

An Unprecedented Year

By Emma Heemskerk, ECA Executive Director

To say that 2020 has been a difficult year might be the understatement of the century. Residents are struggling to pay bills and buy groceries, businesses are shutting their doors, and many families have lost loved ones. As of this writing, the nation is headed into an uncertain winter as Covid-19 case numbers are rising dramatically in Kent County.

The day-to-day can be overwhelming.

Whether you are faring reasonably well or barely hanging on by a thread, the Coronavirus has proven to exacerbate and complicate issues in everyone's everyday life.

My motto lately is "just do the best you can." That is all we can really expect of ourselves (or one another) right now, right? The fact is that everyone is dealing with an unprecedented amount of stress — and there hasn't been much time for healing, self-compassion for what we have gone through, or the space to grieve our many losses.

As we look back at 2020 and towards the year ahead, how do we help each other move forward as a neighborhood? How do we give each other grace and the space to grieve while navigating the uncertainty ahead? How do we acknowledge resilience in the face of struggle?

We would love to hear your ideas about ways that we can work together to help those in need, forge a path to begin healing collectively and engage safely to better support each other in the year ahead. We want you to know that the ECA is here for you - and we are all in this together.



#GivingTuesday is a day that encourages people to do good. *Image: givingtuesday.org*

There are some real front-line heroes out there doing courageous work to help Eastown continue to thrive - thank you for everything you do. We are grateful for the many ways in which so many residents are contributing to this vibrant neighborhood. From businesses starting up in the middle of a pandemic, to construction workers fixing our main streets, to neighbors coming up with Covid-safe approaches for creating social space in their front yards. We can't do it without you.

Like so many organizations, the ECA has not been spared the impact of Covid-19. Sadly, all of our events for the year were canceled, which represent a large portion of the ECA's operating revenue. Yet, we are learning and

adapting like everyone else in an unprecedented year.

As we look towards Giving Tuesday on December 1st, this year's Annual Appeal is also like none other before. We are very cognizant that many of you are unable to contribute monetarily right now.

However, if you are able, your contribution will be invaluable in helping to move Eastown forward. We are asking you to support the ECA with whatever donation you are able, whether it be \$5 a year or \$5 a month, every little bit counts.

If you wish to make a contribution towards ECA's Annual Appeal, you will find a prepaid envelope enclosed in this issue of the Access. Checks can be made payable to: Eastown Community Association, 415 Ethel Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506 and are fully tax deductible. Or if you prefer to donate online, please visit www.eastown.org.

We look forward to tackling whatever 2021 has in store for Eastown together, supporting each other and helping those in need to build a stronger community for years to come. Please don't hesitate to reach out if ECA can help.

Thank you for your support of the ECA and of each other.

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Fostering a safe, diverse, and walkable Eastown neighborhood by creating opportunities for neighbors and friends to engage and connect.

**415 Ethel SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
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www.eastown.org**

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- Amanda Sterling, Treasurer
- Staci Rickman, Secretary
- Michael Bopp
- Becky Dickenson
- Matt Feyen
- Andrew Fisher
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- Marta Johnson-Ebels
- Noah Joseph
- Dan Wells

Executive Director

Emma Heemskerck

The Eastown Community Association board of directors meets on the second Monday of every month at 6 p.m. via Zoom. Eastown residents and business owners are encouraged to attend. For more information visit our website at eastown.org

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Getting Involved in 2021

By Emma Heemskerck, ECA Executive Director

It's hard to believe that 2021 is just around the corner. Each year, the ECA holds its Annual Membership Meeting in February to ratify the new Board of Directors slate. In a typical year, we would hold a free pancake breakfast that is open to all Eastown neighbors to attend and vote on the new Board candidates.

However, after many years of joining around the table together in-person, the ECA Annual Meeting and pancake breakfast will officially be going virtual this coming year. We are currently looking at ways to refresh the gathering for the new reality of Covid-19 and hope that you will save-the-date for February 13, 2021 to acknowledge our achievements, confirm the Board slate and celebrate the New Year. We hope to "see" you there!

In preparation for the Annual Meeting, we are also seeking qualified candidates for the 2021 ECA Board of Directors. Applicants should be residents, business owners or property owners of Eastown and possess a strong commitment to the Eastown community, ECA's mission, as well as to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). The ECA believes that diverse perspectives are necessary for a strong and healthy Board and we encourage members of marginalized communities to apply. More details are available at www.eastown.org or by calling 616-451-3025. Applications are due by February 6, 2021.

Please reach out with any questions or to discuss the possibility of joining the ECA Board. It's a great way to build your network, get involved and contribute to the community - and we are happy to explore the possibility with you!

