# MORNINGSIDER

### THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MORNINGSIDE



Mayor Mike Duggan and DEGC Small Business Services VP, Sean Gray walk along the completed East Warren streetscape on September 21st. Image courtesy of the City of Detroit

### East Warrenfest Celebrates Regeneration of Business Corridor

### Susan Newell | The Morningsider

Detroit — For a community that has long wished for more places to eat, shop, and gather close to home, the East Warrenfest on September 21 was truly an evening of celebration. I've lived in Morningside for almost four decades and remember too well those difficult years after the financial meltdown of 2008. My block on Three Mile emptied out, leaving only eight occupied homes out of 23 houses. East Warren was little more than boarded up storefronts and empty sidewalks strewn with litter. But what a turnaround we've made!

With the completion of the streetscape and a wave of new businesses opening up on the eastern end of Morningside and East English Village, the feeling of revitalization was palpable at the East Warrenfest September 21.

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# Controversial Expansion of License Plate Readers Passes City Council

The Morningsider



A camera License Plate reader Image courtesy of David Guralnick / Detroit News

District 4 Councilwoman Latisha Johnson joined District 6 Councilwoman Gabriela Santiago-Romero last month to oppose the addition of 100 more license plate readers (LPRs) at 25 intersections in Detroit. Council approved the \$5 million agreement with Motorola Solutions by a vote of 7-2.

Councilwoman Johnson said that based on the map of surveillance cameras she received from the DPD, she believed the city was already adequately covered. Councilwoman Santiago-Romero also expressed concern about how widely the information would be shared and what other agencies might get access to the data.

Many residents expressed support for the program at Council hearings on the assumption that it would be used to catch speeders. According to Detroit Police Department policy, however, the LPRs can only be used in cases of vehicle theft and violent crimes. DPD cites an 11% increase in auto theft in the past year as a justification for the expansion of the program. Currently there are license plate readers at 83 intersections in Detroit.

You can read more about the controversy surrounding the program in the <u>Daily Kos</u>, <u>Bridge Detroit</u>, <u>Outlier Media</u>, and <u>ClickonDetroit</u>. For a detailed description of how the license plate reader technology works, as well as problems with the technology, such as inaccurate readings that have led to a few false arrests, check out this article from the <u>Independent Institute</u>.



The Morningsider

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# Spotlight Turns to Mack Avenue Streetscape

The Morningsider



Attention now shifts to the redesign of Mack Avenue. Image courtesy of Model D/ Steve Koss

So much attention has been paid to the E. Warren streetscape over the past several years. Now that the eastern end of E. Warren has a new look, it's Mack Avenue's turn in the limelight. The initial community engagement portion of the project, spearheaded by Eastside Community Network, is scheduled to wrap up this month. We'll be keeping a close eye and reporting on those developments over the coming months. In the meantime, you can read more about it <u>here</u> in Model D.

# TALK TO US! *Letter to the Editor*

One of our goals is to make *The Morningsider* more interactive and resident-driven. To that end, we invite you to send us your ideas and opinions – what do you like about the newsletter, what should we be paying more attention to, what pressing issues are Detroiters facing? Please keep your communications brief - about 200 words - and respectful in tone. Send your comments to

<u>morningsidecommunity2@gmail.com</u>. Letters, edited as necessary for space and clarity, will be published each month.

# Continued... East Warrenfest Celebrates Regeneration of Business Corridor

Hundreds of people, young and old, Black and white, from Morningside and nearby neighborhoods, mingled in the perfect Indian summer weather, shopping among the 30 vendors and stores lining E. Warren. Kids did arts and crafts and enjoyed the pop-up play area at the new Courville Plaza. Live music from jazz to pop to hip-hop was provided by musicians and music entrepreneurs and curators, including <u>D.Cipher, Design Core Detroit, Dominique</u> <u>Campbell, Sophiyah e.</u> and <u>Wayne Ramocan</u>.

Several of the pop-up food vendors provided a preview of bricks-and-mortar establishments to come, including the award-winning East African restaurant Baobab Fare opening next year on E. Warren at Harvard, and Gajiza Dumplin's, an Asian restaurant that will have a home in The Ribbon development going up now at Kensington. Much to the disappointment of latecomers like me, Terri's Cakes, which had a popup in their storefront near Three Mile, had already sold out by 6 p.m. Their grand opening is planned for January.



