

Jolina's Mediterranean Cuisine

by Dan Kaczmariski



Randa and Antoine Ghassa with their daughters Hanaa (left) and Jolina
Photo Courtesy of the Ghassa family

In September, Jolina's Mediterranean Cuisine added to the diverse dining options in Brookline, bringing to the Boulevard a menu from the Middle East...and Greece...and more. "Authentic Mediterranean cuisine" is how it's described on the restaurant's sign and menus.

The owners, Antoine and Randa Ghassa, have an impressive resume. Before moving to the United States in 2010, they ran a restaurant in Syria that seated 300 to 400 patrons. Since then, Antoine has worked at Ali Baba and Aladdin's and Randa has worked for Nellie's Sandwiches, a Middle Eastern diner in Oakland.

But their goal here was to open their own restaurant. "We've been waiting for a good opportunity," says Randa. "We heard about this space and that it had been a restaurant. We talked to the building owner and are grateful to have the chance to start our own business."

The restaurant's name is the same as that of their youngest daughter. The couple had considered different names—Randa's, their eldest daughter's, their last name—but decided that "Jolina's" was uncommon enough that it would give the restaurant a distinctive sound. Plus, says Randa, it wouldn't limit the restaurant's identity to any one country.

"Our food is a combination of Middle Eastern and Greek,"

says Randa. "If a Greek comes here, they're going to find the kind of food they're looking for. Turkish people are going to find the food they're looking for. There are some differences, but the foods are very similar."

Antoine is the primary chef, with Randa's help. When asked what distinguishes Jolina's from other restaurants, Randa says "Jolina's is just different. We offer something unique. We still cook as our moms and our grandmas did. It's home-style cooking. We make everything the way we make it at home. Our food is very healthy. We offer to our customers the food we would make at home for our family."

The menu is extensive, with both vegetarian and meat dishes—including beef, lamb, and chicken—well represented. There are 18 different appetizers to choose from, 9 different soups and salads, 4 different main platters with various combination options, 3 family specials that each serves 4 to 6 people, and 11 different sandwiches.

The décor is bright, airy, fresh, and appealing. The day I was there, cute Christmas centerpieces accented every table. And you can't beat the view of Cannon Park.

The couple says the Brookline community has opened its arms to them. "We love the neighborhood," says Randa. "The people here have been very supportive. They welcomed us. They tried the food. They are really friendly."

And the same can be said for Jolina's owners. They greet patrons with genuine warmth and a welcoming smile that really does make you feel at home. My wife and I dined there several weeks ago—from appetizers to soup to main platter—and judged it the best food of its kind we had ever eaten.

Jolina's offers eat-in dining, take-out, delivery, and catering. There is a BYOB policy with no corking fee.

1011 Brookline Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15226
412-342-3333

jolinas3333@gmail.com

Facebook: Jolina's Mediterranean cuisine

Hours: Monday to Thursday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

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Brookline Updates

Community Contacts

Pittsburgh Police, Zone 6	412-937-3051
Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak	412-255-2131
Brookline Recreation Center	412-571-3222
Carnegie Library	412-561-1003
State Senator Wayne Fontana	412-344-2551
State Representative Dan Deasy	412-928-9514
State Representative Dan Miller	412-343-3870
State Representative Harry Readshaw	412-881-4208
Brookline Christian Food Pantry	412-344-8451
Meals-on-Wheels	412-343-8144
Dollar Energy/Columbia Gas Cap	412-344-4222

Community Crimes Zone 6

Zone 6 Crimes	Total	Brookline
November		
Aggravated Assault	3	1
Sexual Assault	2	0
Robbery	4	0
Burglary	12	4
Theft	18	6
Theft from Vehicle	4	2
Stolen Vehicle	2	0

JANUARY COMMUNITY MEETINGS

January 11 Monday

Brookline Chamber of Commerce Meeting 6 p.m. at Carnegie Library 708 Brookline Blvd.

January 12 Tuesday

Brookline Block Watch 7 p.m. at Magistrate Jim Motznik's office 736 Brookline Blvd.

January 18 Monday

South Pittsburgh Development Corp. 7 p.m. at United Presbyterian Church 1036 Brookline Blvd.

We have over 1,400 readers.

Pick up The Brookline at a Boulevard merchant. Look for "The Brookline Available Here" sign in the window.

The Brookline

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Deadlines for Submissions and Ads

January 7 for February's Issue

February for March's Issue

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Contact us at thebrookline@gmail.com or pdkaz@comcast.net for rates and more information.

The Brookline is available by email or USPS mail.