We will also be embarking on an exciting DEI strategic planning process and various community engagement efforts in the New Year, so it's a great time to get involved.

Residents who are interested in becoming involved on one of our four working committees (Community Engagement Committee, Bricks and Mortar Committee, Garden Committee, and Events Committee) or in serving as a Host Neighbor to disseminate information on their block are also encouraged to contact us.

If you are interested in learning more or would like to attend a virtual meeting, please email info@eastown.org or call 616-451-3025 for more information. We look forward to your involvement in 2021! ♦

EASTOWN ACCESS

As the newsletter of the Eastown Community Association, the *Access* is published six times a year.

Contributors

Mike Bopp, Pamela Goderski, Lee Hardy, Emma Heemskerck, Zalina Jabil, Noah Joseph, Amanda Sterling, Kali Swan, Amy Wolterstorff

The views and opinions expressed in Access are not necessarily those of the ECA Board.

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EBA NOTES

Shop Hop Shifts Gears this Holiday Season

by Kali Swan, Eastown Business Association

Thank you for continuing to shop local! Our Eastown Business District is filled with a wide range of eclectic businesses. Your support—eating, drinking, and shopping local for your needs and wants—is what keeps us thriving.

Looking ahead, Eastown Business Association (EBA) is enthusiastically gearing up for SHOP HOP! Shop Hop is a longstanding event encompassing all of Uptown (Eastown, East Hills, East Fulton and Wealthy Street). This event is hosted by Uptown Grand Rapids, Inc. and highlights the exciting retailers, services, restaurants, and entertainment packed into our four unique business districts.

This year Shop Hop will be expanded to take place over three Thursdays in December (Dec. 3, 10, and 17).

This means more shopping time, more comfortable (socially distant) experiences, and more opportunities for businesses in Uptown to shine. Our biggest goal this year is to deliver safety, comfort, and joy! Be on the lookout as more information begins to roll out about Shop Hop 2020 at Uptowngr.com.

Looking for a way to make an impact? Are you passionate about your Eastown community and business district? The EBA will be voting in additional members to our Board as we start the beginning of a new year. Please shoot us an email with your interest and we would love to sit down and chat about the awesome ways you can get involved in Eastown.

If you would like to volunteer or receive more information on how to get involved with the EBA feel free to email us at hello@eastowngr.com. ♦

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John Witte	526-6548
Aquinas College, Engagement	
Katharina Hausler-Gross	632-2112
Eastown Community Association	
	451-3025
City of GR, Code Compliance	
	456-3053

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NEW IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Detroit Style Pizza in the Heart of Eastown

by Amanda Sterling, ECA Board Treasurer

While construction crews were hard at work revamping Lake Drive in September, Eastown welcomed a new restaurant to the neighborhood. Joel Wabeke and Sarah Wepman's latest venture, Quarantino's, located at 1444 Lake Drive (across the street from That Early Bird, one of the couple's other businesses), opened in mid-September and specializes in Detroit style pizza. Wabeke explained that, "Detroit style pizza was invented by Gus Guerra in 1946 as a way to add food to his bar. The pans he used were used in the automobile factories to hold loose parts. Guerra used these pans to make a unique Sicilian pizza with a thick but really light crust that has a crisp crust of browned dough and cheese."

In addition to offering meat, vegetarian, and vegan pizzas -- as well as a gluten-free crust-- and salads, Quarantino's is serving lasagna and some of the other special dishes Wabeke and Wepman rolled out at Kingfisher when the quarantine first began in the spring. Unfortunately, Kingfisher didn't weather the economic downturn, but even with it being a challenging time to open a new restaurant, the couple saw an opportunity to tap into the take-out pizza market since it's doing quite well.

When asked about the challenges facing restaurateurs in this moment, Wabeke noted, "We are really dedicated to this neighborhood and really need the community's support now

to keep going. It is not an easy time for restaurants and coffee houses and many of us will not make it. We will do our best to find ways to stay relevant and provide great options for Eastown. All we ask is for the support to help make it happen."

Quarantino's offers pick up at the counter, curbside, delivery or contactless delivery and has many scrumptious specials early in the week. You can find them on the web at quarantinosgr.com, their Facebook page (@QuarantinosPizza), or by calling (616) 734-6833. ♦



The new home of Quarantino's in Eastown Photo by Amanda Sterling

BurrLaw

James Booth Burr, Jr.