Terri's Cakes celebrate their ribbon cutting with Mayor Mike Duggan. Image courtesy of City of Detroit

Two other businesses held their grand openings that night. Jeffrey D. Lewis II, owner of Morningside Café, was happy to report he'd had about 120 customers, and Sarah Williams, coowner of Next Chapter Books, described that night as "amazing," with 98 paying customers and many more browsers. According to Joe Rashid, Executive Director of E. Warren Development Corporation, which organized the event, pop-up vendors pulled in \$19,000 in sales, and E. Warren stores reported \$16,000 in revenue. Shout-out to the rest of the EWDC staff – Sarah Feldman, BrieAnn Bell, and Nathan Kempinski – who were also crucial to making this all happen. E. Warrenfest was funded by Invest Detroit in partnership with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan. BCBSM was also a major funder of the streetscape.



A performance at the Courville Plaza during the E. Warrenfest. Image courtesy of Jim West

Earlier in the day Mayor Duggan was joined by Ken Hayward, Vice President and special assistant to the president for Community Relations from BCBSM at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the streetscape at Courville Plaza. According to Ken, "We had a vision to help revitalize this area, and the outcomes have made a huge impact on the community that will have lasting implications."

Of course there's still a lot to be done. Much of Morningside hasn't felt the love yet, but we're heading in the right direction. For the first time in decades we know what real hope feels like.

Susan Newell, retired nurse and resident of MorningSide since 1984. Serves as the Associate Editor of The Morningsider

# It's a Busy Autumn at Brilliant Detroit Morningside

### Regina Williams | Contributing Writer

Brilliant Detroit offers programs for families with children ages 0-8. Here's our great fall lineup:

### Stories & STEM (ages 3-5)

Mondays - 4:30 to 5:30 PM - October 16 to December 11. Exploring science, technology, engineering and math through storytelling.

### Regie's Rainbow (ages 3-8)

Tuesdays - 4:30 to 5:30 PM - October 3 to November 21. Regie, the broccoli superhero, leads young readers to islands of fruits and vegetables.

### Gardening Club (ages 4-8)

Thursdays – 4:30 to 5:30 PM – Ongoing Hands-on gardening (depending on season) and year-round gardening education.

### Snack & Storytime (ages 0-8)

Fridays - 4:30 to 5:30 PM - October 6 to November 10

### Read, Write, Roar (ages 4-8)

Fridays - 5:30 to 6:30 PM - October 6 to November 10 Using phonics to help young readers, sponsored by Michigan Learning Channel.

### Anger Management (adults)

Thursdays – 5 to 6 PM – October 12 to December 21 Strategies for how to deal with the everyday stresses of raising a family.

### Art Therapy (adults)

Fridays – 4:30 to 6:30 PM – October 6 to November 10 Participants create art projects to share their own stories and better understand and appreciate themselves.

### Tech Hub (all ages)

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays – 12 to 3 PM – September 25 to December 19 Help with resumes, job searches, homework, Zoom meetings.

### **Clothing Closet**

Tuesdays and Thursdays – 1 to 3 PM – Ongoing Free gently-used clothing for all ages.

If you want to register for any of these activities or just want more information, call me at (**313**) **528-7217**.

Regina Williams is the Community Engagement Manager at the Brilliant Detroit Morningside house, 5048 Balfour, just north of E. Warren.



The Brilliant Detroit Morningside house. Image courtesy of Brilliant Detroit

# What's Coming Up at the Jefferson Branch Library?

Tracy Malek | Contributing Writer

**Weekly Storytime**: This weekly program features a mix of stories, songs, and activities for children of all ages and their caregivers. Every Tuesday at 10:30 AM, September-December.

