

IN

An IN Community Magazine

Pine-Richland

The PET BOOM!

A surge in demand for **pets** provides companionship and comfort during the pandemic



Garden Clubs & Nurseries

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Special Section: Spring Home Improvement Guide

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SPRING 2021
icmags.com

Cancer-free, strong heart, and feeling blessed

During a routine wellness checkup, Bob Auld's primary care physician noticed bloating on one side of his abdomen. An ultrasound and biopsy later revealed that Bob had diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL), the most common type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

"It was considered stage 4, which shocked me because I didn't have any of the typical symptoms for this type of cancer, like swollen lymph nodes and night sweats," said the 63-year-old, who lives in West View with his wife, Ruth.


He was referred to Sarah Miller, DO, an AHN medical oncologist at the Wexford Health + Wellness Pavilion. From May to September 2019, Bob had chemotherapy treatments, and a follow-up scan showed no lymphoma left in his body.

But Bob still wasn't feeling great and started experiencing symptoms he didn't have prior to treatment, like losing his breath while walking up stairs. AHN physicians found that the chemotherapy negatively affected Bob's heart. He had an irregular heartbeat called atrial fibrillation, and his heart wasn't pumping enough blood with each beat.

"The chemo did its job on the lymphoma, but it also affected the efficiency of my heart," Bob said.

The comprehensive team at AHN's Cardio-Oncology Program dedicates its expertise to patients like Bob. Cardiologist Indu Poornima, MD, and Jennifer Keeley, DNP, used specialized imaging and a combination of medications to effectively treat Bob's heart condition. His health consistently improved throughout 2020, and doctors expect that trend to continue.

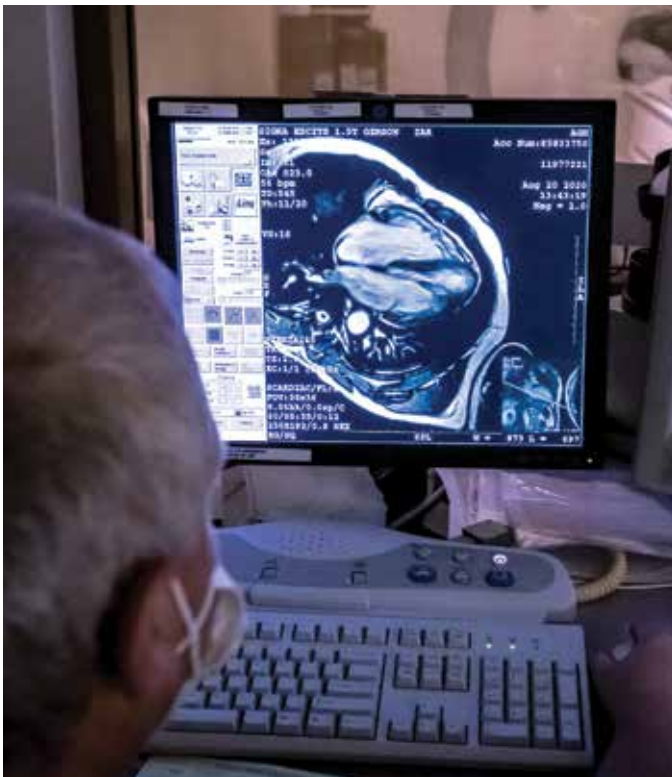
Bob says he's grateful for the care he received that lets him continue enjoying a good life with his wife, three children, and eight grandchildren. "At AHN, in both oncology and cardiac care, I don't think I could have gotten better care from anyone, anywhere. I also feel blessed with all of my family and friends praying for me."



"At AHN, in both oncology and cardiac care, I don't think I could have gotten better care from anyone, anywhere."

– Bob Auld

MORE THAN 18,000 PEOPLE IN THE U.S. ARE DIAGNOSED WITH DLBCL EACH YEAR.*



Experts keep cancer patients' hearts beating

Chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and other cancer treatments are lifesaving, but they can also cause side effects that damage the heart. This is especially the case for people who already have heart disease or are at risk for it.

That's why AHN has a highly specialized Cardio-Oncology Program, dedicated to collaborative cardiac care for patients with cancer. It brings together under one roof an expert team who customize the best cancer therapies for patients balanced against their cardiac effects.

Doctors typically refer patients to the program if they have high blood pressure or diabetes or had previous heart surgery. Oncologists also consider a patient's age, their type of treatment, and the duration of the treatment period.

When cancer needs a heart doctor

AHN Cardiologist Indu Poornima, MD, leads a team that specializes in giving patients with cancer the best possible outcome, while minimizing any negative impact to their hearts.

She is director of AHN Cardiovascular Disease Prevention, which includes the Cardio-Oncology Program. Dr. Poornima said the team's goal is to recognize early signs and symptoms of cardiac issues and follow patients closely to prevent future heart problems.

Through the program, patients can receive cardiac risk assessment, interventions for minimizing risk, assessment of the cardiac effects of cardio-toxic chemotherapies, and the latest imaging techniques to detect and treat heart disease.

"The co-management of patients by Oncology and Cardiology facilitates continuation of the best cancer therapies even for patients with known cardiac problems."

Indu Poornima, MD
DIRECTOR, AHN CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE PREVENTION





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IN Community is a publication dedicated to representing, encouraging and promoting the Pine-Richland area and its comprising municipalities by focusing on the talents and gifts of the people who live and work here. Our goal is to provide readers with the most informative and professional regional publication in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

spring 2021

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A surge in demand for pets has provided companionship and comfort during COVID-19

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The pandemic has created a new generation of gardeners who have found solace in planting shrubs, trees, flowers and vegetable

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If you're looking to move (or stay and improve), here are some of the best home improvement and renovation projects for spring.



on the cover

Dogs and cats are helping families through this stressful time—and pet sales and adoptions are soaring. See story on page 12.

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Welcome to the spring issue of IN Pine-Richland magazine.

Spring is a season of rebirth—both outdoors and indoors. From flowers and trees blooming, to renovations and remodels that bring a fresh look to your home.

In this issue, our Home Improvement special section will help you transform your home from drab to fab! From decks and outdoor kitchens to your bathroom,

kitchen or home office, we have some great ways to remix, remodel and remake your home sweet home.

One thing the pandemic has inspired is a boom in gardening—and spring is the perfect time to join a garden club and start buying seeds. Be sure to check out “How Does Your Garden Grow” for a list of garden clubs and nurseries in your community.

Finally, if you have story ideas or suggestions, we’d like to hear from you. Please email us at editors@icmags.com.

Happy spring!

Wayne C. Dollard

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See the back page for details!

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If you know someone in your community who is making a difference or has done something extraordinary, let us know! We're also looking for interesting story ideas (little-known facts, history or other news) within your community. If you have suggestions, email us at editors@icmags.com.



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Recent Single Family Home Sales in Pine Richland School District.

ADDRESS	YEAR BUILT	PRICE	ADDRESS	YEAR BUILT	PRICE
560 Macleod Drive	2013	\$1,500,000	3009 E Ridge Dr	1996	\$555,000
2130 West Grove	2014	\$1,300,000	305 Osprey Ct	2005	\$529,000
504 Salem Heights Dr	2002	\$1,070,000	2013 Condor Ln	2005	\$525,000
123 Minnock Dr	2018	\$1,025,000	134 Brookfield #BE/31	2019	\$519,600
820 Mt Pleasant Road	2008	\$855,000	3046 White Pine Dr	1996	\$489,900
118 Lyndhurst Circle	1997	\$799,000	324 Osprey Ct	2005	\$470,000
177 Pinkerton Road	2008	\$780,500	550 Fair Vista Ct	1997	\$469,900
101 English Farm	2012	\$749,500	3023 White Pine Drive	1994	\$450,000
202 Durrow Ct	2015	\$735,000	772 Franklin Rd	1979	\$448,000
539 Dean Rd	1991	\$702,325	325 Heather Hill Dr	1993	\$445,000
655 Shortline Court	2020	\$700,942	1004 Applejack Drive	1988	\$439,000
114 Rabold Dr	2006	\$672,500	10715 Babcock Blvd	1979	\$430,000
236 TAMARACK LT142	2020	\$663,360	3613 Patricia Ln	1960	\$430,000
106 Miller Dr	2017	\$635,000	102 Kestler Dr	2012	\$427,500
3007 West Grove Place	1993	\$618,000	3809 Shepard Rd	1969	\$427,500
167 Alder Dr	2020	\$584,477	320 Fox Meadow	1996	\$415,000
122 Pinehurst Ln	1994	\$580,000	1117 Woodhill Drive	1988	\$410,000
150 Brookfield Estates	2018	\$575,000	4211 Grandview Drive	2006	\$400,000
707 Trillium Ct	1992	\$569,900	1121 Woodhill Dr	1988	\$380,000
204 Gander Dr	2003	\$560,100	4168 Grandview Dr	1984	\$349,500

What Should Investors Know About The Election?



The election is, of course, big news. But there's more than one way to look at it. As a citizen and voter, you have your own preferences about the issues and the candidates. But as an investor, should you be rooting for any particular outcome?

You might be surprised at how a major event can have such a minor impact on your long-term investment success. To understand why, consider the following four factors:

• **Election results don't determine the market's success.** A few different configurations can result from an election. One party could win the presidency, while the other could gain both chambers of Congress. Or one party could take the White House, but the two parties could split Congress, with one controlling the House of Representatives and the other gaining the Senate. Or one party could win it all. But here's the key point: In the past, under all these scenarios, the financial markets have done well at some times and not so well at others. In short, there's no one "right" political configuration that spells success or failure for investors.

• **Different policies won't change our basic investment landscape.** Of course, each presidential administration will push for its own policies, and the same is true for every new Congress. And some legislation will indeed affect investors in some ways. For example, tax rates on capital gains and dividends have changed many times in the past, and they may well change again. If they do, adjustments to your investment strategy may be appropriate. But in the bigger picture, we live in a democratic system that mostly limits the power of one administration or political party to radically overhaul the economy, which is primarily made up of consumer spending and business investment. For investors, this means the rules of the game, so to

speak, will probably remain consistent no matter who's in charge in Washington.

• **Market fundamentals are "nonpartisan."** Obviously, the pandemic has wreaked havoc on normalcy in many areas, including the economy. But, eventually, we will get past COVID-19, and when we do, the same fundamental factors that have always driven the economy and the markets – corporate profits, interest rates, consumer spending, innovation, productivity and so on – will do so again. And these fundamentals are non-partisan – they maintain their strength no matter what party controls the presidency or Congress.

• **You're in control of your own investment choices.** We may well experience some volatility in the markets after the election. But, in the long run you, rather than any external forces or election results, control your investment success. And that means you need to follow proven investment principles, such as owning investments that reflect your goals and risk tolerance, staying invested no matter which direction the markets are moving, and avoiding bad habits such as chasing after "hot" stocks that may not be suitable for your needs.