Elder Care & Probate Law
Small Business Organizations
Real Estate Law

Jim been has a resident of Eastown for nearly 40 years and is a Member of the 6th and 7th US Courts of Appeal

Jim is also a member of the State Bar of Michigan and a member of the Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee and Real Estate and Business Law Sections

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URBAN PERCH

Making Places for Everyone

by Lee Hardy, Access Contributor



Affordable housing is a growing problem in Eastown as well as the city of Grand Rapids at large. At present, over 50% of renters in Grand Rapids are paying more than 30% of their household income on rent. That means they are housing “cost-burdened.” First-time home buyers are also finding it difficult to find affordable housing that meets their needs. There are many factors at play in our affordable housing crisis. Chief

among them is the lack of adequate housing supply—not enough housing units to meet demand.

In July of this year, Ryan Kilpatrick, Executive Director of Housing Next, made a presentation to the Grand Rapids City Commission. Based on his research, Grand Rapids will need an additional 5,340 rental units and 3,548 additional owner-occupied units by 2025 to meet our housing needs and keep housing affordable.

But: how to do so? How can we add more housing units to a city that is already largely built out? There is not a lot of vacant land within the city limits. Other cities in the US are facing the same problem. Many of them are exploring ways to allow for more housing units on existing lots.

In the city of Los Angeles, for example, 75% of residential property is zoned for single-family detached

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What Can a Front Yard Be?

By Lee Hardy, Access Contributor

A lawn and a row of foundation shrubs seem to be the standard formula for American front yards. Not so in Eastown. Neighbors have re-invented the front yard and parkways to a number of effects—all different answers to the question: what can a front yard be?



A pollinator habitat?

Send us your photos of what you come up with this winter!



A neighborhood campsite?



A sculpture garden?



A sidewalk porch?



A child's fantasy tableau?



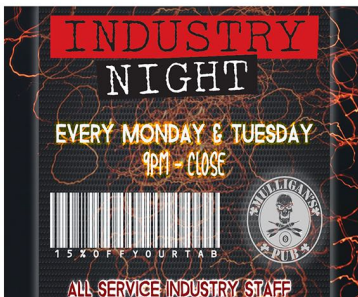
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Aquinas Trees Get a Place on the Map

By Mike Bopp, ECA Board Member

I've memorized many of the mature trees lining our neighborhood streets on my daily walks to and from work and school, often pausing and reflecting on just how much these trees have seen over the years.

I have a particular fascination with identifying the exact species of these trees. On occasion, I'll intentionally bring my fake-leather bound *National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees – Eastern Region* book. It looks like a bible. I hold the guide in my hand as if it's some kind of sacred text, and no doubt make some pedestrians uneasy as I stroll slowly with seemingly no particular destination in mind.

As I encounter an unknown tree I reference the book to systematically identify and match the shape of the leaves and texture of the bark to a particular species or two. If I'm lucky, I'll remember my finding, and proudly point it out to one of my kids the next time we pass, where they will barely acknowledge my discovery.

Now I can leave my field guide at home when walking through the Aquinas campus. Instead, all I need is my phone where I can reference the map created by a team of students in the Aquinas College Geography & Environmental Studies program led by Associate Professor/ Geospatial Technologies Lab Director Mary Clinthorne, Ph.D.

This new resource includes more than a map, and is far more valuable than a simple tree identification guide. It tells a story of the College's trees – past, present and future.

A "journal", rich in historical information can be found at <https://arcg.is/lizDim>. If you are fascinated by history, especially that of the Eastown area, I think you will really enjoy reading it. Clinthorne describes the project:

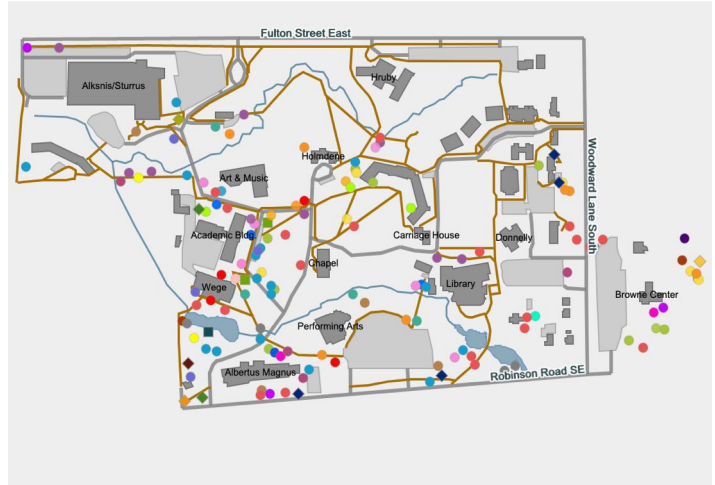
The Aquinas "Trees Project" began as an opportunity to give Geography & Environmental Studies students practical mapping experience. But, as the students collected the first digital tree locations in 2017, we realized that not only could this be a learning experience, but it could also benefit Aquinas' urban forest. As the students mapped tree locations, they also noted missing trees and problems with the wooden tree markers. And, we started wondering if there was a way to tell the larger story of our trees, beyond just their locations.

