

THE REAL DEAL

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Hampton Alumni award \$15,000 in scholarships to area students

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Cleveland school officials, community consider fate of Glenville, Fairfax schools

By Mordecai Cargill

Real Deal Press Reporter

Early last month the Cleveland Municipal School District held an open house at Glenville High School — the fifth in a series of 14 community meetings over a three week period — to discuss school construction plans, and offer Cleveland residents an opportunity to provide feedback on an updated set of scenarios for school construction, renovation and maintenance included in the revised School Facilities Master Plan. Nearly 30 parents, community lead-

ers and alumni attended the Cluster 10 community meeting to learn about the plan, which was released at the end of May. Cluster 10 [there are 12 clusters in the District] comprises 14 schools in the Glenville-University Circle-Fairfax communities, including Glenville, John Hay, and Cleveland School of the Arts high schools and subordinate elementary and middle schools.

Following the infamous collapse of East High School's gymnasium roof — a dramatic moment that focused attention on the deteriorating condition of many CMSD facilities —

Cleveland voters passed a bond issue in May 2001 that raised \$335 million for the CMSD's Capital Building Program. The funds raised from the passage of the bond issue enabled the District to secure 2:1 match support from the State of Ohio, which resulted in the creation and implementation of the original School Facilities Master Plan. Since the \$1 billion school construction effort began in 2001, the city has built or renovated 40 schools, including three high schools (John Marshall, Max Hayes, and Cleveland School of the Arts) currently under construction.

Discussion at the Glenville community meeting centered on recommendations included in the Draft Scenarios for District School Facilities that pertain to the schools within Cluster 10. The revised School Facilities Master Plan released in May, contains recommendations for construction of 19 new schools, while closing 4 or 5 schools, and replacing or relocating others. The District has no intentions of closing any high schools as part of the School Facilities Master Plan.

The most recent version of the School Facilities Master Plan was informed by

“If you don't have a school, you don't have a neighborhood.”

— Mike Polensek,
Cleveland City Councilman

community input gathered in the first round of community engagement last winter, which included 14 community meetings, a survey that drew 900 responses and a

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Alton Tinker: Master Chef a primo SOUP stirrer

By Derek Dixon

Real Deal Press Correspondent

“I never set out to become popular,” Alton Tinker explains, trying to downplay the broad civic recognition he has achieved around town. The self-deprecation doesn't work. You would be hard pressed these days to find someone in your circle with more than two degrees of separation from Tinker the banker, Tinker the city councilman, or, especially,

Tinker the party-giver.

By day a vice president at Key Bank, by several evenings a week a ward councilman in Bedford Heights, Tinker has found the time to build a unique area-wide business collaborative, The Society of Urban Professionals (SOUP). Though technically a business — there is a profit-making component to the organization — SOUP's primary mission is to provide ongoing opportunities for urban business owners and

professionals to grow their own ventures. According to the organization's website, thesoupnetwork.com, SOUP “offers premier networking events where professionals in Northeast Ohio can socialize, connect, and enrich their lives both personally and professionally.”

“I have a different kind of mentality than most when it comes to meeting people,” Tinker volunteers. “I'm a very keen observer of people. When I get a vision of

something, it's more than just a finished product. I can actually see specific people doing specific tasks to make the entire project come together. I actually see all the pieces moving in harmony with each other.”

This gift, which Tinker realized during his formative years, played a major part in the establishment and growth of SOUP.

Tinker talks about how the now 6000-plus member organization was established



Alton Tinker

from very humble beginnings in 1999. “It literally

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Publisher & Editor: R. T. Andrews
Advertising Sales: Paul K. Jones • 216.338.7038
Sheronda Hunter • 216.534.3125
Correspondents: Mordecai Cargill; Derek Dixon;
Alan Howard; Christina Sanders; Jeremy F. Taylor.
Layout & Design: Steve Aresman Thomas
The Real Deal Press • 216.282.5111 v • 216.672.4304 f
rta@TheRealDealPress.com

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NEWSMAKERS • JULY 2014



Michael T. Jeans is now principal and executive of JumpStart's Small Business CDFI.



Jason Minter has relocated from Austin TX to become a real estate development specialist at Burten Bell Carr Development.



Danielle Allen has been elected chair of the Pulitzer Prize Board. Allen, a 2002 MacArthur Fellowship awardee, is Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ.

