



*the*  
**Westsider**

PRESENTED BY THE

Westside Neighborhood Association



**2022**  
**Vol. 1**

# Welcome to the Westside!

## Hello Neighbors!

Pops of color are starting to surround us. Spring is here and, as always, it is a great time to be in the Westside Neighborhood. As the weather warms, so do the smiles of neighbors passing on our streets. It was the warm welcomes and the neighborly nature of the Westside that drew us here in 2019.



We were overjoyed to see a focused, active neighborhood association and jumped at the opportunity to help in our own way. We wanted to assist WNA in its work to maintain the unique qualities of the neighborhood. It is an inspiration to witness the capacity for support held by our neighbors, even in the hardest of times. Our community's strength is in its members, and even in disagreement, the good found here is rare and precious.

As WNA resumes our traditional activities, our goal is simple. We aim to strengthen the ties between neighbors and to grow what is good in our neighborhood. As we look forward to the upcoming garage sale and annual picnic, we hope to see you there! Don't forget to reach out and invite a neighbor to join you!

With the Warmest Regards.

Maya & Heath Lowry

WNA Board Members

## 2022 WNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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President: Melik Brown

Vice President: Mitzi Allen

Treasurer: Laura Hall

Secretary: Jenny McInerney

Matt Black | Heath Lowry | Maya Jones | Heidi Frei Clancy | Natalie Riddle

*The Westsider* Layout and Design: Eric Hall | Cover Photo by Eric Hall

On the cover: Spring emerges in the Westside Neighborhood.

# Westside Fun in Summer 2022

## Neighborhood Garage Sale on June 11!

More than 40 homes signed up to be part of the Westside/Old Oakland neighborhoods garage sale on Saturday, June 11. This annual event gives neighbors the chance to find new homes for unwanted items, and gives shoppers a chance to tour our neighborhoods and hopefully nab some good finds!

Thank you to all who signed up to be part of the garage sale!

## Annual Picnic Returning in 2022

The WNA has received a grant from the city of Lansing to host a picnic for neighbors this summer! The Annual Picnic is always a fun event, hosted at St. Joe's Park, featuring food and fun for the whole family.



Watch for updates at [WNALansing.com](http://WNALansing.com) or on our Facebook group at [Facebook.com/groups/WestsideNeighborhoodAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WestsideNeighborhoodAssociation).

## Westside in Bloom!

In addition to financial grants, the city awarded the Westside Neighborhoods in Bloom, which included flowers and planting kits that were delivered to the neighborhood on May 20. Thank you to all the neighbors who planted these flowers to help beautify the Westside!

# Lansing Juneteenth Celebration 2022!

*Submitted by the Lansing Juneteenth Committee*

Greetings from the Lansing Juneteenth Committee! We are excited to be celebrating Lansing's 29th Annual Juneteenth Celebration, the 17th year of "Juneteenth Day" as a state of Michigan day of recognition, and our 2nd annual celebration as a national holiday.

The Lansing Juneteenth Celebration has served as a respected voice in the community, with the City of Lansing as its backdrop, for over twenty years! The celebration dates are June 11, 16, 17, 18 and 19, 2022. We hope to see you, our event details follow:



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

**The 2022 Lansing**  
**JUNETEENTH**  
*Celebration*

**FEBRUARY 27 TO APRIL 23**  
 The Dr. Eva L. Evans Juneteenth Essay & Scholarship Competition  
**SATURDAY, JUNE 11**  
 The Commemorative Ballgame/Tribute to the Negro Leagues  
**THURSDAY, JUNE 16**  
 The Capital City Kick-Off Ceremony/Essay Contest & Scholarship Awards  
**FRIDAY & SATURDAY, JUNE 17-18**  
 Juneteenth Freedom Festival Activities & African American Parade  
**SUNDAY, JUNE 19**  
 Juneteenth Day Recognition

**JUNETEENTH**  
 SINCE 1993  
 Lansing, Michigan

 [LansingJuneteenthCelebration.Org](http://LansingJuneteenthCelebration.Org)  
 [Info@LansingJuneteenthCelebration.Org](mailto:Info@LansingJuneteenthCelebration.Org)

**Saturday, June 11, 2-4 p.m.**

We will be honoring the Negro Leagues with a Ballgame and Memorial Tribute feature to Jackie Robinson at the Benjamin Davis Park in Lansing from 2-4 p.m.