The Geospatial Analysis students (from Geography and Environmental Studies, but also History, Mathematics, and Computer Information Systems) began to create the interactive "Aquinas College Trees: Past, Present, and Future" the following semester.

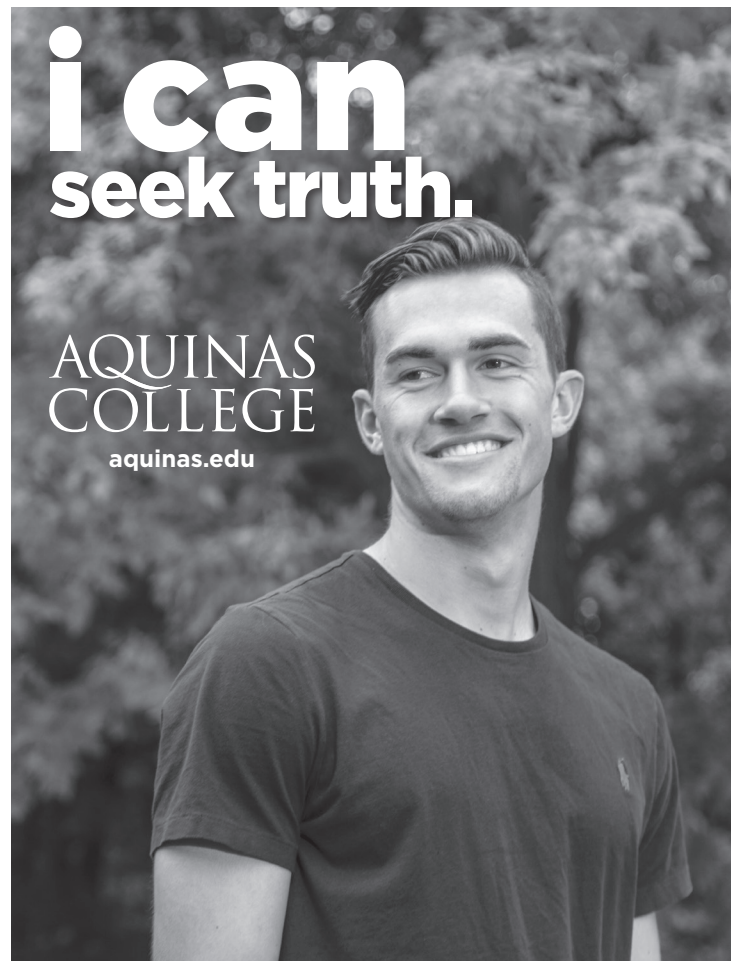
The trees story, and all of the maps it contains, has become a great learning tool for our students, and also a valuable resource for the campus and the local community.

Aquinas College is now being recognized as a "Tree Campus USA" by the Arbor Day Foundation which highlights their commitment to our urban forest.

If you're interested in taking in the tree sights on Aquinas's campus, check out the Aquinas College Trees Story Map narrative at <https://arcg.is/lizDim>. There is also a paper map available for print for the whole family to use! ♦



One map showing the different types of marked trees on campus
Image courtesy Aquinas College



Scooter Pilot Underway

by Kristin Bennett, City of Grand Rapids

The City of Grand Rapids scooter share pilot is now underway with the arrival of e-scooters in late September. Shared micromobility services like scooters and bicycles provide solo, low-cost, on-demand transportation options. They connect with transit, parking and ride sharing as well as important destinations in Grand Rapids.

City staff has been working hard to bring shared micromobility to residents and visitors in Grand Rapids for several years. The City completed a bike share feasibility study in 2018. Both the Citywide Strategic Plan and the Equitable Economic Development and Mobility Strategic Plan recommended piloting new affordable transportation options like scooters and bike share.

What Kind of Vehicles are Available?

The City is partnering with two vendors, Spin and Gotcha, to pilot e-scooter and bike share services for at least 12 months. Stand-on e-scooters from Spin are available to ride now. When Gotcha starts its service soon, options will expand to include seated e-scooters and eventually bicycles.

How It Works

If you are 18 years or older, you can use the shared vehicles by following these steps:

Download either the Spin or Gotcha app onto an Android or iOS smart phone.

Using the app, find a shared vehicle in one of the Designated Parking Zones.