A one-year postal delivery subscription is \$25 for non-SPDC members and \$15 for SPDC Members

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Call for Volunteers

- ANGELS' PLACE Volunteers needed at Angels' Place, Inc. Help us work with children, arts and crafts, organizing and more. If interested, please call Stephanie at 412-531-6667. www.angelsplaceph.org
 - BROOKLINE CHRISTIAN FOOD PANTRY call Pat Erny at 412-344-8451
 - BEGIN AGAIN CLOTHING MINISTRY To donate gently used or new clothing, call Brookline United Presbyterian Church at 412-531-0590
 - DOGIPOT MAINTENANCE call Lisa at 412-304-3086
 - FOREVER HOME BEAGLE RESCUE call 412-304-4034 or BeagleHQ@msn.com Foster homes needed as well as donations of dog food, blankets and bath towels.
 - MEALS ON WHEELS sponsored by St. Mark's Lutheran Church call 412-343-8144
 - OASIS: HELP CHILDREN READ Tutors (age 50+) needed in Pittsburgh Schools, including Brookline PreK-8 and West Liberty K-5. Call John D. Spehar at 412-232-2021. In partnership with Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council.
 - OPEN YOUR HEART TO A SENIOR Volunteers needed to assist senior citizens. Call Family Services at 412-661-1670
- Other ways to help: Meals on Wheels can use donations of cash, cookies, desserts and bread. The Brookline Christian Food Pantry can use grocery store gift cards (send to Pat Erny, 2918 Pioneer Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15226).

Opinion: Dogs With Owner Problems



I worry about some dogs in Brookline.

Well, actually I worry about their owners as much as the dogs. My concern is prompted by the dog doo-doo that mysteriously shows up on the Boulevard sidewalks and

mulched plant areas and on side streets.

Overall, it's clear that Brookline dog owners are doing a fantastic and conscientious job picking up after their dogs. When you figure the large number of dogs who live around here compared to how little poop actually shows up on the streets, most of our dog lovers are clearly great community members doing their part to keep the shared areas clean.

But there is a small number of—how can I say this politely—yahoos who obviously miss the message, based on the souvenirs their dogs leave in the mulched areas and on the sidewalks. I worry about those dogs.

For instance, it concerns me that even after owning a dog for months or years, some owners apparently haven't yet put 2 &

2 together and are blindsided when their dog has to "go" on the sidewalk, and who, omigosh, never considered bringing a pick-up bag. I can only hope these owners aren't as surprised and unprepared when their dog needs fed.

And I sympathize with dogs whose owners leave home bagless and who apparently have such poor eyesight that they can't see the Dogipot bag dispensers hanging on poles up and down the Boulevard. Or lack the mobility to walk the 10 or 20 feet to take a bag from a dispenser. Are these people tripping over their pets at home?

But, as I said, it really is impressive and heartening how clean the streets are overall with regard to dog droppings. If we could just get that last 2 percent of owners to do their duty with their dogs' doo-doo.

Dan Kaczmariski



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Amy Fisher, Visual Artist

The Latest from Your SPDC

by Ryan Askey, President of SPDC

Readers of *The Brookline*, we last wrote to you in July to give an overview of what the South Pittsburgh Development Corporation (SPDC), sponsor of this newsletter, is all about, and we've been very busy since then. When you're an all-volunteer organization, you have to have all hands on deck to help out. We held our board elections this past spring and our new board has hit the ground running to make Brookline a better place.

BreezeFest Reborn

One of the neighborhood's most beloved events is the annual Brookline Breeze, and this year SPDC paired with the Chamber of Commerce to coordinate a rework of the BreezeFest festivities that surround it. Closing down the street for a free fair is not easy, but our volunteers handled every detail and we hope that the thousands of people who attended had a great time. Live music ran all day long, vendors lined Brookline Boulevard, and there was a wide variety of activities for kids. A very special thanks to Rohrich Toyota, whose generous sponsorship made the whole event possible, and to all of the sponsors who care about the community.



SPDC members pitching in on Make a Difference Day

Photo courtesy of the SPDC

The First Brookline Community Yard Sale

SPDC tried its hand at curating a community yard sale for the first time this past August, and the response from the community far exceeded our expectations. Over 50 houses signed up for the yard sale and we used a combined paper and online map system with thousands of views. Yard sale participants saw activity throughout the day and we look forward to creating an improved event next year. A big thanks to everyone who signed up and to all of our volunteers.

Back-to-Back Cleanup Days

We've been lucky enough to get an annual bus full of undergraduate students from the Pitt "Make a Difference Day" program for the past couple of years, but this year's October cleanup efforts were unique. On the weekend of the 17th, we had help from Boy Scout Troop 6 and Brookline Teen Outreach to weed the planter beds along Brookline Boulevard. The next weekend, the Pitt Make a Difference Day undergrads came in and mulched those same beds and ran a general garbage cleanup. You don't often get two weekends

in a row for dedicated large-scale cleanup and SPDC is grateful for the help. The volunteers downed plenty of pizza but were happy to see a cleaner Brookline. Thanks to Caitlin McNulty and all of the volunteers who really put their backs into it.

