

# MORNINGSIDER

*The Official Newsletter of MorningSide*



A new roof installation is just one of the many repairs the NIP Grant can provide.  
Photo by Jim West

## NIP Grant Offers Help With Home Repairs

By Jackie Grant | Morningside Community Organization

Detroit — Is your home in need of repairs that you can't afford? You may be eligible for financial help.

The Neighborhood Improvement Grant (NIP) offers homeowners grants of up to \$7,500 to pay for a variety of home repairs, including heating systems, water heaters, windows, roofing, gutters and downspouts, attic and wall insulation, and underground property sewer systems.

In order to qualify for a NIP grant, you must meet the following criteria:

- Household income at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMC), depending on size of household.
- You must own and have occupied your house for at least six months

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**Jefferson Branch Library Re-Opens With A New Look**

Jackie Grant | Morningside Community Organization



Excitement fills the air at the newly remodeled Jefferson Branch Library. Photo by Jim West

The long-awaited reopening of the Jefferson Branch Library, a signature MorningSide institution, is finally here. After closing for renovations for over a year, the library now sports an updated look with more resources available for MorningSide and nearby communities. The ribbon-cutting ceremony on February 26 welcomed residents to a building with new flooring and furniture, updated lighting, ADA modifications to the restroom, a new heating and cooling system, and many more computers for public use.

The library now offers sixteen desktop computers and an additional four laptops, which can be used on the premises. More laptops will be made available soon for patrons to check out. The meeting room has been cleared out to open up more space, and it has a large screen suitable for audio-visual presentations.

In warm weather, the small landscaped and enclosed area behind the library will have seating for patrons to relax and read. There's even been talk of planting a garden in that space.

"We're really excited!" says Heidi Sargis, librarian and branch manager. "The community has responded really well to it. It's more kid-friendly, more open, more inviting. We're just glad to be back open."

Library hours during the school year are 12 – 8 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The library is closed Fridays and Sundays.

## MECCA Offers Workshop Development and Much More!

Susan Newell | Morningside Community Organization

The past year has been a busy one for MECCA Development Corporation, and 2020 promises to be even more productive.

MECCA (which stands for MorningSide East English Village Cornerstone Community Advocates) aims to fill some important needs in these three communities. Its mission, says Latisha Johnson, Board Chair of MECCA, is “to engage residents and businesses to provide knowledge, skills, resources, and support to help revitalize our communities in a sustainable way for future generations.” An all-volunteer non-profit organization, The MECCA board is made up of residents representing MorningSide, East English Village, and Cornerstone.

MECCA’s programs over the last several years have focused on three, sometimes overlapping, populations – seniors, youth, and those needing to develop marketable skills. Bee Davis, chair of the Senior Committee, has been leading a senior hustle class every Saturday from 9 – 11 a.m. at Bethany Christian Church, 5901 Cadieux. Beginners as well as more experienced dancers are welcome. “In fact,” says Latisha with a laugh, “Bee gets very excited when new people join. She just loves teaching.” The classes are \$5 per session.

MECCA has also been running a free computer class geared toward seniors every Tuesday from 10:30 a.m. to noon at Bethany Lutheran Church, 11475 E. Outer Dr. The 8-week class holds up to fourteen participants, and students can help tailor the curriculum to their individual needs. MECCA’s first job training program was an upholstery class started four years ago. “Most of the people in the upholstering trade now are seniors and so are leaving the profession. If you walk into an upholstering shop on the eastside, you’ll find there’s at least a six-month wait because there aren’t enough upholsterers. People are starting to realize the value of old furniture in comparison to new expensive furniture, so the demand is there.” The next 12-week program begins Thursday, April 2 from 6-8 p.m. at a location to be determined.

As if all these activities weren’t enough to keep everyone busy, MECCA organized its fourth Annual Community Gathering last August at Balduck Park, and sponsored a Progressive Dinner in October, with a multi-course meal spread out over homes in MorningSide, East English Village, and Cornerstone. “It’s a great way for people in the three communities to get to know each other and find ways to work together,” says Latisha.



MECCA board member Bee Davis teaches the latest dance steps to residents in one of her Saturday morning hustle classes, which meet 9-11 a.m. at Bethany Christian Church, 5901 Cadieux. Photo by Jim West

A “Community Closet” is their newest program. MECCA has partnered with Bed Bath & Beyond, Walmart, and J. Crew to provide free new and gently-used display items, returns, and seasonal products to seniors, low income, homeless, students, veterans, survivors of domestic abuse, those with cancer, and families who’ve had a fire. Residents must register on the MECCA website, [www.meccadc.org](http://www.meccadc.org), to take advantage of the Community Closet.