Follow the screen prompts in the app to setup your ride.

Pay for your session in the app with a debit or credit card.

Take your ride – remember to ride in the street (not the sidewalk!) with the flow of traffic.

After you ride, park the vehicle in a Designated Parking Zone to avoid further charges.

Where Can I Find a Vehicle to Use?

The pilot currently covers a 12 square-mile area, including downtown, many local business areas including Eastown, and almost three-quarters of the City's Neighborhoods of Focus. The Neighborhoods of Focus cover several modest income neighborhoods on the west, southwest and southeast sides of Grand Rapids.

The City is installing dozens of Designated Parking Zones where you can pick up and drop off these e-scooters (and bicycles when they arrive). These Designated Parking Zones help with sidewalk accessibility and cut down on clutter. They can be found in Downtown and many neighborhood business areas including Eastown. You can also find them near transit stops, public parking and many other community destinations within that pilot service area.

Use the Spin or Gotcha apps to find Designated Parking



Spin staff servicing vehicles at City Hall - Monroe station
Image courtesy City of Grand Rapids

Zones near you and your destination. Then just look for painted white boxes with pavement decals, typically found near intersections. (Street signs for the Designated Parking Zones are coming soon!)

How Much Does it Cost and How Can I Pay?

The stand-on e-scooters from Spin cost \$1 to unlock plus 15 cents per minute to ride. The cost to ride the seated e-scooters and bicycles from Gotcha will be priced similarly. Stay tuned for the exact cost of Gotcha's vehicles!

Discounts of up to 50% are available for people meeting certain income eligibility requirements. To sign up for these discounted rates, contact Spin and/or Gotcha and provide proof of enrollment in a city, state or federally funded program such as SNAP EBT, TANF, WIC, and HUD Housing Choice Section 8 vouchers. For Spin Access, visit the program's web site or call 1-888-262-5189. For Gotcha's Kickstart program, visit their web site or call 1-844-254-7174.

Don't have a credit or debit card? Both Spin and Gotcha can assist customers without bank accounts in obtaining reloadable debit/credit cards.

COVID-19 Precautions

New transportation services like these are important as we seek ways to support residents and visitors through the

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Neighbor Spotlight: The Benjamins

By Pamela Goderski, ECA Board Member

Craig and Pamela Benjamin are true Eastown Treasures. Their involvement in the Eastown Community is only the tip of the iceberg of their commitment to Grand Rapids. They are Naturalized U.S. Citizens; Craig is a native Australian and Pamela is originally from New Zealand. Recently, I had the opportunity to ask them a few questions.

How long have you lived in Eastown? What made you decide to come here? Where did you come from?

Pamela: We arrived in Grand Rapids in the summer of 2003. Then we moved from our rental into Eastown in November 2003. When I was house hunting here in Grand Rapids, my realtor told me she thought Craig and I might be Eastown people. She showed us one house in Eastown among 3 others in different areas.



Eastown Residents Craig and Pamela Benjamin
Photo by Pamela Goderski

We both loved this house the moment we saw it and we've lived here on Auburn ever since. We moved from Sydney, Australia. We came to Grand Rapids for Craig to take up a tenure track position at Grand Valley State University. We came with 54 boxes of books (all Craig's) and our clothes. I had to furnish our house right down to knives and forks.
Please tell us about your involvement in the ECA.

Pamela: Craig took me to the annual ECA breakfast in January 2004 and asked me to attend board meetings. About 3-4 months after that I replaced Tom Cary as a Board Member. I transitioned to Board President in early 2005. I ended my tenure at the Eastown Community Association at the end of 2010.

Craig: After attending some Eastown events (because of Pamela's involvement with the ECA) I became interested in helping with the organization of Streetfair and BizBaz. I had been a professional musician in Australia for 25 years and been involved in the organization of many music festivals, so it was a good fit for me. I am also a detail-oriented person, so I enjoyed the opportunity to work

with a great committee to ensure that our events went off without a hitch. I spent six years on the committee, three as Chair. I am proud of the events we ran between 2007 and 2012.

What else have you been involved with in the Community? Other Organizations?

Pamela: I was a sitting member on Uptown Forward, the precursor to the Uptown Corridor Improvement District Board; which I served on, first as the Neighborhood Representative and then as the Board Chair. I also served for some years on the Housing Appeals Board for the City of Grand Rapids. I served as Grand Rapids Weed & Seed Board President between 2008 – 2010. I have been a member of the Women's City Club since 2013. During that time I have been Chair of the Human Resources Committee and Staff Supervisor and then Chair of the Enrichment Committee which organizes all talks, dinners and events for the club.

