

# on the mount

January - March 2016  
Ring in the New



***Year in Review***

***Details inside! (page 10)***

Photo courtesy of Jack Wolf and Port Authority of Allegheny County



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### Become A Member

All residents, property owners and business owners in Mount Washington and Duquesne Heights who are interested in supporting the mission of the MWDCDC are invited to become members.

Membership is FREE. [mwcdc.org/membership](http://mwcdc.org/membership) or 412.481.3220 x201

### Community Forums

Community Forums are held on the third Thursday of each month (except December) at 7:00 PM at the Mount Washington Senior Center located at 122 Virginia Avenue.

All Community Forums are open to the public.

**January 21 | February 21 | March 17**

### Committees

The MWDCDC hosts multiple bi-monthly volunteer committees to review projects and serve as a first point of contact for public review and approval. They provide advice to MWDCDC board and staff on internal development projects, community planning and other issues as necessary. Committee members commit to attend 75% of the meetings in a calendar year to maintain committee voting privileges. All committee meetings are open to the public. See the Community Calendar for dates.

02 | January - March 2016 | [mwcdc.org](http://mwcdc.org)



MOUNT WASHINGTON  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

301 Shiloh Street • Pittsburgh, PA 15211 • [mwcdc.org](http://mwcdc.org)

Phone: 412.481.3220 • Fax: 412.481.2324 • Email: [info@mwcdc.org](mailto:info@mwcdc.org)

*The Mount Washington Community Development Corporation's mission is to bring together residents and business owners to cultivate growth, development, and investment toward an even stronger and more livable community. We are a non-profit, catalyst organization, seeking to inspire, nurture, and transform our neighborhood.*



### Professional Staff

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Neil Grbach, Economic Development PULSE Fellow  
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### Board of Directors

Breen Masciotra, *President*  
Amanda Rubio, *Vice-President*  
Kyle Stewart, *Treasurer*  
Bob Zilch, *Secretary*

Tom Brady, Darla D'Anna, Paul Gitnik, Michael Grande  
Eric Horwith, Terry Moss, Talia Piazza, Edward Preston  
Joe Rewis, Alaina Spanoudakis, Josh Whiteside

## A note from Breen Masciotra, Board President

We are excited to formally announce a few big changes at MWCDC. After five successful Emerald Trail Corps (ETC) seasons and over a year of planning, MWCDC is spinning off the ETC to become an independent organization. Every year since 2013, the ETC has been asked to help partner organizations to construct trails on land outside of Emerald View Park. We are very proud of the work our crews have done and our role in developing this exceptional model, and recognize that the ETC is capable of filling a significant land stewardship and workforce development role in our region that goes beyond the boundaries of Mount Washington. As a result, through conversations with our partners, Allegheny Land Trust, GTECH Strategies, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, and PGH Works, we are untying the apron strings in order to empower the program to reach its full potential as an organization that will exist outside of MWCDC. We will be inviting the crews in their new iteration to continue working in Emerald View Park this summer to continue the mission of MWCDC: to cultivate growth, development and investment in Mount Washington and Duquesne Heights.

The transition is bittersweet, as Ilyssa Manspeizer will be leaving her role with MWCDC to take over leadership of this new organization. We are grateful to Ilyssa for her nine years of service to the community, during which she demonstrated leadership and advanced neighborhood progress. We are also excited to see where her next steps will lead her. Throughout the transition period, our very talented Directors of Economic Development and Park Development, Laura Guralnick and Kathryn Hunninen, will share the executive director duties while the Board explores options for the organization's next steps.

*Photo generously provided by Jim Albright Photography*

Yours truly,



## Letter from Ilyssa Manspeizer, former Executive Director

When I started working at the MWCDC as the first Park Manager, exactly nine years ago, just about every time I got in my car to leave work, I would head down Natchez Street thinking it should get me quickly and directly to Virginia Avenue. But I was new to Pittsburgh. What did I know?