In addition to continuing and expanding 2019 activities, MECCA will be co-sponsoring a health fair on May 30 with Wayne County Commissioner Tim Killeen. Its current “wish list” also includes classes in sewing, woodworking, photography, and jewelry-making, as well as programs for kids ages 5-15 in reading literacy, martial arts, robotics, dance, financial literacy, and cooking. A “senior day camp” rounds out the list of possible 2020 programs.

**For more information about MECCA and its programs, visit their Facebook page (MECCA Development Corporation), website at [www.meccadc.org](http://www.meccadc.org), or call 313-757-1355.**

## NIP Grant Offers Help With Home Repairs

- You must be up to date on your mortgage, property taxes, and home insurance.
- You must intend to live in this house for at least 5 years.

**MorningSide Community Organization (MCO) will sponsor an informational workshop on Saturday, March 21 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Jefferson Branch Library to explain the NIP grant and help residents get ready to apply for it.**

We will be handing out applications for the grant, but you can also download one from [www.fhlbi.com](http://www.fhlbi.com).

The exact date that NIP grant applications will be accepted is yet to be determined, but the grants should be available in late March or early April on a first-come, first-served basis. We will update you as we get more information.

In the meantime, start getting your documentation in order. You will need:

- A copy of the deed to your house.
- Documentation of all sources of income for all household members.
- Two bids from licensed contractors for the repairs.

If you need more than one repair, they should all be done by the same contractor. For more information about the workshop, call Jackie Grant at (313) 720-3904.



A roof installation is in full effect for this home.  
Photo by Jim West

## Check, Check It Out!

- **Senator Stephanie Chang Coffee Hour**, Friday, March 6th, 10:30-12:00 pm, Astro Coffee (2124 Michigan Ave); for more information, go to <https://senatedems.com/chang/events/>
- **Homebuyer Education Class**, Friday, March 6th, U-SNAP-BAC (14901 E. Warren Ave), to attend you MUST call to RSVP 313.640.1100
- **Spoken Word Open Mic Night**, Saturday, March 7th, 7:00 pm, ZAB Cultural Collective, 16927 E. Warren Ave
- **D4 Tax Foreclosure Prevention Meeting**, Sunday, March 9th, 6:00-7:30, Wayne County Community College East Campus, Cooper Room, 5901 Conner Street
- **Credit 101 Workshop**, Tuesday, March 11th, U-SNAP-BAC, 14901 E. Warren Ave. To attend you MUST call to RSVP (313) 640-1100
- **Tea Time w/ State Rep. Tenisha Yancey**, Monday, March 16, 5:30-6:30 pm, Frec Eastside, 15491 Maddelein Street
- **"Java with Joe" w/ State Rep. Joe Tate** (3 options), Monday, March 16, 10-11:30 am at Starbucks on Mack Ave, 12-1:30 pm at Monteith Library (14100 Kercheval), 5-6 pm at McDonalds (8825 E. Jefferson Ave

## Don't Lose Your Home - Get Property Tax Help!

Morningside Community Organization

If you are a homeowner struggling to pay your property taxes, you may be eligible for the Homeowners Property Tax Assistance Program (HPTAP). As we reported previously in this newsletter, the Board of Review is now allowing homeowners 25% as well as 50%, and 100% exemptions on their property taxes, depending on household size and income. Even if you don't qualify for an exemption based on income alone, you may still be eligible for some tax relief if you have significant debts due to circumstances like illness, death in the family, job loss, etc.

To apply for a property tax exemption, you will need the following documents:

- Proof of homeownership – recorded deed, land contract, or court order
- Current photo ID for all adults in the home
- Recent report card or other documents that include the address for all minors in the home
- Proof of income
  - 2019 Federal and State tax returns for all adults required to file
  - Proof of current income (W2's, pay stubs, SSI/SSD, pension, child support ,etc.)
- Proof of assets (only if assets equal more than \$12,000)
  - Bank statements, 401K, other properties, vehicles, etc.
- Proof of debt/expenses (only if household income is above eligibility guidelines)
  - Utility bill, medical bills, phone/cable/internet bills, credit card debt, etc.

**You can download information, including the income guidelines and an application for the HPTAP from [www.detroitmi.gov](http://www.detroitmi.gov). Type "HPTAP" in the Search box. We will also have applications available at our March 21 workshop on the NIP grant.**

A new program to provide some property tax relief, Pay As You Stay (PAYS) will be rolled out on April 1. We will have more information about that program in an upcoming newsletter.