A presidential election is important for a number of reasons – but it probably won't greatly affect your investment success. Ultimately, staying on track to achieve what's most important to you means being aware of the factors that affect the financial markets, putting them in perspective and then making appropriate decisions that are aligned with your longer-term goals.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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Matt Dudkowski has been a financial advisor with Edward Jones since 2002, serving individual investors in the Pittsburgh area from his Shaler Township office. In January of 2015, Dudkowski accepted an invitation to become a limited partner with the firm.

Since joining Edward Jones, Dudkowski has obtained the professional designation of AAMS®. Prior to Edward Jones, Dudkowski, as a CPA, worked at the H.J. Heinz Company, and at Ernst & Young LLP. He currently serves on the board of directors for Keystone Wellness Programs, a local nonprofit organization.

A native of Butler County and a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, Dudkowski resides in Gibsonia with his wife, two sons and daughter.

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WHAT'S NEWS IN PINE-RICHLAND



KEEP PENNSYLVANIA BEAUTIFUL ANNOUNCES PICK UP PENNSYLVANIA

Participate and Make a Difference in Your Community

Beautiful communities start with you. Everyone wants to live, work and play in a clean and beautiful community—and it's up to all of us to make that possible. Whether you have vacant lots plagued with debris, natural areas that have been dumped on, or littered streets and sidewalks, any neighborhood can be improved by positive community action.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's Pick Up Pennsylvania provides the tools and resources to help get you started. Join thousands of fellow Pennsylvanians and participate in litter and illegal dump cleanups; beautification projects, such as tree and flower plantings; recycling collections and education programs. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful partners with PennDOT, the Department of Environmental Protection, and Keep America Beautiful to provide free trash bags, gloves, and safety vests to registered participants, as supplies last.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful suggests doing a cleanup either solo or with household family members and encourages adhering to current recommendations for social distancing. All that's needed is a trash bag, gloves and bright colored clothing, if you are cleaning up near a roadway.

According to the Pennsylvania Litter Research Study, conducted by the Department of Environmental Protection, PennDOT and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, there's an estimated 502 million pieces of litter on Pennsylvania roadways.

Registration begins in January at keeppabeautiful.org. Questions can be answered by Michelle Dunn, Pick Up Pennsylvania Program Coordinator,

at 877.772.3673, ext. 113, or mdunn@keeppabeautiful.org.

Join thousands of Pennsylvanians for Pick Up Pennsylvania and help keep your neighborhood clean and beautiful!

MENDELSSOHN CHOIR OF PITTSBURGH OFFERS FREE VIRTUAL SERIES ON GLOBAL CHORAL TRADITIONS

Starting in January, the four monthly episodes will feature experts in Appalachian, Gospel, Bulgarian and South African choral music.

While the pandemic continues to keep us apart physically, the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh (MCP) is offering a way to connect musically and across cultures. In the new year, the choir will present Global Choral Traditions, a live, interactive, virtual exploration of choral music from around the world.

Over the four sessions of Global Choral Traditions, experts from Gospel, Appalachian, Bulgarian and South African choral traditions will teach participants about what makes each style unique, as well as about the elements they share as branches of choral music, one of the oldest and most ubiquitous of human art forms. All sessions are free and open to everyone, no singing experience required.

The virtual series begins January 2021, with a new session each month through April. In each session, a different artist will teach participants about their choral tradition and then lead the group in learning and singing along to a choral work from that tradition.

Wed, Jan. 13 (7:30 p.m. EST):

Lonnie Norwood, Gospel Music

Wed, Feb. 3 (7:30 p.m. EST):

Suzannah Park, Music of Appalachia

Wed, Mar. 3 (7:30 p.m. EST):

Elitsa Stoyneva Krastev,

Bulgarian Folk Singing

Sat, Apr. 10 (11 a.m. EST):

Bongani Magatyana, Traditional

South African Music

All sessions will be live. Since Bongani Magatyana will be teaching from South Africa, his session will be in the morning, to accommodate the time difference.

Each teaching artist is a culture-bearer of the tradition they will be presenting.

- Born and raised on the South Side of Chicago, Lonnie Norwood is a choral conductor, choral clinician and organizer who credits his extensive work in arts, outreach and advocacy to his church upbringing.
- A native of Asheville, NC, vocal teacher Suzannah Park comes from three generations of traditional singers, storytellers and dancers and has been touring and teaching for more than 20 years in the U.S. and abroad.
- A seven-time gold medalist in traditional folk singing from Targovishte, Bulgaria, Elitsa Stoyneva Krastev grew up surrounded with the beauty of Bulgarian traditional singing.
- A singer, music director, composer and theatrical producer living in Gugulethu Township, South Africa, Bongani Magatyana conducts the 120-voice OAC Choir, and his folk-inspired choral compositions are sung by choirs in South Africa and internationally.

"This series gives us an opportunity to explore the rich diversity of choral music and learn about choral traditions that are very different from what MCP and other symphonic choruses typically perform," says Music Director Matthew Mehaffey. "At a time when a global pandemic has disrupted many of the ways we're used to coming together, Global Choral Traditions gives music lovers a way to engage with that which makes us more human, and therefore, more connected to each other."

Global Choral Traditions is hosted by the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh and the Oratorio Society of Minnesota in collaboration with Village Harmony, a nonprofit organization with activities around the world welcoming singers of all colors, creeds, ethnicities, nationalities, gender orientations and socio-economic backgrounds. Since 1988, Village Harmony has developed a strong international presence through its many study/performance programs, professional recordings, and innovative online learning opportunities.

The series is free and open to the public. Registration required. Sign up now at this link to receive your exclusive Zoom weblink to participate. ■



Coldwell Banker's LUZ CAMPBELL

Should You Get a Home Inspection?

When making an offer on a home, my clients frequently ask me whether they should get a home inspection. Without exception, my answer is "absolutely." Buying a home will likely be the most expensive investment you will ever make. Therefore, spending a few hundred dollars for an unbiased examination of the house is a no-brainer. The home may look beautiful on the surface, but that desirable facade could be masking issues costing thousands of dollars to resolve. An inspection can uncover unseen issues or ones you wouldn't even know to look for, thus protecting you from future stress and expense.

The obvious intent of any inspection is to discover and rectify problems. However, negotiation is an equally important component. You can utilize the home inspection to have the seller either address issues directly or factor them into the price. I also recommend one even when the home is being sold "as-is," so at least you are aware of any problems. Furthermore, if a health or safety issue is discovered, the seller will be more likely to negotiate since they are obligated to disclose it to the next buyer. An inspection also serves as a contingency that allows you to rescind your offer, without penalty, if an unacceptable problem is discovered.

Are there scenarios where you would forgo an inspection altogether? In my opinion, no. Even now, amid a hot seller's market, it is not advisable. The rationale for not doing a home inspection is that it makes your offer more desirable. While true, it also leaves you open to potentially large, unanticipated expenditures. For example, after moving into your new home you discover you need a new roof. That expense falls entirely on you. An inspection would likely have discovered this, and your agent could have negotiated it in the sale. Alternatively, rather than waiving inspections, you can waive a specific dollar amount in repairs. It tells the

seller you would like to do your due diligence, however sets a clearly defined limit.

While the home inspection will uncover issues that require immediate attention, it can also be a useful planning tool. Items like the roof, mechanical systems, and appliances do not last forever and will all need replacing at some point. A home inspection can make you aware of their condition, thus preparing you for the day the repairs are needed.

Inversely, sellers should not necessarily look at an inspection with apprehension since it removes the possibility of future liability. One way to view a home inspection is as a tool to facilitate the closing of the deal. And it is important to remember what an inspection is not:

- It is not the sole determinant as to whether a home will sell. As a buyer, you may be willing to make some repairs to the house. The inspection will help you determine exactly how many you'll need to do.
- Rarely, if ever, does an inspection not find something. Even new construction homes will have small issues that need to be addressed.
- It is not about getting all the fixes done. No seller is going to remedy everything. They may negotiate on some and stand firm on others.

Ultimately, the greatest benefit of a home inspection, and one you cannot put a price on, is peace of mind. The last thing you want is to purchase your dream home only to encounter expensive repairs that would have been discovered by an inspection. A thorough home inspection by a certified inspector gives you that peace of mind.



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Denise Josephs, Marline Siddo, Michael Brown and Kwasi Prince, Co-Owners, 2 Sisters 2 Sons

2 Sisters 2 Sons

1882 Main Street, Sharpsburg;
412.252.2864, facebook.com/2sisters2sons

On the Menu:

Authentic Jamaican fare with vegan, vegetarian and pescatarian options. The appetizers are an offering of Fried Plantain, Seafood Fritters, Saltfish Fritters and Beef Patties. Entrees include Curry Chicken, Brown Stew Chicken, Jerk Chicken, BBQ Jerk and Jerk Chicken Pasta. There's also Oxtail, Pork (Jerk style or Brown Stew), Goat (Curry style or Brown Stew), Salmon, Snapper, Tilapia and Shrimp dinners, Veggie Chunks (Curry style, Brown Stew or with pasta), Vegan Lasagna, Vegan Pasta and a Vegan Chicken Sandwich. Entrees feature two sides from a variety of traditional and new sides, such as Rice and Peas, White Rice, Mashed Potatoes, Steamed Cabbage, Side Salad, Mac 'n Cheese, Mixed Vegetables, Crab Salad, Linguine Salad and Fried Dumplings. A different soup is served daily, and salads (Jerk Chicken, Grilled Chicken, Fried Chicken and Seafood) are made to order.



Sliced and stuffed Pineapple Bowls.



(with Denise Josephs)
What led you to open 2 Sisters 2 Sons?

My mom, stepmom and I had a previous Jamaican restaurant, 3 Sisters in Wilksburg, but we could no longer stay open due to a few issues we were having with the structure of the building. After we closed we participated in the annual Pittsburgh Jerk Fes in Highland Park (featuring the tastes and sounds of the Caribbean). The customers visiting our booth said they missed our food and told us to reopen. My sister Marline and I started looking for another location and that's when we found our new place in Sharpsburg. Our original open date was early last year, but COVID-19 made it impossible for us to do that. Eventually, we opened on July 6, 2020, as a sit-down restaurant; however during the pandemic we're offering take-out service.

What has influenced your cooking the most?

My mom, Elsa, and my Indian grandma, Elizabeth, influenced our cooking. She taught Marline and me how to make curry dishes. It shows in our food, because we do a lot of curry veggies and Indian food on our menu. We offer a variety of cuisines at the restaurant and that's what makes us unique from other Caribbean or Jamaican restaurants.

What kitchen tool can't you live without?

It's not really a tool, but I can't see making a meal without Goya seasoning. I love it. You can put it on anything and since we don't use salt, Goya is perfect in every way. Marline can't live without her curry seasoning. She leaves notes on her seasoning bottles that say, "I'm watching you" and "Don't touch my curry." Marline may be older than me, but I always try to boss her around.

Best cooking advice for a novice?

