill Creek Fall Neighborhoods

**Goal**  
Did not Respond

**Priority**  
Did not Respond

**COMMITTEES**  
Municipal Services & Properties - *Chair*  
Finance, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - *Member*  
Transportation & Mobility Utilities - *Member*  
Operations - *Member*



Deborah A. Gray  
dgray@clevelandcitycouncil.org  
Office: 216.664.4941

### Ward 4 Council Member—

**Deborah A. Gray** was elected to represent Cleveland southeast side neighborhoods of Shaker Square and portions of the Buckeye, Woodland Hills, and Mount Pleasant.

### Goal

To work with my colleagues on Cleveland City Council and Mayor Bibb's Administration to improve

the quality of life for every Clevelander by promoting investment in our people, our businesses, and our infrastructure on the southeast side. We must not be distracted by divisions, but stay united, transparent and engaged to create a better future for us all - TOGETHER.

### Priority

Civic participation is vital to our democracy. Therefore, my priority is to ensure that every corner of Ward 4 is engaged, and receives tangible benefits so we can all thrive, not just survive. We must fight for a Cleveland that works for EVERYONE in our southeast neighborhoods.

**COMMITTEES**  
Health, Human Services & the Arts - *Member*  
Safety - *Member*  
Transportation & Mobility Utilities - *Member*  
Workforce, Education, Training & Youth Development - *Member*



Richard A. Starr  
rstarr@clevelandcitycouncil.org  
Office: 216.664.2309

### Ward 5 Council Member

**Richard Starr** represents Central, Kinsman, Midtown neighborhoods and part of downtown and North Broadway/Slavic Village.

**Goal**  
Did not Respond

**Priority**  
Did not Respond

**COMMITTEES**  
Health, Human Services & the Arts - *Member*  
Municipal Services & Properties Safety - *Member*  
Workforce, Education, Training & Youth Development - *Member*  
Mayor's Appointments - *Member*



Blaine A. Griffin  
bgriffin@clevelandcitycouncil.org  
Office: 216.664.4234

**Ward 6 Council Member and Council President**

**Blaine A. Griffin** represents one of Cleveland's most diverse wards, encompassing the East Side neighborhoods of Fairfax, Larchmere, Little Italy, Woodland Hills, and parts of Buckeye-Shaker, University Circle, North Broadway, Slavic Village and Union-Miles.

**Goals**

Establish a new identity for

Cleveland and City Council, and make Cleveland competitive.

- Be 1st (A Leader)
- Be Different (Innovative and Change Agents)
- Be The Best (No Longer Be Last on Important Lists)

**Priority**

My priority is making Cleveland a safe, stable and thriving community. We will focus on innovative public safety strategies that embrace technology. We will promote housing stability, home repair and homeownership. We will work to eliminate health disparities. We will address income inequality and focus on wealth creation and economic mobility.

**COMMITTEES**

**Finance, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Chair**  
**Rules - Chair**  
**Mayor's Appointments - Member**  
**Operations - Member**



Stephanie D. Howse  
showse@clevelandcitycouncil.org  
Office: 216.664.2908

**Ward 7 Council Member**

**Stephanie Howse** represents the neighborhoods of AsiaTown, Goodrich-Kirkland Park, Hough, Midtown, St Clair-Superior.

**Goals**

Organizing people locally to yield power. If we could have at least 5 or 6 new street clubs or community organizations with the intent to galvanize people who normally are not engaged.

I want to know individually each person in Ward 7 because that will be an indication and is a measuring stick of who is involved.

**Priority**

Adjust the mindset or culture of Ward 7 residents to be engage in solutions for the issues and concerns of the community. We have to help ourselves and stop waiting for someone else to do it. Also have the City of Cleveland leverage our dollars for the benefit of our people. Creating our own by having solutions.

**COMMITTEES**

**Workforce, Education, Training & Youth Development - Vice Chair**  
**Development, Planning & Sustainability - Member**  
**Health, Human Svcs. & the Arts - Member**  
**Safety - Member**



Michael D. Polensek  
mpolensek@clevelandcitycouncil.org  
Office: 216.664.4236

**Ward 8 Council Member**

**Michael D. Polensek**, the "Dean" of city council, has represented the Collinwood Neighborhood for nearly 4 decades. Today, he represents N. Shore Collinwood, Collinwood Village, and the eastern section of the Glenville neighborhood. The longest serving member in the history of City

Council. (45 years, 13 terms)

**Goals**

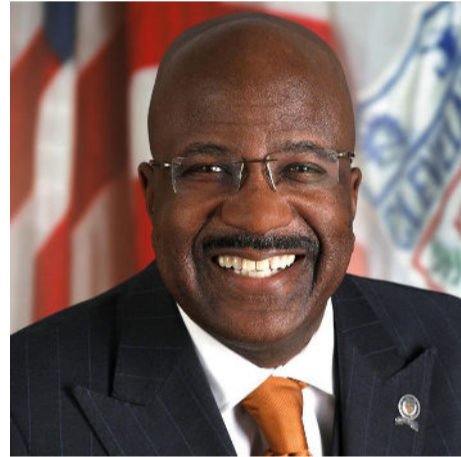
Excited and optimistic to work with the new mayor, his administration, and the city council and the new city council leadership team. Drill down on public safety issues. Turn Cleveland around from being at the top of many negative lists and at the bottom of many positive lists for the best cities in the U.S.