Entrepreneur Meetings

We've had meetings with a variety of different groups that have either recently started business in the neighborhood or that are looking to get space. Ever since the Brookline Boulevard

resurfacing project, demand for space in the neighborhood has gone up and organizations like SPDC and the Chamber of Commerce have had their hands full making sure that new businesses get the information they need. Some businesses have an easier time than others in getting established, as dealing with local codes and policies can be difficult, but we've seen some great success stories like LFG Pittsburgh and a few other businesses opening soon. We met with Julianne Reiland, the new Public Liaison for

the City's Office of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections (PLI) to get a better understanding of how to guide business owners through PLI's revamped processes and hope to help as many businesses as we can to find success in Brookline.

Planning for the Future - Website Work and New Committees

One thing that we sometimes find difficult is communicating with people looking to get involved, and so we're reworking a few things to make community work more easily accessible to more Brookline residents. We are working with a great developer to build a new website so that we can more easily tell people about Brookline and SPDC and also to communicate upcoming volunteer opportunities more effectively. We've also reworked our organization's committee structure to streamline our board meetings and give people more opportunities to get involved through focused meetings tailored to particular subjects, like beautification or helping entrepreneurs. We want everyone to be able to get involved in whatever capacity they can feel most comfortable.

Our next meeting is Monday, January 18, 2016 at the Brookline United Presbyterian Church at 7 p.m. All of our meetings are open to the public and we encourage anyone who is interested in getting involved or in just hearing what's going on to come join us.

Brookline Open Mic Finds a Home at Pub & Pourhouse



Open mic organizer Mark Joseph Meyers (left) and host Erick Williams joke onstage as they close out the weekly open mic at the Pub & Pourhouse.

Photo courtesy of Marlee Shipp

When the open mic at Cannon Coffee needed to find a new home, due to new ownership and a re-branding of the local coffee spot, the-not-yet-named Brookline Community Open Mic partnered with Citiparks to move to a temporary home inside Moore Park on Pioneer Avenue. "It was a great spot," said organizer Mark Joseph Meyers, "but it was isolated and too far from the Boulevard. There was something missing--most people would probably say it was freedom of expression and beer."

The open mic found a permanent, and much less isolated, home at The Pub & Pourhouse (formerly The Brookline Pub), located on Brookline Blvd. The open mic is held in the upstairs lounge, which includes its own bar, every Wednesday night from 7- 10 p.m. All performance types, including comedy, poetry, spoken word, and hip hop are welcome.

"We're really excited to welcome the open mic family to the Pub," says Taylor Hughes, whose family owns the Pub & Pourhouse. Hughes met with the open mic organizers a few months ago and offered her family's bar as a venue.

The open mic is hosted by local comedian Erick Williams. "Erick's a great host because he brings energy that makes people excited to perform," said Meyers. "Although, we did have to set a limit on the number of drinks he can have during the show, since moving to a place that serves alcohol."

The only change from the original Cannon Coffee open mic is now attendance is 18 years old and over. Effort is being made to set up a monthly all-ages version for younger performers.

The first night at the Pub & Pourhouse featured 17 different performers, a significant increase in the number of sign-up during the 2 months spent at Moore Park. "Now that we have a permanent home, we can focus on spreading the word, getting a bigger audience, making improvements to the show for both the audience and the performers," said Williams.

"It's important to balance the experience of performing on stage in front of others and feeling like you have an audience who is listening and being respectful," he said. "We want both the audience and performers to feel like they're a part of something special. Someone may be up there for the first time, they may be reading a poem about a really tough subject. We want that experience to be as powerful for the performer as it is for members of the audience."

More information on the open mic can be found at facebook.com/Brooklineopenmic. The organizers can be reached at brooklineopenmic@gmail.com

Brookline Memorial Recreation Center

Weight Room and Fitness Center

Patrons ages 16-17 must be orientated and accompanied by a parent or guardian. Membership card is required. \$5 monthly fee for use of weight room and fitness center.

Indoor Adult Bocce

Come join the fun Monday mornings and play a game of Bocce! Games will begin at 10:30 a.m. and teams will be randomly chosen, so bring a friend or two and join the fun! FREE

Kindersports

This fun activity is for children up to school age and their parents. This includes fun time in the gym, story time, a craft and snack. Program runs throughout the school year on Wednesday mornings at 10 a.m. FREE. Please be sure to wear your tennis shoes.

Tae Kwon Do Martial Arts Class

Learn the fundamentals of Tae Kwon Do with our expert instructor. Beginner and Intermediate classes for students age 10 and up. Beginner class: 6:15 p.m.-6:45 p.m. Intermediate class 6:45 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Advanced class 7:30 p.m.-8:45 p.m. Classes are held on Monday evenings. Cost is \$15. New sign-up in January, Visit www.sejongtkd.org for more information.