Always remember the customer is always right. Give them good food and good service and they will come back. Quality is everything, but good portions are important, too.

What is your favorite quick meal to prepare at home?

We're never home, except on Sundays and I cook then. My husband, Michael, and I like to make seafood boil with crab, lobster, scallops and shrimp.



From left to right: Marline Siddo, Denise Josephs, Michael Brown and Kwasi Prince, Co-Owners, 2 Sisters 2 Sons in Sharpsburg.

Other than your own restaurant, where's your favorite place to eat?

Marline and I usually eat the food we make at the restaurant. If we go out, it's a trip to Wholey's Market in the Strip District to buy lobster. We add seasoning and butter—this makes us happy.

What's the best part for you and Marline of sharing the business with your sons?

Michael is my son, but I also have twin daughters in the Air Force and our youngest daughter, Angel. Marline's son is Kwasi and she, too, has a son named Michael, as well as a daughter, Angelie. Michael and Kwasi are equal owners in the restaurant, but Marline and I are the chefs and our sons (who can also cook) handle all of the financial work, customer service, advertising, ordering of product and serving. It came natural for them to take on the business. Marline and I are naturalized U.S. citizens and we moved to New York City from our native home of Jamaica in our teens. After I got married, my husband—who is in the Air Force—decided we should move to Pittsburgh 22 years ago. The best part of working with our sons is they help with the business side so Marline and I can cook, make our food look pretty and make people happy. We want our customers to keep coming back.

What's your next big idea?

Michael and Kwasi don't want to stop with one location. Together we want to grow it into the first Caribbean franchise—a fast food restaurant for jerk chicken. But, we'll still have our main restaurant in Sharpsburg; the neighborhood has truly embraced us. ■

—Reese Randall

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THE PET BOOM!

A SURGE IN DEMAND FOR PETS HAS PROVIDED COMPANIONSHIP AND COMFORT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

BY JENNIFER BROZAK



Between lockdown restrictions and the loss of everyday norms, the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly taken a toll on people's emotional health and well-being. Through it all, there has been one silver lining: the comfort and companionship that pets bring to our daily lives.

Despite the chaos and challenges the pandemic has brought, pet adoptions from local shelters have remained steady. With people at home more, those who may have once found themselves too busy to care for an animal are now experiencing the joy of pet ownership—and the multitude of benefits that four-legged family members can offer.

Numerous studies show that owning a pet can offer many health benefits, both physical and mental. According to research, pets can help to decrease blood pressure, heart disease risk factors, anxiety and depression, and improve longevity—plus, during times like these when many people are spending more time alone and away from their loved ones, a pet's unwavering companionship can help people feel less lonely.

As the CEO of Animal Friends, a humane animal shelter in the North Hills, Kathleen Beaver has seen firsthand the joy that pet ownership can bring to those who feel isolated as a result of the pandemic.

"At Animal Friends, we know that our pets do so much for us—they make us better humans physically, socially and emotionally," she says. "They make us laugh, and they give us unconditional love, but most importantly, they are loyal and nonjudgmental companions who are always there for us. During the pandemic, we have seen so many touching stories

of people who have opened their homes—families, seniors, young professionals—all looking for extra companionship and to make a difference in whatever way they can during uncertain times."

Beaver, who has been with the shelter since 1997 in a variety of roles, noted that Animal Friends has seen a tremendous influx of foster applications during the pandemic.

"We were thrilled—though not incredibly surprised—when many of those foster animals, who were supposed to be temporary, ended up becoming permanent members of their foster families," she adds.

Aly Brown and Ashley Shoup, who serve as co-directors of the Humane Society of Westmoreland County, have witnessed similar adoptions at their shelter.

"Many of our adopters have shared encouraging stories of how their adopted pets have made such a difference in their lives. Most say they have bonded within just a day of adopting, and most adopted pets become accustomed to their new homes very



Animal Friends CEO Kathleen Beaver



quickly,” says Brown. “We are always ecstatic to hear stories of adopted pets who had spent a long time at the shelter, or pets with special needs, or mother dogs and cats of litters who have found their forever families.”

Both shelters have had to overcome the weighty challenges of operating in the midst of a pandemic. Animal shelters are considered essential and therefore are permitted to stay open; however, with mandatory restrictions in place, the shelters had to take a hard look at which programs would need to be temporarily suspended to keep staff and potential adopters safe.

For instance, between a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and government restrictions in place, Animal Friends found it necessary to close its public clinic and halt all in-person appointments, including its low-cost spay and neuter surgeries.

“We knew that there were still many owners out there struggling with health issues with their pets. So, with the expertise of our lead veterinarian, we began to offer free telemedicine appointments to help provide guidance and direction to worried pet owners,” explains Beaver. “Not only were lives supported, but many were also literally

saved due to her compassion and commitment.”

To comply with social distancing mandates, adoptions at both shelters had to move to appointment-only, but all the changes have had no effect on demand. More than 1,100 animals have been adopted through Animal Friends since March.

“People are home right now and see a great opportunity to welcome a new family member into their household,” says Beaver. “I commend our adoption team for the work they have done to continue to find great homes for our residents.”

The Humane Society also has seen a steady demand for pet adoptions, despite the pandemic.

“Adopters in quarantine have found that they have more time to give to a homeless pet, therefore keeping our adoptions successful, which also makes space at the shelter for more homeless pets,” says Shoup.

The pandemic has also required the shelters to rethink the methods they use to offer services to the public.

“As the pandemic grew and we watched lines of cars snake through parking lots for food donations, we were certain of one thing—if people were hungry, so were their pets,” notes Beaver.

In April, Animal Friends hosted its first drive-through pet food distribution and provided food for more than 700 hungry pets. It then partnered with other social service organizations to provide much-needed pet food to individuals in neighborhoods struggling the most. Since the pandemic began in March, Animal Friends has distributed nearly 200,000 pounds of free pet food to pet owners in need.



Volunteer Julie Galli with Animal Friends

“At Animal Friends, we know that a shelter should be the last resort for a pet in crisis. We are committed—especially now—to continue to provide the basic resources necessary to keep beloved pets in their homes, right where they belong,” says Beaver.

Both shelters require prospective adopters to complete an online or phone application before meeting with any pets. Once the application is approved, adopters will be contacted by an adoption counselor to set up an appointment to meet with a pet. The shelters take an individualized approach to matching pets with their forever families.

“Normally, an adoption can happen in just a few hours. However, during these COVID times, and the need for prescheduled adoption appointments, an adoption will likely take a couple of days,” explains Beaver. “Additionally, some of our animal residents prefer to meet an adopter a few times before going home, while others find love at first sight and are on their way out the door in no time.”

In addition, the Humane Society encourages potential adopters to research adoptable pets before applying.

“We strongly encourage any potential adopters to research breed and age requirements of adoptable pets, and consider the cost of veterinary care, training and the time required to housebreak and train adoptable pets, especially young pets,” says Brown. “Adoption counselors strive to match potential adopters with pets that will fit their individual lifestyles.”

To keep employees safe and maintain social distancing requirements, both shelters have placed volunteer opportunities on hold for the time being. They are hoping to welcome new volunteers sometime this year.

In light of the challenges presented by the pandemic, these organizations are grateful for the community’s support. With fundraising events canceled due to restrictions on gatherings, financial donations and pet supply donations are greatly appreciated. Anyone interested in adopting or donating to either organization can find information on their respective websites: thinkingoutsidethecage.org (Animal Friends) and hswcgbg.petfinder.com (Humane Society of Westmoreland County). ■

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Providence Heights Alpha School is an independent, private, Catholic school located in the North Hills area of Pittsburgh. Founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence in 1926, Alpha School provides an exceptional education to children grades PreK through eight. Alpha School is open to families of all faiths.

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How Does Your Garden

Grow

The pandemic has created a **new generation of gardeners** who have found solace in planting shrubs, trees, flowers and vegetables.

BY W.B. FRESA





With a new spring
season afoot
there is hope and
rebirth in bloom.



In any given year, when spring is near, we emerge from hibernation to assess winter's damage. It's a tradition. We arm ourselves with rakes, shovels and debris bags, envisioning colorful flowers, ripe tomatoes and sweet-smelling herbs.

But any given year was not 2020. A modern-day pandemic touched everyone and everything. But that's where old traditions became new experiences for many—and there's no better example than the gardening boom that sprouted as a result of COVID-19.

In the South Hills, the Simmons family has been growing and selling agricultural products for more than 100 years. Current fifth generation caretakers of the family business, Scott, his brother Bob, and their wives, Jan and Jean, along with the sixth generation Jeremy and his wife, Megan, run the farm today. And, for all their experience in gardening and farming, they have never seen anything like 2020.

"To be honest, we weren't sure of the effect the pandemic would have on our business," says Scott Simmons. "We haven't done true calculations yet, but we know sales of certain products and services were more than double compared to the previous year."

This would include the "pick your own" products, like strawberries and peaches, and "cut your own" flowers. The seven to eight acres used for flower crops were planted a second time in June to accommodate demand—something that has never happened before.

As well, they had to reach out to other growers and suppliers to keep stock in hanging baskets and vegetable plants. "We have really well-developed hanging baskets, probably more so than other growers," says Simmons. "We start these in our greenhouse, along with the plants we sell at the beginning of spring. This usually holds us for the season. By the end of May, we were reaching out to suppliers for more product. And even then, it was difficult to find what we needed. We just couldn't believe it."

The Simmons aren't quite sure what to make of the increase in business in 2020.

"We think about it all the time. Was it just a freak incident that only happened because of the pandemic? We just won't know until next season. But the uptick in business absolutely arose from travel restrictions and folks sheltering in place. It gave them the chance to focus more on their homes and plant their own gardens, many for the first time, and it was nice to help them get started."

Chelse's Greenhouse in Monroeville had a similar experience. Once May came around, there were customers 15-deep at the cash register. According to owner Nyles Falatek, "We're used to checking out one to two customers at a time. But last spring and summer during the pandemic, it was so busy we had to keep an employee at the register all day long. It was tremendous to see."

There are no complaints. Not even after waking at 4 a.m. to be the first in line with suppliers in Pittsburgh to supplement the stock of almost everything: annuals, perennials, hanging baskets and vegetable plants. "In my assessment, people had extra money to spend and they were choosing whatever they wanted. They were even buying vegetable plants late into the season. It was a fantastic year," adds Falatek.

Contributing to the gardening boom were also first-timers planting flower or vegetable gardens, not only for something to do but also for the serenity it brought to their families' lives.

The International Association of Horticultural Producers compiled scientific evidence that shows how gardening helps all-around well-being. It states that gardens provide a place for experiencing nature, which is proven to benefit mental health, cognitive functioning, and emotional well-being. Gardens also reduce depression, anxiety, obesity, and heart disease and are essential to supporting recovery from illness. Merely looking at gardens can reduce stress, blood pressure and muscle tension.