Tinker Continued from page 1

came from an informal lunch I set up with people from different walks of life that I knew," he says. His intent was to create an association of African American professionals with diverse interests who could draw from each other's strengths.

"It's not that other professional organizations for African Americans didn't already exist," he says. "But their membership was always based on you having a certain professional background—such as black accountants or black lawyers or black educators. I wanted to establish an all-inclusive group where people felt empowered regardless of their specialty."

Because it was difficult to establish continuity of communication with SOUP's initial members, the group lacked cohesiveness early on and growth and activity waned. "We didn't have a website at that time. We lacked a lot of things and basically had to start over," Tinker continues. "So I set up another lunch meeting with some ideas on how to fix things, and one person showed up."

That was 2004 and the person turned out to be Donna Dabbs, at that time a banker like Tinker but now working as director of small business development for the Urban League of Greater Cleveland. As part of SOUP's

restructuring process, Dabbs assumed the role of vice president, bringing both her organizational management skills and her business savvy. Together, Tinker and Dabbs began to re-grow the organization, streamline communication within the group, establish a website, and most importantly, attract strong sponsorship. "Over the last few years, we've actually provided promotional opportunities for various businesses in exchange for their financial support," Tinker explains.

The Tinker-Dabbs partnership was a success, and SOUP now had the infrastructure for sustained growth. As a result, membership began increasing exponentially and regular networking events were established. SOUP members look forward to what have become staples of networking on a monthly basis: "Throwback Thursday" happens every second Thursday at the popular Jezebel's Bayou on Larchmere Blvd., northwest of Shaker Square. The goal is for urban progressives to meet, greet and create mutually beneficial partnerships across professions.

Just as popular for different reasons is "SOUP Night" at Ligali's Bistro on West 11th Street. This third Thursday monthly event exists to support a locally black-owned restaurant. Fi-

nally, like any well-established organization, SOUP has its trademark event. The annual "Chicken-and-Waffles" summer outing is personally hosted by Tinker and his wife, Lynnette at their Bedford Heights residence. The second Sunday in August is circled on many a SOUP member's calendar.

SOUP's progression from humble beginnings and slow growth fraught with challenges is a reflection of Tinker's own life journey. "We had very meager surroundings growing up," says Tinker, referring to his childhood years in Kingston, Jamaica, where he and his siblings were raised by his mother, a housecleaner for a well-to-do white family.

In contrast to the racism so often visited on black women in her position, Tinker remembers a different experience for his mother.

"This family treated her very well, like one of their family. So I never had the same view of whites as racists growing up like most other kids I knew." The respect the family showed Tinker's mother actually became a source of a special blessing in young Alton's educational life. "We moved to Cleveland when I was a child, seeking a better life. I was always encouraged to excel in school and I did. I qualified for a full scholarship from "A Bet-

ter Chance" to attend a special high school."

Alton began his tenth grade as one of a handful of black students at Appleton West High School in Appleton, Wisconsin. "The entire town was white except for us who lived in that (boarding) house. We were the only black people in the entire city." It turned out to be the first time Tinker ever experienced strange looks and cold responses from people around him. "It was a wake-up call because I had never had that experience." He is quick to add that he wouldn't allow those tensions and challenges to be excuses for not succeeding in school. In fact, it didn't even turn out to be his greatest revelation. "Unlike in my early years, for the first time I had to really study hard. Up to that point, school came easily to me and I always got good grades. At Appleton, everybody was gifted and I was no longer special."

Tinker graduated from Appleton, but with a much stronger work ethic than before. He initially attended college at University of Wisconsin in Madison but finished his undergraduate work in industrial engineering at Southern Illinois University. That's when the money finally ran out, opening the door for an act of generosity he would never have expected.

"My mother's employer offered to pay for my MBA at Cleveland State University as long as I promised to pay it back. They just wrote a check every quarter. I never took out any loans. They said they'd be willing to pay for it under the condition that I pay it back to them as soon as I could," he remembers fondly. Entering CSU's finance program in 1990, Tinker received his master's degree in 1994. As soon as he began earning an income in the banking industry, he began the repayments he had promised. Then another blessing happened. "After giving them two or three repayments, they told me to just keep the rest of it. I believe they just wanted to see if I would keep my word. So I didn't have the same experiences with white people as many other people did."