**Priority**

Quality of Life for a better community. Redefine role of city government and how it can best serve the residents of Cleveland.

**COMMITTEES**

**Safety - Chair**  
**Finance, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Member**  
**Utilities - Member**  
**Rules - Member**



Kevin Conwell  
kconwell@clevelandcitycouncil.org  
Office: 216.664.4252

**Ward 9 Council Member**

**Kevin Conwell** represents the neighborhoods of Glenville, and a parts of University Circle.

**Goals**

Did not Respond

**Priority**

Did not Respond

**COMMITTEES**

**Health, Human Svcs. & the Arts - Chair**  
**Finance, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Member**  
**Operations - Member**  
**Rules - Member**



Anthony T. Hairston  
ahairston@clevelandcitycouncil.org  
Office: 216.664.4743

**Ward 10 Council Member**

**Anthony Hairston** was re-elected to City Council in November 2021. He previously had served as a member of the Cuyahoga County Council from 2014 to the end of 2017. Hairston represent the neighborhoods of Glenville, and a parts of University Circle.

**Goals**

Did not Respond

**Priority**

Did not Respond

**COMMITTEES**

**Development, Planning & Sustainability - Chair**  
**Finance, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Member**  
**Municipal Services & Properties - Member**  
**Mayor's Appointments - Member**



Rebecca Maurer  
rmaurer@clevelandcitycouncil.org  
Office: 216.664.4233

**Ward 12 Council Member**

**Rebecca Maurer** represents which includes parts of Old Brooklyn, Slavic Village, Brooklyn Center and Tremont. Councilwoman Maurer is a lawyer and a community advocate.

**Goals**

Rebuild trust between residents and local government. We can do this by increasing transparency and communicating with resident about what Council is doing and why. Passing participatory budgeting and supporting public comment will also help.

**Priority**

Setting up constituent services and passing renter and worker protections that are vetted and supported by Renters Rights Day One and Guardians for Fair Work

**COMMITTEES**

**Health, Human Services & the Arts - Member**  
**Municipal Services & Properties - Member**  
**Transportation & Mobility - Member**  
**Rules - Member**

## COVID-19 Long Haul Survivors



Pastor Jae Williams, aka Jae the GospelKidd of WOJU 95.9

By Danni Lynn McDonald

In March of 2020, **Pastor Jae Williams**, aka Jae the GospelKidd of WOJU 95.9, was admitted to the hospital after contracting COVID-19. His wife, Minister D. Williams, waited in her car talking to him on the phone until he was put on a ventilator. Jae went into a coma for 24 days, and his wife did not see him again for 54 days.

The Williamses did not know in March 2020 that there was going to be “a reversal on the sadness—a day to be happy.” On November 27, 2021, Jae stood on stage and raised his voice to the ceiling for the **I Am a Survivor** concert and service at the Pentecostal Church of Christ at 10515 Chester Avenue, Cleveland, OH.

This event raised awareness of resources available to “long haul” survivors experiencing long-term effects after being infected by COVID-19.

Cleveland’s own MetroHealth has established a local Post-COVID Clinic to assist individuals with lasting symptoms across a range of cardiovascular, respiratory, dermatologic, neurological, and psychiatric needs.

<https://www.metrohealth.org/covid-19/post-covid-clinic>

Call **216-957-3959** to schedule an appointment at MetroHealth Post-COVID Clinic if your symptoms persist after 4 weeks.

### COVID-19 Long-term Symptoms

According to the MetroHealth Post-COVID website, long-term symptoms include joint pain, cough, shortness of breath, anxiety, fatigue, muscle pain, intermittent fever, depression, trouble thinking or concentrating, heart palpitations, and more.

Several survivors at the event shared their personal experiences with COVID-19. The event headliner was **Le’Andria Johnson** from Atlanta, GA, with additional performances by spoken word poets **Olivia Brown** and **LeBerty**, dancer **Antonajha Munns**, and **The Spiritual Believers**.

Pentecostal Church of Christ included: **United Black Fund of America**, **Saint Luke’s Foundation**, **WOJU 95.9 FM BBC Community Radio**, **Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood**, **Documenters**, **Nerve DJ**, and **MetroHealth**.