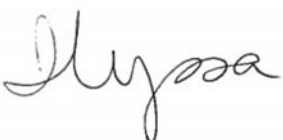
*Pictured: Laura, Ilyssa, Kathryn*

As I reflect back on these nine years, the metaphor is clear - I joined the MWCDC certain of the path I would take to a defined point the incremental creation of a beloved park that embraces Mount Washington. What I was to discover is that there are no straight roads in Mount Washington, and where you wind up is not necessarily where you thought you would be; but the destination is always grand. While I am deeply grateful that I got to lead the effort to create and develop Emerald View Park, I did not expect to have also had the honor of serving as the organization's Executive Director.

Through every twist, turn or hazard in the road, I never travelled alone. The professionalism and compassion of my colleagues at the MWCDC, the vision of our Board members, the commitment of committee members, the dedication of our elected leaders and government employees, the examples set by our funders, supporters and nonprofit partners, and the tens of thousands of volunteer hours I have witnessed have shown me a route I never could have imagined alone. The power of community, warts and all, has inspired me every step of the way.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me, thank you for the work we've done together, thank you for caring so deeply about the place in which you live and the success of this organization. I have learned so much in the last nine years about how communities work, about the functioning of nonprofits, about greening our world, and about the potential of human capacity. If I have been able to leave behind onetenth of the good things I will take with me, then I can leave feeling proud. No matter what, in my heart, I will always carry a piece of Mount Washington and the people who call this place home.

Yours,







**1|04, 2|01, 3|07**

### **Free Coffee**

The Well Church will serve free coffee at the Monongahela Incline from 7:30-9 AM.

**1|05, 1|12, 1|19, 1|26, 2|02, 2|09, 2|16, 2|23, 3|01, 3|08, 3|15, 3|22, 3|29**

### **Baby & Me Storytime**

Every Tuesday from 11 AM-12 PM at the Mount Washington Carnegie Library at 315 Grandview Avenue. More info: (412) 381-3380 or [mtwashington@carnegielibrary.org](mailto:mtwashington@carnegielibrary.org).

**1|05, 1|12, 1|19, 1|26, 2|02, 2|09, 2|16, 2|23, 3|01, 3|08, 3|15, 3|22, 3|29**

### **Farm Truck Foods**

Farm Truck Foods, Pittsburgh's first mobile grocery store, visits the Hilltop every Tuesday from 4-6 PM at Work Hard Pittsburgh – 744 East Warrington Avenue 15210.

**1|07, 1|14, 1|21, 1|28, 2|04, 2|11, 2|18, 2|25, 3|03, 3|10, 3|17, 3|24, 3|31**

### **Toddler & Preschooler Storytime**

Every Thursday from 11 AM-12 PM at the Mount Washington Carnegie Library at 315 Grandview Avenue. More info: (412) 381-3380 or [mtwashington@carnegielibrary.org](mailto:mtwashington@carnegielibrary.org).

**01|13, 3|09**

### **Park & Conservation Committee Meeting**

The MWDCDC Park and Conservation Committee will meet at 301 Shiloh Street at 5.30 PM. More info: Kathryn Hunninen, [kathryn@mwcdc.org](mailto:kathryn@mwcdc.org) (412) 481-3220x200.

**1/11**

### **Neighbors on the Mount**

The meeting is at 6 PM at Grandview Bakery. More info: visit "Neighbors on the Mount" on Facebook or [Pwhite1832@gmail.com](mailto:Pwhite1832@gmail.com)

**1|18, 3|21**

### **Public Safety Council Meeting**

The Zone 3 Public Safety Council Meeting is held at 6 PM at the Zone 3 Police Station located at 830 Warrington Avenue on the 4th floor.

**1|21, 2|18, 3|17**

### **Community Forum**

Join our monthly Community Forum from 7-9 PM at the Mount Washington Senior Center, 122 Virginia Avenue. Forums are open to the public. More info: [mwcdc.org/forums](http://mwcdc.org/forums), (412) 481-3220 or [info@mwcdc.org](mailto:info@mwcdc.org).