Tinker proceeded from there with a newfound resolve to show the urban community that racism, though deeply embedded in our culture, shouldn't prevent productivity and progress of urban citizens and the businesses that serve them. "I have lots of philosophies, and I always look for the good in a person. If I can leverage that, there's no need to make excuses or succumb to negative pressures."

Guns, Drugs are focus of church coalition

By **Jeremy F. Taylor**
Special Correspondent

Greater Cleveland Congregations, an interfaith group of more than 30 congregations of different denominations and religions, met at Cleveland's Olivet Institutional Baptist Church May 29 to take action against the easy availability of illegal guns in Cleveland and to put a stop to charging offenders of low-level and non-violent drug abuse offenders with felonies. As Senior Rabbi Robert Nosanchuk of Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple said in his opening prayer, "The System is working for some but we will not be satisfied until it works for all!"

Olivet was packed with nearly a thousand members of various congregations and associations. Busses, church vans and cars from all across the county filled Olivet's parking lot. News stations filled the aisles of the church. Pastors, reverends and rabbis stood together in front of the audience

who sat in the sections of their congregations, each having a sign to identify them.

Fouad Yared of Seven Hills found the meeting right on point. "To me this is experience was more than just a congregation for religion, it was a social justice for the greater good of the community", said Yared. "I expected a good feeling of emotion; I didn't know how powerful the testimonies would be. The things they do are amazing and they have accountability. There is power in numbers, not just one group, and they are working together as a machine." He pointed out GCC's leading role in the successful effort to expand Medicaid in Ohio.

The meeting was tightly organized and crisply run, a reflection of GCC's focus on effective and timely action. Everyone who spoke read a concise prepared statement that seemed to resonate powerfully with listeners.

There were two personal

testimonials for each topic. Timothy Jones said he spent more than 8 years in prison for having "less than a ten dollars' worth of crack cocaine". His addictions caused his return to prison on a similar charge before he finally received court-appointed treatment. Jones said he has been drug-free for five years. "Let me tell you it works," Jones said of his treatment.

Jones said he has been unable to find gainful employment because of his convictions, even though his non-violent crimes hurt only himself.

Megan Mullins, speaking after Jones, said she had faced a similar initial charge but was placed in rehab and given "a second chance in life" instead of a felony record. Grateful for her second chance, she thinks everybody should get one.

Gun Violence

A young man describing his life in the Wade Park neighborhood talked about how seeing people gunned down in the street had become com-

monplace. A second speaker on gun violence was a teacher who said she knew Jermani Brooks, the five year old girl who was killed by a gunshot in Cleveland earlier in 2014.

The GCC position on gun violence is that ways must be found to reduce the supply of guns finding their way into the community. Following the meeting, everyone signed statements addressed to Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Tim McGinty "revoking their consent" to the continued existence of the prison pipeline and the easy availability of illegal guns.

McGinty, speaking at the meeting, said "we want to help addicts obtain treatment and not jail cells, as well as focus most of our resources on violent crimes and dangerous criminals." He also talked about Cuyahoga County's "drug court", which seeks to help people by diverting criminal defendants into rehab instead of prison.

Olivet's pastor, Rev. Jawanza Colvin, calling Ohio's

drug-related deaths a public health epidemic, said the U.S. had "become an incarceration nation who has made prison the answer for far too many problems" creating problems for both families and society.

Ashley Reddick, who works at the Cleveland Public Library, called GCC "a mega-collaborative group". Reddick, who professed no current church affiliation, said she first learned about the group when she discovered that GCC had contributed statistical data to the CPL's Strategic Plan. She likes how GCC embraces differences and uses collaboration as a tool for change instead of using differences as weapons.

Cleveland is a city in need, said Reddick, and we "are lucky to have a group of 40 different mindsets, lifestyles, fundamental belief differences that are coming together saying, no matter what you believe in, there are fundamental truths and certain things that are right and let's work together to change Cleveland."

Hampton Alumni award \$15,000 in scholarships to area students

By **Alan Howard**
Real Deal Press
Correspondent

Mary Smith Peake, a "mulatta" who had risked her lives teaching slaves to read, was hired shortly after the Civil War by to educate young freedman at the newly established what is now Hampton University, one of the oldest HBCUs [historically black colleges and uni-

versities] in the country.

