

# The Northside Voice

Winter 2018 : Issue No. 9

## Cleveland Academy of Leadership Opens It's Very Own Credit Union

Carolina Foothills Credit Union in partnership with D7 and the school 'officially' cut the ribbon on the second elementary school branch on January 25th. They opened 68 student accounts that day for a grand total of 108 students who now are saving for their future.

The credit union, in collaboration with the school, has implemented a college savings program called "Saving for Success," aimed at starting young children and families on the best possible track for future education and financial success. On 'savings days' (Thursdays) students are allowed to visit the in-school branch to make deposits. The credit union staff oversee the older students working as 'tellers' and 'manager', sharpening their math and interpersonal skills. No deposit is too small and many students bring birthday and special occasion deposits as well.

Carolina Foothills is proud to partner with the parents and administration of Cleveland Academy of Leadership to improve the financial lives of our children and give them tools for savings that will benefit them throughout their lives!



## Employment Available through Construction Training Program

### New classes and scholarships in 2018!

A new Construction Training program has been established through a partnership between the Northside Development Group, Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System, Spartanburg Community College, SC Works, and the Upstate Workforce Board. This program offers scholarships for training in various parts of construction, including framing, drywall, tile work, and other aspects of building to receive NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research) certification. Graduates have the opportunity to enroll in a paid Apprenticeship program through Spartanburg Regional Hospital.

8 participants have completed the program since June 2017, and new classes start in early February. Employment opportunities are immediately available after graduation with possible earning potential up to \$22/hour. NDG is currently taking applications for future classes, and applicants may be eligible for scholarships. Please call NDG at 864-598-0097 to start your application.

NDG will be hosting job fairs with Harper Corporation General Contracting throughout the year. For more information on dates and event follow us on Facebook @ spartanburgNDG.

## Start: ME 2018 Class is Underway!

The Northside Development Group, in partnership with USC Upstate Business School, has completed recruiting for it's second 14 week entrepreneurship accelerator program, known as Start:ME Northside. Last year 11 small businesses successfully completed the program, including lawn care, catering, boutiques, cleaning, and hair salons.

20 businesses applied to take part in the program, and the 14 chosen applicants began classes on January 16th. This year businesses range from a Cleaning Agencies to Accounting, and many others.

The START: ME model works by injecting knowledge, networks, and capital that entrepreneurs in a community need to be successful. The program takes a grassroots

effort and connects Northside residents to larger Spartanburg area entrepreneurial resources. The goal is to take an intentional approach to uncover these local entrepreneurs and give them access to knowledge through the business school, mentors through community partners and capital through a local community development finance institution (CDFI). This program will grow wealth from within the community by helping residents increase earnings and provide job opportunities through their businesses creating a healthier, more economically stable community.

For further information, check online at [www.spartanburgNDG.com](http://www.spartanburgNDG.com)

## Housing Trust Fund Emergency Repair Program

In 2015, The Northside Development Group initiated an owner occupied home rehabilitation program to support emergency and minor repairs needed by existing homeowners in the Cleveland Heights area. This program provided funding through a five-year forgivable loan to eligible homeowners in the Cleveland Heights Neighborhood. As of September 2017, 25 homes have been approved for repairs, and all \$325,000.00 funds have been committed to Northside homeowners.

In an effort to continue providing repairs to existing homeowners now that the Cleveland Heights Neighborhood Improvement Program is coming to an end, NDG has gained approval to coordinate emergency repairs through the South Carolina Housing Finance and Development Authorities Housing Trust Fund (HTF) program. Homeowners in the Northside with qualifying income may be eligible to receive up to \$8,000.00 in emergency repairs for projects such as roofing, HVAC, accessibility ramps, and many other projects.

To apply for emergency repairs, please call Carolyn at 864.598.0097.



## U Project Updates

### The Franklin School

**A new Early Learning Center in the Northside Breaks Ground October 2017**



A groundbreaking ceremony was held on October 19th, 2017 for the new Franklin School Early Learning Center. Students from Cleveland Academy 4K and elementary classes participated by singing and ceremonially "breaking ground" on the construction site.

The Franklin School will be a full-day, full-year early learning center serving approximately 160 children, age 6 weeks to 5 years old, and will focus on early learning through discovery: a holistic child development and learning program, using an evidence based curriculum with STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) inspired classrooms.

The school is under construction near Cleveland Academy of Leadership, and is scheduled to open in January 2019. Children living in the Northside will be the priority when enrollment begins in 2018. Opportunities for employment at the school will become available in 2018.



### Butterfly Creek Park Now Open!

The Butterfly Creek Park, complete with an unearthened (previously piped) creek and a new pedestrian bridge is officially open! The Walking Bridge that connects Harvest Park to Brawley Street was installed in October, along with a walking and biking paths running from Preston Street to College Street are now open. Final landscaping and the installation of water fountains and other fixtures, will be completed by Spring 2018.