Barbara Narone of the Giant Oaks Garden Club goes one step further, noting, "I've always had a connection with gardening, probably because my mother loved it so much. I cannot imagine not getting my

hands in the dirt. It's peaceful, provides a closeness to the earth and, for me, a closeness to God."

Dana Leskovic of Butler was a first-time planter. She and her daughter decided to plant tomato seeds. "I found myself feeling cooped-up even though I work from home regularly," she says. "I think because there were so many restrictions, we needed a distraction. We bought some seeds, watched a lot of online videos about pruning, watering and sun capture, and luckily we got tomatoes! But what we found just as rewarding was enjoying the summer mornings while watering our plants. The newness of the day and tending to something we planted gave us a sense of calm and a healthy excitement to see something grow. It was also one less thing we had to buy at the store."

Growing fruits and vegetables as a food source has also increased in popularity during the pandemic to help adhere to distance guidelines and perhaps offset the inability to find products in stores.

Moon Township resident, and Edgeworth Garden Club President, Suzane Vandertie, said her love of berries had her seeking ways to grow them at home in pots. "I recently moved and my new residence doesn't quite have the amount of sunlight needed to grow berry bushes in the ground," she explains, "so I tried them in pots, and put them in my driveway. Berry pots are a fairly recent development, but I love raspberries and blueberries so much I gave it a go, and it worked!"

For all the trouble and concern of 2020, a silver lining of the pandemic has proven to be fruitful. And with a new spring season afoot there is hope and rebirth in bloom. ■

Our list of
Garden Clubs and
Nurseries & Garden Centers
on next page





Butler Garden Club

Mary Reefer, Co-President
724.287.1804

Facebook @ButlerGardenClub

The Butler Garden Club is one of the oldest in the region, with 90 years of gardening, beautifying, and education. It has 33 active and 10 honorary members who meet on the third Thursday of every month, March through December, at members' houses. The members plant and maintain Gateway Gardens, the flower gardens at the historic Shaw House, and the Blue Star Memorial marker at the Veterans Association. Several fundraisers during the year support charities that apply to Butler Garden Club, Phipps Conservatory, and horticulture-related projects. New members are always welcome.

Edgeworth Garden Club

Suzane Vandertie, President
412.474.3295

This garden club staple of the community is an active group of more than 20 members. They meet monthly on Wednesdays at the Sewickley Public Library beginning at 10 a.m. The group maintains several areas, including the Sewickley Tuskegee Airmen Memorial flower beds and bus stop planters in the borough. They also design and donate a Christmas wreath to the Sewickley Borough Building and have planted trees as a sound break at Riverside Park. May Mart and a holiday luncheon at the Edgeworth Club are the main fundraisers for the year, which are open to the public. New members are welcome.

Fox Chapel Garden Club

P.O. Box 11320
Pittsburgh, PA 15238-0320
foxchapelgardenclub.org

Fox Chapel Garden Club's mission is to further the appreciation and knowledge of gardening and to advocate sound environmental stewardship. To support this effort, it holds two fundraisers: the Annual Annual Adventure and Glitter & Glow. These events help support the group's many projects, including Hartwood Acres Sculpture Garden, Aspinwall Riverfront Park, Audubon Society Handicapped Trails Initiative, and more.



Garden Club of Allegheny County

gcacpgh@gmail.com

Garden Club of Allegheny County (GCAC) was founded in 1914 and is rich in history and involvement in the area. In 1916, it joined the Garden Club of America as one of the first members and one of the largest clubs. GCAC partners with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy to sponsor the Urban Parks Seminar, an international urban conference to increase awareness of the positive impact that parks and green spaces have on urban communities. The members also participate in the Carnegie Museum's Art in Bloom and hold their signature fundraiser, PIZZAZZ, which attracts thousands of visitors for three days each October. Over \$1,000,000 has been donated to the community by GCAC through PIZZAZZ.

Grapevine Garden Club

sewickleygardens.com

Grapevine Garden Club was established in 1961 and has an active membership. Meetings are held September to June on the second Wednesday of the month at members' homes or various local venues. Grapevine Garden Club cares for Walnut Street Park and is proud to participate in the biennial SCGC Garden Tour and annual May Mart.

Greybrooke Garden Club

Bonnie MacDonald, President
Parkwood Presbyterian Church
4289 Mt. Royal Boulevard,
Allison Park, PA 15101
412.366.3689

Greybrooke Garden Club is a small but mighty organization. The 28 active members recently celebrated the club's 50th anniversary and look forward to continuing their care and maintenance of the large garden at Orion Personal Care Home, as well as a garden at Passavant Hospital and the entrance to Greybrooke Housing Plan. Meetings are held every second Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. and new members are welcome.

Ingomar Garden Club

ingomar-garden-club.com

Ingomar Garden Club was established in 1946 and is committed to establishing roots in the community and watching them grow.

Yearly civic projects include funding annual scholarships to local college students, working directly with patients at Wexford House Nursing Home, and sponsoring a poetry and poster contest at local elementary schools. Members also maintain the David Council Memorial Park, UPMC entry plantings, Edith's Garden at Northland Library and many more.

Leetsdale Garden Club

190 Broad Street, Leetsdale, PA 15056
Facebook @LeetsdaleGardenClub

Leetsdale Garden Club is a civic garden club serving its fine community. The members beautify and maintain areas along Beaver Street, have planted gardens at Henle Park, and landscaped Port Authority bus stops in the borough. There is an active membership of more than 20 and the club holds an annual Autumn Fest. New members are welcome.

The Little Garden Club

Alie Gensheimer, President
aliegens@gmail.com
Wendy Gordon, Membership
wendygordon6@gmail.com

The Little Garden Club was founded in 1922 and is the oldest garden club in Sewickley. Its mission is to foster interest in horticulture, community, general learning, and fellowship among members. The members maintain the grounds of the Sewickley Post Office, help support Fern Hollow initiatives, participate in May Mart and the Garden Tour, and support other local projects. The Little Garden Club meets on the second Thursday of each month from September through June.

Longvue Acres Garden Club

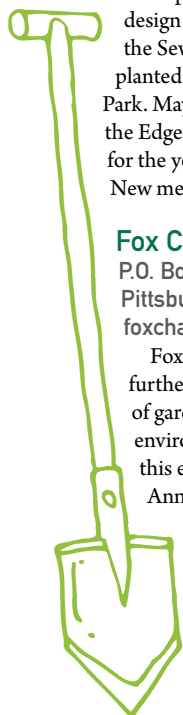
longvueacresgardenclub1950@gmail.com
Facebook @longvueacres

Celebrating 70 years as an organization, Longvue Acres Garden Club is a standout in the North Hills for the time and attention paid to the UPMC Passavant Healing Gardens in McCandless. With more than 30 active members, the club meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. for a variety of programs and outings.

Sewickley Civic Garden Council

sewickleygardens.com

The Sewickley Civic Garden Council is comprised of six garden clubs: Edgeworth Garden Club, Garden Club of Allegheny County, Grapevine Garden Club, Little Garden Club, Trowel & Error Garden Club and Village Garden Club as well as Nature Guides Riverfront Park and the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association. They coordinate efforts to stimulate interest and influence action toward preserving and improving the appearance of the Sewickley area. Last year, the council held its first annual garden tour and gala. The money raised will continue to feed back into the beautification projects for the Sewickley area.



Shaler Garden Club

Glenshaw Presbyterian Church
300 Glenn Avenue, Glenshaw, PA 15116
shalergardenclub.com and Facebook
@ShalerGardenClub

Shaler Garden Club was founded in 1921. The group holds meetings from February to December on the fourth Tuesday of each month at noon at Glenshaw Presbyterian Church. Field trips, annual plant sales and Shaler garden tours are just part of this club's activities. Interested new members can learn more by visiting the website or contacting the club on Facebook.

Southern Butler County Garden Club

Seven Fields Community Center
380 Castle Creek Drive.
Seven Fields, PA 16046
southernbutlercountygardenclub.org

Southern Butler County Garden Club offers friendship through flowers, with educational opportunities to members. Community service projects include Graham Park, UPMC Passavant Cranberry Hospital, Victims Outreach and Intervention Center in Butler County, and many more. The members meet the fourth Tuesday of the month, March through December, at 7 p.m. at Seven Fields Community Center.

Trowel & Error Garden Club

Janet Renner
janetrenner84@gmail.com

Trowel & Error Garden Club was founded more than 50 years ago as a means of creating a more active interest in gardening among members. It provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and techniques and contributes interest and financial support for conservation and beautification projects. Members maintain Wolcott Park and Shields Spring in Edgeworth, focusing on the park area. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at a member's home.

The Village Garden Club

info@sewickleygardenclub.org

The Village Garden Club was founded in 1927 and is the only garden club in the Sewickley Valley that is affiliated with the Garden Club of America. The members maintain multiple projects and relationships to support the community, including Allegheny Land Trust, Fern Hollow Nature Center, Osborne Elementary gARTen Club, Penguin Bookshop, Pittsburgh Botanic Garden, Sewickley Heights Park, Sewickley Public Library, Sewickley Valley YMCA, and the Sisters of St. Joseph Miriam's Garden. Monthly meetings are held September through June and new members are welcome.

Nurseries AND Garden Centers

North

Overbeck's Nursery & Landscaping.
Blawnox, 412.828.3332.
overbecksnursery.com

Best Feeds Garden Centers,
Babcock Blvd. & North Park,
bestfeedsgardencenter.com

Brenckle's Greenhouses,
Shaler, 412.821.2566,
brenckles.com

Hahn Nursery Garden Center, Ross Twp.,
412.635.7475, hahnnursery.com

LMS Greenhouse & Nursery, Allison
Park, 412.767.7020, On Facebook.

A&N Lawn Service Greenhouse and
Garden, Franklin Park, 412.931.9230,
anlawnservice.com

Patty's Farm Market, Aspinwall,
412.781.1212

Sewickley Creek Greenhouse, Sewickley,
724.935.8500,
sewickleycreekgreenhouse.com

WGM Garden & Supply, Ross Twp.,
412.369.4704
wholesalemulchandgravel.com

South

Chapon's Greenhouse, Baldwin,
412.881.1520,
chaponsgreenhouse.com

Bedner's Farm Market, Upper St. Clair,
412.221.5525,
bednersfarmmarketusc.com

Woehler Landscape Design & Garden
Center, Upper St. Clair, 412.257.4384

Jim Jenkins Lawn & Garden,
Upper St. Clair, 412.221.3070,
jenkinslawnandgarden.com



Simmons Farm, McMurray,
724.941.1490, simmonsfarm.com

The Landscape Center, Bethel Park,
412.835.6699

Trax Farms, Finleyville, 412.835.3246,
traxfarms.com

East

Beall's Nursery & Landscaping, Plum,
412.793.6147, beallslandscaping.com

Chelse's Greenhouse, Monroeville,
724.325.1300,
chelsesgreenhouse.com

Holiday Garden Center, Plum,
724.327.0164, On Facebook

Penn Hills Lawn & Garden, Penn Hills,
412.241.0411,
pennhillslawnandgarden.com

West

Janoski's Farm & Greenhouse, Clinton,
724.899.3438, janoskis.com

Dahlia Gardens, Oakdale, 412.489.5122,
dahliagardenslandscaping.com
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HOME & GARDEN RENOVATION GUIDE

SPRING 2021

If you're looking to move (or stay and improve), here are some of the best home improvement and renovation projects for the spring.