**For more information about HPTAP, you can also call Jackie Grant at (313) 720-3904 or U-SNAP-BAC at (313) 640-1100.**

## Check, Check It Out!

- **D4 Get Active Hustle Class.** Friday, March 19th, 6:30-8:00, Samaritan Wellness Center, 5555 Conner Street
- **"Coffee Talk" w/State Rep. Joe Tate,** Saturday, March 20th, 9-10:30 am, Panera Bread, 17150 Kercheval
- **Spoken Word Open Mic Night,** Saturday, March 7th, 7:00 pm, ZAB Cultural Collective, 16927 E. Warren Ave
- **Brick + Beam Detroit Presents: Fixer Upper Supper Club.** East Warren Tool Library, 16006 E. Warren Ave. Details & RSVP at: [brickandbeamdetroit.com/events](http://brickandbeamdetroit.com/events)

## MCO General Meeting

We welcome everyone to attend our general community meeting on Tuesday, March 10th at 6:30 p.m., Ronald Brown Academy 11530 E. Outer Drive. Pre-meeting dinner at 6:00 p.m. Be a part of MorningSide's comeback!



Residents attend previous Morningside General Community Meeting. Photo by Jeffrey D. Lewis II

## Advertise in the Morningsider!

The Morningsider is officially open for advertisement! For those who want to place ads in our newsletter, please contact Zelda Anderson at (313) 657-7152 or via email at [josh.rowland23@yahoo.com](mailto:josh.rowland23@yahoo.com) or contact Ulysses Jones at [usjones817@gmail.com](mailto:usjones817@gmail.com)

## Morningside + Gleaners Food Distribution

Twiana Odom | Morningside Community Organization

The collaborative efforts of both the Morningside Community Organization (MCO) and the Gleaners Community Food Bank Organization (GCFB) has been servicing Morningside and District 4 with food and fresh produce since January 2019.

GCFB has been serving families since 1977. One of Gleaners top priorities has been to reduce child hunger as 40% of the clients they serve are children. As we all know, the lack of proper nutrients can prohibit a child from reaching those important milestones.

The goal of the monthly food distributions is to reduce the hunger disparities in our community. The distributions are held at The Craft Cafe, 15641 E. Warren Ave. The staging area is located in the rear of the Craft facing Balfour. The setup is intended to operate as if it's a drive thru making it easier to access goods and creating a swifter motion to serve as many families in a timely manner as possible. We appreciate the countless hours our volunteers have contributed, especially our day one contributors such as Morningside board member Maurice (Mo) and his daughter Moesha Mitchell. They have been extremely instrumental in the entire process. Whether it's handling food or just engaging our clients, they are present and for that we can't thank them enough.

To date, the MCO/Gleaners food distribution has distributed over \$200,000 in food while also serving over 2,000 families.

**For anyone interested in donating or volunteering, please contact Twiana Odom at (313) 808-3493. Text message is preferred.**



Dedicated volunteers serving the community at a recent food distribution. Photo by Zelda Anderson

## Let's Talk Trash

Morningside Community Organization

**Mark your calendars! The next three pick-up dates for bulk trash and recycling are Thursdays, March 5 and 19, and April 2.**

Did you know that if you are disabled, you can get help putting your Courville container to the curb and returning it to your house after the pickup? Just call the Department of Public Works (313-224-3901) or Solid Waste (313-876-0049) to see if you qualify for this service.

Also, the Neighborhood Police Officers will be doing a sweep of our neighborhood to ticket residents who leave their Courville dumpsters out past Friday. The first ticket is \$130, and they go up to triple that amount with repeated violations.

To get text reminders of your bulk trash and recycling days, text your address to (313) 800-7905.



DPW worker disposing recyclables. Photo by Jim West

## Your March 10th To-Do List

1. Vote in Presidential Primary. There's so much at stake! Not sure where you vote? Google "Michigan Election and Voter Information" to find out your polling place.
2. Come to MorningSide Community Organization General Meeting. 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Ronald Brown Academy, 11530 E. Outer Dr. Dinner served 6:00 – 6:30 p.m.

## Morningside's Finest: Elena Fracasa



Elena Fracasa. Photo courtesy of Michigan Radio

I believe Elena and I first met at a MorningSide general meeting many years ago. Since then, I've known her to be a very committed, caring neighbor. Elena has been an active member of our MEC neighborhood patrol for over 10 years and regularly patrols MorningSide with me and others to work towards a safer neighborhood. In addition to this, she is always passionate about helping youth in our community.

She always works hard to engage kids in various activities, through the Bedford Block Club and beyond. She's even helped take some of the neighborhood kids to the library. She was one of the first neighbors I know of that started a Little Library at her house so kids and adults in the neighborhood can get access to books for free. Elena also works hard to keep our neighborhood looking nice. She purchased the vacant lot behind her home and keeps it up. She participates in neighborhood beautification efforts, like Motor City Makeover.

Elena is very family-oriented and cares a lot about others. She's a good neighbor and always goes above and beyond. She works to make our community better and safer for everyone. We appreciate her very much.

- *By Beverly Brown, MEC Neighborhood Patrol President*



For the latest news taking place in MorningSide, please follow us on:



morningsidedet

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