**1|27, 3|23**

### **Economic Development Committee Meeting**

The MWDCDC Economic Development Committee will meet at 301 Shiloh Street at 6pm. More info: Laura Guralnick, [laura@mwcdc.org](mailto:laura@mwcdc.org) (412) 481-3220x205.

**2|13**

### **Venture Outdoors Winter Bird Count Walk**

Join local naturalists on a 3-mile winter bird walk through Emerald View Park. To register and for more info visit [ventureoutdoors.org](http://ventureoutdoors.org) or call (412)255-0564.



Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh are putting out a county-wide call for volunteers to help our elderly and residents with disabilities stay safe this winter through the Allegheny Snow Angels program. Snow Angels is a program that helps minimize the hardships of winter by pairing volunteers with elderly or disabled residents to assist with snow removal. Snow covered sidewalks can be hazardous for everyone. Along with fostering stronger community relationships, and relieving some of the stress that comes from a snow storm, Snow Angels makes our sidewalks safer for those who continue to serve despite the winter weather – like postal service workers, firemen, and police officers.

To be matched with a Snow Angel and receive assistance, residents must have a physical disability OR be age 60 or older. In addition, residents must lack alternative snow removal resources and reside within Allegheny County.

This volunteer opportunity is open to anyone living in Allegheny County, and is great for families and high school students. Volunteers are asked to help at least one resident for the entire winter season. Shovels and salt are available by request.

To register as a recipient or volunteer, call 412-863-5939 or 3-1-1; visit <http://alleghenysnowangels.org/>; or email [manager@alleghenysnowangels.org](mailto:manager@alleghenysnowangels.org).

### **Share Your Events and Advertise Your Business in On The Mount!**

#### **2016 Submission Deadlines:**

**April - June Edition**  
Due Tuesday, March 1, 2016

**July - September Edition**  
Due Tuesday, May 31, 2016

**October - December Edition**  
Due Tuesday, August 30, 2016

Find more info at [mwcdc.org/OTM](http://mwcdc.org/OTM) or email [info@mwcdc.org](mailto:info@mwcdc.org)

