

BROOKLINE NOW

MELISSA DISTEL PHOTOGRAPHY

By Dan Kaczmarek

As a grandfather, I'm very much aware of how quickly kids grow up. One minute they're three and sniffing over a Dumbo movie. In what seems like the blink of an eye, they're raising kids of their own.

Photographer Melissa Distel provides parents and other family members with a service that preserves moments of childhood

innocence. She specializes in photographs of newborns, babies, and other children, and is also busy photographing weddings, family groups, and seniors.

Melissa has been at her location at 800 Brookline Blvd. since 2010. She grew up in Ohio, earned a degree in photography at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, and has 17 years of experience as a photographer.

Her photographs of babies and other subjects are works of art. Beyond the expertise she brings to the job, her personality is a perfect fit for working with people, especially kids. She's energetic, ebullient, and patient. She laughs easily and exudes a joie de vivre that makes her a pleasure to be with.

Melissa has four kids of her own. It was largely because of them that she ended up specializing in baby pictures. "I used to do only weddings," she says, "but once I started taking pictures of my own kids for birth announcements to send to my ob-gyn, they asked me 'why aren't you doing this for a living?'"



Photos for this article courtesy of Amy Fisher, Pawsburgh Photography.

Her rates are very competitive because she largely relies on word-of-mouth and online reviews, rather than paid advertising.

Although she photographs all ages, the majority of her photos of children capture those age one and younger. Not because parents of older children don't want pictures, but because once kids start going to pre-school, many of those places take their own photos.

She says newborns are the easiest to photograph because it's just a matter of waiting for them to cooperate or fall asleep. On the other hand, toddlers can have their own ideas. "You sometimes have to stand on your head, do tricks, make funny noises," she says with a laugh. "I joke that if anyone recorded me doing those silly things, they'd have something to use for blackmail."

Holiday seasons are especially busy for Melissa, with Christmas being a notably popular time for photos in Brookline. Despite her increased holiday workload, for

...continues page 2

BROOKLINE TOGETHER

BRIDGING BUSINESSES AND THE COMMUNITY

2019 OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS
2nd Monday of odd-numbered months. We hope to see you November 11th!
All meetings are held at 7pm at the Brookline Teen Outreach, 520 Brookline Blvd.

BROOKLINE LIGHTS UP:
Saturday, November 30th, 3-7pm

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY,
November 30th

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OUR MISSION
To promote a vibrant and livable community through collaborative initiatives that unify Brookline's business and residential interests.



Street view of Melissa Distel Photography from Brookline Boulevard.

a number of years she's been giving back to our community as part of the neighborhood's Light Up Night (the Saturday after Thanksgiving).

On that day, Melissa will take a free photo of each child with Santa at her studio. Families then have the option of purchasing additional prints if they choose. On the average, she photographs between 100 and 150 kids with Jolly St. Nick at those events.

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GET INVOLVED!

BROOKLINE NOW wants to hear from you! We welcome your articles, art work, ideas, referrals, and feedback, and would love to include as many Brookline voices as possible in future issues. If you would like to contribute to our newsletter, please email us at newsletter15226@gmail.com or leave us a comment on our Brookline Together page, www.brooklinetogether.org/newsletter.



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To promote community and development in Brookline by illuminating people, places, and institutions that make the neighborhood a great place to live.

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JASON TIGANO,
Business Development Committee

Hello friends and neighbors,

The holiday season is fast approaching. I for one am very excited to spend time with family and friends, share with loved ones, and take time to reflect on my good fortune. One of the things I am grateful for is our neighborhood, specifically the diversity and walkability of our business district. The Business Development Committee of Brookline Together has been focusing on making this even more true.

One way that you can support our efforts in growing and diversifying our business district is to participate in **Small Business Saturday** on November 30th. We as a community are lucky to have so many amazing and unique businesses on the Boulevard. With our great variety of food establishments, clothing, health related services, entertainment, etc., there really is something for everyone on your list.

While your shopping local, stick around and join us at the best **Brookline Lights Up** yet on Saturday, November 30th from 3-7 pm. Hosted by Brookline Together there will be a tree lighting thanks to the efforts of our Beatification Committee to have electrical outlets installed at Cannon Memorial Park,

tons of activities, games, stops to make a craft or watch a holiday movie, have your photo taken with Santa, and so much more. I hope you will come and join us for this free, family friendly event.

