



MORNINGSIDER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MORNINGSIDE



The exterior facade of Agape Love Childcare Center showcases a bright yellow sun. Image courtesy of Jeffrey D. Lewis II

Unconditional Love inspires Excellence in Education at Agape Childcare Center

Sharon Cawthorne | The Morningsider

Detroit — Inspect what you expect – It’s a mantra for many entrepreneurs as they work the various components of their business endeavors. However, the tenor and care exemplified by Sheri Williams, shows that being the owner and operator of a childcare facility, takes on more than the professionalism of running a business, it also takes on prolonged consistency and a depth of heart for working in your calling.

At Agape Love Childcare Center (ALCC), she has high expectations for the children the center educates and cares for as well as for the staff. Through her Masters level early education training and 17 years of work experiences, she has curated a space that provides a variety of age-level readiness experiences for children from 6-weeks to 5 years old, as well as broad opportunities for career development for the hands-on team that works with each child.”

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Ladies' Night Out at the Warren Café

Donyelle Pressley | The Morningsider



Donyelle Pressley and her bouquet of flowers. Image courtesy of Rakisha Odom

One of the best evenings I've spent all year was on January 25, with my Morningside and East English Village sisters (and a couple of brothers) at The Warren Café.

The gathering was hosted by newsletter Associate Editor Susan Newell, who I must say is an excellent host no matter the occasion. We played an ice-breaker game to introduce ourselves that consisted of asking people "How did you get your name? Is there a story behind it? Did you like your name?" It was an exciting and interesting way to meet others and get an intimate introduction into their lives.

I was very excited and surprised to win the beautiful door prize, a bouquet of flowers, which I must say is still alive and resting on my counter today.

Donyelle Pressley, Morningside resident



THE MORNINGSIDER

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More February/March Programs at the Jefferson Branch

Jefferson Branch Library | Content Partner



Jefferson Branch Library. Image courtesy of Jefferson Branch Library

Black History Month events aren't the only things going on at the Jefferson Branch Library this month and next. Here's what happening during the rest of February and early March.

Manage your High Blood Pressure

Wednesdays, February 7 - March 27
6 pm - 7:30 pm
Free gift to participants attending all classes)

Talking is Teaching

Mondays, February 12 - 26
4 pm - 6 pm
This is a program for parents with children 1-4 years old that provides tools and strategies to encourage reading at an early age. Talk, read, teach, sing.

Basic Computer Class

Wednesday, February 14
5 pm

Story continues on page 6...

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

Continued... Unconditional Love inspires Excellence in Education at Agape Childcare Center

Enrollment at Agape Love, which accepts private-pay and DHS, gives families all-access to any of the programs that they qualify for. The Motor City Match recipient says, "We have a partnership with Matrix, so early-Head Start programming is something we can offer to families."

The strength of growing a well-rounded facility lies in partnerships that can provide funding for families, continuing education for staff, and operational needs, like furniture. According to a 2015 study by the Kresge Foundation entitled *The System We Need: A Neighborhood Snapshot of Early Childhood in Detroit*, most 4-5 star early childcare facilities require not only great staff, but consistent revenue to operate and they, "combine various funding streams to provide full-year, full-day care and education." Currently located off Roxbury St in a home converted to meet the regulatory needs for licensed childcare, ALCC is primed for growth. "We definitely need to expand," says Sheri. "Most of my kids started with me when they were younger and now, they're getting older and age-out because we didn't have space." So, Director Williams has opened the waiting list for children and will expand her staff for the transition on the horizon.

Agape Love Childcare Center's mission is to, "provide a nurturing, loving, safe, and healthy environment, where children can thrive, blossom and grow to be successful individuals." Having a desire to provide quality, holistic services to more children and their families, Sheri and her team are in the final stages of a move to the new location of Agape Love Childcare Center to 16225 E Warren at Three-Mile. The once church, now an early childcare haven, is receiving its final coats of kid-captivating blue exterior paint, signage, and interior, up-to-code, upgrades. What Sheri saw as a growing need for families prompted the move. "I see a community on the rise. This is the perfect time for us to be in the community because we are building a high-quality, state-of-the-art facility, second to none.

We pride ourselves on investing our all. We are the only five star rated facility in 48224." That rating by Great Start to Quality or GSQ, funded by the Department of Education, both sets and evaluates quality standards in education and early care in the State of Michigan. The current center has met those standards as well as other benchmarks in staff education and training to meet various learning styles.