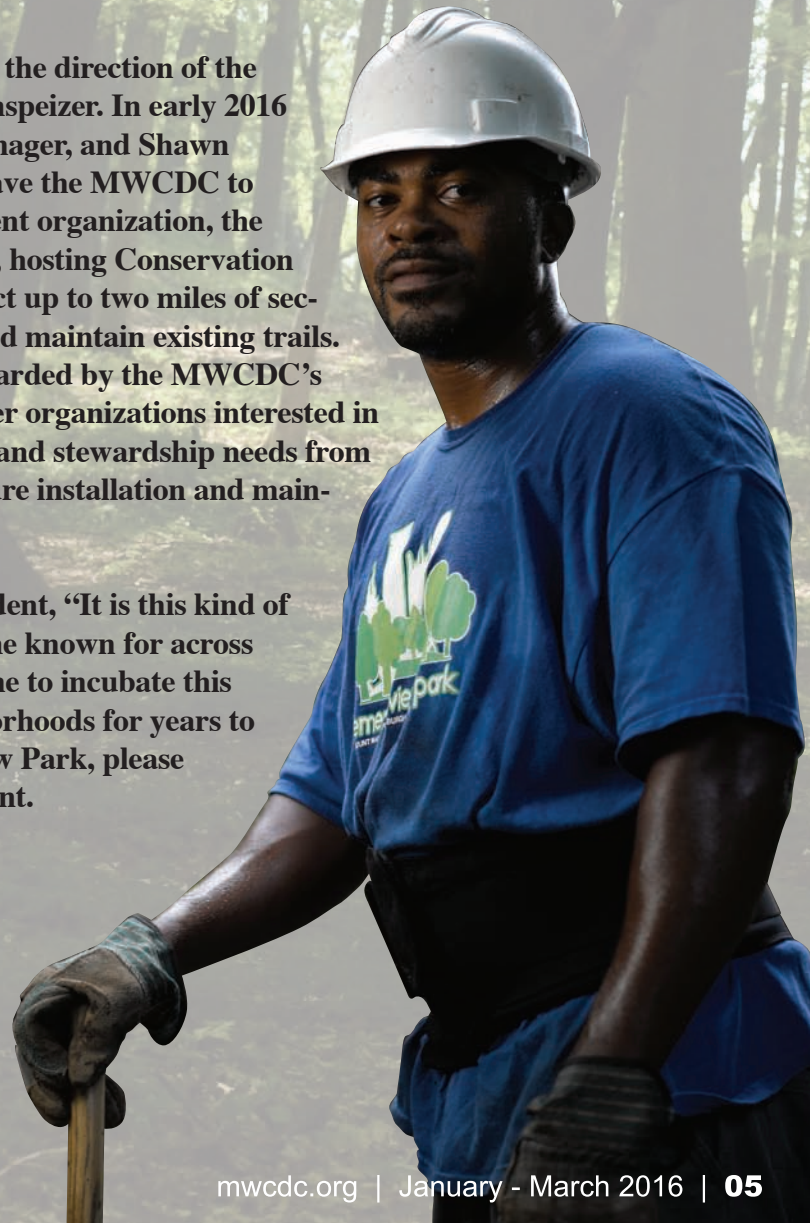


# EMERALD TRAIL CORPS TO BE MODEL FOR CITY-WIDE EFFORT

In 2011 the Mount Washington Community Development Corporation (MWCDC) created the Emerald Trail Corps (ETC). Since then, 44 adults were hired and trained in trail construction and habitat restoration to help develop Emerald View Park, building nearly 10 miles of trails, restoring acres of woodland, and planting dozens of trees, all while building their personal capacity to find and keep jobs with family sustaining wages. The ETC was also hired by several other non-profits to assist in trail construction projects throughout the region, indicating a much greater need than in Emerald View Park alone. As a result, the MWCDC worked with Allegheny Land Trust, PGH Works, GTECH Strategies and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy to use the Emerald Trail Corps as a model to create a new Pittsburgh-wide initiative -- the Pittsburgh Conservation Corps (a working name).

The new initiative will kick off in January 2016, under the direction of the MWCDC's most recent Executive Director, Ilyssa Manspeizer. In early 2016 Thomas Guentner, Emerald Trail Corps Program Manager, and Shawn Taylor, Emerald Trail Corps Crew Leader, will also leave the MWCDC to resume their positions with the new Corps. As the parent organization, the MWCDC will continue its relationship with the Corps, hosting Conservation Corps crews in Emerald View Park in 2016 to construct up to two miles of secondary trails, conduct habitat restoration activities, and maintain existing trails. Conservation Corps crews will also work on land stewarded by the MWCDC's partner organizations in this initiative and several other organizations interested in hiring professional-level skilled crews for a variety of land stewardship needs from trail construction to tree planting to green infrastructure installation and maintenance.

According to Breen Masciotra, MWCDC Board President, "It is this kind of innovative programming that the MWCDC has become known for across the City. We are very proud that the work we have done to incubate this program will directly benefit many Pittsburgh neighborhoods for years to come." For inquiries about 2016 work in Emerald View Park, please contact Kathryn Hunninen, Director, Park Development.





## *Dust and Diamonds:*

### *The MWCD's Annual Gala*

On November 12th, 2015 nearly 200 people gathered at the LeMont Restaurant to celebrate the MWCD, our 2015 accomplishments, and to honor Councilwoman Theresa Kail-Smith, the MWCD's Partner of the Year. Thank you to everyone who joined us, and also to our sponsors PNC Bank, Port Authority of Allegheny County, Trimont, Richard L and Virginia M Fischer Foundation, POMO Development, Terra Building Group, Paul Gitnik, The Mosites Group, Bigham Tavern, Cipriani Studios, Forest City, The Medicine Shoppe, Councilman Bruce Kraus, The Summit, Neighborhood Allies, Lofts of Mount Washington, Shiloh Grill, Wallace Floral, Orr's, zTrip, and Millcraft Real Estate Services.









