



what's up WEST SIDE

a quarterly update on
West Side events and resources



photos by Rafael Barker

Congrats to the West Side Middle School Principal List!



West Side Middle School honor roll lists at westsidetogether.org/wsm



SPRING 2024

issue no. 6

Black By God launches 'Project Spotlight West' series

by Amanda Barber | originally published in Black By God



I grew up on Watts Hill on Charleston's West Side, a community home to one of the highest percentages of Black residents in a concentrated area in West Virginia.

Given the political and financial histories in West Virginia, the West Side is not the stereotypical neighborhood that many out-of-state residents picture. It is a diverse and urban community that is bustling and flourishing.

And just while much of the country makes false assumptions about our state's neighborhoods, some Charleston area residents have done the same to the West Side. While growing up, I noticed that many people, including the media, implied that my community was nothing else but the "bad part of Charleston."

Like many other communities, the West Side has faced hardships, but its residents and community leaders are some of the most hard-working, resilient and caring people I have ever known. Thanks to these residents who consistently strive to uplift others, the unfair negative narrative about their community continues to evolve.

Many local organizations work diligently to provide residents access to free substance abuse treatment, mental health care, and COVID-19 tests and vaccines. West Side leaders give back to the youth by planning block parties, basketball tournaments, church events, community dinners and back-to-school donation drives. Other local organizations provide crucial services like food pantries, educational assistance, and low-cost or free childcare.

The West Side community is really just that: a COMMUNITY that truly understands the meaning of the phrase "It takes a village."

With Black By God, I am launching "Project Spotlight West" to tell the stories of the

West Side and its residents and leaders of change. I want to bring the neighborhood beyond some people's perception that it is one of Charleston's most dangerous locations.

Another goal of the project is to record oral histories from West Side residents, business owners, community leaders and historians. By doing this, I hope to provide deep and meaningful information about people's daily lives and their past experiences.

"Project Spotlight West" will include articles, images, videos, and audio. In addition, we will amplify each story on our social media.

Read more "Project Spotlight West" and other stories at BlackByGod.org



photo by Amanda Barber | Watts Hill overlooking the West Side of Charleston

YOUTH SUMMER PROGRAMS

Deadlines approaching... Sign up for summer programs today!

ALL SUMMER / ALL DAY			
WV Dreamers Afterschool by Step by Step grades K-12 M-F 10-5pm or 2-6pm FREE	304.414.4452	stepbystepwv.org	
YMCA Summer Day Camp ages 5-12 M-F 7am-6pm \$155/wk (scholarships available)	304.340.3527	ymcaofkv.org	
Girl Zone Day Camp grades K-5 M-F 7am-5pm pricing TBA	304.345.7722	bdgsc.org	
Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club grades 1-12 8am-6pm \$35/wk (financial assistance available)	304.342.8831	facebook.com/CACCBGC	
Bob Burdette Center Summer Program grades K-5 8am-5:30pm FREE	304.342.1158	boburdettecenter.org	
PAAC TBA	304.768.7688	paac2.org	
SHORT TERM CAMPS & PROGRAMS			
Kanawha County All Age 4-H Summer Camp ages 9-21 7/19 - 7/20 pricing TBA	304.720.9573	extension.wvu.edu	
WV Summer Arts Camp at Capitol HS grades Pre K-12 7/10 - 7/21 pricing TBA (scholarships available)	304.389.4189	wvsummerartcamp.com	



Full list of youth summer programs for West Siders at westsidetogether.org/summer

NEW ON THIS SIDE!

INTRODUCE THE TEEN DROP-IN CENTER

1410 4th Avenue, Charleston WV

Mon-Fri 6am-3pm
Step By Step after 3

WASH CLOTHES
REST
GET SUPPORT
EAT
SHOWER
SELF-CARE
BE SAFE.

MOUNTAINCARENETWORK.COM
304-513-3900

Elk City Bistro
207 Washington St W
Tue, Thu, Fri | 11am-3pm
Sat | 9am-1pm
locally owned gourmet casual dining with a new menu every week!

PHAT DADDY'S IS MOVING!
NEW LOCATION: 1634 6TH AVE.
SPRING 2024



Some of the many "Gas Crisis Heroes" recognized by Charleston City Council in December 2023



photos by Rafael Barker

2023 Winter: Martec Washington & Shayla Leftridge

On November 10, 2023, an American Water Company high-pressure water main break infiltrated the gas distribution system of the West Side flats. For several weeks, gas was shut off as Mountaineer Gas Company removed water from 46 miles of natural gas lines. A state of emergency was declared. Over 1,000 families were left without heat, hot water, or working stoves. Many families' appliances suffered water damage, requiring service or replacement resulting in cold nights even after gas service was restored. Some residents continue to face challenges that stemmed from the gas outage crisis.