If any of these efforts sound appealing to you and you would like to get involved in a hands-on capacity, I invite you to attend the next Brookline Together Community meeting on Monday, November 11th at 6pm at Brookline Teen Outreach (located at 520 Brookline Blvd, next to CVS) to hear what we're working on, voice your opinions, and possibly join a committee.

BECOME A MEMBER OF BROOKLINE TOGETHER

If you love Brookline and want to take an active role in your community, become a member of Brookline Together! Whether you are a business owner or an individual, a long-time resident or a brand new Brookliner, we would love to work with you! There are three levels of membership to choose from, each with their own perks: Business/Professional, Community Member, and Friends of Brookline. To join, simply visit www.brooklinetogether.org/membership and submit an application.

A collaborative new organization unifying **Brookline Chamber of Commerce and South Pittsburgh Development Corporation** that is working to promote a vibrant and livable community through collaborative initiatives that unify Brookline's business and residential interests.

WELCOME

Visit us at www.brooklinetogether.org



HERITAGE PLAYERS



The Heritage Players proudly present Meredith Willson's **The Music Man** on November 15-17 and 22-24 at the Seton Center, 1900 Pioneer Avenue, Brookline 15226. Friday and Saturday performances are at 8:00 pm, and Sunday matinees are at 2:00 pm. General tickets are \$15.00 and senior tickets are \$13.00 at the door or online at www.heritageplayers.org. Phone: 412-254-4633. Box office opens one half hour before curtain.



COUNCILMAN ANTHONY COGHILL
City Council District 4

Food insecurity is an issue that can have serious consequences and unfortunately in Pittsburgh one in five residents are food insecure, which is higher than both the

national and country average. A food insecure household exists when there is uncertainty over whether or not household members will have enough food to meet basic needs.

For residents of Brookline who are experiencing food insecurity there are thankfully many resources that can be utilized. During the spring, summer, and fall months District 4 has farmers' markets in Brookline, Beechview, and Carrick. The Carrick and Beechview markets have collaborated with Just Harvest and participate in their Fresh Access Program. The Fresh Access program gives recipients of SNAP benefits (Food Stamps) an extra \$2.00 for every \$5.00 they spend in food stamps! The process is quick, easy, and can be completed with the assistance of a Just Harvest employee.

In addition to District 4's farmers' markets, Brookline's Tree of Life Open Bible Church runs a food bank. To keep in compliance with the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank and the Department of Agriculture the verification process to receive food includes documentation of proof of income, proof of address (utility bill), and a valid photo ID card. Birth dates and genders of each family member that reside in the household is also required. For more information on the local food bank, please visit Tree of Life's website here <https://www.godlovesbrookline.com/food-bank/>.



REPRESENTATIVE DAN MILLER

Dear Friends,

Food insecurity is a real concern for many in our community. Typically, there isn't a simple solution to the underlying problem, and often there are multiple challenges to assist the person or family that need to be addressed holistically.

Obviously, we need to make supportive food programs more sustainable and easier to access. These programs must be supported in a way that ensures healthy food options are provided in a manner that decreases stigma.

In our area we thankfully have a network of food pantries that work hard to fill these needs. We also have active organizations like Goodwill and the South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM) which have the capacity of not only assisting people in need but can also address other systemic challenges that are making things difficult financially at home. My office has assisted in connecting residents to resources, and we have a done several events to highlight these issues and to deliberate on how we can provide greater resources to end long-term need. I also have championed bills like ending lunch shaming- a practice that has increased stigma on kids who rely on free or reduced lunch programs. It is very difficult for students to learn when their bellies are hungry.

The reality is that in a country as blessed as ours, food insecurity should be a relic of the past. No one should go hungry in America. And the state should help support local programs that address these needs, and the challenges that typically accompany it.



REPRESENTATIVE HARRY READSHAW

This October, the Department of Agriculture launched a restaurant inspection mobile app called EatSafePA. This free app allows users to have restaurant inspection reports at their fingertips to help them choose a dining establishment without fear of foodborne illness, a great step in keeping food safety a top priority for all Pennsylvanians.

