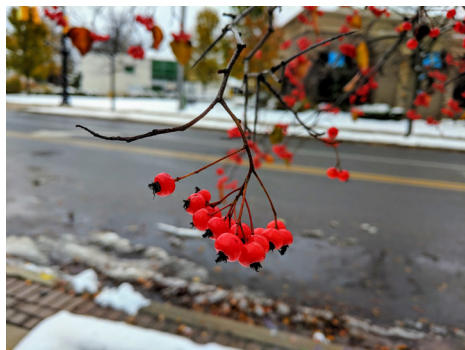


Get On Out!

By Amanda Sterling, ECA Board Member

Winter weather is upon us, but that doesn't mean we need to retreat into our homes until the snow stops flying in the spring. The Centers for Disease Control have attributed much of the recent uncontrolled spread of COVID-19 to indoor gatherings, so in order to reduce the rate of infection as we wait for the vaccine to become widely available, let's embrace our Michigan winter and get outside when hanging out with friends and family the next few months!



Eastown in winter
Photo by Amanda Sterling

Outdoor dining in the winter may sound extreme, but a little extra preparation is all you need to make it work. Many local restaurants have adapted and found ways to expand their outdoor seating by adding patio heaters, open-sided tents, pop-up igloos and the like. However, also be sure to bring a cushion or a blanket to sit on so the metal chairs and benches don't drain your body heat. Pros recommend wearing a synthetic fabric or wool as your first layer rather than

cotton which tends to retain moisture from sweat and can have a cooling effect. *GRNow* has created a handy winter outdoor dining guide to help you plan your al fresco winter dining experience. Check it out at: <https://www.grnow.com/winter-outdoor-dining-guide-map-for-grand-rapids/>. If you're looking to get out into nature, West Michigan has so many options when it comes to hiking trails and other outdoor activities. We're lucky to have the Aquinas College campus with its beautiful meandering Coldbrook Creek and woods right here in Eastown.



South Haven Pier Photo by Amanda Sterling

Just out of the city, Aman Park is a quick drive down Lake Michigan Drive between Standale and Allendale and has six loop trails for hiking and cross-country skiing. If you've never strolled along Lake Michigan in the winter, you're missing out! In years when there is extensive freezing of the lake, the shoreline takes on an otherworldly look and is simply breathtaking. There's no doubt that it's going to be a challenging winter, but let's do what we can to keep each other's spirits up even if that means braving the elements



Pigeon Creek Photo by Amanda Sterling

and meeting up outside in the chilly air to stay connected. We're hearty Michiganders. We can do this!

Other lovely hiking trails in the area:

- Reeds Lake Trail (East Grand Rapids)
- Huff Park (NE Grand Rapids, between Fuller and Ball)
- Calvin Ecosystem Preserve & Native Gardens (Calvin University campus)
- Peace Park (Cascade Township)
- Provin Trails (Grand Rapids Township)
- Seidman Park (north of Ada)
- Saul Lake Bog Nature Preserve (Rockford)
- Trails at Pigeon Creek (West Olive) ♦

Community

ECA Happenings
Page 3

Urbanism

Pedestrian Spaces
Page 5

Civics

Black History Month
Page 7



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

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www.eastown.org

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

Executive Director

Emma Heemsker

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

ECA Annual Meeting

By Emma Heemsker, ECA Executive Director

The New Year is finally here and, like many of you, we can barely believe we made it through. A huge debt of gratitude is due to those of you who supported the ECA, Eastown residents, businesses and each other - and generally kept the wheels turning this past year. A big "THANK YOU" goes out to the many frontline heroes who worked tirelessly to keep us moving forward and who courageously continue to do so.

Even though Covid-19 led to the cancellation of all events, 2020 represented a big year organizationally for the ECA. We completed a leadership transition in the midst of navigating the impacts of the pandemic, initiated a new Community Engagement Committee, achieved a successful Annual Appeal campaign, and set plans for Board transitions, a White Accountability analysis, and Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion (DREI) strategic planning.

In preparation for these exciting happenings, the ECA invites you to "attend" our **virtual 2021 ECA Annual Meeting on Saturday, February 13 at 10am** where the community will vote on the new slate of Board of Director candidates for the 2021-2023 term, celebrate our accomplishments, and provide input on our plans for the future. Stay tuned to our Facebook page (@eastowngr) or call 451-3025 for information on how to participate in the meeting or to submit a paper ballot as it draws nearer. We look forward to "seeing" you there!

We are also seeking qualified candidates to join the ECA Board of Directors to fill six vacancies including Board President and Treasurer. Applications are due by February 6, 2021 at 5pm ET. Applicants should be residents, business owners, or property owners in Eastown and possess a strong commitment to the Eastown community, ECA's mission, as well as to DREI. More information and the application can be found on our website at www.eastown.org or by calling 451-3025. We encourage you to reach out if you are interested!