Ever feel like the grass is always greener someplace else? Maybe the real problem is that your grass needs some TLC. Your home is most likely the largest investment you'll ever make. It's the place where you spend the most time and make most of your memories. Although many improvements are made to increase the functionality and comfort of your home, others are worthwhile investments that can translate to a higher resale value when the time comes to sell your home.

In today's market, mortgage rates may be at an all-time low, making it seem like the optimal time to buy, but price growth has soared over this past year, driving up home prices and the money needed for a down payment. So, if you're in the market to sell, a few small upgrades may be just what you need to sell your home quicker. If you're thinking of buying, you may want to consider all of your options. Do you like your neighborhood but need a bigger kitchen? Updating and renovating now may be the change you need to keep you in your home longer. No matter your situation, spring is coming, so turn off the home and garden channel, hop off your couch and get ready for some of your own spring cleaning and renovating.

Continued on next page >



A Few Key Upgrades That Can Really Pay Off

Although the housing market is in a unique position with all-time low mortgage rates and rising home prices, Pittsburgh is considered one of the most affordable U.S. metro areas to buy a home, according to the National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Opportunity Index. In addition, millennials, falling in the prime first-time homebuying age of early 20s to late 30s, are now the largest generation in America and eager to take advantage of the low mortgage rates. If you're looking to sell your house now or in the not-too-distant future, you might want to check out the following generational roadmap of four upgrades experts say are worth it to help attract potential buyers.

Cross-generational: a new steel door. The only thing that beat it on Remodeling magazine's annual Cost vs. Value Report was loose-fill attic insulation, but this project—with a 90.7 percent return on investment—speaks directly to the report's main takeaway: "Curb appeal projects, by and large, generated higher returns on investment than work done

inside the home." Plus, as far as millennials go, while their ideal interiors may differ from older generations—for example, they prefer open floor plans and hardwood floors—Architectural Digest says they're still into "traditional" exteriors.

Millennials: Smart-home tech. Yes, there are boomers and Gen X-ers who are super tech-savvy, but millennials especially crave homes that allow them to control their heating, air-conditioning, home security, and lighting systems from their phones. They want to use their brains for other things, not for remembering whether they adjusted the heat or closed the garage door.

Cross-generational: A new roof. It's the ultimate curb appeal enhancer, and buyers pay a premium for one already in place. So, if the first thing prospects notice—even before exiting their cars—looks like something out of the movie "Twister," you've got a problem.

Millennials: All-new appliances. Realtors will tell you that major kitchen (and bath) upgrades aren't generally worth their high costs, in terms of return on investment, since prospective buyers' tastes can clash with yours. However, millennials love, love, love

all-new stainless steel appliances. So much so that what RealtyTimes.com called "an astonishing majority of 75 percent" of survey respondents chose to spend their hypothetical home buying budgets on them.

Do-It-Yourself Landscaping That Doesn't Look Like It

If you've ever attempted to transform your backyard into a beautifully designed paradise, then you have probably planted, trimmed and dug your way into a few minor frustrations along the way. While good landscaping can vary by degrees including budget, skills and climate, there are a few easy things you can do in order to be proud of your landscaping without paying an expert.

The following tips will guide you on the right path to do-it-yourself landscaping:

- Always layer your planting beds. Layering in three rows, begin with your tallest plants in the back row, next tallest in the middle and shortest plants in the front. And don't just plant one bed—

- put another elsewhere in your yard to help provide a sense of harmony.
- Calm your yard with water features. Providing focal points in your landscaping work is a must, and one great way is to incorporate water features such as ponds and simple waterfalls. They both look appealing and add an attractive element to your yard—the calming sounds of moving water.
 - Utilize retaining walls. If you are planning on protecting the fragile landscaping work around your home, it's imperative to construct a strong retaining wall. Erosion-prone areas in your yard will benefit greatly by incorporating segmental retaining walls constructed from concrete masonry. Using concrete not only provides the best value for the investment, it also delivers superior design flexibility and aesthetic appeal to any landscape idea.
 - When planting flowers, go with annuals. To have a continuous sense of color throughout your yard, plant annual flowers alongside your favorite perennials. Research and lay out creative flower combinations that make use of both kinds of flowers for lasting beauty.
 - Think year-round. One of the biggest mistakes a homeowner can make is only providing one or two seasons' worth of eye-catching landscaping. Plan for having plentiful trees and shrubs during the springtime, fall foliage during autumn months, and good, visually interesting plant life in the winter, such as holly shrubs or bayberry bushes.

Decked Out

One of the most inexpensive ways to add living space to your home is the addition of an outdoor deck or patio. Having a great outdoor space is like adding an extra room to your house. It can be enjoyed by the whole family, or experienced in quiet solitude as a retreat to the Zen of outdoor living.

If you like to entertain, then an outdoor space is a must. Guests can spill out onto the patio, extending your home to allow more freedom for guests to mingle, both inside and out.

Though the words "patio" and "deck" are often used interchangeably, there is a difference. A patio is generally constructed of stone pavers, tile or a simple concrete

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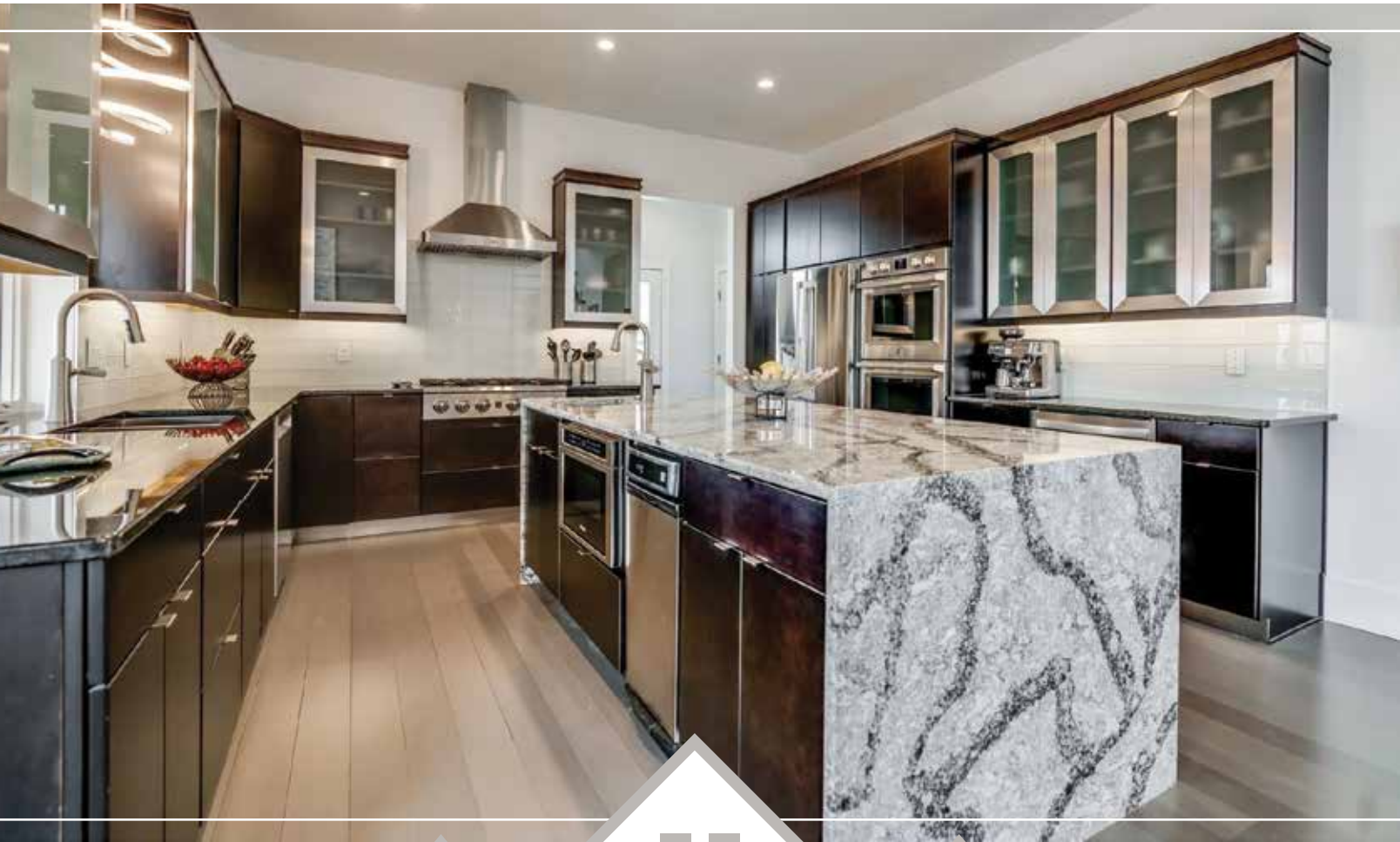
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Hemphill Contracting

When Quality is the First Priority

For the past 20 years, Jason Hemphill, founder of Hemphill Contracting, has been building, renovating and remodeling homes throughout the greater Pittsburgh area for discerning homeowners who refuse to cut corners. That reputation for quality has propelled him from working on other crews to striking out on his own nearly a decade ago, leaving a neighborhood's worth of satisfied homeowners behind him.

"We do everything and that sets us apart," Hemphill said. "From new construction to very extensive renovations to difficult remodels and the biggest additions, we do it all and we do it with quality."

He points to 1786 Dominion Drive in Upper St. Clair as an example of his craftsmanship on a home that Hemphill Contracting built from foundation to shingles. "We will not sacrifice quality for speed, and that's important," he said. "We deliver on time without having to cut corners. We

Our systems keep homes comfortable and clean when we perform work. We use zipper walls, completely seal openings and cover/protect all surfaces.



use the highest quality materials—real plywood over OSB and copper pipes over PEX, which a lot of people aren't sold on yet. We do it the right way, and I've been fortunate that the last seven years we've been serving clients in the Pittsburgh suburbs."

Hemphill inadvertently got into contracting right out of high school when his brother-in-law saw hard labor as a way to push him in a career direction.

"I didn't know what I wanted to do. I knew college wasn't something for me, so he brought me out to torture me as a laborer," Hemphill joked. "Turns out, I loved it. I loved it then and I still love it today. I'm out here with my guys every day, putting the tool belt on rain, shine or snow."

And while he's up for any project, Hemphill takes special pride in the more extreme aspects of the jobs he bids out.