## Southern Avenue Home to Strikeforce Karate Academy

Mount Washington has an abundance of small, successful businesses that cater to niche markets. On occasion, On the Mount will highlight these businesses. This edition is highlighting the Strikeforce Karate Academy, a karate, self-defense and kickboxing gym located at 22 Southern Avenue. This is a family owned and operated gym that just celebrated its 22nd year anniversary. All classes at Strikeforce are taught by the owner, Master Bill Kelly. Bill's four children have all trained at Strikeforce. Master Kelly is highly decorated in the world of martial arts. As a competitor, he has won Competitor of the Year, National and State Champion in his respective Self Defense, Weapons, Kata and Kumite Divisions in the Professional Karate Commission (PKC). Moreover, he is the second adult in PKC's history to win four National Titles in one season. The trophy lined gym has boasted honored guests such as Chuck Norris, Bill Wallace and Cynthia Rothrock. Master Kelly is truly a little known treasure in our neighborhood.



Located in the same storefront for the past twenty-two years, Bill has seen Mount Washington undergo a number of changes. Bill is dedicated to serving the community, in particular, the neighborhood youth, understanding the benefits of a quality martial arts education from first hand experience. He was a self-described "wild child" that was "out of control" until being instilled with martial arts principles by his father's best friend at a young age. Bill, a former Marine, teaches his students self-discipline, and to first respect themselves, family and friends, then to establish their own identity. His alumni have graduated from the West Point Military Academy, pursued careers in nursing, police enforcement and firefighting.

In his dedication to serve youth, Bill is willing to sacrifice financially for the community's benefit. He currently offers two free weeks of youth lessons (up to six lessons). After the two weeks, Bill offers a three month membership for only \$25 a month. This includes unlimited

access to the gym during its operating hours. Discounted deals on first classes can also be arranged for adults interested in karate, self-defense or kickboxing classes.

Please look for more information about Master Kelly's annual Mount Washington karate tournament happening in either February or March at the Ream Recreation Center. In addition, Bill is actively looking to rent his gym space to a kickboxing, Zumba or yoga instructor and is working to remodel his basement into a full service weight room. For more information please contact Bill at (412)508-4705 or masterk522@gmail.com.

### Who Yinz Gonna Call?

In an emergency, call 911 immediately from any wired or wireless phone. An emergency is any situation that requires immediate assistance from the police, fire department or ambulance.

Examples include:

- A fire
- A crime, especially if it is in progress
- Motorized vehicles, hunting and dumping in the Park
- A car crash, especially if someone is injured
- A medical emergency, requiring immediate medical attention

**Important:** If you're not sure whether the situation is a true emergency, officials recommend calling 911 and letting the call-taker determine whether or not you need emergency help.



The City's 311 Response Center can answer questions about programs and services provided by the City of Pittsburgh; register non-emergency concerns about quality of life and public safety issues; and take your comments and direct them to the appropriate city departments.

Examples include:

- **Potholes on Your Street** – use the online map to pinpoint a location and add the coordinates to your submission
- **Dead Animals** on your street or in Emerald View Park
- **Hazards on the Trails**, such as a downed trees or landslides
- **Hazardous sidewalks or stairs** in the community

Dial 3-1-1 from any phone

Visit [pittsburghpa.gov/311/form](http://pittsburghpa.gov/311/form)

Tweet @Pgh311





## Neighbors on the Mount:

### *A New Volunteer Action Group*

**Mission:** *Neighbors on the Mount* is a volunteer action group to help improve quality of life, public safety, and community connections in Mount Washington and Duquesne Heights. All residents and business owners interested in building a stronger community are invited to participate.

**Vision:** We see the Mount as a true community – where people, know, care for, challenge and engage each other, as well as take pride in the unique beauty and potential of Mount Washington, creating a greater life together.