Quilting Class

Quilting class has expanded from Monday evenings 6 p.m.-8:45 p.m. to now include Friday mornings! Friday morning class will run from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Class is open to everyone who has some sewing experience and a sewing machine. This class is ongoing and everyone is welcome! FREE

Call the Center for more information: 412-571-3222

Old Notes By Old People

by Chip Gorski

I guess truth can be told now since the place is out of business. I lied to get my first real paying job. As a teenager, before one could get a part-time job afterschool or on the weekends, one had to apply for a “work permit.” Obtaining the permit was not hard. All you needed was a physical examination (which could actually be done in school) and permission from the Board of Education to be employed for a set amount of hours per week. There was one other rule. You had to be 16 years old to get this permit. I wanted money and I wasn’t going to let rules and regulations stand in my way.

Having just turned 15, I heard about an opening at Blue Bonnet Bakery. I remember walking into the place and applying—which consisted of my writing down my name and telephone number on a bakery order slip. I was called in for an interview. The job requirements were fairly simple. All that was required was the ability to wash pots and pans, clean all of the mixing bowls, and stock the supplies when the trucks came for deliveries.

Actually, there was one other important requirement. One

had to be able to carry a 100-pound sack of flour or sugar up the steps from the basement and into the kitchen. I think the sack of flour weighed more than me at the time and I wasn’t too sure I could pull that off. The owner watched as I struggled up those steps and loaded the flour into its correct bin. He asked how old I was and, I lied. I told him I was 16. I’m sure I looked like I was 12. He hired me anyway and said I would need to get a “work permit.” I knew if I did that, I would be caught in my lie—so I never brought it up and apparently he forgot about it as well. And so I began my career as a “pan boy.” Not a particularly fun career, but the people were very nice.

At that point, Brookline Boulevard had three bakeries. I was working at Blue Bonnet; my sister was working at Party Cake. All three bakeries had their specialty (and two still do), but Blue Bonnet’s strawberry whipped cream cake was my absolute favorite. I have never found one like it since the place closed. Being a “pan boy” was an experience that provided a couple of bucks a week spending money. After a few years cleaning up other people’s messes, I decided I wanted something more. Personally, I knew I wasn’t going to make a career out of scrubbing cake pans. Foolishly, I let it be known that I wanted to be either a radio or television reporter or anchor person. That drew laughs from several in the kitchen. They laughed harder when I told them that one day I would work at the very radio station they were listening to. I only wish I could have seen their flour-covered faces when they first heard my voice coming through the radio doing exactly what I said I wanted to do.



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Bingo. Every Monday, Church of the Resurrection. Doors open 5 p.m.; bingo begins 7 p.m. 412-563-4400.

Bingo. Every Sunday, American Legion Post 540. Doors open at 4 p.m.; bingo begins 6 p.m. 412-561-9750.

Do You Like To Write?

The Brookline Newsletter is looking for writers for articles and announcements. If you’re a writing student, this is a great way to get clippings for your portfolio. We’ll provide you with contacts and choices of topics and will work with your schedule. You don’t need to commit to any minimum number of articles. The newsletter staff is all-volunteer. For more information, contact Dan Kaczmarek at pdkaz@comcast.net

Outreach to Area Teens



Brookline Teen Outreach is a non-profit based in Brookline that will bring much needed services to the teenagers of south Pittsburgh. Caitlin McNulty, current youth minister at Resurrection

Church, founded this organization in 2015. Her team of volunteers is committed to carrying out the group's mission to provide a positive environment to help teens reach their fullest potential. The objective is to establish an organization that will serve as a safe place for teens to go in the evenings and on weekends.

Brookline Teen Outreach will offer free tutoring by tutors trained in many subject areas and community service opportunities submitted by local community organizations and Brookline residents. Additionally, the organization will provide engaging and diverse programming that includes life skill building, ESL services, guest speakers from a wide range of disciplines, and much more.

The teen center will provide the only mental health services in the area by licensed counselors. Lead counselor, Diana Duncombe-Fischerkeller, is a dedicated and client-focused Licensed Professional Counselor with proven expertise in outpatient, wraparound, and school settings with children, adults, and families of diverse backgrounds and diagnoses. She's experienced in the provision of individual, family, and couples counseling, using Cognitive Behavioral, Family Behavioral Therapy, and Solution Focused approaches. Specialties include Adolescent Mental Health, Adventure Based Counseling, Aggression Replacement Training, and Treatment of Eating Disorders/Anxiety/Depression/LGBT issues. In addition, she plans to open her practice not just to teens, but to individuals of any age that are seeking counseling services.

The ultimate goal of Brookline Teen Outreach is to serve the community on a large scale, by engaging our youth in the community in order to reshape the morale and identity of Brookline, and to build the confidence and ownership of the youth within our neighborhood. The group strives to be visible, to motivate the community to address the larger

issues affecting teens, to give teens new and life-changing experiences, and to provide the necessary resources for success so that we can build a vibrant and safe community for the future.

Brookline Teen Outreach plans to open a meeting space on Brookline Blvd. by February 2016 in order to be more visible to the community and more accessible to students. They are accomplishing amazing strides in programming, mental health and community service through collaborations within the community.

