Larchmere Mural Bridges the Gap between Youth and Community

By Lee Chilcote

Charles Smith, an 11th-grade student at Cleveland School of the Arts, points to a colorful painting of a brick building with big storefront windows. “I painted the barber shop,” he says with a smile as he takes a break from working to provide a tour to a group of Larchmere residents and merchants.

The barber shop is Rebecca’s, a longstanding Larchmere merchant. Smith points to the colorful objects in the windows – Rebecca collects barber shop memorabilia, and the painting captures these details beautifully. A few dozen students, brushes in hand, focus on the mural and appear not to notice the visitors. Although there are over thirty teenagers in the room, it’s strangely calm.

Smith is a student intern in the Summer Mural Institute, a program of the Building Bridges Arts Collaborative, a nonprofit community-based arts organization that fosters youth development and supports emerging artists. This summer, the interns painted a large-scale mural of a building.

Raising the Housing Standard

Owners Restore and Improve North and South Moreland Apartment Buildings

by Lee Chilcote

Brian Cook stands in the oval-shaped dining room of an apartment at Ludlow Castle, the signature Tudor-style building off of Shaker Square. The unique room has hardwood floors, and opens up to a sunken living room with a wood-burning fireplace and a wall of windows overlooking the street.

“My wife would kill for an oval-shaped dining room like this,” Cook says, “and for the closet space in these units.”

The neighborhoods of Shaker Square have long been a popular draw for individuals and families that are seeking the conveniences and amenities of apartment living. Now a Cleveland real estate developer is restoring and rejuvenating many of the apartment buildings on North and South Moreland, a densely populated apartment corridor.

Cook represents Crossroads Property Management, a real estate management and development firm that is owned by Paul Gabrail. CPM operates 14 buildings on North and South Moreland.

(See Larchmere Murals on page 13)

(See Housing Standard on page 15)
Skyline Campus Intergenerational Garden has One Family Prepared for Thanksgiving

CarolMitch

The garden is the result of a vision by Joanna Van Oosterhout, Shaker Square Area Development, Sunbeam School, Ohio State University Extension Summer Sponsorship, and the St. Luke’s Foundation. Allowing residents of the Larchmere Community to grow their vegetables organically, the project has one gardener and with the success of her garden, next year more gardeners will join. Gardening takes time and patience and with help from the community, Carol’s garden thrives. Helping with the watering, ReZina and DeTwain Thomas make sure the garden doesn’t dry up. The Landscaping Interns from SHAD, sponsored by the St. Luke’s Foundation, with supervising interns, Alex Freeman and Joe Gruder helped with the weeding and cleaning of the plot. Matt Jones and his group of volunteers helped as well. Anyone interested in getting their hands dirty and green, should call 421-2100 and place a reservation for next year, for their own bunch of fresh-picked greens and more.

Grant Opportunities for Façade Renovation and New Businesses on Larchmere

For business owners looking to expand into the vibrant community on the Cleveland/Shaker Heights border or entrepreneurs ready to lease their own space, grant funding opportunities are available on Larchmere Boulevard: Shaker Square Area Development Corporation (SHAD) has launched the Larchmere Façade Improvement Program, which offers a dollar to dollar matching grant of $500 to $5000 for any business making eligible exterior property improvements. Eligible property improvements include exterior painting, landscaping, tuck-pointing, and new windows, sidewalks or signage. All Larchmere commercial district properties, from East 121st St. to North Moreland Blvd., whether they are in Cleveland or Shaker Heights, are eligible.

Additionally, projects must meet the following requirements, owner must use a licensed contractor; improvements must be to the exterior and visible from the street, and improvements must receive the necessary design approvals. A list of available properties can be found at www.telépapiescleveland.org or by contacting Lee Chilcote, Neighborhood Commercial Development Manager at SHAD.