Residents are also encouraged to get involved with ECA's committees and Host Neighbor Program. If you're feeling isolated, are interested in strategic planning, are new to the neighborhood, or just want to get more involved, it's a great time to participate! We also have virtual trainings, workshops, and panels in the works for 2021 so stay tuned to our website and social media for more details as we work towards brighter days ahead. ♦

EASTOWN ACCESS

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

Contributors

Kristin Bennett, Lee Hardy, Emma Heemsker, Jay Hoekstra, Kristin Revere, Staci Rickman, Drew Simon, Amanda Sterling, Amy Wolterstorff

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

The Access reserves the right to accept, reject or edit any material submitted for publication.

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EBA NOTES

Farewell Kali, Welcome New Faces

By Kristin Revere and Drew Simon, Eastown Business Association

Our former Eastown Business Association (EBA) Board chair, Kali Swan, has moved on to new career adventures and will be leaving Eastown and the EBA Board. During her four year tenure, Kali was always willing to step up and get the job done! Her leadership and fun-loving spirit are appreciated by all of us. Kali became Board Chair in January of 2019 and she hosted and chaired our Annual Meeting at Billy's in 2020. She served on several committees representing Eastown and was a key organizer of our street clean-up. She also managed the EBA booths at Biz Baz and the Eastown Streetfair. Kali also organized the annual Billy's Golf Outing benefitting Eastown. Thanks for your services to Eastown, Kali! Come back and see us soon.

Thankfully, we are fortunate to see many new faces at our monthly EBA meetings. With their help, we've focused our efforts on becoming a key resource for local businesses in coordination with Uptown Grand Rapids, Inc. Working closely with Uptown, we will continue to provide useful information to Eastown businesses such as new grant opportunities and reopening strategies.

Our marketing committee has also doubled down on their efforts to help local businesses. We have planned a gift card giveaway from December to Mid-January. The contests can be found on our social media pages. Follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/EBAGR) and on Instagram (Instagram.com/Eastown_gr) for information on how to enter the giveaway! This giveaway is just one of multiple new marketing methods we're implementing to support shopping local. ♦



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NEW IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Cereal Cafe Brings Out the Kid in Eastown

By Emma Heemsker, ECA Executive Director

Taylor Kyle is a senior in high school who's not afraid to mix it up. She plans to bring Fruity Pebbles, Cinnamon Toast Crunch and other breakfast favorites to Eastown along with her own specialty cereal mixes in the New Year.

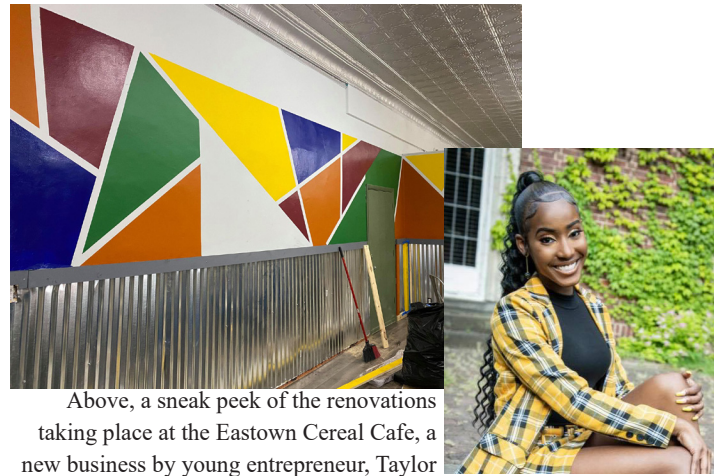
Eastown Cereal Cafe is set to open in January at 1507 Wealthy St. and bring a retro, kid-friendly vibe to the neighborhood. "I got the idea from Las Vegas when I visited my Grandmother. She couldn't believe we didn't have cereal shacks. I did more research and it's been really exciting," said Kyle.

Entrepreneurialism is not new to Kyle and her family. Her parents own KD's Sports Bar in Wyoming. Her dad was the one who challenged her to take initiative and open her own place. Kyle explained that they didn't share the idea with her mom, however, until they had all the details sorted out. "She is the decision maker," Kyle noted, "She has been a real help! I've never done anything like this before, but I have a lot of support."

Regarding opening a business during a pandemic, Kyle says that "people turn bad situations into opportunities. I turn it all into fuel. I'm trying to bring something new to the neighborhood and turn a negative into a positive."

Asked why she chose this location she explained, "I chose Eastown because I feel safe and I can walk there. There's small businesses I can learn from. It's just an area where I feel like I can grow and learn."