The new app is available in the Apple App store and the Google Play Store for Android. According to Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding, once downloaded, users can either enable their location services or manually search by restaurant, business name, city, or zip code. In the app, those dining on the move will find thousands of retail food establishments and restaurant inspection reports, including violation details and inspector comments.

It's a great step future for our commonwealth, and a big win in the name of transparency, as each year in the United States, 48 million people get sick from foodborne illness. Bottom line, everyone deserves to know about the food they're consuming. In addition to the new app, it's important to offer a reminder about food recalls, given the frequency they occur.

A food recall occurs when there is reason to believe that a food may cause consumers to become ill. A food producer initiates the recall to take foods off the market. In some situations, food recalls are requested by government agencies, such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). A product can be recalled for many reasons including but not limited to:

- Discovery of organisms such as bacteria like Salmonella.
- Discovery of foreign objects such as broken glass or metal.
- Discovery of a major allergen that does not appear on the product label.

Remember, if the product details in the recall notice match the details on the food product you have at home, do not open or consume the product. Instead, do one of the following:

- Return the product to the place of purchase for a refund.
- Dispose of the product following the instructions provided in the recall notice to make sure no one will consume it.

It's my hope that you've found this information useful and you'll consider sharing it with your family, friends, and neighbors.



REPRESENTATIVE DAN DEASY
412.928.9514

There is a sad reality that many children and families in our communities face daily. Many do not know where their next meal is coming from, nor when their next meal is coming.

In order to support and aid our neighbors who are struggling with hunger, we all must be aware that this problem exists AND know what we can do to help address this public health crisis.

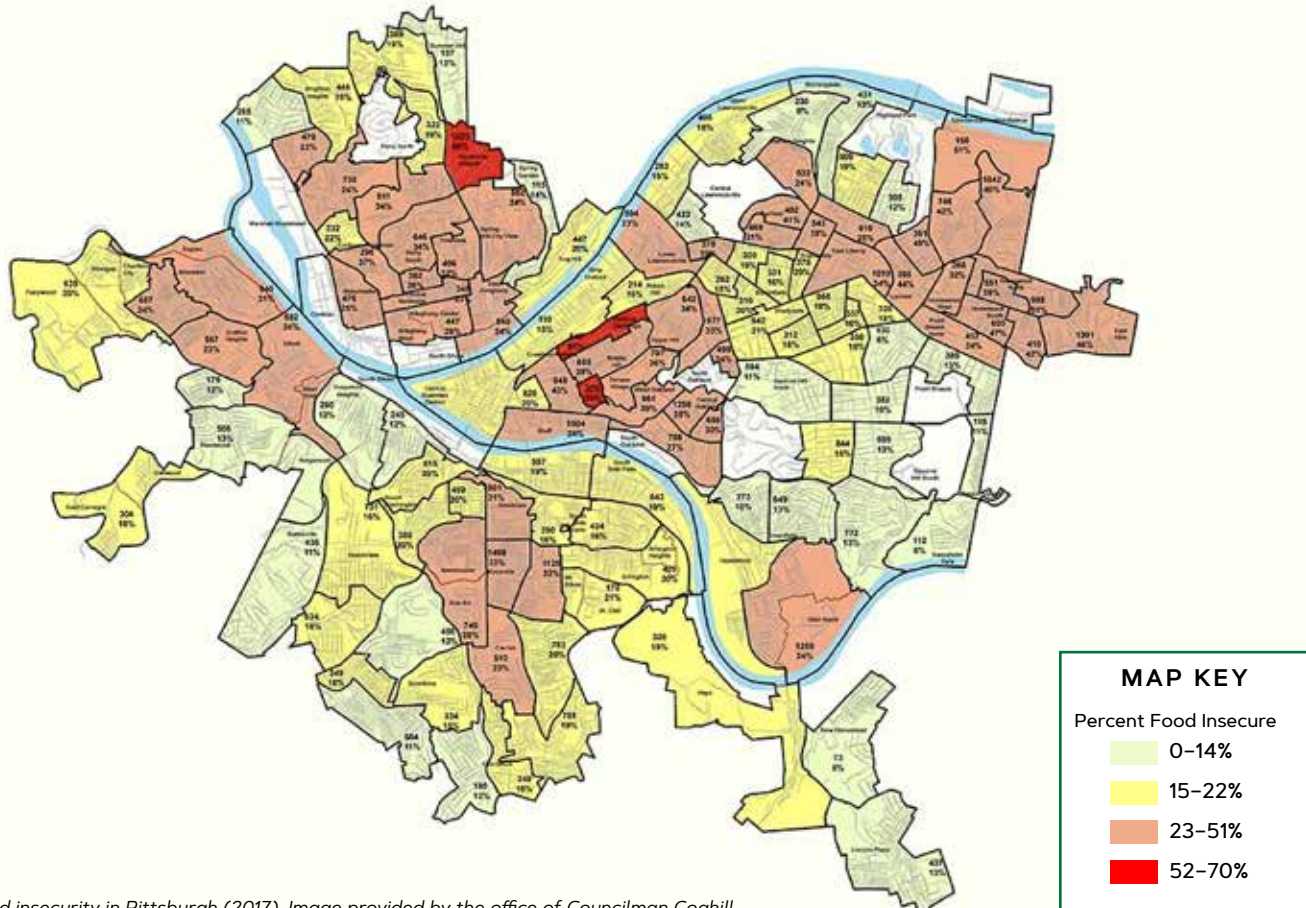
Families experience food insecurity for a multitude of reasons. If you are facing food insecurity or are aware of others in crisis, please reach out to Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank by calling 412-460-3663 (FOOD), or your local food pantry.