### **Focus Areas and Committees:**

1. Public Safety is addressing the welfare, safety and security of our streets, homes, business and community
2. Quality of Life is the feeling of well being, that encompasses feeling secure, comfortable and at peace in your surroundings and with your life.
3. Community Connection/Cohesion – is a feeling of belonging to a neighborhood that inspires all who live there to be part of and participate in improving our connection with each other and our neighborhood. This necessitates clear and consistent communication. This included having fun!

### **Ways to Make a Difference:**

1. **Communication** – Create channels of communication within the community that are clear and consistent.
2. **Advocacy** – influencing other community organizations. Communicating to the City, the MW CDC and other community organizations, businesses etc.
3. **Particular Hands on Action** – dig, paint, repair, beautify, organize, etc.
4. **Creativity** – incentives/pay it forward/accountability etc. – like an award for most improved garden, “landlords hall of shame” etc.

#### **Next Meeting:**

Monday, January 11th, 2016  
at 6:00 PM  
at Grandview Bakery  
on Shiloh Street.

#### **For More Information:**

Facebook Page “Neighbors on the Mount” or Paul Whiteside  
Pwhite1832@gmail.com,  
412-491-3966.





# 2015 Year in Review

- Partnered with the City of Pittsburgh to begin repairing dilapidated infrastructure along Grandview Avenue.
- Completed the planning for a gateway over Shiloh Street with a construction date of Spring 2016.
- Advocated on behalf of the community with our local, state and federal elected officials for local projects, both large and small.
- Helped create, Neighbors on the Mount, a new community council aiming to address quality of life, public safety and community cohesion.
- Processed 200 energy assistance applications, resulting in over \$50,000 in utility assistance to families in need.



*Thank you to the Bares for helping to beautify Shiloh Street.*



*Phase 1 of Grandview Avenue sidewalk reconstruction completed in November 2015.*

## ***Emerald View Park 2015 Accomplishments***

- Unveiled a Conceptual Design for the Olympia Park shelter house building, following a series of public meetings.
- Conducted our first pilot Park Use Study with 40 hours of data collection and 150 survey respondents.
- Released a new park brochure, highlighting park amenities such as play and sports facilities, public art, and a 10+ mile trail system.
- Completed the 5th season of the Emerald Trail Corps, through which we have trained and hired 44 at-risk adults since 2011.
- Installed the Park's first rain garden to manage storm water runoff and beautify a park entrance with native shrubs and wildflowers.
- Engaged 220 volunteers who contributed 1,250 hours of service to Emerald View Park projects, worth \$27,500 in inkind services.
- Monitored 7 polluted abandoned mine water discharges, removed 2 acres of invasive plants, planted 165 native plants, constructed 1.5 miles of trails, maintained 8 miles of trail.



*Thank you to members of the McCoy family and other volunteers who planted 11 beautiful shade trees at the Eileen McCoy Playground in November 2015, made possible through a TreeVitalize Pittsburgh grant.*

*Thank you to Pitt students, who cleaned up litter in the Shiloh Street business district on Fall Redd Up Day in October 2015.*







Thank you to neighborhood resident Jessica Friss, who helped to create a rain garden at Emerald View Park's Republic Street entrance for her Girl Scout Gold Award Project.

## Economic Development 2015 Accomplishments

- Completed one new residential renovation, and acquired two single family homes in need of rehabilitation.
- Created a future pipeline of 40 residential renovation projects.
- Released an RFP for the disposition of 9 residential properties in transitional market areas.
- Partnered with the Hilltop Alliance and other stakeholders to hold a summit
- Destination Hilltop, attracting real estate agent and real estate developer attention to our region of the city.
- Interfaced with over 70 businesses, surveying their needs, and providing technical assistance and connections to resources.
- Worked with the Port Authority to postpone Monongahela Incline repairs until after our business district's busy season.



The kitchen before and after at our Chess Street rehab



Before and After of a residential rehab project on Chess Street, sold to owneroccupant in August 2015.



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