ALCC strives to assure children in their facility are meeting all standards and benchmarks. Image courtesy of Agape Love Childcare Center

The journey to growing ALCC hasn't been a level, straight-lined promenade to a larger facility. Sheri has worked through government guidelines and city regulations. Her grit, comes from growing up in a family of service leaders and educators, and as a mother herself, Sheri, who also co-pastors Saved by Grace Christian Ministry, with her husband, Apostle Dontez D. Williams has taken prayerful paths to success.

Story continued on page 6...

Is the Land Value Tax Good for Morningsiders? Part 1

Susan Newell | The Morningsider

Ever since the mayor introduced the Land Value Tax plan (LVT) last May, the flow of information and misinformation has been enough to make anyone's head spin. This is the first of a two-part series designed to analyze the arguments for and against the plan, so that you can make an informed decision.

First, a very simplified recap of what the LVT would and would not do:

- It **would** approximately double taxes on most land, including the land under the structures on that land.
- It **would not increase** the tax rate on side lots (up to four), community gardens, pocket parks, or community recreational spaces on land purchased from the Land Bank. (Those exemptions were created based on community feedback about the original plan.)
- It **would decrease** taxes on occupied structures, either homes or functioning businesses, by an average of 17%. The vast majority (97%) of Detroiters should see a property tax cut.

What's the point of taxing land and buildings separately? Supporters of the LVT say that the higher property taxes on Detroit's vast array of vacant land will make it too expensive for investors to just sit on, prompting them to either develop it or sell it. More on that later.

The LVT still has a long road ahead. It needs to be approved first by the state legislature, which kicked the can down the road last November. Many pundits believe it will eventually get through the Democratic majority legislature. Then it needs the approval of City Council, and finally the voters.

Of course, the devil is always in the details. To learn about the LVT plan from an expert, I turned to Alex Alsup, VP of Research & Development at Regrid, a storehouse of nation-wide property data. Alex has been working on and writing about property tax issues since 2011.

He is familiar with neighborhoods all over the city, including Morningside. Equally important, he's not employed by or beholden to the mayor in any way. In fact, he says they've disagreed on most property tax issues in the past.

According to Alex, the LVT is intended to be "revenue-neutral" that is, it shouldn't change the city's overall tax revenue. "A sudden change in tax structure can be a shock to the system," he says. "The goal is to encourage better land use and development....The hope is that there'll be increased revenue down the line as a result of new development."

What will determine the success or failure of the LVT, he says, is whether and how it changes behavior. Speculators have several options if the LVT is adopted: pay the higher taxes but still do nothing with the land; walk away and let it go into foreclosure; develop or sell it; or pay just enough taxes to stay out of foreclosure.



Vacant lot at the corner of East Warren Avenue and Audubon. Image courtesy of Jeffrey D. Lewis II

Here's where the size of an investor's holdings can make a difference, Alex says. If you only own one commercial lot or two, you won't see much increase in your overall tax burden, so you may just pay the higher taxes and continue to sit on the land.

Story continued on page 7...

Continued... Unconditional Love inspires Excellence in Education at Agape Childcare Center

When asked about her guiding philosophy, Sheri states, "One thing about Agape Love, it starts with our name. Agape love is from the Bible that talks about God's unconditional love. Here at Agape love, love is our guide. So that means it doesn't just start or stop with the kids. It spills over into our staff. If we have happy staff. We will have happy children. Then that will spill over into the class. Being patient, kind, and respectful. That's us. That's the staff. I appreciate them because we're all in this together." Look for the newest location for Agape Love Childcare Center to open in Spring 2024.