"We specialize in our tile work and carpentry. All of our team's skills are exceptional, but if I had to pin down crown jewels, custom showers and finishes would be it," he said. "Everything we do is custom. I treat each home as if it were my own, giving every client my full and utmost attention, and ensuring that we're communicating every aspect of the project along the way. I also have an affinity for contemporary and modern style builds and have a history of working with some of the most highly



successful builders in the region, so our work looks seamless when matched against existing work."

Hemphill also loves when homeowners challenge him with a design that's unique to their lifestyle.

"We build things that people will live with for as long as they own their home," he said. "So creating something that's special, unique and reflective of the personality of the homeowners is like being commissioned for a work of art. We're using common building materials to create something they will cherish and enjoy, day in and day out. When it comes down to it, the place you lay your head at night is your home and it deserves to be as personalized for you as it can be."

As the leader of a team of five professionals, Hemphill said his team is the best he's ever worked with and consummate professionals about the work.

"Everybody I work with loves their job and what we do," he added. "We're all happy to come to work every day and we love seeing homeowners' faces when they see the quality we put into every job. We all care about the job we do and want to make sure the homeowners see that every time they walk into their home."

For more information on Hemphill Contracting, call 724.581.8199.



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foundation that sits squarely on the ground. Decks are usually made of wood, PVC (also called vinyl) or composite, which has wood content that has been encapsulated in a PVC wrap. Decks can either be ground level or elevated. When considering which option is best for you, you'll want to look at the costs and also which one works well with the style of your home. The good news is that regardless of the option you choose, you'll get a positive return on your investment—somewhere between 30 and 75 percent.

For a wood frame house, wooden, composite or PVC decks can match the trim of your existing home. Since wood can be painted, a wooden deck offers the most color options, however it will also require frequent repainting. Both PVC and composite decks are available in a wide range of earth tones to match your home's style.

Experts say there are cost differences, but PVC and composite decks require less maintenance in the long run.

Wooden decks will run about \$2 to \$3 per square foot. These are attractive, but they do require more maintenance and will have to be resealed every few years

to give them maximum life. Both PVC and composite decks will run an average of \$8 to \$9 per square foot. They will require power-washing for cleaning, with frequency depending on location. If the deck is adjacent to trees and shrubbery, leaves and pollen will settle on the frame, so washing is required to keep it looking sharp.

If your home is made of stone, you may opt for a patio that is a continuation of the stone look, but this also works well with a wood frame or brick home. Patios work best in yards that are level, while a deck can be placed pretty much anywhere, including a hilly or uneven lawn.

Homeowners are especially keen to add fire features to their outdoor area, functioning as a gathering point for both family and guests. Traditional wood-burning fireplaces not only add physical warmth and beauty, but emotional warmth as well. Contemporary homeowners are opting for very modern linear gas fireplaces, with smooth, clean lines to mirror the style of their home.

For those homeowners who don't have the space for a traditional fireplace, firepits or tables make a great feature, with some

Continued on page 28 >



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RAISE THE ROOF THIS SPRING

A new roof can mean many different things to many different people. Some get a new roof out of necessity—the roof is damaged and old and simply needs a replacement. Others are looking for an esthetic update to the exterior of their home—think cool metal roof. No matter the reason for a new roof, spring is the perfect time to “raise the roof” and bring in something new.

Replacing your roof has several benefits other than the most obvious: updated curb appeal. New roofs improve your home's efficiency, providing savings on heating and cooling costs. There are even special coatings that are Energy Star-certified to reflect more of the sun's rays and lower the amount of energy needed to cool your home.

Whatever shape your roof is in, it's good to have an inspection done by professionals each year. They can do routine maintenance to extend the life of your roof and make repairs to loose or missing shingles. Depending on the quality of materials, roofs typically last anywhere from 10 to 50 years, so find a local roofing company you can get to know and trust to help you maintain the literal roof over your head!



Bringing Both Tree Service and Landscape Service Under One Roof



When brothers Jonathan and Charles "CJ" Mussari first went into the landscaping business, their company was called Artistic Landscape Creations. However, over time, they found that many of their clients needed tree service as well, so they eventually became a full-service landscape and tree company and changed the name to Artistic Tree & Landscape Creations.

"That's what makes us unique," Jonathan said. "Typically, companies do landscaping or tree work, but very few do both. Most don't want to get into the tree business because carrying insurance for tree services (business liability and workers compensation) is a lot more than for just landscaping services. We do both, we're insured for both and we know both sides of the business like no other."

In fact, Jonathan added that homeowners appreciate his and his brother's insights into trees and how they fit into a homeowner's landscape to create an aesthetically pleasing yard.

"We'll get a call to remove a tree and we can plant a new one right on the spot," he said. "A lot of times, homeowners will be renovating and have to remove a tree that's too close to the home and they want recommendations on what kind of tree would be less maintenance, smaller, or suit their needs better in the overall landscape. We have that design background and can convert their landscape into something that's more appealing and functional."



What's more, Artistic Tree & Landscape Creations can also create small hardscapes for clients that will make their yard stand out.

Jonathan noted that the hardscape portion of the business has boomed with the pandemic as families called



for small patio installations so they could get out of the house together in a safe outdoor space.

"People were looking for smaller entertainment spaces with a fire pit because they just wanted to get out of the house," he said. "That's exactly what we do as far as hardscaping goes, and it worked out great. But, when the hardscapes are built, people still want to be surrounded by a beautiful yard."

Artistic Tree & Landscape Creations offers customers worry-free service. According to C.J., "They know when they call us, they'll get us right away or we'll return their call within 24 hours. Our regular customers don't have to call us to ask if we're coming out. They know we're on it." He goes on to explain that they have several different plans for their customers. "Some prefer to use us once or twice a year, while others want regular lawn maintenance. We do everything for them...cut grass, mulch, weed, do spring and fall cleanups."

Artistic Tree & Landscape Creations not only has an experienced crew, it also has a bucket truck and a Spiderlift. Very few local tree companies have a Spiderlift. This type of equipment allows them to work in narrow spaces and reach heights that are too dangerous to climb. The Spiderlift can reach up to 86 feet high.

For more information on Artistic Tree & Landscape Creations, including photos of the team's work, go to the website at artisticctlc.com. You can also call directly at 412.303.4443 to schedule an appointment for a consultation or email at info@artisticctlc.com. The business is located at 4545 Gibsonia Road, Gibsonia, 15044.

creating a beautiful flame that glows through crystal rock. They're available in three different heights, with a lower coffee-table height, dining table, and bar height. Homeowners also have the option of selecting wood- or gas-burning firepits.

Outdoor Kitchen Splendor

When the summer heats up, the prospect of slow-cooking a roast or searing some ribs is just not as appealing when you know it's going to heat up your house and drive up your air-conditioning bill. Take a tip from our pioneer ancestors who baked their bread and cooked their meats outdoors to maintain a cool house. This simple idea can really help keep your home comfortable during the dog days of summer, while saving you money on energy costs.

With an outdoor oven and grill, barbeques can be a spontaneous dinner idea, rather than a major event that must be planned days in advance. The grilling process gives steaks, chicken, fish and pork a wonderful smoked flavor, while reducing the overall fat content.

And it's not just meats that can benefit from grilling. Bell peppers, onions, zucchini and tons of other vegetables take on a wonderful flavor when tossed lightly with olive oil, wrapped in foil and cooked on a grill.

With an outdoor kitchen, grilling is not just for summer either. With a covering for rainy days and outdoor heating available, it can be used virtually year-round. Although just a simple oven and grill can change the way you live, a sink with running water and a fridge can really make cooking outdoors convenient.

For entertaining, the outdoor kitchen offers a way to spend time with your guests while preparing the meal. There's also an entire line of in-ground sound equipment and specially made outdoor TVs. The televisions are completely waterproof, and three times as bright as a normal TV so they can be viewed even in strong direct sunlight.

In the Comfort of Your Own Home Office

Are you one of those lucky individuals able to work from home? The world just seems like a nicer place when you're dressed in your pajamas, doesn't it? But work is still work. You need a place that's organized, designed well, and in which you feel comfortable. Chances are, you may also need a degree of privacy to do your best work.

One of the most overlooked factors in productivity is lighting. Many studies demonstrate that natural lighting is best whenever possible, and results in more productivity among workers and a more positive attitude toward the work itself. Lighting can have a profound effect on your mood and can even influence your hormones. A good overview of this subject is provided by Andrew Jensen, a business growth, efficiency and marketing consultant, at AndrewJensen.net.

If placing your home office in an area with windows is not possible, try the soft lighting of a lamp instead, and try to avoid harsh fluorescents. Adding a silk plant or two, along with a picture of the outdoors, will help transform a windowless area into a more inviting space. Warm colors such as reds, yellows and orange will also help warm up an otherwise dark office area such as a basement.

Next, you'll want to design your workspace with cabinetry where office supplies and files can be tucked neatly out of sight. Shelving that is custom-designed for the way you work can transform even a tiny space into an efficient work area. Having cabinets and shelves that are suited to your exact purpose will eliminate a great deal of frustration and overwhelming feelings of disorganization. A designer and expert carpenter can help you get the most from your workspace.

Just because you don't have an entire room in your house to dedicate to your home office doesn't mean you can't have a dedicated workspace. Even a closet can be transformed into a workspace with the right planning, and the whole office can be put away at day's end by simply closing the closet door.

If you have even less space to work with, try a wall-mounted desk that can be extended when in use and collapsed flush with the wall when it's not. Cubby holes built into the interior wall area can also provide places for storage in a tight space. A creative builder can help you make the most of your available space.

If your work area is not separated from the rest of your home and building a wall is not an option, there are still attractive ways to define your space. For example, tall wooden shutters can be linked together with hinges and painted any color to create a private area. Though not soundproof, they can create an intimate atmosphere of privacy when needed for yourself or for seeing clients. Tall silk plants, such as a series of ficus trees, can also be used to divide the space.

Don't skimp on your office chair! It's likely a place where you will be sitting for several hours every single day. Make sure it's comfortable and provides plenty of lumbar support, in addition to being an attractive addition to your office. Visit Spine-Health.com for some helpful suggestions on choosing the right chair that will work best for you.



Bathroom Beauty

Though your bathroom may not spring to mind as the place to hold your next cocktail party, with the right accoutrements your bath can be a great place to hang out and enjoy life. And if you live with family members, it may be the only place in your house where you can truly be alone for a bit.

Besides just being a place to "get ready" to meet the day, it's also a relaxing space to recharge your batteries after a long week at work. Hydrotherapy is one of the best ways to relieve stress and help tired, overworked muscles. With tons of specialized

showerheads, you can have everything from the sprinkle of a gentle rain to an invigorating massage to bring your body back to center. And a nice relaxing bath in a soaker tub can make the world go away for a while.

Does all of this sound like a fantasy? Maybe not. You may be able to make updates to your bath for less than you might expect.