Additional information about Brookline Teen Outreach can be found on their Facebook page or by contacting Caitlin McNulty at Caitlin.mculty@yahoo.com.



Litter cleanup and weed pulling on Brookline Blvd. October 2015. Logan Brown (left) and Chris Micknowski

Photo Courtesy of Caitlin McNulty

Healing

A Public Service of Healing

The Rev. Dr. Regis Turocy, OSJ
Assisted by Mrs. Meg Kaufman
Sunday, January 17th-9:15 AM
Church of the Advent, Anglican
3010 Pioneer Avenue

What Do They Do There?

by Dan Kaczmarek

If you've gone down West Liberty Avenue to the Liberty Tunnels anytime since 1948, you've passed the Matthews complex of buildings at the intersection of West Liberty and Pioneer Ave., at the extreme northern tip of Brookline.

But how many of the thousands who motor by each day know what goes on there? I was born and raised in Brookline, but have to admit I couldn't say for sure. So we asked the nice people at Matthews to fill us in.

We learned that Matthews' site on West Liberty is one relatively small unit of a worldwide company-- Matthews International Corporation-- that employs over 10,000 people in more than 25 countries.

Matthews International has deep Pittsburgh roots. According to the company, it's the city's oldest continuously operating manufacturing company, tracing its history to 1850, when John Dixon Matthews, a skilled engraver from England, opened a small shop. In 2015, Matthews International, now a publicly traded company, did over \$1.4 billion in sales.

Matthews's corporate offices are on Pittsburgh's North Shore. The company has seven other sites in the Pittsburgh area, with a regional workforce of over 1,000 workers. More than 250 work at the Brookline site.

Overall, the corporation is divided into three distinct business segments: memorialization, brand solutions, and Industrial (automation solutions).

The Brookline site produces memorialization products-- such as cast bronze memorials and urns primarily used in cemeteries. According to Greg Geers, Plant Manager of the Brookline location, the memorials can be cast in practically

any size, shape, or design.

The Brookline location also produces cast bronze and aluminum architectural products--a fancy name for things such as plaques, signage, and awards. Matthews cast the towering lifelike statue of Bill Mazerowski that greets visitors to PNC Park. Matthews International has been the exclusive producer of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum plaques for more than 30 years.

In addition, the company crafted lasting tributes to heroes of one of the darkest days in U.S. history. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Matthews donated to New York City a 6' x



West Liberty site workers pouring molten bronze at over 2000° F.

Photo courtesy of the Matthews International

6' bronze statue of a firefighter in an emotional kneeling position, along with two 4' x 8' bronze feature plaques in remembrance of those who gave their lives while assisting in rescue operations. Matthews also produced a cast bronze memorial honoring the courageous passengers and crew of United Flight 93 that crashed in Somerset County.

One of the company's many claims to fame is that, in 1927, it produced the first "flush [i.e., ground-level] bronze memorial," an innovation that literally changed cemetery landscaping.

If you're interested in learning more about Matthews International Corporation, see their website at www.matw.com. You can also access a short video about the company's production of baseball Hall of Fame plaques at www.matthewsid.com.

Humans have worked with bronze for over 3,000 years, using it in ancient times for weapons, coins, tableware, and other household purposes. Bronze is an alloy usually produced by blending mostly copper with tin or other materials in various amounts, depending on what the bronze will be used for.

Senator Wayne Fontana



As the New Year begins, I want to encourage everyone to contact me and my office with any state-related issues or concerns. I also want to remind everyone how you can stay connected throughout the year.

My district office at 932 Brookline Boulevard is open Monday– Friday, 9

a.m.–5 p.m. I encourage all my constituents to contact me to discuss legislative issues and express opinions and suggestions on matters before the General Assembly, by either contacting my office or emailing me directly at Fontana@pasenate.com. After all, I represent you and it's important for me to know what my constituents think about issues that may come up for a vote.

My News & Views will continue to be distributed weekly and my Special Edition JOBS monthly. Anyone wishing to receive these editions can sign up on my website at www.senatorfontana.com. You can also follow me on Twitter at [@WayneDFontana](https://twitter.com/WayneDFontana). Additionally, the front window at my Brookline office will continue to list job openings throughout our region.

It is important to know that I and my staff are always available to assist you. Since elected in 2005, we have ensured that any constituent who comes to us has his or her problem solved. If we can't solve the problem directly, we are at least able to provide direction and/or information for a solution.

Why Shop Brookline?

- Shopping at your locally owned independent business returns dollars to the Brookline community. The Brookline Chamber of Commerce sponsors the annual Halloween Parade, BreezeFest, Christmas lighting and more.
- Your local independent businesses and the Chamber of Commerce support your baseball, football, and other sports leagues, your Churches, Breeze Run, and school programs.
- The Boulevard business district adds to the character of Brookline, contributing more than just goods and services. They offer personalized attention and bring life to the Boulevard.
- Each time you spend your dollars at a local business, you are saying "Yes!" to the continued strength and vitality of our community.
- Keep the money in our neighborhood!
- Create more local jobs!
- Local businesses support local non-profits!