For additional information and waitlist inquiries Contact:

Agape Love Childcare Center, Childcare offered
Monday - Friday: 6:00 am - 6:00 pm

Sheri Williams, Director
(313) 800-3283

Website: www.agapeloveccc.com, Email:
agapeloveccc@yahoo.com



Blue paint adorns the exterior of the new home of Agape Childcare Center. Image courtesy of Jeffrey D. Lewis II

Sharon Cawthorne is an at-large board member of the Morningside Community Organization

Continued... New Year Activities at the Jefferson Branch Library

Winter Decoupage Plate Craft

Wednesday, February 28
6:30 pm - 7:30pm

Dr. Seuss Birthday Celebration with special guest Cat in the Hat

Saturday, March 2
3 pm - 4 pm

Play-Doh Creations

Saturday, March 2
3 pm - 4 pm

Learn Word and Email

Wednesday, March 6
5 pm

Basic Computer Class

Wednesday, March 13
5 pm

Basic Computer Class

Wednesday, March 13
5 pm

Women's History Month Scavenger Hunt

Daily March 11 - 16
All day

St Patrick's Day Craft

Saturday, March 16
2 pm - 3 pm

Continued... Is the Land Value Tax Good for Morningsiders? Part 1

On the other hand, the big land holders may see an overall tax increase large enough to prompt them to develop the land (or pay just enough of the higher taxes to stay out of foreclosure).

The primary concern of most residents, of course, is what would happen to their own tax bill. Fortunately, the city website has a [tax estimator](#), which Alex believes is a reliable tool. I put my own address into the calculator as an example. My husband and I paid \$1,336 in property taxes in 2023. According to the estimator, in 2024 we would pay \$1,086 – a savings of \$250, or approximately 18%.

Even though the tax on the land under and around our home would double, that's more than made up for by the tax cut on the home itself. And that's what the LVT is supposed to do for the vast majority of Detroit property owners.

Let's look now at a couple of properties on the E. Warren business corridor. The Orchard Lake resident who owns the vacant lot at the corner of E. Warren and Audubon paid \$420 in 2023. Under the LVT, she'd pay \$950 in 2024. This is the only lot in Detroit she owns, and so far she's refused offers to buy the lot. We'll see if the \$530 tax increase will prompt her to do something with the land.

Another lot, at the corner of E. Warren and Bedford, which holds a partially-demolished building, generated \$370 of taxes in 2023. Under the LVT, the Ypsilanti owner would pay an additional \$450 on the same property, for a total of \$820. As for taxes on the derelict building itself, it wouldn't be affected by the LVT.

It's pretty certain that the LVT would lower the tax bills of Morningside homeowners. What's less certain is the impact on commercial development and the city's overall financial health. That's the issue we'll consider in next month's installment, along with various concerns about the LVT. In the meantime, if you have concerns or questions about the LVT, please send them to morningsidecommunity2@gmail.com, and we'll do our best to address them.



The partially-demolished building at East Warren Avenue and Bedford. Image courtesy of Jeffrey D. Lewis II

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

Infrastructure Improvements Now Underway in Morningside

Eric Dueweke | The Morningsider

Many of our older homes in Morningside, just like those in Flint, Benton Harbor, Eastpointe and elsewhere, get our drinking water delivered through pipes made from lead.

Thanks to a new program of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), over 500 neighborhood houses will soon have their lead service lines replaced.

In May of 2023, DWSD began a neighborhood-by-neighborhood approach to replacing lead service lines. Neighborhoods are being prioritized if they have a density of housing built prior to 1945, have a significant number of children and/or seniors in the area, and are primarily low-income households based on Census data. Lead service line replacement includes replacing the lead line with a new copper pipe from the City's water main (located in the street) into the resident's house to the water meter. There is no cost to the customer for this work!

The DWSD contractor started exploratory digging in late January on four streets in Morningside:

- Balfour between Mack and Warren
- Chatsworth between Mack and Warren
- Berkshire between Mack and Warren
- Buckingham between Mack and Warren

Exploratory digging requires the contractor to dig a small hole in the front yard to verify if each house has a lead service line. Later, the contractor will leave a door hanger notice for the resident to call and schedule a lead service line replacement appointment. If it's confirmed that the resident has a lead service line, they will receive a free water pitcher and filters as a precaution.

Actual service line replacements are scheduled to begin in April or May. The contractor will make an appointment with each property owner to enter their home and complete the replacement process. Someone over age 18 must be present during the 2 hours work is being done.

When all homes in the neighborhood are finished, any lawns damaged in the process will be seeded and mulched. Sidewalk sections will also be replaced if necessary.



Lawns such as this one on Chastworth has been mulched and the sidewalk has been fully replaced. Image courtesy of Jeffrey D. Lewis II

A zoom community meeting was held on February 1 for the streets within the project limits. Door hanger packets containing detailed project information were distributed about a week prior to that meeting. For more information on this Lead Service Line Replacement Program and to see a complete list of streets currently scheduled across the city, please visit www.detroitmi.gov/lslr. The DWSD phone number for more information is **(313) 880-2812**.