If a homeowner is just updating and not moving plumbing, heating ducts and electricity, the makeover can start at around \$10,000. And the choices for today's bath are incredibly enticing. Many homeowners are opting for larger showers that will not only get you clean, but can also bathe you in LED lighting that changes colors to suit your mood. You can also enjoy your favorite music in the shower to either calm you down after a stressful day, or pep you up for the daily routine.

Vanities and bath cabinetry have also arrived in the 21st century. Vanities are no longer empty-shell cabinets that open to a cavernous interior with little customization. Current options for drawers and cabinets include specialized areas for storing your blow dryer neatly away and stackable storage options for makeup. And while you're standing in front of that vanity applying your makeup, you can watch TV in the mirror! New technology allows your favorite TV program to be projected onto the mirror, so you can keep up with the latest baseball scores or check the weather before going out.

Slate and marble tile are always elegant options for bathrooms, but one of the latest trends in baths are porcelain tiles that mimic wood. These tiles come in sizes up to 48" and can be laid to look like natural woodgrain, without the worry of water damage. The woodgrain appearance can really warm up the bathroom.

And speaking of warm—your toilet can be warm too! Homeowners can opt for a "throne" with a retractable base that comes out and heats your feet, as well as the seat of the toilet. And new touchless flushing helps prevent the spread of germs among your family, along with a bidet, which ensures a much cleaner experience.

You spend so much time in your bathroom every day you owe it to yourself to make it a more enjoyable place. And, according to HGTV.com, bath remodels often offer a return on investment of more than 100 percent!

Kitchen Makeover

Whether your cooking style is Chicken Cordon Bleu, or just some great Pad Thai takeout from the corner restaurant, you need a place to prepare your meals that's fun, organized and feels like home. Regardless of lifestyle, you'll probably spend a significant amount of time each day in your kitchen.

Though it's a significant investment to update a kitchen, it's a worthwhile endeavor from both a personal standpoint and a financial one. And, like bathrooms, HGTV.com estimates that a kitchen remodel can offer returns that are upwards of 100% on the resale of your house.

Most kitchen remodels start around \$25,000, and on average will range up to about \$50,000. You can give your kitchen a whole new look in any style from ultra-contemporary to French country in this price range. Your designer and builder can assist you with computer-aided design (CAD) to help you envision your dream.

Continued on next page >



INTERIOR DESIGN TRENDS FOR 2021

Over the past year, we've all spent way more time at home. We went from extreme uncertainty, to learning how to adapt, to complete stir-craziness, and finally to settling into a new normal routine. We took on new hobbies, found joy in things we may never have realized before, and changed the way we lived our lives. An increase in time spent at home and a revamp of how we use our home has shaped the recent trends for interior design this year.

Pretty Plants – The positive vibes plants send are strong. Not only do they freshen the air in your home, but they bring with them a sense of caring. Often the feeling of caring for other things helps keep us grounded. And there is no other living thing easier to care for than a plant (they don't talk back, either!).

Bringing Nostalgia Home – What brings us more comfort than the feeling of home? This trend takes us back to our chic grandmother's house. Light floral designs and cozy elegance allow for a sense of warmth just when we need it most.

Natural Light – The abundance of natural light is not only good for your newly acquired house plants, but also for your well-being. Especially when you're not being forced out of your home to run errands, go to work, and pick up the kids, extra vitamin D should pour in through your windows.

Peacefulness/Feng Shui – We've all been searching for ways to bring harmony, balance, and flow into our lives, and what better way to start than in your home. Whether it's finding ways to incorporate the art of feng shui, or simply including things that bring you peace, now more than ever is the time to make room for harmonizing energy in your home.

Earth Tones – Colors for 2021? You guessed it—earth tones. Once again going back to our roots, quite literally this time. Creating a sense of calm and warmth, earth tones are welcoming and reassuring. Typically comprised of colors that contain at least a hint of brown, earth tones can vary from greens and oranges to purples, blues, and reds.

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Some trends in the kitchen include spacious farm sinks that offer tons of space for food prep. Clean, white subway tile can match virtually any décor, making it a popular choice for backsplashes. Recycled glass tiles can be found in any color for a look that's great for your kitchen and great for the environment as well. Mosaic tiles are frequently used and can be laid in customized patterns for a uniquely personal look.

Although cherry wood cabinets are classic, white cabinets are also popular. Cherry will give your kitchen a warm feel, while white cabinets will brighten the space and have a clean appearance.

As for flooring, experts say you can't go wrong with natural stone, and travertine is extremely popular right now. After the stone is sealed, it's an easy-care option for homeowners and offers a lot of longevity.

It's not just about the look you want to achieve in your kitchen, it's also about the way it makes you, your family and your friends feel when you're there. ■

SPRING CLEANING FROM THE INSIDE OUT!

As the final snowflakes melt away, it's time to start thinking spring. Most of us start our spring-cleaning checklist by sweeping out the garage or uncovering stored patio furniture. But the real cleaning should start from the inside. It is critical to give attention to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, or HVAC, to ensure comfort inside your home. Follow the checklist below to give your home the boost it needs before spring sets in.

Check and replace filters – Changing the filters in your furnace and air-conditioner about every three months (depending on your filter type) keeps the air in your home clean and allows for your system to continue to run efficiently. Be sure to first turn off equipment before replacing anything.

Dust and wash bathroom fans – Clean exhaust fans help with bathroom odor and keep moisture out, preventing against mold and mildew. To clean, remove the bathroom fan cover from the ceiling and wash with warm, soapy water and allow to dry completely. Be sure the electricity to the fan is off before you dust the fan blades.

Drain and air-out dehumidifier (if applicable) – Dehumidifiers have several health benefits for your family, including reducing allergens such as dust mites, mold, and mildew. Empty and clean the water collection tank with warm, soapy water and vacuum the intake and exhaust grills to keep your dehumidifier running clean.

Remove plants around the air-conditioning unit – Allow for maximum airflow around your air-conditioner unit by clearing any encroaching weeds or plants, keeping a two-foot radius around the system.

Install a programmable thermostat — If you're in the market for a new thermostat, consider a programmable one. These thermostats increase your home's efficiency and offer cost savings through adjustable timing and consistent temperatures throughout the house, optimizing your HVAC system.

If all else fails, put your trust in the hands of the professionals. They'll ensure that your HVAC system is ready for spring.

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WHAT EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW

The needs for counseling and support services are increasing among kids and parents. According to results of The Pittsburgh Study: Family Strengths Survey by the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, the majority of parents in our region are having a hard time supporting their children's social, mental and emotional struggles.

One way to start the healing process for your family is by incorporating coping and self-care strategies into your lives. Coping can be difficult because it asks you to assess how you feel and respond to being overwhelmed. There are some simple practices you can pick up, though.

- **Exercise:** Whether through daily workouts or taking brisk walks for some fresh air, it's important to take care of your body.
- **Sleep:** Creating a consistent sleeping schedule is another key to keeping a healthy wellbeing.
- **Traditions:** Start new traditions at home or find happy hobbies that involve everyone. Start regular virtual get-togethers with friends and family who you cannot see in person.

Introducing the Child and Parent Place at Anchorpoint (C.A.P.P.)

A mother was worried about her teen daughter who was battling anxiety and depression. The girl was experiencing panic attacks and shying away from social interactions with peers and family members. Through counseling at C.A.P.P., she learned healthy coping strategies and social skills that helped her gain confidence and feel more comfortable. Today, she is living without panic attacks and engaging with others without becoming upset.

C.A.P.P. is a new community mental wellness and academic success center in the North Hills area that specializes in serving children, teens, parents and families.

C.A.P.P. is led by licensed and experienced counselors and certified teachers who provide a wide range of affordable services including:

- Play therapy
- Sand tray therapy
- Family therapy
- Trauma-informed counseling
- Parent counseling
- ADHD, social skills and parenting groups
- Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
- One-on-one academic tutoring/mentoring for grades K-12.

Do you know a child or parent struggling with anxiety, depression, trauma, anger, defiance, academic problems or other mental health or educational needs? Are you or your family having difficulty coping during this unprecedented time?

Call today at 412-366-1300.

This article is written on behalf of C.A.P.P.'s leadership team.

Maria Kitay, MEd, NCC, LPC

Maria specializes in mental health counseling for children and families, and she excels in communicating in the treatment areas of grief/loss, addictions and trauma.

Stacey Martin, LSW

Stacey's work history in the foster care system gives her the expertise to support families struggling with anxiety, depression, loss of self-worth and ADHD.

Sandy Niekum, MEd

Sandy is a former special education teacher who has extensive experience supporting parents, students and tutors. She constantly strives to advocate for children with learning needs.

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Looking for an innovation in the food business? Pronio's Food Service is the answer!

We know the hunt for consistent quality AND service can feel like a never-ending battle. Here at Pronio's we have really focused in on the idea of giving you exactly what YOU want! Every single order that leaves our building is customized by our consumers.

At Pronio's we carry a full line of top-quality beef, pork, poultry, and seafood. There aren't many items you won't be able to get from us. This includes harder-to-find items such as veal, bison, lamb, and much, MUCH more.



What we are doing for people may seem crazy to some but is undoubtedly beneficial to all, especially during these tough times we have all been put through lately. Our goal is to provide you with fresher, healthier, and more tasty foods to help you live a more efficient lifestyle. Imagine having a running balance of meat (cut perfectly for your family) at your disposal without ever having to leave your home. Sound too good to be true? It's not!

Let's be honest, going to the grocery store to buy your meat just to return home to the labor of cutting, prepping, and repackaging before you can even cook it is daunting. We can eliminate this entire process! All our cuts are trimmed to your specific want and ready to cook. The benefit of custom packaging eliminates food waste as well as the dreaded repackaging.

We understand your time is valuable. We sit down and find out exactly what you eat, how you like it prepared, preferred packaging, and the portions you require. Once we have this information, we can scale the order you personally created to any size you would like. Don't worry! A huge freezer is not necessary—at Pronio's we want to please everybody. If you have a smaller freezer but still want the savings that come with the volume of a larger order, we will deliver the meat in increments that suit you!

Guess what? This also means we will customize and create a payment option that works for you! Our customers are diverse, and our service is flexible. If you eat meat then Pronio's wants to help! This is your rodeo and our responsibility, not the other way around.

All of our products are free of hormones, antibiotics, pesticides, steroids, and any other junk a lot of the meat you get in grocery stores are full of! We also offer other options including 100% grass fed and organic meats. Our consultation process is laid back and our team is genuinely invested in making sure you get the most out of our service. As a family-owned and operated business, we promise wholeheartedly that we will not let you down and will do all in our power to create a healthier, more efficient, and tastier lifestyle for you and your family!



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Seven Students Earn National AP Scholar Status

Pine-Richland High School is recognizing seven graduates for being named 2020 National Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars based on their performance on AP exams given during the 2019-2020 school year. To qualify for the National AP Scholars Award, students must earn an average score of four or higher on a five-point scale on all AP Exams taken and must have taken eight or more exams.