Keep an eye out for the Eastown Cereal Cafe in the new year and help us welcome this inspiring young entrepreneur to the business district! ♦



Above, a sneak peek of the renovations taking place at the Eastown Cereal Cafe, a new business by young entrepreneur, Taylor Kyle, right Photo by Flair Studios

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URBAN PERCH

Pedestrian Paths and Spaces

By Jay Hoekstra, Access Contributor

Eastown is a wonderful neighborhood. And it has one of the best neighborhood centers in the city—necessary businesses, interesting businesses, pedestrian friendly streets, and good public spaces. Perhaps it is not as amazing as old town Boston or central Vienna. But could it be?



Positive space Photo by Lee Hardy

Those cities have had centuries to become as good as they are. What are the characteristics of old town Boston or central Vienna that Eastown does not have, but perhaps could? We can consult valuable sources to find specifics. Three great sources are these books: *A Pattern Language* by Christopher Alexander; *Cities for People* by Jan Gehl; and *The New Civic Art* by A. Duany, E. Plater-Zyberk, and R. Alminana.

The essential approach to making good towns and neighborhoods is to design everything at the human scale. Gehl talks about 3 mph streets versus 37 mph streets, walking speed versus car speed. Make everything to accommodate people walking, sitting, or standing. Unlike old Boston, we have had to make room for automobiles. But we have overcompensated.

The presence of people, not cars, makes a place appealing.

More than anything else, people like to see other people. So, dimensions should conform to human ability to recognize and interact with other people.

For example, neighborhood squares and plazas should be no larger than

about 60 feet across because it will only take four people to make it seem lively. People will feel comfortable in such spaces and those spaces will become favorite places.

Here are a few other ways to design a human-scaled town:

Have public plazas that are primarily for pedestrian use but may accommodate parking. These are common in many old cities. Often they are the space around a cathedral, a church, or a public building. Such a plaza can also be a way for pedestrians to get around apart from cars and trucks. The type of paving often tells whether the ground is for people to walk and stand, or for cars to move and park. Are there underused areas in Eastown, behind or in front of buildings that could be consolidated into a such a plaza?



Negative space Photo by Lee Hardy

A large monument, fountain, or sculpture can give a place identity and be a spot to rest and watch the world go by. The attractive Harmony Brewing Company tall sign is a good size and location for a monument. It is visible from the ends of both Wealthy and Lake Drive. Public art can be supported by the public. The City of Hastings, for example, has a contest for outdoor art pieces and buys one each year to keep on its street corners.

Alexander Christopher has found that spaces should be “positive,” not “negative.” That is, they should be enclosed, their edges should be defined.

Compare the outdoor dining spaces at Harmony Brewing and Terra with

them. But since cities and towns are always changing, such changes may become a reality.



Potential site for monument, fountain or sculpture Photo by Lee Hardy



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WINTER IN EASTTOWN

Drive Slow on Ice and Snow

Tips from the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning launched a new winter driving safety campaign entitled "Drive Slow on Ice and Snow".

The campaign hopes to reduce accidents and prevent serious or fatal injuries by reminding drivers that most winter accidents are attributed to drivers going too fast for the road conditions.

The full list of Winter Driving Safety Tips, which includes information about things you can do ahead of time to prepare your car for safe winter driving, information about making sure your tires are safe and ready for ice/snow, keeping pedestrians and passengers safe, tips for driving safely around snow plows, and tips for handling emergency situations can be

found at www.michigan.gov/ohsp.

Here are some highlights that are particularly relevant for Easttown residents this winter:

- Stopping distances can be up to 10 times greater on ice and snow, so drive slowly and stay alert for pedestrians, especially at intersections and crosswalks.
- Watch out for pedestrians who may be obscured from view by snow banks or low light. Keep sidewalks clear for those who need assistance with walking, as well as to keep pedestrians from having to walk in the street in order to pass by your residence safely.
- The extra bulk from puffy coats or snowsuits on infants and toddlers may interfere with the straps from fitting properly and tight enough

around the child's chest. Dress children in car seats in lighter layers and cover with a blanket or heavier coat.

- Michigan speed limit laws require drivers to move at a speed that is "reasonable and proper" for the road conditions, which means you could get a speeding ticket if the road conditions make that speed unreasonable for safe driving
- Make sure your car is in good working condition, is stocked with an auto emergency kit, and that your tires are adequately inflated and have at least 1/8" of tread for safe driving.
- With many people driving far less frequently due to COVID-19, it's important to remember to keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid fuel line freeze up.




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Celebrating Black History Month

By Staci Rickman, ECA Board Member

Black History month calls upon us to reflect upon, learn, recognize, and celebrate the incredible contributions and central role that Black people have had in our history and culture, which are far too often overlooked.

Despite restrictions on group activities and events due to COVID-19, there are still many ways for Eastown and Grand Rapids neighbors to recognize and celebrate Black History month, which takes place for the entire month of February each year.