## C Community Spotlight

### Meet Linda Askari: President of Northside Neighborhood Association

Linda Askari was elected by the Northside Community as the Neighborhood Association President in September of 2017. She Came to live in the Northside in 1983 with her husband and Children. At that time, the community had few residents of color, and some of her neighbors were not pleased to have an African American family as their neighbor: one of her neighbors even put up a "For Sale" sign in front of her home to show his dissatisfaction in the new owners. Initially, Linda was scared to be home alone, but quickly resolved to make an effort to change their minds: she went with her kids to introduce herself to her neighbors, quickly making friends and eventually becoming more like extended family.

Linda began her community activist efforts by hosting a fund raiser at the Northwest Center. The community needed a playground for their children, so Linda organized a talent show to raise the funds needed. Not long after, Linda started her own non-profit, called Asset Society, to provide programs to children in the neighborhood. She organized the HARAMBEE festival fund raiser to help get the community involved, and to fund the Right of Passage program for young ladies around Spartanburg. The program worked to help young ladies build self-esteem, and discover who they were as individuals. They did activities such as going to nursing homes to read to residents and perform a small program.

Linda's involvement with the Northside Neighborhood really took root through Stop the Violence, an effort through the Mary Black Foundation and Partners for Active Living to reduce violence in high crime areas. Linda worked for the effort in other neighborhoods in Spartanburg, but also became involved as a

resident in the Northside. Stop the Violence had a powerful impact on the Northside, and Linda wanted to see the community enhanced by the tools she was given through working with the initiative. Linda firmly believed that a small group of people could make a big change, and Stop the Violence helped the community come together to see what could be improved and how their involvement could improve the community. Through this effort, the Neighborhood Association was formed.

Linda encourages all of her neighbors to stay involved in the Neighborhood Association to be able to see that our neighbors will see all the changes and new beginnings happening in our community. From the beginning, the leaders of the community knew that change takes time: the starting generation may not see the end results, but maybe their kids or grandkids will be able to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

If you are interested in participating in the monthly Neighborhood Association meeting, please contact Linda Askari, or call 864-598-0097. Your participation is vital to giving a voice to the community! Please visit meetings on the second Thursday of every month, 6pm, at the Cleveland Academy media center.





## V From The Voyagers

### Voyager Spotlight: Phoenix Miller

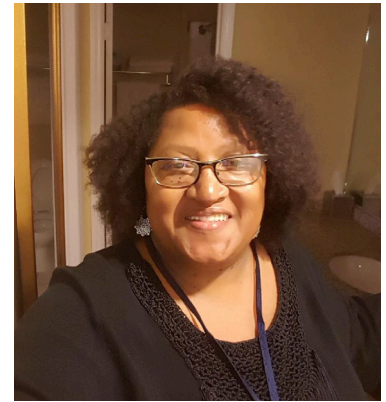
Phoenix Anita Miller was born in the Northside Neighborhood, and has many memories of how wonderful the community was to grow up in; stories of neighbors helping neighbors, sharing books with her classmates, and was learning a general sense of community-togetherness. As a young woman Phoenix gave into her wanderlust and moved to Atlanta, then joined the Air Force shortly after. She spent just over 13 years in the military without a dull moment: she wouldn't trade those years for anything.

Phoenix moved back to the Northside in 2009, and considers it her best move ever. Here she met Sylvia Means and saw how she and her family were so involved in the community and thought "wow, that's service, that's sacred, I need to be doing that!" helping bring her back to her roots of a strong community. Initially, the first committee she served on was the Northside Sympathy Club when she was 6 years old. They lead community efforts to help in emergencies: to take up collections for a funeral wreath, and to send food to the family of recently deceased so they didn't have to worry about cooking. The group of ladies caringly worked to keep the community together. Phoenix loved that it was wise, prominent older ladies, made up of teachers, principals, leaders in churches. They always started meetings with prayer and a bible verse. Her best memory is that the ladies made the best Russian tea ever, and admits she may have stayed a member just for the tea!

In 2009 Fulton, Vernon, and Howard streets were declared the worst streets in the city (based on crime rate)- she was astounded! Her family and friends lived here! It looked rough, but this couldn't be the worst! This made her want to join together with other future Voyagers to let the rest of Spartanburg know how great her community was- its rich history, it's wonderful residents, and how great it could be in the future. They met Curt McPhail through Sylvia Means when he was working through the Mary Black Foundation and PAL

on the Stop the Violence Initiative- a precursor to the Northside Initiative. Phoenix enjoyed coming together and talking about concerns and strengths and a plan of what could be accomplished short term and long term. Phoenix proudly remembers that everything listed in the beginning has been accomplished within 6 years, including Monarch Cafe, the Farmers Market, and the Urban Farm. The greatest success was uniting the community with one purpose: the efforts brought together so many people that had never been involved before, and now community members are involved in every initiative. She is comforted that the City is closely involved, and is paying attention to how things like property taxes and affect existing community members.