Remembering Bill Williams

The life of Mr. Bill Williams, an impassioned Vocational Specialist at Lifeskills, was cut tragically short on June 5th, 2010, following an unexpected illness. During his life, Mr. Williams’ achievements revealed his passion for education and youth. He would often encourage his students at Lifeskills by saying, ‘I expect nothing less than greatness out of you’. Mr. Williams was instrumental in involving Lifeskills students in projects to improve Larchmere and the surrounding community, and his legacy as an educator and youth advocate will be memorialized with a plaque that will be installed beside the Larchmere mural on the Lifeskills building.

“Expect nothing less than greatness out of you.”

Bill Williams
Welcome back, Wolfy!

Michael Wolf opened Cleveland's first permanent auction gallery on Larchmere Blvd. in 1979. After stints in Cleveland's warehouse district, Wolf opened The Popcorn Shop and moved to West Park Boulevard. Wolfy then returned to his roots, running a five-day live auction every Friday.

If you haven't been back to the new Wolfy's, here's your chance, with an auction event starting Friday, October 1 at 7 pm.

Emphasis of the exhibit are Cleveland artists and Wolfy's excellent collection of affordable pieces from Paul Brandwein, Emily Black, and MaryFlyn-Mossou's abstract expressionist pieces and a recently acquired painting by Curtis to celebrate Wolfy's 60th birthday.

Our goal was to establish a visual look that reinforced the unique aspects of the street and conveyed the "uptown vitality – olf Urban," Gutzwiler says, "initially with the design and the market and then with the change to the Larchmere entry signs.

We are proud to have had the opportunity to create a look for our street and fellow members of the Larchmere Merchants Association. We are excited to be able to help further look at the immediate community," says Gutzwiler. Gutzwiler and Wolfy's are tuned into the stylish and curated and installed Signature Signs, "Creative signs add a visual vocabulary that changes a street," Farkas says. "This year's entries are to celebrate Wolfy's 60th birthday. What's this sign does for Larchmere.

Come on in to Re-NEW Beginning!

Cherie Campbell, thinks of herself as a treasure hunter, who credits her uncle, a collector, into the idea of developing a consignment store. Campbell’s always wanted a business, if for nothing else to get off the road," she explained. She drove for Greyhound lines across Country and around Cleveland’s R&T. She ran an antique store in Athens for three years. She also worked in construction and is a Certified Plasterer.

Her Re-New Beginning is a consignment shop, filled with beautifully arranged ideas of accessories in a comfortable house. Campbell or her daughters Porscha and Gillian will be on hand to assist.

For those looking to sell an item, Campbell is looking for high-end, designer labeled women's clothing and purses, shoes, jewelry and vintage jewelry two years old and less. Incidentally, the name is an excellent condition, cleaned, or ready to go and ready to wear. Campbell is pleased she has received calls from people who invite her to their homes to help them clean out their drawers. She does. If you have a detailed information on consigned pieces, you can send it to the shop.

Her stock changes all the time, but overall is a fascinating variety of clothing. Campbell states, "we are always on the lookout for new, never-worn or nice condition development to try our consignment store. The Popcorn Shop

Installation of the new Larchmere Sign

Home Improvement Dollars Available from SHAD

Shaker Square Area Development Corporation offers the Exterior Home Improvement Program to homeowners and property owners of the Larchmere community. This program will pay one-half of the cost of up to $150 for curb appeal projects. Here’s a checklist for the process:

1. Choose the exterior work needed to your house.
2. Select a contractor.
3. Contractor must have copies of insurance, Workman’s Compensation, tax ID, and New Sign Application.
4. Make an appointment to come to the SHAD office with your application.
5. Make a 21-28 days payment for the contractor to complete the work.
by Kevin Kay

In her five years as principal at Sunbeam School, Melanie Sinks has seen her school develop a strong connection with its surrounding community. Hundreds of neighbors visit the school each year for Schools as Neighborhood Resources (SNR), the evening program that offers free recreational and educational activities to residents of all ages (see sidebar).

Many neighborhood organizations take advantage of the free meeting space available at Sunbeam through the SNR program. The Larchmere Street Club and the Larchmere Mural Committee were among the organizations that met at Sunbeam during the 2009–2010 school year. However, despite the increased traffic through the school, some misconceptions about Sunbeam still linger. As a result, Sinks has resolved to take a more proactive approach in letting the community know about the unique resource that it has in Sunbeam School.