Morningside is truly blessed to be one of the first neighborhoods receiving water line upgrades. The value of this improvement is over \$10,000 per house. Although it is unknown at this time when the remainder of our community will experience this benefit, the State of Michigan is requiring each city to replace all lead lines by 2040.

Eric Dueweke, MCO President

New Beginnings on Three Mile

Rachel Pisano | Contributing Writer

U-SNAP-BAC is a local non-profit that has had a presence in the Morningside neighborhood for over 30 years. They have been working on housing redevelopment work on the East Side of Detroit since they were founded with the goal to empower residents to impact the future of Detroit as stated in their mission. They do this in a variety of ways: from new housing development and renovations, to connecting people to housing resources and building coalitions. In Morningside alone they have built or renovated around 80 homes. This year they are adding two more homes to the list.

One of their latest efforts has been rehabbing two houses on Three Mile which they purchased from the Detroit Landbank Authority. The goal is to renovate these homes completely - from needed HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems, to brand new roofs and finishes – and sell them to low-to-moderate-income first time homebuyers. This allows these individuals build equity while helping to stabilize the community. Linda Smith has been the executive director of U-SNAP-BAC since 1995 and has worked hard to get these projects underway. The first of the two homes is well into construction and the construction has a local story too.

The general contractor for the project, Steve Manning, is a local himself. He currently lives on Mack and has been in the area for 30 years. Working on projects this close to home means a lot to him. Besides these two houses, Steve has worked on many others in the neighborhood. He started working on rehabbing homes when he was 22 years old and has been a licensed contractor since 2007. To him the work he does is more than just work. He told me “This is not what I do, it's what I am. If I hit the lottery and I didn't have to work another day in my life, I would still do it”. And that passion is clear to anyone who talks to him. He currently does his rehab work during the day and works a full-time night shift job at Chrysler.

His crew has worked tirelessly on this project, recently completing the roof on the first home, and continuing exterior improvement efforts. He says the greatest challenge on the projects so far has been trying to deal with the Michigan winter weather the past month. Though the cold temps and snow delayed some of the roof work, Steve and the team are confident they are on track to create a beautiful home for this great cause.



Exterior renovation work happening at the first home on Three Mile. Image courtesy of Rachel Pisano

Story continues on page 10...

Continued... New Beginnings on Three Mile

Eric Dueweke is the current Chair of the Board for U-SNAP-BAC and shared that this work is important for many reasons, but ultimately, he recognizes that there will be two less empty homes and two more residents who will fit into the wonderful community Morningside is. His dream would be to see zero empty houses in the neighborhood and this project is just one step closer to getting there.

Keep an eye out for all the great working coming from U-SNAP-BAC and check out more of what they are all about at their website: usnapbac.org

Rachel Pisano

Give A Smile, Get A Smile

[Donyelle Pressley](#) | The Morningsider

There are many untold stories of Black Detroiters who once lived in the thriving community of Black Bottom. Many of those stories were erased from history just as the community that was cleared to install Interstate 375.

However, at 87-years young, Detroit, Frances Lewis is preparing to publish her memoir "Frances Is," which will detail her experience living in the once home to many Black-owned businesses and so much more.

This is a story you should definitely read during Black History Month.

Click [here](#) for the full story.

Donyelle Pressley, Morningside resident



A complete install of a new roof. Image courtesy of Jim West



Detroit native Frances Lewis prepares to publish her memoir, "Frances Is." Image courtesy of David Rodriguez Munoz

Let's Talk Trash: Weekly Bulk Trash Collection Coming Soon!

The Morningsider

For years, Morningsiders have complained about blight in our neighborhood, most of it caused by investors renovating homes and dumping the debris on front berms or by residents who pay no attention to the bulk trash pickup schedule. That's about to change.

Beginning June 1, sights like this pile of trash on Waveney at Bedford should be much less common. After soliciting feedback from thousands of residents, City Council voted earlier this month to increase the frequency of bulk trash, yard waste, and recycling pickup from bi-weekly to weekly. Even better, trash will be picked up from side streets and vacant lots, too.

To pay for the increase in services, solid waste fees will increase from \$240 to \$250 on July 1, followed by additional \$10 increases in 2025 and 2026.