Representative Dan Deasy



My office has seen a significant uptick in calls from constituents reporting attempts by fraud artists to scam them out of money. Sophisticated scam artists are using phones and email to impersonate Internal Revenue Service (IRS) staff and demand payment for bogus overdue taxes or fines. I am writing to make you aware

that should you receive a call from someone claiming to be from the IRS, this is a scam.

First and foremost, the IRS **does not** initiate contact over the phone or via email. It may be hard to tell if the calls or emails are legitimate, and the callers may put pressure on you for an immediate resolution. Do NOT follow their instructions. Do not push any buttons on your phone or click any links in an email. Do not open any email attachments, either; even if it looks like a letter, it may be fake.

If in doubt, hang up the phone or delete the email and call the IRS directly at 1-800-829-1040. The Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General has more information about the scam. If you would like more information, please contact my office.

If you believe you have been contacted by an IRS scammer, you can report it directly to the U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration or call 1-800-366-4484.

Representative Dan Miller



As referenced in last month's newsletter, our 3rd Annual Children and Youth Disability and Mental Health Summit will be held on March 3 and 4 at the Beth El Congregation on Cochran Road. We are very excited for this year's summit and have a number of exciting developments to share!

This year we are thrilled to be continuing our partnership with 21 & Able—an initiative of the United Way—to provide the "Survival Guide After High School" program for transition-aged youth with disabilities. We are also welcoming new partnership opportunities with the PEAL Center, who will be hosting their 10th Annual Inclusive Communities Conference at the Summit, as well as the Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Taskforce, who will be bringing up to 100 transition-aged students to the Summit to focus on developing advocacy skills.

Be sure to check out our website for more information at www.disabilitysummit.com.

Representative Harry Readshaw



I wanted to let my constituents know that the state's heating assistance program, LIHEAP, is accepting applications for the winter. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program provides federal aid to eligible families to help pay winter heating bills and cover emergency heating equipment needs.

LIHEAP ensures that qualified households can pay for their heating costs, such as gas, oil or electricity. Emergency funds are also available for households without heat or fuel, or those facing cut-off from a supplier.

Household income limits to qualify vary according to family size:

Household Size	Maximum Income
1	\$17,655
2	\$23,895
3	\$30,135
4	\$36,375

The household income level increases by an additional \$6,240 for each additional person.

Since this program is based on federal money, the state budget impasse should not affect the funding for this program. My staff can help complete the application, which can be completed online at www.compass.state.pa.us, or obtained at local county assistance offices, which can be found at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/CAO-locations.aspx.

Stepping it up in the New Year

If one of your resolutions is to get more exercise, consider climbing the city steps of Brookline (weather permitting of course). Brookline has the third most sets of all Pittsburgh neighborhoods. The Everest of Brookline steps is the set at Ray Avenue, with 258 treads.

Council Woman Natalia Rudiak: Update on 2681 Waddington Avenue



The facility at 2681 Waddington Avenue has been in the news and on the minds of neighbors since their application to treat people recovering from drug and alcohol addiction. Due to the proximity to St. John Bosco Academy, neighbors showed concern

about the facility and what it could mean for the neighborhood. Neighbors, lawyers for the Catholic Diocese, my staff and I all testified before the Zoning Board of Adjustments to relay community concerns.

On December 3, the facility was approved by Zoning Board of Adjustment with a stipulation that the owner must provide an outdoor smoking area hidden from public view and the school. This was an issue that my office heard many concerns about over the last six months, so we are glad to see this addressed. As anticipated, the decision was based on guidelines in the Fair Housing Act, a Federal law which protects people in recovery from housing discrimination.

I want to commend neighbors in Brookline on actively participating throughout this process. I also want to make clear that this is not the end. The facility will need to be licensed by the State of Pennsylvania. Additionally, if there are parking, noise, or criminal issues, we ask neighbors to remain vigilant and report such issues immediately.

If parking becomes an issue, residential permit parking could be an option. Learn more online at <http://pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/rppp/designation> or contact Mr. Ashley Holloway, at 412-393-0162 or ashley.holloway@pittsburghpa.gov. If the use of the facility changes, or to report a non-emergency, call 311 or my office: 412-255-2131. As always, call 911 immediately to report an emergency or criminal activity.

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What's Happening at Brookline PreK-8

by Amy Cornelius Dembosky, Parent Volunteer

Character education is very important for students of all ages. At Pittsburgh Brookline PreK-8, one of the ways we address character and social skills is through our Bobcats against Bullying program. Students are taught one lesson a month about what bullying is, how to prevent it, what to do when it happens, and how to stop it. Another part of our character education program is studying a different character trait each month. For November, our study focused on "gratitude." Students discussed what they were grateful for in their lives while considering the needs of others. Students who brought in money or canned goods for the Brookline Food Pantry were able to participate in several dress-up days, like Twin Day and Crazy Hat Day. Spirit Week contributions were \$275 in cash plus a truckload of food! Great job, everyone!