Peake's legacy was carried forward by The Cleveland Chapter of the National Hampton Alumni Association, when about 150 Hamptonians gathered at Beachwood's Doubletree Inn on June 8 to award scholarships to five Cleveland area scholars seeking their own bright futures under Hampton's storied tutelage.

\$15,000 in scholarship

aid was given to five deserving students: Marlena Smith [Hathaway Brown], Sarah Coulter [Shaker Heights HS], Justin Alvis [St. Ignatius], Danyelle Chambers [Bedford HS], and Monae Smith [Twinsburg]. Smith and Coulter will be seniors at Hampton this fall, while Alvis will be entering his sophomore year. Danyelle and Monae will be freshmen.

Monae described her
Continued on Page 6



Pictured from left to right are: Patricia Ross, NHAAl Scholarship Chairperson; Sarah Coulter, '15, Justin Alvis, Sophomore '17, Danyelle Chambers, '18, and Monae Smith, '18.

Schools Continued from page 1

telephone poll of 2,700 voters. The District also consulted City Council members, religious and philanthropic leaders.

In response to declining enrollment throughout the district (but particularly in Cluster 10), school officials say the newly revised facilities plan is designed to enable the district to maximize efficiency, trim operating expenses, and provide high-quality school options in every Cleveland neighborhood. The five-year plan would complete the building program that began in 2001, and would continue work after state money that has typically covered two-thirds of the cost of construction and renovation runs out.

Future of Glenville HS

Perhaps the most polarizing scenario being introduced concerned the future of Glenville High School. The prospect of the District closing Glen-

ville—along with Collinwood and MLK High School—has been a hotly-contested debate in the public sphere. Cleveland schools CEO Eric Gordon, strongly rebuffed rumors that either Glenville, Collinwood, or MLK high schools were on the chopping block, reiterating that Glenville, which has been announced as an Investment School for 2014-2015, would remain open for the immediate future.

Gordon did indicate that a significant downsizing is on the horizon for Glenville. Designed to accommodate 1900 students when built in 1966, the school's occupancy stood this past year at just 647 students, a mere 34% of capacity. The district's solution, instead of closing the entire school, is to shutter Glenville's unused areas by installing plywood barriers at the entrances to the designated areas. Following

the precedent set during the "refreshing" of Collinwood and East Tech, this scenario is intended to create a safer and more intimate environment for students. Though it wasn't quite the ideal scenario for many of the attendees — who want a brand new school with first-class amenities — few found fault with the District's efforts to consider the wishes of residents. Area councilmen Jeff Johnson and Mike Polensek agreed with the audience that both Glenville and Collinwood must remain open, and that a brand new Glenville remain as an option.

"If you don't have a school, you don't have a neighborhood," said Polensek.

Other proposed changes

Along with recommendations for school construction, the plan discusses the potential collaboration of cluster schools with such University Circle

institutions as the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland Clinic, and Case Western Reserve University; considering schools as an integral component of branding efforts in forming comprehensive neighborhood development plans; and promoting quality school choices (high-performing public and CMSD-sponsored charter schools) within Cluster 10 neighborhoods.

Many of the schools in the cluster — Franklin D. Roosevelt, John Hay Campus, Mary M. Bethune, and Patrick Henry — are scheduled to receive routine maintenance and general upkeep. The District is considering construction of a new 350-seat Bolton Elementary on a different site close to the existing building, but closer to the Buckeye-Woodland and Fairfax neighborhood populations. The District is also

proposes closing Iowa-Maple Elementary, after construction of a new 350-seat K-8 building on the former site of Forest Hills-Parkway School.

Other schools in the cluster include Harry E. Davis, Michael R. White STEM [the former Miles Standish], and Empire.

District to ask for bond issue renewal this fall

Johnson and Polensek, who are both Collinwood graduates, emphasized the importance of voter support for the renewal of the district's bond issue, expected to be on the ballot this fall. The bond issue, which decreases significantly starting January 2015, must be renewed in order to fund renovations and new school construction, in addition to projects that have public support, but are not eligible for state match funding, including a proposed new football stadium at Glenville.

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CAAO executive director gone after two months

David Owens is no longer executive director at CAAO. His last day was June 20. Owens was presented as CAAO's executive director at the group's Matchmaker event in early April.

Owens told The Real Deal Press that he had presented a series of recommendations to the organization's board on how they might re-tool the group's mission going forward. He indicated his departure was amicable.