Top among the misconceptions is the idea that Sunbeam is a school for disabled children only. Sinks sets the record straight, saying, “We are not a school for handicapped children. We are a school for all children.”

The misconception has historical roots. For much of its history Sunbeam served only children with illnesses or other special needs. Sunbeam began to exist in the 1920s as a school for children with polio. When the polio vaccine was developed and the number of cases declined, Sunbeam began to serve children with other special needs as well. However, over the past few decades the trend in education—under headings such as “mainstreaming” and “inclusion”—has been to find ways to integrate students with special needs into “regular education” classrooms. This trend has affected the composition of the student body at Sunbeam to the point that the current Sunbeam School population of approximately 210 students includes students among special education and regular education students. “If you look at the history of Sunbeam and the evolution of it, I think the community can take pride that it’s an inclusive school,” says Sinks.

For many years of inclusion at Sunbeam, some damaging stereotypes persist. “Unfortunately,” says Sinks, “some people equate physical disability with mental disability. That just isn’t so.” The truth is that many students with special needs function quite effectively in regular education classrooms.

Sinks says the key is providing the accommodations that each student needs to participate. A student with scoliosis may need extra hydration during the day. A student with cerebral palsy might require a keyboard instead of pens and pencils. Students in wheelchairs need extra space. “Wheelchairs have a hard time navigating around individual desks,” notes Sinks. “We have tables instead.”

The presence of students with assistive devices does not alter the course of study. “We follow the same curriculum and are held accountable to the same state standards as everyone else,” Sinks emphasizes. She adds that the Sunbeam faculty is dedicated to teaching all children. “I’m very blessed with a staff that sees children as children,” she says, “not as a disability or a non-disability.”

Because they are held to the same standards as children from other schools, many Sunbeam students have gone on to “the most demanding high school programs in the district,” according to Sinks. “We have also distinguished ourselves in many district-wide and even state and national academic competitions (see sidebar, above). “We try to give children the very best education possible,” says Sinks.

It is true that some students at Sunbeam School have profound needs that require them to receive instruction in what are now called “special contained” classrooms. That does not stop Sinks from including them in the larger school community.

“For when we have field trips, everybody goes,” says Sinks. “Pros, being an inclusive school also allows the community to use the building after the regular school day is over. According to Sinks, the school is a Neighborhood Resources Program “helps the school be part of the community.”

“We’re open at night and have activities after school,” she explains. “It brings families out. Especially like that we get adults. I think that’s tremendous. If we want people to support the school and the school district, they have to see the school as part of the community.”

Sinks has developed a strong working relationship with Jack Beideln, the site coordinator for the SNR program at Sunbeam. “I try to work as much as possible with Jack Beideln,” says Sinks. “He’s so professional and so competent. I think everybody who deals with him respects him. He’s the right man for the job.”

Sinks also has high praise for Chris Lett, her former colleague at Joseph Tallight Middle School, who also serves as the security officer at Sunbeam SNR. “He’s very alert, very aware,” she says of Lett. “He pays attention to what’s going on outside the building as well as inside. He knows how to talk with people and prevent confrontations.”

Although Sinks is pleased to have so many people visiting Sunbeam in the evenings, she wants community members to know that they are also welcome to come in and volunteer during the day (see sidebar, left). “We could use the help in the lunchroom on the playground, and in the classroom listening to children read,” says Sinks. “Because we have kids from all over the city, some parents can’t always get over here to participate.”

Sinks has a great affection for the Larchmere neighborhood and its residents. “People are friendly, they’re helpful, and they care about their neighborhood,” she observes. Like so many people, she enjoys shopping and dining on Larchmere. She notes that some of the Larchmere business-owners have children who attend Sunbeam.

It is that connection between school and community that Sinks wants to nurture. More than ever, she feels that the fate of the Larchmere neighborhood is tied to the quality of its schools. “If you want to have a community that attracts families,” she says, “You need a safe neighborhood and a visible school system. If we’re going to make our community safe for our children, we have to work together.”