When ArtPrize began I was a volunteer at the old Federal Building with Fred Bivins, the curator. I worked with Rick & Melissa DeVos on souvenirs and David Abbott in the shop space. The following year I volunteered as a volunteer team supervisor and I did that job for 2 more years. In the 4th year of ArtPrize I entered as an artist. That year my glass piece was in an office window, but the 5th year I was entered in the Women's City Gallery, again curated by Fred Bivins. I entered another 5 years in the Women's City Club Gallery. I also entered other art shows and markets during this time such as Bizarre Bazaar and Streetfair, and I had a booth at the Fulton Street Sunday Artists market for a few years. After I broke my wrist at the end of 2017, I gave up glass art, but over the years I sold many of my glass art pieces.

Craig: In 2008, I gave a lecture for Black History Month, which also included a live performance by some local jazz musicians, and by me on my flute and alto sax. After the performance I was approached by Betty Forrest, who had been married to the great tenor saxophonist Jimmy Forrest, and who was then President of the West Michigan Society. She asked me to join the Board of the WMJS (West Michigan Jazz Society), and I was happy to do so. I stayed on the Board for several years, and served one year as President. I was proud of all the events we organized – Jazz at the Zoo, Jazz Gumbo, Musician of the Year, etc. – and particularly pleased that we were able to offer so many performance opportunities for all the outstanding jazz musicians in our community. I have also played regularly in a band for more than 12 years, with musician colleagues from GVSU. We have been regular performers at StreetFair.

When did you become naturalized citizens? What does that mean to you?

Pamela: We became citizens in November 2010. For me,

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Places for Everyone, cont.

homes only. This zoning restriction has led to a lack of housing supply and sky-rocketing home prices in the area. To address this problem, which afflicts both southern and northern California, the state of California senate recently passed a bill known as SB1120 by a unanimous vote. The bill would allow duplexes by right (that is, without special approval) on most property now zoned for single-family homes. The state assembly passed its version of the bill shortly thereafter. The bills will soon be reconciled and most likely passed into law.

Changes like this in zoning codes will allow for the development of “missing middle” housing types within existing neighborhoods. “Missing middle housing” is a term that refers to housing types between single-family detached homes and large apartment buildings. That includes duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, accessory dwelling units, cottage courtyard housing, townhouses, and condos.

Durham, North Carolina, reformed its zoning laws in 2019 to allow for missing middle housing. The reform also allows for reduced off-street parking requirements and reduced

minimum lot size. In the new code, a large single-family lot can be subdivided into two lots, one of which can have a duplex and an accessory dwelling unit, the other a single house and an accessory dwelling unit—a total of five units where previously there was only one.

The city of Minneapolis also adopted zoning reform legislation in 2019. Initially, the city adopted a 2040 Comprehensive Plan that allowed for up to three housing units on any residential lot in the city. The city council followed up on the plan with an amendment to its zoning, converting that policy into law in the same year.

The state of Michigan is also at work in this area. Our state has adopted a “Redevelopment Ready Communities” program that streamlines state funding for real estate development. In 2018, in cooperation with the Michigan Municipal League (MML) and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the Congress for the New Urbanism published *Enabling Better Places: The Users’ Guide to Zoning Reform*, which focuses on promoting the development of missing middle housing in the state of Michigan.

In the introduction to that guide, we find this statement:

“Each Michigan community has its own unique qualities, challenges and opportunities. However, similar geographic, economic, and cultural forces have resulted in common concerns regarding local zoning codes. . . *Enabling Better Places* is intended to be used by Michigan communities who are planning to make incremental changes to their codes.”

The emphasis here is on “incremental change”.

“Many code reform processes seek to overhaul the entire code. This all-or-nothing approach has the significant potential to become a contentious and arduous process for all involved. It can daylight simmering community tensions, create strong NIMBY (“Not In My

Backyard”) reactions, and can lead to other unresolved, community issues.” The program seeks modest but meaningful changes to existing codes, not sudden radical reform.

Some communities resist even the modest introduction of missing middle housing types, claiming that it will “change the character of the neighborhood.” While Eastowners may have legitimate concerns about zoning changes, code reforms that allow for missing middle housing by right will not fundamentally change the character of the neighborhood. We already have missing middle housing. Eastown was built in the 1910s and 1920s before strict zoning laws separated housing types into different areas. Sprinkled in amongst our single-family homes are duplexes and small to mid-size apartment buildings—making room for everyone. That’s part of what makes Eastown so great, and potentially greater. ♦



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A mid-block Eastown fourplex between two single family homes *Photo by Lee Hardy*



Above and below: Examples of “missing middle” housing in Eastown *Photos by Lee Hardy*



COMMUNITY NOTES

Crisis Counseling

1-800-985-5990 is a service from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that provides crisis counseling for people going through both natural and human caused disasters. It's free, multilingual and confidential. You can also text TalkWithUs to 66746.