For local history, we recommend starting by visiting the Grand Rapids African American History Museum and Archives (GRAAMA) at www.graama.org. Physically located at 87 Monroe Center, the GRAAMA's website includes a treasure trove of materials honoring the lives, history, culture, and art of local African Americans.

The website includes a link to a two-mile, free, interactive, and self-guided walking tour that highlights some of the historical moments of the African American experience and legacy in Grand Rapids. You can also download the walking tour app at grwalks.com.

Check out GRAAMA's Education page for links to historical articles, books, videos, audio clips, and a link to the Virtual Library on US African American History, which features a large collection of links to numerous

topics related to Black and African American history. You may also want to consider donating to support their important work at www.graama.org/donations and following their Facebook page (@graamahistory) for the latest local Black History Month news and events.

Keep an eye out for updates on local opportunities and virtual events on Experience Grand Rapids' website at www.experiencegr.com/events/black-history-month/. Experience GR's website also has a list of local black-owned businesses and eateries to support.

Don't forget to order an upcoming meal to support Eastown's black-owned businesses, such as Chez Olga (1441 Wealthy), Eastown Cereal Cafe (1507 Wealthy), and GoJo Ethiopian Cuisine and Deli (421 Norwood).

What is your favorite way to celebrate Black History Month? Share your ideas and cool opportunities for Eastown neighbors on the Eastown Community Association's Facebook page (@eastowngr)!

The ECA would like to extend a special thank you to Deborah Pryor Bayard and the GRAAMA for celebrating, uplifting, and sharing local African American history with Grand Rapids residents throughout the year.



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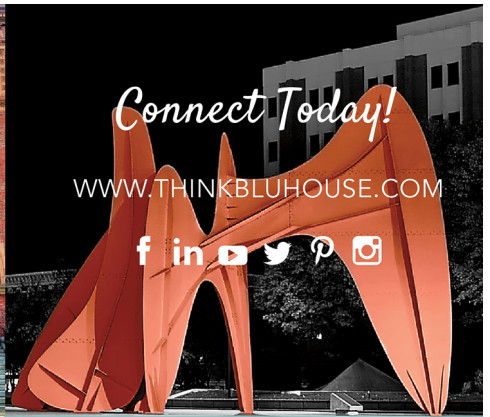
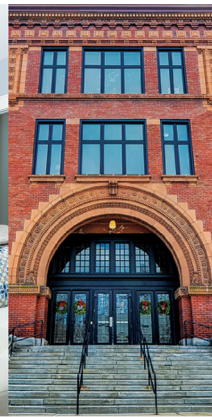
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COMMUNITY NOTES

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Dial 211 or 844-875-9211 if you or a loved one need some assistance.

Hazards in Your Home

Most of us will be spending more time indoors as the weather turns cold and the snow piles up outside. That might be a good time to deal with the hazardous materials in our homes— weed killers, oil-based paints, paint thinners, half-used aerosol cans, motor oil, old CFL bulbs, and the like.

Hazardous household waste can be safely disposed through a program run by the Kent County Department of Public Works. Various collection points are located in Kent County, with different hours for collection. The closest one to Eastown is at 1500 Scribner NW. It is open between 8am and 10 am every Wednesday throughout the winter (November-March). Just drive up and a representative of the SafeChem company, under contract with the county, will remove the material from your car for you. They ask that you stay in your car; so it is a good idea to load the material in your trunk or back seat. Also: latex paint is not accepted.

If you plan to use the 1500 Scribner NW location, be advised that the hazardous waste collection point is actually a block north of the county building at the official address. You will see a big white sign for hazardous waste disposal at the entrance to the facility.

For more information, go to reimaginetrash.org or call 616-632-7920.



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CLIMATE WISE

By Lee Hardy, Access Contributor

Question: what is the best thing you can do for the climate?

AnsWER: You might think the best thing would be to buy a pricey electric car or pay thousands of dollars to have solar panels installed on your roof.

All fine ideas to be sure, but the best thing you can do is far less expensive, and in fact may even save you money: adopt a plant-based diet.

Research conducted at the University of Oxford in 2018 found that "A vegan diet is probably the single biggest way to reduce your impact on planet Earth, not just greenhouse gases, but global acidification, eutrophication, land use, and water use. . . . It is far bigger than cutting down on your flights or buying an electric car, as these only cut greenhouse gas emissions."

Why? Because livestock production is the single largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions around the globe—more than planes, trains, and cars combined. If the entire world made the transition to a vegan diet, greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced by 70%. Similarly, a vegetarian diet (which includes milk, eggs, and cheese) would trigger a 63% reduction. For more information, go to drawdown.org and look up Plant-rich Diets.



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