As a community, we all can play a role in the effort to end hunger. One way can do this is by supporting anti-hunger efforts by local, state and federal governments. In my role as a state representative, I have long advocated and supported funding for the SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) program because I know that this program is most impactful and has the largest reach.

If you are interested in volunteering, you can learn more about opportunities to provide food assistance – including schedules for Produce to People distribution, Green Grocer stops and nearby food pantries – by visiting www.pittsburghfoodbank.org or calling 412-460-3663 (FOOD). Two state-funded programs, the State Food Purchase Program and the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System are important sources of food for these efforts.

For more information on addressing hunger, or for assistance in any other state-related matter, please call my office at 412-928-9514. You can also visit my website at www.pahouse.com/Deasy or follow me on Twitter or Facebook.

Also, for alerts on shredding or other events in my district, you can visit <https://www.pahouse.com/Deasy/emailsSignup> to subscribe to receive email alerts on upcoming events.



Map of food insecurity in Pittsburgh (2017). Image provided by the office of Councilman Coghill (<https://pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/food-access>).

YARD DEBRIS PICK-UP DAY



On Saturday, November 16, the City of Pittsburgh will pick up yard debris from your curb, including leaves, grass, plants, tree trimmings, branches (4 inch diameter or less), and shrubs. Items must be in paper bags weighing less than 35 pounds. No plastic bags allowed!

Bundle all branches with fiber twine or natural rope in lengths of 5 feet or less. Set items out at your regular collection spot before 6 a.m. on the morning of the collection day. The pick-up will not accept plastic bags, stones, dirt, rocks, manure, garbage, lumber, or food waste.

OAKRIDGE LIGHTS

By Joseph Geier

LRM Lights is back for its third holiday season on Oakridge Street. The lights will be dancing, blinking, swirling and twirling to music from The Muppets and Disney, along with holiday favorites... and a few surprises!

Nightly shows are scheduled to begin Wednesday, November 27th at 5 pm.

The house and yard are filled with more than 9,000 LED Nodes. (Each node consists of 3 individual lights, bringing the total number of individual lights to more than 27,000!)

LRM Lights will be helping out the community again this year with two special events:

- The food bank collection will be expanding to two nights: Saturday, December 14 and Sunday, December 15. This will be the third year of taking donations of non-perishable food items to benefit the Brookline Christian Food Pantry.
- For eight nights, LRM Lights will be a drop-off location for "Toys For Tots" donations: November 29 & 30; December 1, 5, 6 & 7. Toys must be new and unwrapped. Monetary donations in the form of gift cards or checks/money orders will also be accepted. Checks/money orders need to be made payable to: Toys For Tots. No cash donations can be taken.

If you're coming to watch the show, please do not block the street or neighboring driveways. Parking is available at the bottom of the street in Brookline Memorial Park.

Exact location: 1326 Oakridge Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15226
You can find the full 2019 schedule, along with more details at the LRM Lights Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LRMLights>.