In the future, Phoenix wants her grandchildren to grow in a flourishing community and to be able to keep the culture of the community. She knows through seeing what is going on in the community that there will be a good future for her grandchildren, and great-grandchildren- especially through the great schools that are inclusive of everyone- from the Franklin School early learning center and VCOM, showing that economic vulnerability should not hold anyone back from an education. She loves being in a community with prominent schools that are inclusive of low income students to show how successful they can be. Also, having affordable housing within walking reach of resources and schools brings so much to the community while lessening strain on the residents.



## C In The Community

### NDG Board Member Receives Distinguished Citizen Award

Excerpt from article posted on Wofford.org, October 16th, 2017

The Wofford College Alumni Association honored three alumni and a community leader during the college's annual Homecoming on October 21, in the Jerome Johnson Richardson Theatre in the Rosalind Sallenger Richardson Center for the Arts.

Gomez-Agnoli located the company he founded, Dellfrio, a major importer of commercial refrigeration, in the Northside community of the City of Spartanburg because he wanted to be a part of a neighborhood that would benefit from a viable business. The Medellin, Colombia, native learned his entrepreneurial skills as a young child, selling his mother's freshly bought produce on the lawn of his family's home. He honed those skills with his father and grandfather as mentors as they each built major companies – Districondor, the leading lumber supply company in Colombia, and CKD furniture manufacturer, also in Colombia.

Now, Gomez-Agnoli serves on the board of directors and the housing committee of the Northside Development Group, and he supports arts funding at Cleveland Academy of Leadership. He hires students from Wofford College as interns to assist with valuable hands-on training in international business. He is a life supporter of the PAN Foundation, founded by his late father, Carlos Gomez-Urbe, to support homeless children in Colombia.

The Distinguished Citizen Award is presented to a non-alumnus or alumna who has served a distinguished career and has contributed extraordinary service to humanity, reflecting honor on both the recipient and Wofford.



Marcos Gomez-Agnoli

## Don't Forget!

**Monarch Café**  
Open Daily  
498 Howard Street

Monarch Café: Open Daily 498 Howard Street. Don't forget that the Monarch Café's has groceries and accepts SNAP benefits! Anyone that receives SNAP can spend their benefits locally on fresh, healthy foods! So stop by the Monarch Café today to see their wonderful programs, have a snack in the café, and take home some fresh produce for dinner!

Be sure to stay up-to-date on Job Training opportunities, and events sponsored by The Butterfly Foundation. Check their website for more information on upcoming events: [www.butterfly-sc.com/events.html](http://www.butterfly-sc.com/events.html)

**Farmers Market**  
498 Howard Street

The HUB City Farmers Market Winter Market is open one Saturday per month through March (see events below). The weekly market will reopen Saturday, March 31st. Look out for Mobile Market and Pop-Up Market opportunities!

# C Changes at NDG

## Four New Board Members!

Starting in October of 2017, NDG has welcomed several new Board Members. NDG would like to say a fond farewell to David Wood, who served on the NDG Board as representative of Wofford College from February 2012-October 2017.



**ROCHELLE WILLIAMS**

Director of Development at Middle Tyger Community Center, will now be serving as a Community-At-Large Board Member.



**TERRY BRANNON**

Owner of Brando Brand Recognition and Awards, will now be serving as a Community-At-Large Board Member.



**THERESA WRAY**

Teacher at Spartanburg Regionals Childcare Center, will now be serving as a Resident Board Member.



**TIM SCHMITZ**

Will be replacing David Wood as Board Member representative of Wofford College.

## Upcoming Events

### February 14th

Unwine and Dine-Italian. \$50/person  
Monarch Cafe

### February 17th

Winter Market  
Harvest Park

### March 1st / 11am - 1pm

Lunch and Learn: Spartanburg Regional  
Healthcare System Careers  
NDG office

### March 8th / 6pm

Neighborhood Association Meeting  
Cleveland Academy Library

### March 10th / 10am

Homebuyer Education Class  
NDG office

### March 16th

Irish Pub Night - \$50/person  
Monarch Cafe

### March 17th

Winter Market  
Harvest Park

### March 31st / 8am - 12pm

Farmers Market Opening Day

### April 7th

Saturday Farmers Market Opens

### April 9th / 11am - 2pm

Lunch and Learn: Spartanburg Regional  
Healthcare System Careers  
Location: TBD

### April 12th / 6pm

Neighborhood Association Meeting  
Cleveland Academy Library

### April 20th

Moroccan Magic Night- \$50/person  
Monarch Cafe

### May 10th / 6pm

Neighborhood Association Meeting  
Cleveland Academy Library

### May 16th / 8:30am

Northside Advisory Committee Meeting  
Cleveland Park Event Building

### May 18th

Tacos and Tequila Night - \$50/person  
Monarch Cafe

### May 18th / 10am - 12pm

Healthcare Job Fair  
Harvest Park

### July 18th / 8:30am

Northside Advisory Committee Meeting  
Cleveland Park Event Building

## P Our Partners



Northside Development Group  
698 Howard Street  
Spartanburg, SC 29303  
864.598.0097