If you would like to volunteer at Sunbeam, call the school at 231-0961.
The Connection
Fall 2010

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216.295.1200
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216.231.1234

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BUZZ AROUND LARCHMERE

The second year of Larchmere’s Porchfest was another big hit with music lovers driving, walking and biking into the area to hear everything from bluegrass to rock, country, folk, indy/alternative and more, with the finale, a concert on Shaker Square. See you next year for Porchfest III.

BUZZ AROUND THE SQUARE

Meeting with the Mayor

Mayor Frank Jackson of the City of Cleveland has a policy of walking the city’s neighborhoods to talk with residents and business owners. Over the summer it was Shaker Square/Larchmere’s turn, and the Mayor and his staff chatted with homeowners, and made a quick stop to meet with people at The Academy Tavern.

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by ReZina Ludlow Residents Recruit Teens for Beautification Project

Sylvia Clayton, a longtime Ludlow neighbor, in her home.

By her classmates, Clayton decided that she has seen a difference in her neighborhood. Clayton now feels that she is part of the neighborhood. It is easy for other people to see the benefit of what the teens have accomplished. The landscaping installations on the Hampton Road traffic islands had become overgrown and filled with debris. Although the grass had been cut regularly, the shrubbery plots had received little attention since they were first installed two decades ago.

Clayton, who has years of experience in urban gardening, landscaping, and floral design, is often a frequent critic of the teens, join to help them. “I promise myself...”

Clayton says that LCA also plans for rewarding the teens with small prizes. The landscaping installations that she has seen a difference in her neighborhood. Clayton now feels that she is part of the neighborhood. It is easy for other people to see the benefit of what the teens have accomplished. The landscaping installations on the Hampton Road traffic islands had become overgrown and filled with debris. Although the grass had been cut regularly, the shrubbery plots had received little attention since they were first installed two decades ago.

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The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes recently completed the sculpting of a new wetland at the entrance of the Nature Center property. The new wetland is part of a larger project to improve the quality and biodiversity of the wetlands at the Nature Center.

The new wetland is located at the entrance of the Nature Center property. It features a variety of native plants, including cattails, rushes, and sedges, that are adapted to the wet conditions of the site.

The new wetland is part of a larger project to improve the quality and biodiversity of the wetlands at the Nature Center. The project is being funded through a grant from the Cleveland Foundation.

The new wetland provides a habitat for local wildlife, including birds, frogs, and insects. It also serves as an educational tool for visitors to learn about the importance of wetlands in the environment.

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and education of the wetlands of the greater Cleveland region.

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is a member of the Cleveland Metroparks System. Its mission is to provide education, recreation, and conservation opportunities to the community.

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is located at 2000 Shaker Boulevard, Shaker Heights, OH 44120. For more information, visit www.shakerlakes.org.

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is a great place to visit and learn about the importance of wetlands in the environment. It is open daily from 9 am to 5 pm. Visitors can also purchase memberships online at www.shakerlakes.org/membership.

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is committed to preserving and protecting the wetlands of the greater Cleveland region. Its mission is to provide education, recreation, and conservation opportunities to the community.

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Beautification Project
Continued from Page 10

The Rental Connection: an easy way to find apartments at Shaker Square

The new 2010 tabloid-sized Apartment Hunter’s Guide is now available at the library! Read on for tips on choosing the right place for you.

The Rental Connection can make you think the Shaker Square/ Laurelton neighborhood is an exciting place to live! Do you want to be close to the right neighborhood and to the shops, restaurants, movie theaters, and exciting events taking place here?

Call The Rental Connection at 421-2110. It’s a free rental information and referral service of Shaker Square Development Corporation (SHAD). We can help you find an apartment or house perfect for your needs.

The Rental Connection has current vacancies in SHAD-approved Shaker Square apartment buildings, as well as in several neighborhoods. Apartments range from efficiencies to three-bedroom double houses. This program is made possible through financial support from the City of Cleveland, the Salvation Army, the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle Against Poverty in the Third World, Groton Savings Bank, the Salvation Army, and the Shaker Heights City Hall. Inquiries are welcome!

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