You can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline if you are feeling alone and struggling at 1-800-273-TALK OR text 741741 to the Crisis Text Line.

Statewide Resources

Call 2-1-1 from any phone 24/7 to be connected to a list of statewide resources for everything from food and diapers to rental assistance and bus fare. You can also search their online database at mi211.org.

Fair Housing & Community Needs Survey

Kent County and the City of Grand Rapids are developing a Regional Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan for the next 5 years. Your participation in this short survey will help identify the types of services that are needed in your community: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Community_Needs_and_Priorities_Survey.

Winter Parking Restrictions Begin

Odd-even and same-side parking restrictions started on Nov. 1 to allow City street sweepers and snowplows easier access to neighborhood streets while clearing roads of leaves, tree debris, and snow throughout the fall and winter. Odd-even and same-side parking restrictions take effect at 12:01 a.m. on Nov. 1, regardless of whether there is snow. The restrictions are in effect until 11:59 p.m. on April 1. Streets with restrictions have odd-even or same-side parking signs posted.

Parks & Recreation Classes

November recreation programs are open for registration! Register now online at grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr or by phone at 616.456.3696, option 1. Classes include virtual and in-person adult, youth and family exercise and enrichment activities. Keep you and your family active this winter!

Lead Safety

Many of the homes in Grand Rapids contain lead hazards that put children at risk. The Get the Lead Out! program provides loans and/or coverage for the repairs needed to ensure safe and lead-free homes. See if you qualify at gettheleadoutgr.org or call (616) 241-3300 x306.

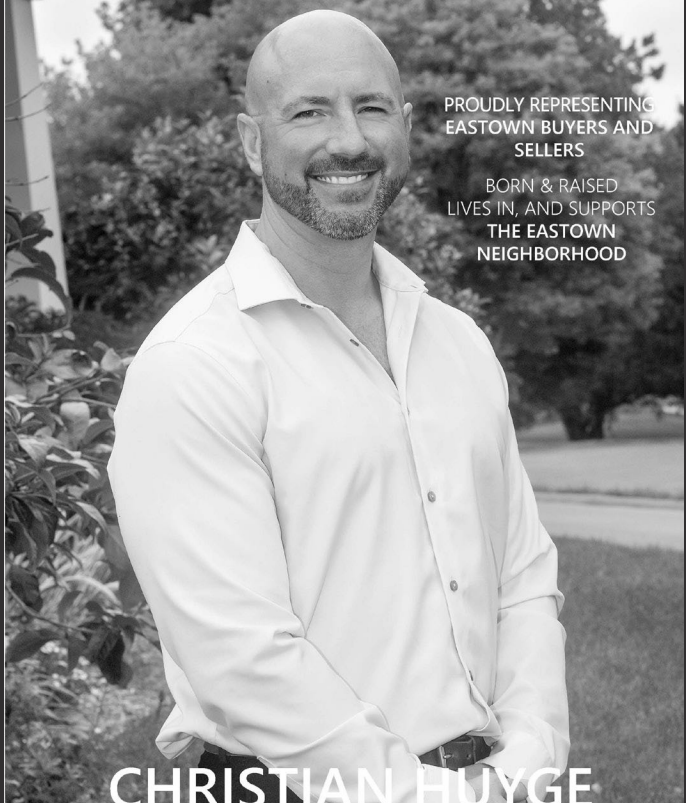


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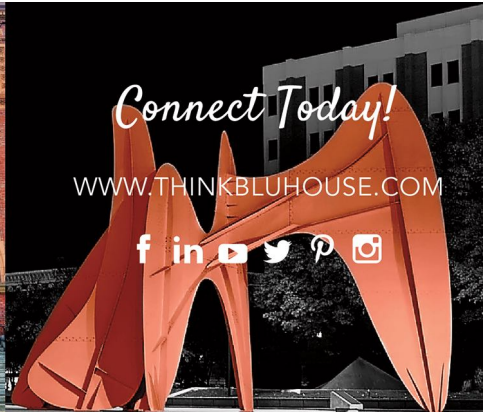
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You're Never Too Young To Make A Difference

By Noah Joseph, ECA Board Member and Zalina Jabil, Access Contributor

Everyone is having a hard time right now, but there are ways to make the best of the situation. Sometimes we can learn from our children. This fall, my step-daughter Zalina (she goes by Z) was going back to virtual school. She generally likes school but was not looking forward to going back. She especially missed the personal interaction with other kids.