The latest round of national honorees include 2020 PRHS graduates Erin Ahearn, Jack Caronovale, Max Farino, Daniel Krill, Aranya Krishnan, Benjamin Solomon and Justin Waltrip. In all, 183 PRHS students earned some sort of distinction for 2020.

In 2019, 13 students earned the national distinction and included Amalendu Bokil, Tom Fest, Luke Francis, Devin Golla, Daniel Krill, Jordan Labuda, Martha Lacek, Bailey Mohri, Umayal Natesan, Justin Waltrip, Abigail Waryanka, Lucas Zak and Kevin Zou. Daniel Krill and Justin Waltrip earned the status in 2019 and maintained it in 2020.



Max Farino
2020 PRHS Graduate



Daniel Krill
2020 PRHS Graduate



Aranya Krishnan
2020 PRHS Graduate



Benjamin Solomon
2020 PRHS Graduate



Justin Waltrip
2020 PRHS Graduate



Erin Ahearn
2020 PRHS Graduate



Jack Caronovale
2020 PRHS Graduate

Students Collect Eight Bus Loads Worth of Toys

Fundraising during a pandemic cannot be easy. However, Pine-Richland High School students made it look like a breeze. In fact, the students collected a record number of toys during the annual "Stuff-a-Bus" Toy drive. While PRHS Student Government members collected enough toys to fill eight buses during the drive, the students packed them into one bus for delivery on Dec. 4, 2020. The fundraiser was a district and community-wide effort under the direction of senior student government representatives Zeyad Amr and Ekaterini Balouris. After staff and students loaded up the toys, sponsored Lindsay Brough helped deliver the toys to Robinson Township to 96.1 Kiss Radio, which hosted the annual Stuff-a-Bus toy drive. Thank you to PR's bus carrier Student Transportation of America for its time and help in delivering the toys. In all, 96.1 loaded 56 buses full of toys. Last year, the district sent six busloads of toys.

Pine-Richland High School senior student government representatives Zeyad Amr and Ekaterini Balouris lead a successful toy drive.



Driver Named Finalist in 2020 Champions of Learning Awards

Pine-Richland Bus Driver Glynn Newcamp is being recognized as a finalist in the 2020 Champions of Learning Awards. Mr. Newcamp, who drives a bus for Eden Hall Upper Elementary, Richland Elementary, and Pine-Richland High School/Pine-Richland Middle School with PRSD's transportation provider Student Transportation of America, will be recognized during a program sponsored by the Consortium for Public Education and the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania.



The picture shown is a file photo from the Bus Driver Appreciation program at Eden Hall Upper Elementary hosted in January or February of 2020. Mr. Glynn Newcamp is shown with one of the student leaders at the school.

PR Looking to Connect with All Residents

Pine-Richland School District is trying to reach more members of the community specifically residents who may not have children in the district. We are also looking to connect with residents who own businesses in Pine-Richland. To connect, please visit pinerichland.org/residents to complete a short questionnaire so we can reach you via email or phone with pertinent information.

PR Earns Award for Performance Excellence

Pine-Richland School District was one of only five organizations to receive The Mid-Atlantic Alliance for Performance Excellence (MAAPE) Award for 2020. The five organizations receiving a 2020 MAAPE Award include:

- Eden Autism – Princeton, NJ (education)
- Highmark Health IT – Pittsburgh, PA (service)
- Penn Medicine Department of Radiation Oncology – Philadelphia, PA (healthcare)
- Pine-Richland School District – Gibsonia, PA (education)
- UPMC Western Maryland – Cumberland, MD (healthcare)

MAAPE, a 501(c)3 organization serving Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, is focused on helping organizations achieve improved levels of performance by identifying and recognizing role-model organizations and sharing their best practices and strategies. MAAPE is one of 31 state and regional Baldrige-based award programs across the country. The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recognizes exemplary U.S. organizations and businesses that demonstrate an “unceasing drive for innovative solutions to complex challenges, visionary leadership and operational excellence.” The Baldrige Award is the highest level of national

recognition for performance excellence that a U.S. organization can receive.

MAAPE applicants, including Pine-Richland, were evaluated in seven areas defined by the Baldrige Criteria: leadership; strategy; customers; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; workforce; operations; and results.

“The pursuit of excellence is a major category within the Pine-Richland Strategic Plan. It is grounded in the continuous improvement mindset. By participating in MAAPE, we are able to gain insight into strengths and opportunities for improvement,” says Dr. Brian R. Miller, PRSD superintendent. “Although the recognition is an important reflection of our district, commitment to the journey of organizational growth is the most critical part. Through these efforts, we are better positioned to achieve our mission for students and families.”

Awardees, including Pine-Richland, were recognized at MAAPE’s 15th Annual Conference on November 12, 2020.

Dr. Miller, Dr. Justus, and Ms. Hathhorn were invited to present an overview of the district’s commitment to continuous improvement on January 15, 2020.



(L-R) Hance Elementary School Teacher Lisa Burnsworth and Principal Greta Kuzilla hold up the PA Healthy Schools Award. Hance and Eden Hall Upper Elementary were both honored in 2020.

Schools Recognized by PA Healthy Schools

Eden Hall Upper Elementary School and Hance Elementary School were recognized during the Women for a Healthy Environment’s Healthy Schools PA Summit on Dec. 3, 2020. Summit experts covered topics ranging from public health decision-making in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of indoor air quality as infection prevention, national advocacy for healthy and green schools, teaching public health in the classroom, best practices for school nurses, and youth civic engagement.

Hance and Eden Hall were among six schools/districts honored in Pennsylvania this year for their year-long participation in Women for a Healthy Environment’s Healthy Schools Program. Schools are being applauded for their progression in creating healthier learning environments.

“Our partnership has afforded us the opportunity to develop meaningful sustainability initiatives with a key focus of engaging all of our stakeholders,” says Dr. Joseph Domagala, Eden Hall’s assistant principal. “The Healthy Schools program has also assisted us in renewing our focus on school-wide opportunities for our students and staff with hands-on activities,” said Joe Domagala.”

The program helps schools meaningful goals annually.

“As we continue moving our healthy schools’ journey forward, we are in constant collaboration as a team and always considering new and innovative strategies to promote a healthy environment at Hance,” says Hance Elementary School Principal Greta Kuzilla. “Last year, we partnered with our PTO to have plant walls installed in the front of the building as well as PROF to open our outdoor classroom. These initiatives have improved not only the aesthetics in and around the building but create a healthy learning environment as well.”

Eden Hall and Hance earned high honor roll awards. Eden Hall Upper Elementary School was named a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award honoree in 2019 and Wexford Elementary School in 2018.



What is happening this Winter at the Library?

Northern Tier Library

Richland Center, 4015 Dickey Road,
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Library Hours:
Monday through Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sun: Closed

Bookmobile Service

Pine Tree Shoppes, 12001 Perry Highway,
Wexford, PA 15090
Bookmobile Hours:
Fridays, 12:30 to 2:45 p.m.

Pine Center

PRHS, 700 Warrendale Road
Gibsonia, PA 15044
724.625.5655

Pine Center Hours:
Closed

During these uncertain times, please check our Facebook page or website for the most up-to-date information! We will be posting updates as well as daily videos with stories and activities on The Northern Tier Regional Library Facebook page.

SPRING PROGRAMS

All our children's programs run in a six-week session please check our website or Facebook for the dates of our current sessions.

■ VIRTUAL STORY TIMES

■ TODDLER STORY TIME

Uploads Tuesdays @ 10:30 a.m.

A time to move, dance, share stories and sing songs with your busiest friends! These virtual story times are for toddlers and their families, and will be available to watch on our Facebook page.

■ PRESCHOOL STORY TIME

Uploads Wednesdays @ 10:30 a.m.

A story time for our graduating toddlers. Longer stories, exciting new rhymes and songs, but still all of the fun. These virtual story times are for families with preschoolers, and will be available to watch on our Facebook page.

■ RHYMES, SONGS, & YOGA POSES

Uploads Thursdays @ 10:30 a.m.

New for 2021! This program is an interactive story time featuring stories, word play and music, as well as yoga poses and stretches. This virtual program is for families with young children, and will be available to watch on our Facebook page.

■ TAKE-HOME CRAFTS

Kids (and adults!) of all ages are invited to create and enjoy a simple weekly take-home craft with us. Please call or register online to reserve a weekly supply kit that can be picked up and enjoyed at home. Registration is required each week to account for supplies.

■ THE WEEKLY PROJECT

Welcome to The Weekly Project, a program featuring a variety of activities that can be enjoyed from home like cooking, crafting, art, and STEM. Each week will showcase a different project for children to do with their families, and will include take-home materials. This program is for kids of all ages. Registration is needed each week to account for supplies.

■ TAKE-HOME MAKER MONDAYS

Our Pine Center Maker Mondays are now virtual! Even though you can't visit us in person at the Pine Center, Maker Mondays will continue in a virtual format. Every Monday, a tutorial video will be shared on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. A weekly supply kit will be available to reserve and pick up for some great Maker fun at home!

■ POPCORN & HOT CHOCOLATE

Do you feel like you have watched everything on Netflix? Why not try one of our uniquely themed Movie Night Kits? Enjoy a couple of movies, a cup of hot chocolate and a bag of popcorn from us for a great night in. To request a kit, message us on Facebook or call the library at 724.449.2665.

ADULT PROGRAMS

■ KNIT LIT

Do you knit, crochet, or craft in any way? If not, would you like to learn? Beginners are invited to learn; experienced crafters are invited to bring a project to work on. Everyone is encouraged to bring their latest read to talk about. **Registration is needed to receive the Zoom meeting invitation link.**

■ BRIDGET'S BOOK CLUB

Join us for a discussion (via Zoom) of our monthly book choice. Email us at northerntierlibrary@gmail.com to register

UPCOMING SPRING PROGRAMS

- Help us crown the best book of 2020! The top 16 books reviewed on Goodreads were selected as our contestants. Completed charts will be accepted Tuesday, March 16 through Wednesday, March 31. Drop them off, mail them in, or send them via email to northerntierlibrary@gmail.com. Just like the NCAA, our winner will be announced on Monday, April 5. Game on!
- Did you know that your library card can give you access to much more than books? In March, we will begin featuring and showing some of our eResources that you can access from home!
- What's brewing, Pittsburgh? Join us this April for an online beer tasting from local breweries.
- Is it too early to think about spring? Our annual Plant and Flower Sale will return in May!

CURRENT LIBRARY PROCEDURES

Stay up to date on our current procedures by checking our website, or Facebook page.

All individuals must wear a mask, covering both mouth and nose, while in the library.

The Northern Tier Library aims to provide resources that inspire, inform, educate, and entertain the public.

A current issue of this magazine is also available online.

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**To be considered for publication, all high-quality photos must be original size, digital format (1MB or larger) and highest resolution possible, 300 dpi preferred. Please put "Pine-Richland Photo" in the subject line of the email.*



Here are a few examples of the types of images we are looking for.



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