December's character trait was "generous," and staff and students had another opportunity to demonstrate their generosity during a holiday toy collection for the Brookline Food Pantry. Gift cards were collected for teens and older children, too. Thank you to everyone who contributed and kindly included others in their holiday shopping. Our January

collection will be mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves for all ages. Check those post-holiday sales if you can!

Our chorus, which is comprised of third through eighth graders, was invited to participate in the Allegheny County Courthouse Holiday Program on December 15. They did a wonderful job sharing the joy of the season! On December 17, they were joined by students from our instrumental program for our school concert. All of our musicians have made lots of progress this year. Keep up the good work!

Our fabulous Parent Resource Center has opened. It includes computers, bulletin boards, and useful information for Brookline PreK-8 parents and guardians. The center is staffed from 2:00–2:45 on Mondays and Fridays and 8:15–9:00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Stop in and see all of the cool things you can do!

We would also like to congratulate the 109 students who earned the Principal's Trifecta Award for perfect attendance, excellent citizenship, and making the honor roll during the first nine-week grading period. This was a record-setting number of recipients for the award, and we hope that this trend continues!

St. John Bosco Joins Global Learning Event

St. John Bosco Academy is located in the Brookline neighborhood and serves students from the diverse communities of South Pittsburgh. There are 156 students from 13 parishes and 7 school districts at the Academy.

In December, Academy students in Grades K-8 participated in an "Hour of Code." Teachers collaborated to provide the opportunity for the students. The following is a description of the Hour of Code the students took part in.

While physics, chemistry, and biology are a norm at all high schools, computer science is still a nascent subject. It is estimated that just 10 percent of American schools offer computer science and only 19 percent of high school students graduate with the course under their belt. Seattle-based non-profit Code.org wants to change that by exposing every student in the world to this all important science that is the basis of the digital world we live in.

From December 7 -11 millions of kids across the globe spent at least 60 minutes learning the basics of computer science. Called "Hour of Code" the initiative was designed to demystify the world of coding and inspire students of all backgrounds to consider a career in software engineering.

During the hour, students of all ages practiced their programming skills using free tutorials created by Code.org programmers. The sessions that required no prior coding knowledge started with a brief discussion about computer science. Then began the fun part-- coding! But if you think that meant completing a boring assignment, think again. The tutorials included fun projects like coding a Minecraft adventure, creating a Star Wars galaxy and even exploring the magic and beauty of ice with *Frozen's* Elsa and Anna.

It is no wonder that "Hour of Code" has grown into one of the biggest global learning events in just two short years. According to Code.org's founder Hadi Partovi, in 2013, the event attracted 15,000 schools, most in the United States. More information can be found at: <http://hourofcode.us>

Free Meals for Kids

GrubUP Pittsburgh offers free afterschool meals for those under 18 at the Brookline Rec Center.
Snacks: 3-4 p.m. Hot meal: Starts 5 p.m.

Community Events & Announcements

Carnegie Library of Brookline January Events



Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Holiday Closing Information

The library will be closed all day on Friday, January 1.

For All Ages

- Crochet & Knitting Fun – Saturday, January 9 & 23 @ 1 p.m. – one-on-one assistance and limited free supplies are available.

For Kids

- Storytime: Toddler and Preschooler Tales – Mondays @ 6:30 p.m. and Thursdays @ 11 a.m.
- Tween Workshop Tuesdays – Tuesdays @ 3 p.m.
- Kids Club: Wacky Wednesdays – Wednesdays @ 3:30 p.m.
- Kids Create: Pop des Fleurs – Wednesday, January 13 @ 3:30 p.m.

For Teens

- Pokemondays – Mondays @ 3 p.m. – card and video game drop-in battle leagues
- Teen Time – Thursdays @ 3 p.m.
- Electronics Club – Saturday, January 30 @ 2-4 p.m.
- Intro to Guitar by Appointment – Monday, January 4 & 25 @ 7 p.m. – A qualified volunteer is available to teach you guitar. Call 412-561-1003 to schedule an hour appointment. (Open to teens & adults.)

For Adults

- Let's Speak English! Tuesdays @ 6:45 p.m. – non-native English speakers build comfort and confidence with the language through casual conversation.
- Power Yoga with Amy – Wednesdays @ 6:30 p.m. – bring your own water, mat and towel for free fitness-based yoga.
- Résumé Assistance by Appointment – Wednesday, January 13 & 27 @ 6-8 p.m. – A qualified volunteer is available to review your existing résumé and cover letter to help make them stronger. Call 412-561-1003 to schedule a half-hour appointment.
- Monthly Movie Showdown – Tuesday, January 12 @ 6 p.m.
- Game Night – Tuesday, January 19 @ 5:45 p.m. – classic and adventure-based board games
- Book Discussions
 - Mystery & More – Wednesday, January 13 @ 1 p.m.
 - Between the Lines – Monday, January 18 @ 6 p.m.