### I Am a Survivor Partnerships and Speakers

Partnerships and speakers at this event included **Joy Johnson**, Executive Director of Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc.; **Dale Robinson Anglin**, Vice President for Programs of the Cleveland Foundation; **Timothy L. Tramble, Sr.**, President and CEO of the Saint Luke’s Foundation; **Richaun N. Bunton**, LSW, MSW, Managing Director, Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood; **Dale Edwards**, Chief Executive Director and Editor at Call & Post; **Kaye Gaines**, CEO and President of Gaines Funeral Home; **Alan K. Nevel**, Senior Vice President and Chief Equity Officer at MetroHealth; **Dr. Charles S. Modlin Jr., MD**, MetroHealth; and **Dr. Sherrie D. Williams, MD**, MetroHealth.

*“I’m telling my long COVID story, so you won’t have one to tell.”—said one COVID presenter and survivor.*

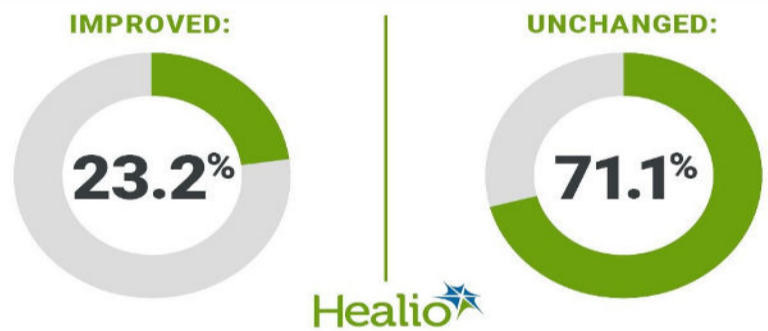


Songstress Le’Andria Johnson from Atlanta, GA

### I Am a Survivor Sponsors

Sponsors of the I Am a Survivor kickoff event at the

### Symptoms among COVID-19 ‘long-haulers’ 1 month after vaccination:

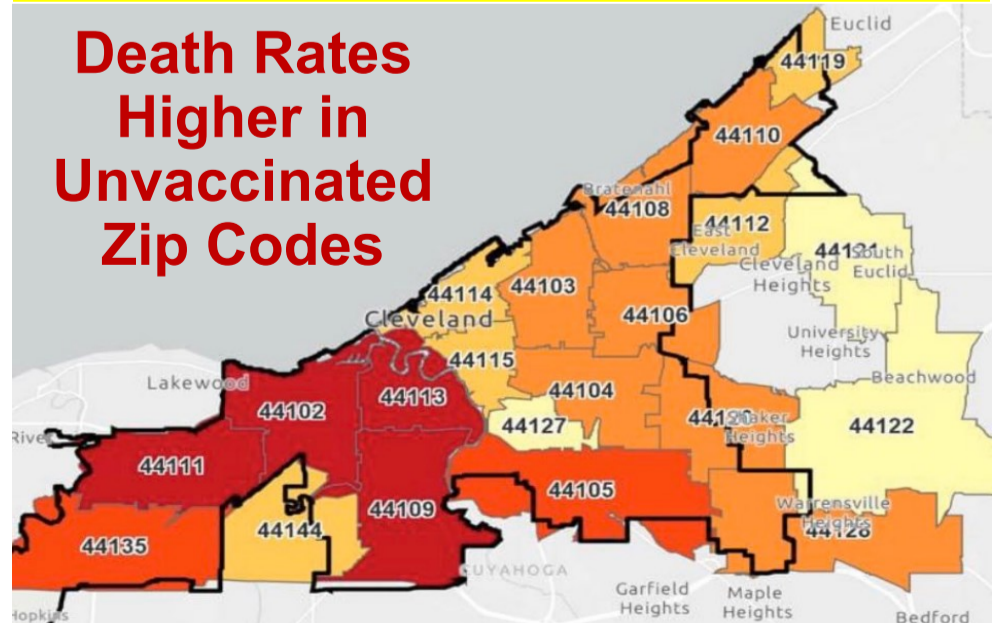


### COVID Vaccine by Zip Code:

Zip	% Vac	# Rec’d	# Residents
44103	43.7%	6.9k	15.9k
44104	31.8%	6.3k	19.8k
44106	73.2%	18.5k	25.3k
44108	42.9%	9.1k	21.2k
44110	39%	7.1k	18.3k
44114	75.1%	5.1k	6.8k
44115	54.9%	4.6k	8.5k
44120	55.6%	19.4k	34.9k
44127	38%	1.6k	4.2k

**Total 50.4% 80.6k 119k**  
Most Outer Ring Suburban zip codes are over 80% vaccinated

### Death Rates Higher in Unvaccinated Zip Codes



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