**Lego Time**! Join us for creative, freestyle building with Lego Classic and Duplo blocks. For ages 3-13. Saturday, October 14 at 11 AM Saturday, November 4 at 11 AM

**Books & Bagels**: Join us for bagels and refreshments while listening to stories. Or, you can read you own stories independently. For ages 3 and up. Wednesday, October 18 at 6 PM Wednesday. November 15 at 6 PM

**Arts & Scraps—Monster Edition**: Create your own Halloween monster from an Arts & Scraps kit. Recommended for children ages 5 and up. Wednesday, October 25 at 6 PM

**Family Movie Day**: Children and their families are welcome to view "Coco" (2017). Rated PG, 1 hour and 45 minutes. We'll provide snacks and refreshments. Monday, October 30 at 5 PM

Tracy Malek is the Assistant Manager/Youth Librarian at the Jefferson Branch Library

# Give A Smile, Get A Smile

The Morningsider

Once an abused stray left for abandon, to a designated pet for senior living facility, the story of Scout the dog is one you will definitely want to check out in this month's Give A Smile, Get A Smile.

For the full story, click <u>here</u>.



Scout the dog. Image courtesy of Ryan Garza, Detroit Free Press

# Property Tax Changes May Benefit Morningsiders

### Eric Dueweke | The Morningsider

Proposed changes to Detroit's property tax system have attracted much attention over the past several weeks. MorningSide residents who attended our September general meeting received a highly informative presentation on this topic from Kevin Bain of the City's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. As Mr. Bain noted, the proposal from Mayor Duggan centers around two key points:

- taxes on homes would be reduced by an average of 17%
- taxes on land would be increased by 50%.

If implemented, the so-called Land Value Tax (LVT) will result in savings for almost all homeowners and landlords in MorningSide. Yet many steps remain before changes could go into effect in 2025. First, the State of Michigan Legislature needs to pass legislation allowing the City of Detroit to change its taxation system. Assuming they do so, City Council will need to authorize a ballot question that enables Detroiters to vote Yes or No on a Land Value Tax.

As of October 4, the MI House of Representatives is still considering and tweaking the LVT legislation. It will then need approval from the State Senate and Governor Whitmer. According to Kevin Bain, the Mayor's goal is to have City Council approve in November placement of the question on the February 2024 ballot for the voters' decision. Rumors in recent days suggest, however, that this approval timeline may be delayed, pushing a public vote to November of 2024.

A few MorningSide homeowners currently receive a NEZ property tax exemption. Those homeowners would not see a reduction in taxes. The LVT would effectively give all property owners the same tax break now enjoyed by a small minority. My own property taxes will decrease by about \$250, if my math is correct.

Questions remain about whether this new system would result in lower overall tax revenues for the City. Many public information sessions, most of them accessible by Zoom will be held over the next several weeks. Attending our monthly 2nd Tuesday MorningSide community meetings is an excellent way to keep up with changes and ask questions.

Eric Dueweke, President of the Morningside Community Organization

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# Struggling to Pay Bills? MIHAF May Be Able to Help

### The Coalition for Property Tax Justice

The Michigan Homeowner Assistance Fund (MIHAF) is a program launched by the Michigan State Housing and Development Authority (MSHDA) that gives eligible homeowners up to \$25,000 to help with overdue property tax, mortgage, and utility bills.

In March of this year, MSHDA expanded MIHAF and now allows qualifying homeowners to apply their funds to all property tax debt, regardless of when it was accrued. If you haven't yet applied, you should make an appointment with Wayne Metro to submit your application and get the money you deserve before the funds run out this month.

Unlike other programs, MIHAF is not just for low income households: You can make up to \$99,450 or \$187,550 a year depending on your family size.

### Make an appointment to apply to MiHAF.

Because funds are running out quickly, we're asking you to tell your family, friends, neighbors, congregations, and classmates to apply for MIHAF as soon as possible. We want as many Detroiters as possible to get compensation for the years of property tax over assessment.

# **LPR Statement**

### Gary Gray | Contributing Writer

On September 26th, I withheld my support for the motion to provide the Detroit Police Department \$ 5,000,000 to expand the use of License Plate Readers (LPRs) in the City of Detroit. When I toured the police crime center, I concluded that the technology currently being utilized by the Department has worked to help solve crimes. I requested additional information regarding the current deployment of LPRs and other technology to discern the gaps in coverage. I had yet to receive the information before voting on the issue. The city deploys significant surveillance technologies (LPRs, Green Lights, Dumping Cameras, and Miovision), which appear to be adequate to serve the citizens of Detroit.