East siders will also have a new provider – Priority Waste Management – which is replacing GFL Environmental due to residents' complaints about their service.

In the meantime, here are your next three bulk trash and recycling pickup dates:

Thursday, February 15 and 29 (Yes, this is a leap year!)

Thursday, March 14



Illegal dumping of such items on side streets have been an ongoing issue in Morningside. Image courtesy of Susan Newell

Celebrate Black History Month in the Neighborhood and Beyond

The Morningsider

Every year there are more opportunities in metro Detroit to celebrate and learn about Black history and the many ways that African Americans have and continue to enrich our nation.

The Jefferson Branch Library is offering two more Black History-related programs for the family this month:

Black History Head Wrap Party

Saturday, February 17
2:30 pm - 5 pm

Black History Bingo

Saturday, February 24
2 pm - 3 pm

Next Chapter Books (at the corner of E. Warren & Kensington) is also doing its part to elevate Black voices:

An Evening with Detroit Poets

Thursday, February 15
6 p.m.

Featuring Nandi Comer, Poet Laureate of Michigan; La Shaun phoenix Moore, spoken word artist and activist; and Justin Rogers, Literary Program Coordinator for InsideOut Literary Arts.

The Book Club

Monday, February 26
4 pm – 5:30 pm

Donna Givens Davidson and Orlando Bailey, hosts of the podcast “Authentically Detroit” will lead a discussion of Black AF History: The Un-Whitewashed Story of America,” by Michael Harriot.

If this isn’t enough to keep you busy, here are just a couple of the many websites listing Black History Month events in the metro area: [All Events](#) or [Patch](#).



Wayne County Commissioner Tim Killeen, Presents

Free Community Health Fair

March 23, 2024, 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

St. Clare of Montefalco
16362 Mack corner of East Outer Drive
Grosse Pointe, MI. 48230

Diabetes, Cholesterol and kidney Function Screening, Blood Pressure Screening, Covid-19 Vaccinations & Boosters, Covid Testing and other Health Screenings.
Social Distancing and Masks are optional.
A Bag of fresh groceries for those in need will be provided.

FORGOTTEN HARVEST
Special Thanks to those who support good health in our community.

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For more information visit our web site
www.unifydetroitcoalition.org or call 313-418-3049

Resources & Upcoming Events

The Morningsider

Next Chapter Books Presents...

Fiction from the Heart of Flint

A book launch, reading & conversation with Connor Coyne & Kelsey Ronan



Connor Coyne (he/him) is a writer living and working in Flint, Michigan, with several published novels, a short story collection, and work featured in Vox.com, Belt Magazine, and elsewhere. Connor is the director of the Flint-based Gothic Funk Press and is a facilitator for the Gloria Coles Flint Public Library's writing workshops. Lethe Press recently published his novella, "Hollywood."



Kelsey Ronan grew up in Flint, Michigan. Her work has appeared in Lit Hub, Michigan Quarterly Review, Electric Literature, Kenyon Review, and elsewhere. She is the author of "Chevy in the Hole," a New York Times Book Review Editor's Choice, and a Michigan Notable Book. She lives in Metro Detroit.

Connor and Kelsey will read excerpts from their work, participate in a Q&A, and sign copies of their books, which will be available for purchase.

This is a free event.

February 21, 2024
6:00 PM



16555 E. Warren
Detroit, MI 48224

Next Chapter Books Presents...

Open Mic Night

FEBRUARY 22
6 - 8pm



Calling all poets, storytellers, and musicians

DM or email ahead to sign up



16555 E. Warren
Detroit, MI 48224

THE STODAMIRE

TECHNOLOGY 101

Every Tuesday*
5:00 pm - 6:30 pm

The Stoudamire Tech Hub
4401 Conner St
Detroit, MI

Technology 101 helps residents build the confidence, basic skills, and digital literacy needed to use computers and mobile phones for everyday tasks.