She has been able to play with her best friend, but only outside, so they are always looking for interesting things to do. It was a beautiful and warm day, so Z invited a second friend from school over to play. They are all fourth graders. And well, I think it's better that I left the details to her, so in her own words, here's Z:

Hi, I'm actually one of three girls that decided to raise money for Black Lives Matter. While my friends and I were sitting in our front yard I decided to

get some paper and I thought, "why not write a nice message." So, I wrote on the paper "Make someone smile by saying HI," but then I thought, "why not take this farther?"

I asked my wonderful mom for a little plastic bowl, and told her "I want to raise money for BLM." We taped our signs together, put rocks to hold them down, placed the little bowl right on top and waited for the bucket to fill up.

We waited and waited. The runners had earphones or didn't want to stop their rhythm, dog walkers had no money on them, we couldn't take credit cards, and shoppers had just spent their money.

Eventually, we got our first donor. They donated maybe one or two dollars and we thanked them but we were still intrigued to get more. It got quiet again and we kinda lost hope

but then one by one we saw people's hands reach down into pockets to put some of their own money into the little plastic bucket.

But when we hit the jackpot was on our walk. It's actually a funny story, so we came upon a lady carrying multiple bags of McDonalds from her car to her house. She said, "Oh yeah, let me set these down and see what I have."

In the end we raised about 70 dollars, which I am very proud of. And I'm very glad we had the experience of joy in seeing how much people cared and were grateful that the people with no money on them said they would if they could. In the end we donated it all to the national Black Lives Matter organization and were very pleased.

You know, you're never too young to make a change! ♦



Photo by Noah Joseph

Scooter Pilot, cont.

pandemic. Both Spin and Gotcha are taking precautions to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in accordance with CDC guidelines and best practices including:

Repeated disinfection of high-contact areas on the vehicles such as hand grips, brake levers, bells, etc. throughout the day while servicing and charging them;

Disinfecting of each vehicle that enters their local service facilities at all major points of contact before it can be repaired or charged.

Requirement for Spin and Gotcha employees to wash their hands with disinfectant soap for 20+ seconds before and at the end of each shift and, whenever possible, in between;

Employees are provided with hand wipes and/or hand sanitizer to clean their hands when working in the field;

Masks are provided to Spin and Gotcha staff to wear at their local service facilities and in the field.

Find out more information about the pilot, including up to date information on where to find Designated Parking Zones, at www.grandrapidsmi.gov/sharedmobility or call 311. ♦

Benjamins, cont.

initially, it meant that after 7 years I could vote again.

Craig: We were proud to become citizens in 2010. As Pamela says, it was important to be able to vote, but it

also meant we were even more closely attached to the community in which we were living. We are proud of our US citizenship, and always travel on our US passports, even though we also have Australian passports.

Please tell us about your family. Do you have Pets?

We have 3 adult children. My son Zar and his wife Alva live in Auckland, New Zealand. He is the front page editor for an online news source called *Stuff* and she is an early childhood supervisor/educator at a local daycare. Our daughter Zoe lives in Sydney, Australia with her 14 month old son Oliver. She is a single mother and she works in a managerial position at the New South Wales Department of Community Services. Our son Asher lives in Melbourne, Australia and works in a senior management position at the Country Road Group for Australasia and South Africa.

Pamela: We have owned 2 dogs. We got our first dog, Buster, a cockerpoo, when we were renting a colleague's house. Craig was busy at Grand Valley and I was very lonely, so 6 weeks after I arrived here, we bought Buster from a breeder in Allendale. He remained my best friend and companion for 9 years, until he died from cancer. It took me 7 years to think about getting another dog. We bought Murphy Brown, a chocolate doodle from a breeder in Norton Shores. She is a big, quiet, loving dog who constantly gets under my feet. ♦

Thanks to the Benjamins for their commitment to Eastown!

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If you have electronic components you need to get rid of, you can take them to:

Kent County Recycling Center

977 Wealthy SW/Grand Rapids
Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

CompRenew

629 Ionia SW/Grand Rapids
Monday-Friday 10:00 a.m.- 6 p.m.

Valley City Electronic Recycling

2929 32nd St SE
Grand Rapids MI 49512
616-421-3386

Have an item to recycle but not sure where to take it? Visit www.recyclekent.org/ for locations to accept most household items.

Used auto oil can be taken to the Auto Zone, on Fuller just south of Leonard, for free recycling.

If you wish to reduce the amount of junk mail you receive, try: www.41pounds.org or www.dmchoice.org



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