Gary Gray, Chief of Staff for District 4 Councilwoman Latisha Johnson



Overtaxation has left many Detroiters struggling to maintain their homes. Image courtesy of Bridge Detroit

# Property Tax Help is Literally Around the Corner

### The Morningsider

Applying for help with property taxes can be overwhelming, but you don't have to do it alone. The City of Detroit Board of Review makes decisions on the <u>HOPE</u> application three times yearly: March, July, and December. **The last day to submit an application this year is Monday, December 11.**)

Jackie Grant, longtime Morningside resident, works with Rocket Community Fund to help residents fill out the application for property tax exemptions. She meets with residents by appointment at the storefront next to the Alger Theater on E. Warren at Outer Dr. You can reach her at (313) 720-3904.

The application requires a number of documents, so come to your appointment prepared. Here's what you'll need:

- Deed or Land Contract to the home with a stamp on it from the register of deeds
- Current picture ID for all adults (18 years and older)
- Report card with the address of the home for all children in the household
- For children under 5 years old, nothing needed
- All income received for everyone living in the home
- 2022 Income Tax return, W2's
- 2023 last 4 weeks of pay stubs
- Social security income for 2022 and 2023

# Planting Seeds of Hope: My Volunteering Journey with Brilliant Detroit

### Susan Rutherford | Contributing Writer

In unassuming houses scattered throughout our city, there is a non-profit sowing the seeds of hope for its youngest residents and their families. <u>Brilliant Detroit</u>'s mission is clear and ambitious: to build kid success centers (AKA 'hubs') within high-need neighborhoods, with the vision of ensuring that all children are reading 'at level' by the age of 8. My personal journey with Brilliant Detroit (Brilliant) began when I was looking for a way to work with kids now that I've retired from my corporate sales and marketing career. Morningside resident, Charon Nogues, another Brilliant volunteer, said, "I know just the place for you." She was right.

I eased into it, volunteering at the hub on Balfour once a week for their after-school programs. The moment I walked through the door I was welcomed with open arms by the staff and the children. Community Engagement Manager Regina Williams took the time to understand my skills and desires, ensuring that I was placed in a role that aligned with my interests and desires. The warmth and support I received instantly made me feel like a part of the Brilliant family.

Story continues on page 10...

# Continued... Planting Seeds of Hope: My Volunteering Journey with Brilliant Detroit

As my bond with Brilliant grew stronger, I decided to spend my entire summer with the organization. At 14 hubs all over Detroit kids aged 4-8 came together from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Thursday for "Summer Camp". With a focus on reading skills, the weekly schedule also included time for arts and crafts, fitness, STEM, outdoor play time and other fun activities. My personal favorite thing to do was gardening with the kids.

We partnered with <u>Keep Growing Detroit</u> to build and plant garden beds filled with an assortment of vegetables and herbs. What a great opportunity to teach about ecology, biology, nutrition and healthy eating, and caring for our planet! Watering and caring for the plants became a highly anticipated event. Witnessing the joy on their faces as they popped a juicy cherry tomato into their mouths or sampled a sprig of basil warmed my heart. It was a beautiful reminder that learning can be a fun hands-on and exciting experience.

I also got to assist with Brilliant's sponsored reading programs, <u>Raising a Reader</u> and Michigan Learning Channel's <u>Read, Write, Roar</u>. Meeting each child where they are and helping them make strides in their reading comprehension and writing skills was sometimes challenging and always fulfilling. Watching kids' eyes light up as they are listening to a story is a great reminder of how important one-on-one engagement is for their development.

Another highlight of my time at Brilliant has been the <u>National Kidney Foundation's Regie's</u> <u>Rainbow Adventure</u> program, which introduces kids to healthy eating habits while reinforcing literacy, language development, math skills, social-emotional development and physical health. By categorizing fruits and vegetables based on the colors of the rainbow, the program made learning about nutrition engaging and fun. If you are looking for a meaningful way to give back to your community, whether it's for just a few hours a week or more, I encourage you to check out the <u>volunteer</u> <u>opportunities at Brilliant Detroit</u>. Together we can illuminate the path towards a better tomorrow for Detroit kids.