Featured Class Topics:

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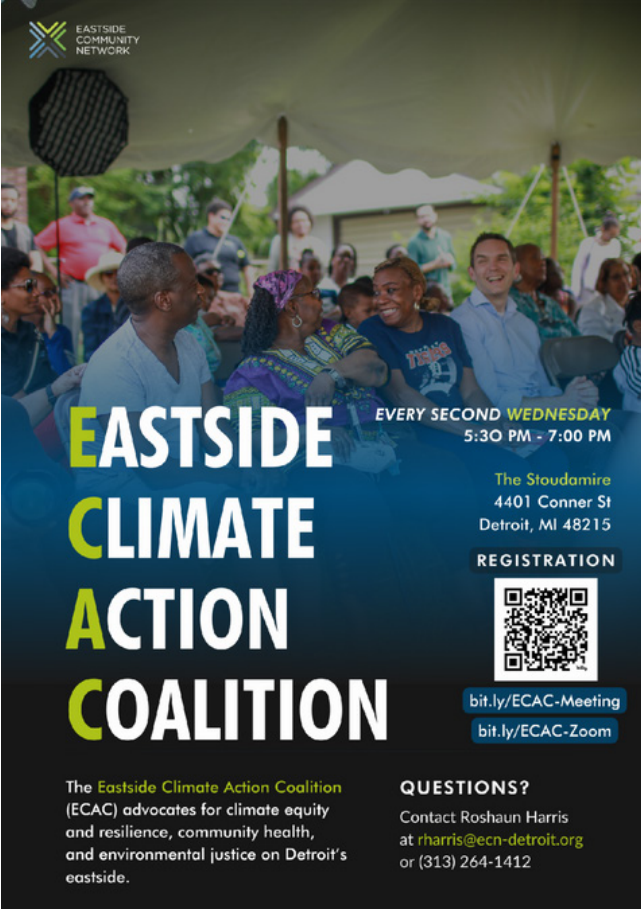


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Questions?
Contact Myla Chapman at mchapman@ecn-detroit.org or (313) 484-3206.

Resources & Upcoming Events

The Morningsider




EASTSIDE CLIMATE ACTION COALITION

EVERY SECOND WEDNESDAY
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

The Stoudamire
4401 Conner St
Detroit, MI 48215

REGISTRATION



bit.ly/ECAC-Meeting
bit.ly/ECAC-Zoom

QUESTIONS?
Contact Roshaun Harris
at rharris@ecn-detroit.org
or (313) 264-1412

The *Eastside Climate Action Coalition* (ECAC) advocates for climate equity and resilience, community health, and environmental justice on Detroit's eastside.



THE STODAMIRE

The BLACK WOMEN'S WELLNESS PROJECT

Wednesdays | JANUARY 24 - MARCH 13 | 11AM-12PM
Eastside Community Network | EXECUTIVE MEETING ROOM

8 TOTAL SESSIONS

Don't miss out! Join to discuss self-care, healthy eating, emotional wellbeing, and more with a Certified Wellness Coach. Attend all eight sessions for a chance to win a prize giveaway. Limited seats available.

For more information, contact Adesina Wheeler at 313.887.1885
ecn-detroit.org/the-stoudamire



THE STODAMIRE

THE BLACK DETROIT DEMOCRACY PROJECT

Special Series: **Every 4th Monday of the Month**

Monday, February 26, 2024 | 6:00 PM-8:00 PM
The Stoudamire | 4401 Conner St, Detroit, MI

Join our monthly planning group as we:

- Build awareness about threats to democracy in Detroit
- Identify strategies to enhance Democratic participation in an effort to build collective power
- Work to improve the responsiveness of public officials
- Address political accountability to Black Detroiters

REGISTER HERE!




[BIT.LY/3RMNQZC](https://bit.ly/3RMNQZC)

HOSTED BY
DONNA GIVENS DAVIDSON
PRESIDENT & CEO, EASTSIDE COMMUNITY NETWORK

Resources & Upcoming Events

The Morningsider



Join the ...
BOOK CLUB

AUTHENTICALLY DETROIT

This Month's Book Choice
"Black AF History: The Un-Whitewashed Story of America"
by Michael Harriot

AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT:

Next Chapter Books
16555 East Warren Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48224

Our **BOOK CLUB MEET-UP** will take place
February 26th from 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm at Next Chapter Books

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!
f i X y

Sign up for our new Book Club
at www.authenticllydet.com

LISTEN TO OUR PODCAST ANYTIME!

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WHEN CRACK WAS KING

BLACK AF HISTORY
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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
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Contact the Morningside Community Organization at:

(313) 355-2468 or via email:

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Also checkout our website!

www.morningsidedetroit.org

P.O, Box 24325, Detroit, MI 48224



#morningsiderepresent