Last winter, **Shayla Leftridge** and **Martec Washington** were honored with Westside Together's seasonal Best of the West Award for their compassionate and swift actions during the crisis. As community workers and West Side residents, they played pivotal roles in disseminating crucial information about the outages through social media and brought direct relief to their neighbors.

Martec worked with volunteers to collect donations and distribute space heaters, water, food, and supplies throughout the neighborhood. He reached out to the Governor, state, and local officials, advocating for a state of emergency declaration and voicing the community's needs. After driving home from work in Parkersburg every day, Martec assisted with WV Health Right's initiatives as well.

Shayla dedicated herself to personally feeding her neighbors with volunteer Chef Keaton Contini. Serving as WV Health Right's West Side Site Coordinator, she orchestrated daily dinner services at the CommUNITY Center at Five Corners. They averaged 350 people a night, hosting meals and relief every evening until gas was restored with the help of the National Guard, City Councilors, Partnership of African American Churches, the McGee Foundation, and countless other donors and volunteers.

Best of the West AWARD

what's happening?

Free Food Pantry

3rd Saturdays | 12pm

MAR 16 | APR 20 | MAY 18

John 6 Community Food Center
@ 523 Central Ave



Obi Henderson Community Awards Dinner

Sun, Mar 17 | 4pm @ 100 Quarrier St

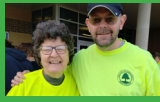
Beni Kedem Temple



Spring Resource Fair by Step by Step

Mon, Apr 1 | 3-6:30pm @ 1401 4th Ave

Kanawha Dreamers Family Support Center



Spring Clean-up by West Side Neighborhood Association

TBA @ 100 Florida St

Mary C. Snow Elementary School



Race to End Racism by YWCA

Cultural Celebration & Packet Pickup

Thu, Apr 25 | 4pm @ YWCA Center for Racial Equality

5K Run / 1mi Walk

Sat, Apr 27 | 9am @ Kanawha Blvd W, Magic Island Park



Res-Con FREE Community Conference by American Job Center

Housing, Education, Seniors, Youth, Recovery, Health, Legal

Sat, Apr 27 | 9am-5pm @ 200 Civic Center Dr

Charleston Coliseum & Convention Center



10th Annual Block Party: In Memory of Tymel McKinney

Sat, Apr 27 | 4pm @ 6th St between Glenwood & Park Ave

The GIFT Project



Class of '24 Graduation Celebration

Sat, May 4 | 4-7pm @ Kanawha Blvd W

Magic Island Park



Monthly Senior Luncheons

with Salvation Army

MAR 19 | APR 23 | MAY 21

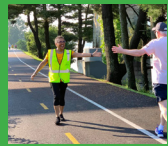
12pm @ 301 Mary St

for ages 55+ | meal | games | crafts



check The Maker's Center
Facebook for upcoming
crafts classes & events!

Ask for a TOUR! 681-265-3745



Charleston Parkrun

Sat | 9am until Mar 10

Sat | 8am after Mar 10

@ Magic Island Park

Kung Fu
Sun | 1pm



Tai Chi

Sun | 2pm

Universalist Unitarian Congregation
@ 520 Kanawha Blvd W

WEST VIRGINIA 
Health Right™ 511 Central Ave
CommUNITY Wellness Center

DANCE CLASSES

Tue 4:30pm - Modern Dance (ages 6-10)

Tue 5:00pm - Ballet (ages 3-5)

Tue 5:30pm - Ballet (ages 6-10)

Tue 6:00pm - Tec Style Hip Hop Fitness

COOKING CLASSES

1st Mondays 5:00pm - Sizzle Sprouts (Kids)

Wed 1pm & 5pm - CHOP it Like it's Hot

Thu 1pm & 5pm - Stealthy Healthy



North Charleston Community Center

2009 7th Ave | 304-348-6884



WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Pickle Ball - Tue, Thu, Fri 9am-12pm

Table Tennis & Pickle Ball - Mon 5:30pm-8:45pm

Men's Open Runs Basketball - Mon, Wed 12:00pm-2:30pm

Soul Step - Thu 6pm-7pm

Kids In Motion Fitness Class - Wed 6:30pm-7:30pm

Socializing Through Play - 3rd Wednesdays 10:30am-1pm

Bingo Night - 4th Fridays 4:30-6:30pm

Mon-Fri 9am-9pm
Sat 9am-5pm




**WESTSIDE
TOGETHER**
westsidetogether.org

share your memories with **#westsidecwv**



or email the team at
whatsapp@westsidetogether.org

create
west virginia

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