Susan Rutherford is a resident of the Eastside



Susan Rutherford and Brilliant Detroit children. Image courtesy of Susan Rutherford

# "CMP Appeal" Susan Newell | The Morningsider

Cornelia Williams' home on Chatsworth certainly catches the eye, in a good way. She's lived here for 26 years, and several years ago decided to have it painted red, which is - you guessed it – her favorite color. Now it's clearly the cheeriest home on her block. Cornelia works at Better Made and is also working to become a licensed foster parent.

Thank you, Cornelia, for creating this bright spot in our neighborhood!



Cornelia Williams proudly showcases her landscaping skills. Image courtesy of Susan Newell

# Let's Talk Trash

The Morningsider

Unfortunately, it's not unusual to see residential trash containers at the curbside missing a lid or wheels. Replacement dumpsters are provided by GFL Environmental, not the city. GFL charges \$25 for a new dumpster, payable by credit card, check, or bank card. Call them at 844-464-3587 and press "3" for residential service assistance, then "9" for issues in Detroit. Please pass this information on to neighbors who have damaged dumpsters.

Here are your next three bulk trash pickup days:

Thursday, October 12 and 26 Thursday, November 9



Courville Container. Image courtesy of the City of Detroit

# Resources & Upcoming Events

The Morningsider



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# **Resources & Upcoming Events**

The Morningsider







# DETROIT LAND BANK AUTHORITY CONSTITUENT SERVICE HOURS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2023, 6:00-7:30PM

Meet us for one-on-one assistance with complex DLBA matters at a Detroit Public Library

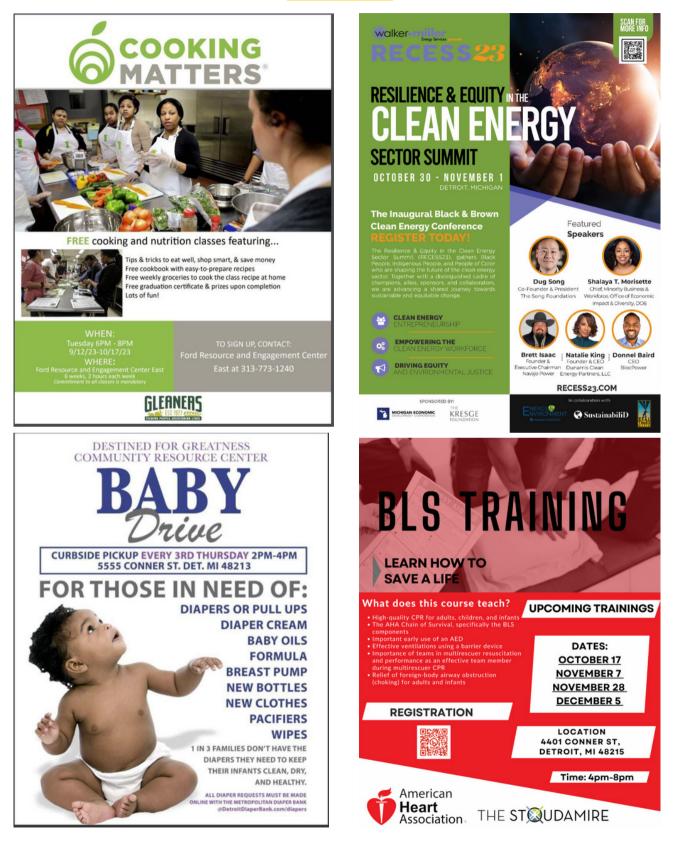
### MEET US AT

Wilder Branch Detroit Public Library 7140 E. 7 Mile Rd Detroit, MI 48234



# Resources & Upcoming Events

The Morningsider



# FUTURE LEADERS Adrian L. Green The Morningsider

Keyshawn Jones is 12th Grade Graduating Senior at East English Village Preparatory Academy at Finney. He is a model student with a grade point average of 3.87 and is ranked at the very top of the Class of 2024. Keyshawn is very involved in extracurricular activities as a member of the Robotics Team, the Chess Club, and the Cross Country Team.

Keyshawn has maintained perfect attendance at The Ville and he is well respected among his peers. Once Keyshawn graduates from high school, he will attend either the University of Detroit Mercy or Michigan Technological University where he will pursue a degree in Electrical or Mechanical Engineering.



East English Village Preparatory Academy at Finney senior, Keyshawn Jones. Image courtesy of Adrian L. Green

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