David Owens

CAAO's board chair Gwen Davis declined to comment.

Tri-C to put levy request for November ballot

The Cuyahoga Community College Board of Trustees voted last month to place a 1.2-mill renewal levy with a 0.9-mill increase on the Nov. 4 ballot. Collection of the levy would begin in 2015 and run 10 years.

The proposed levy is meant to sustain Tri-C's vital educational and economic impact in Northeast Ohio. The request asks Cuyahoga County property owners for an additional investment of \$2.63 per month on a \$100,000 home.

"Every day, more good jobs

require a college education," Tri-C President Alex Johnson said. "Tri-C is the leading educator for careers in our community's technical workforce and health care sectors, as well as for students preparing to enter four-year degree programs."

Tri-C officials say they have cut millions of dollars from the school's budget in recent years. Without the levy, the College would have to cut an additional \$40 million, with pronounced effects for the school's 60,000 students.

Hampton Continued from page 4

feelings as a mixture of excitement and nervousness: she is thrilled by the opportunity to follow her dream of practicing medicine, but daunted by the challenges on the road ahead. Her poise and maturity, however, suggest she will live up to the faith the alumni association, and her proud family, have in her.

"This is the Cadillac of our event season," said Maurice Woods, a retired law enforcement officer who is now the association's parliamentarian. Decked to the nines and serenaded by the Pat Harris Quartet, the alumni brunch, bonded, greeted old friends and new, participated in a silent auction, and, most important-

ly, gave to and celebrated the current group of scholarship recipients: for the heights that they've reached, and for the heights yet to come.

Hampton president in town this month for National Alumni Convention

Hampton University president William Harvey will be in town to address his school's biennial Alumni Association convention, July 24-27. Alumni from all over the country are expected to attend the gathering, for which Beachwood Doubletree by Hilton Hotel will serve as host. For more information, visit www.nhaainc.org/biennial/.

License Plate of the Month



See a license plate that made you laugh, made you think, was especially original? Capture it with your phone and email it to rta@TheRealDealPress.com along with where and when you took it.

BUSINESS CALENDAR

• **Beth Mooney, KeyCorp. Chairman and CEO, will speak at the National Black MBA Association Leadership Breakfast Series on July 23, 7:30-9:30am.**

Tickets: \$15 for members, \$20 nonmembers at The Club at Key.

Register: <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/>

• **The Ohio Department of Transportation will host a pair of DBE certification workshops on July 31 at its District 12 Area office, 5500 Transportation Blvd., Garfield Heights.**

Pre-registration is required at <https://DBECertificationWorkshopJuly31/Eventbrite.com>.

Questions: Deborah.Green@dot.state.oh.us or 216.584.2003

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Showcase in the Circle Business Award Winners

University Circle Inc. (UCI) and the Uptown Business Association (UBA) held their annual Showcase in the Circle Business Awards on June 20 at The Glidden House.

The Stephanie Tubbs Jones Neighborhood Leadership Award was presented to Malinda Matlock. The award honors the late Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones and her legacy of service to the University Circle community. Malinda was recognized for her years of work at Commodore Place.

Other awardees were: Best Nonprofit/Local Business Relationship – Reese Pharmaceutical and United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Cleveland and Reese Pharmaceutical, who have been working together since 2006; Best Start Up – The Rose of Sharon Barber Salon, East 82 St. and

Wade Park, established in December 2011; Best Multi-Generational or Family-Owned Business – Fairfax Place, a neighborhood business which has been passed on from one generation to the next, or in which two or more family members are employed in the business, share ownership, or are primary decision makers.

Deb Rutledge, UBA president, and COO of the Rutledge Group, was crowned UBA Champion for her work on behalf of the organization.

Eddie Taylor, president of Taylor Oswald, and co-chair of the Commission on Economic Inclusion, Greater Cleveland Partnership, focused his keynote address on the importance of Cleveland's business community continuing and accelerating its efforts to be more inclusive.



Eddie Taylor delivered keynote at annual Showcase in the Circle Business Awards.



L-R: UCI president Chris Ronayne, Malinda Matlock, Ndeda Letson of Charter One Bank, Tom Mignogna of Millenia Housing Mgt., and Joe DiRocco. Photo credits: Scott Ford



L-R: Deb Rutledge, Mel Pye, and Joe DiRocco (Charter One Bank) Photo credits: Scott Ford