3rd ANNUAL "FESTIVAL OF TREES"

By Kristina Rhoades

The Festival of Trees at Tree of Life Open Bible Church is a four-day event to create a sense of community with an atmosphere for families to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas – love. Last year we had 50 trees displayed in our sanctuary and over 300 people attended. We expect the event to be even larger this year.

Participation is free and open to individuals, families, businesses and organizations. Just pick a theme and decorate a tree to match your theme. You can use this opportunity



to bring your family or employees together and make ornaments. You don't have to spend a lot of money to buy decorations, instead, we encourage you to be creative and craft decorations from items you have on hand. Businesses can also decorate a tree using their products or pick a theme that coordinates with their products.

The event opens Thursday, December 5th and Friday, December 6th from 5:00–8:00 pm, Saturday, December 7th from 11:00 am to 8:00 pm and ends Sunday, December 8th from 1:00–6:00 pm. Admission is free. There will also be other family-friendly activities including food, Caroling and live Christmas music, crafts for kids, holiday photo booth, pictures with Santa and more. We would love to have a live nativity and petting zoo as donations are made available.

Be sure to stop by Tree of Life Open Bible Church at 1036 Brookline Boulevard (by the cannon), and see all the trees. Tell your family, friends and customers to come and vote for your tree. Prizes will be awarded the following Sunday morning during our regular church service for the Best Traditional Tree, the Most Creative Tree, People's Choice Favorite Tree, and the Overall Most Votes Favorite.

Visit www.GodLovesBrookline.com/trees to register, donate or get more information on the event.

MOORE PARK 80TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



On Saturday, August 24th, Brookline came together to celebrate the 80th anniversary of Moore Park. It was an all-day celebration that included live music, food, activities, free swimming in the pool, guest speakers, and much more. Thousands of people passed through the park that day, taking in the sunshine and enjoying company in a place that Brookliners have frequented for eight decades. Special thanks to Guarino Group Productions, Concilman Coghill, and Brookline Together for organizing the event, as well as to everybody else who took part in the day's festivities.

Photos for this article courtesy of Amy Fisher, Pawsburgh Photography.

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BROOKLINE HONOR ROLL DEDICATION



Rear view of plaque during the ceremony. Photos for this article courtesy of Amy Fisher, Pawburgh Photography.

At high noon on Saturday, August 31, 2019, the Brookline Historical Society hosted a ceremony at the Brookline Veteran's Park and War Memorial to dedicate a bronze Honor Roll plaque listing the fifty-six soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines that lost their lives during the conflicts of the 20th Century (World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam).

On a pleasant summer afternoon, well over 100 people paid homage to Brookline's fallen heroes in a solemn, well-orchestrated ceremony that included some individual military history, personal recollections, several gestures of national pride and a few symbolic visual and audio treats.

Several elected officials were in attendance, and each came to the podium to say a few words. This was followed by Clint Burton recanting



Guests salute the flag during the ceremony.

Editor's note: This is an excerpt of an article written by Clint Burton. Read Clint's full article at <http://www.brooklineconnection.com/history/Gallery/HonorRoll19/HonorRoll19.html>

some historical anecdotes on several of the soldiers listed on the memorial, then inviting some family members to the podium to speak on behalf of their loved ones. Each speaker stepped forward with a compelling story to honor their fallen relative.

Several family members then gathered around the plaque, designed by Doug Brendel, each taking turns saying a prayer for their loved ones and snapping photos. The Fagan family, relatives of Lt. Gerald B. Fagan, were by far the most well-represented, with fifteen members gathering on the steps for a group photo. All things considered, it was a wonderful occasion for everyone in attendance, and great day for the community of Brookline.



Members of a local veterans group take a moment to pose with a bagpiper.



The new Brookline Honor Roll plaque, located in front of the cannon at Brookline Veteran's Park on Brookline Boulevard



Taps is played during the plaque dedication ceremony.

THE BROOKLINE HONOR ROLL

WORLD WAR I

[David P. Digby](#)
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[William J. Miller](#)
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WORLD WAR II

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[Roy T. Arensberg](#)
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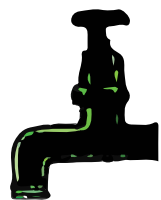
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