Visit www.carnegielibrary.org/locations/brookline or call 412-561-1003

Heritage Players Theater News

The Heritage Players perform at the Seton Center on Pioneer Ave. and draw actors, directors, and crew from throughout the Pittsburgh area. Brookliners are encouraged to share their talents with the all-volunteer group.

Coming this year

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde, March 11-13 and 18-20

Picnic by William Inge, May 13-15 and 20-22

Alice in Wonderland, August 5-7 and 12-14

Mame by Jerome Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee and music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, October 14-16 and 21-23

Season tickets

Enjoy a significant discount off per-performance tickets by pre-purchasing season tickets. \$25 entitles you to admission to three mainstage show.

Become a member

Membership includes one ticket to each production, plus the right to attend all general membership meetings, the right to vote at all general membership meetings (including play selection), the ability to volunteer for a committee, and the ability to run for board positions. Members receive 10 percent off all classes offered,

Making New Year's Resolutions

by Dr. Guy Reschenthaler

New Year's resolutions are a tradition of the Western Hemisphere. A New Year's resolution is defined as making a promise at the beginning of the year to do an act of self-improvement.

According to research, 45 percent of Americans make New Year's resolutions. In doing so, they are following in the footsteps of ancient Babylonians, who vowed to return borrowed objects and repay debts in the new year. There is evidence the Romans participated in New Year's resolutions by pledging allegiances to the emperor and swearing in government officials at the beginning of the year. In medieval times, knights would reaffirm their commitment to chivalry in the new year.

According to Statistic Brain Research Institute, the top resolutions for 2015 were:

- Lose weight
- Get organized
- Spend less/save more
- Enjoy life
- Get fit and healthy
- Learn something new
- Quit smoking

- Help others
- Fall in love
- Spend more time with family

Albrecht Powell, researcher for *About Travel*, ranked Pittsburghers top resolutions as:

- Spend more time with family
- Get fit and healthy
- Lose weight
- Quit smoking
- Enjoy life
- Quite drinking
- Spend less/save more
- Learn something new
- Help others
- Get organized

If you are one of the 45 percent who make New Year's Resolutions, I wish you the best of luck. If you are not successful in achieving all your resolutions don't despair; there is always the next year. And remember, a baseball player who is successful only one time in every three at-bats will probably get into the Hall of Fame.

Have a happy and healthy 2016, and make this a year to see your chiropractor!

Brookline Shows Its Heart

by Dan Kaczmariski

Racism and intolerance are never welcome, but a recent unfortunate incident in Brookline led to a silver lining that showed what Brookline is all about.

On December 8, resident James Todd noticed racist graffiti scrawled on the garage door of Las Palmas grocery store and taqueria. James alerted South Pittsburgh Development Corporation (SPDC) president Ryan Askey, who in turn texted Nathan Mallory, President of the Brookline Chamber of Commerce and former owner of Cannon Coffee.

Nathan contacted Gabriel Berumen, one of the owners of Las Palmas, as well as the office of Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak and Pittsburgh Police Zone 6. As a police officer and graffiti detective came to the site, Nathan scoured the writing off the door.

That could have been the end of it, but it wasn't enough for the people of our great community, who refused to leave the cancer of hatred lingering in the air. An engine of support roared into action. SPDC Vice-President Jen Grab suggested a multi-day community "Taco-In" at the restaurant, and a solidarity campaign, promoted on social media, quickly spread.

The campaign was highlighted by a support rally at the store the following Saturday, spearheaded by Casa San Jose—a community center for Latino immigrants--and the Brookline Chamber of Commerce.

The words "awesome" and "inspiring" are used a lot, but they both apply to the community's response. That week, people lined up to patronize Las Palmas. The support campaign, attended by Pittsburgh and state legislators, was covered by various media, who spread the word citywide. Many at the Saturday rally, described by WTAE as having a "party atmosphere," hoisted homemade signs welcoming Las Palmas and all immigrants.

Brashear Students' Mural

The whole incident left Brookline with a tangible lasting asset. Within days of the graffiti, students from Brashear High School's Black and Latin American Student Unions painted a vibrant and welcoming mural on the store's garage door. The mural shows a large heart surrounded by flowers and overarched by the words "BIENVENIDOS a Brookline." Many thanks to these wonderful students for their lasting contribution to the community.



Brashear High School Students preparing the surface for the mural at Las Palmas

Photo Courtesy of Nathan Mallory



Welcome to Brookline and **gracias** to the students!

Photo Courtesy of Pawsburgh Photography

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Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend.

- Martin Luther King Jr

But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- Romans 5:8

In the month we remember the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr, we recall these words of both Dr. King and the apostle Paul. God's love transforms His enemies to His friends.

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