**Thursday, June 16, 6 p.m.**

We will be having our Annual Kick-off Opening Ceremony recognizing and awarding the Essay & Scholarship winners at the Lansing Community College Gannon Building Michigan Room. The

Keynote Speaker will be the Honorable Judge Shanna Dunnings.

**Friday & Saturday, June 17 & 18 - At St. Joseph Park in Lansing!**

On Friday evening, the Freedom Festival activities begin from 4-8 p.m. and it will be family night! "Juneteenth where the Reunion Begins" is our theme! The Village Market will be showcasing food and merchant vendors, along with public service exhibitors. Music by DJ Rob Newsome and Hustle Line dancing. Calling all chess and checker players to resume our annual gathering!

Saturday, the day begins at 11 a.m. with the African American Parade at the J.W. Sexton High School Front Entrance and ends at the St. Joseph (St. Joe) Park to continue the Outdoor Freedom Festival. The festival kicks off at 12 noon till dusk and features a Health Fair, Juneteenth/NAACP Job Fair, Art Form Exhibits, merchants and food vendors along with children's activities and musical entertainment.

**Sunday, June 19**

JUNETEENTH SUNDAY! Juneteenth Sunday Fathers of Freedom – United States Colored Troops (USCT) Yes, the First Father's Day was on Juneteenth 1910.

# Black History:

## Union Missionary Baptist Church

Union Missionary Baptist Church was the first African-American Baptist Church established in the City of Lansing. Union Baptist has come a long way from its humble beginnings in 1909, first established as the Hillsdale Street Baptist Church by a small group of worshippers meeting in a living room. The group soon moved its religious services to a small building on the corner of West Main and Division Streets and in 1937 changed the name of the church to “Union Missionary Baptist Church.”



Next the church purchased an old Elks building on Moores River Drive. The facility was remodeled and later named River View Place and served the community as a banquet, restaurant and leadership facility for five years. This was the only facility of its type—owned and operated by African Americans in the mid-Michigan area.

By 1995 the congregation had purchased land west of its location in 1995 and proudly marched across northbound Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard for the groundbreaking ceremony. This new campus would include an 84,610 square foot sanctuary, a chapel, and a 53,700 square foot Family Life Center which includes a chapel, a regulation gymnasium, several classrooms, a computer lab, prayer garden and commercial kitchen.

The senior pastor, Melvin T. Jones, retired in March for a life closer to family, leaving behind a 37-year legacy of community building. Melvin and his wife, Minister Sally Jones, were known in the area for building up Union Missionary Baptist Church's prominence in the Black community, fostering connections with other churches to develop pastors' resumes and strengthening children's programs.

Both Melvin and Sallie Jones have been deeply involved in social justice.

Melvin Jones took part in the fight to rename MLK Jr. Boulevard — then Logan Street — in the 1980s and 1990s; Sallie Jones took part through the children's ministry. They've

led numerous press conferences and events, and founded the Assembly of Lansing Pastors to tackle youth gun violence.

With Melvin Jones' retirement, the church has begun its first pastoral search since 1985. The congregation currently is being led by interim pastor the Rev. Charles Magee. He conducted his first service on April 3.

Melvin Jones left Magee a solid foundation at the church, Lynn said. For the permanent pastor, he added, their biggest worry will be how to keep the church moving into the future now that the Joneses' programs, partnerships and initiatives have put Union Missionary Baptist Church on the map.

## Crime and Safety Update

Often the Westside Board of Directors receives emails from neighbors wanting the board to take action to prevent car break-ins, vandalism, theft, speeding, reckless driving, code compliance violations, barking dogs, and outdoor cats, and other actions. As much as the board would like to help everyone who asks, the board has no authority to do anything to prevent these occurrences.

As an Association, the board has no authority to enforce laws or punish unlawful conduct. The board works closely with Lansing Police and other governing agencies to try and keep the neighborhood safe.

The Crime and Safety Committee has begun to have in-person meetings again. At these meetings, residents can make their request known and the committee will bring in speakers to address these specific needs. The committee, working with neighbors and government agencies, has been successful in working to eliminate drug houses, address code violations, petitioned to have dilapidated houses torn down and new homes rebuilt. Working together, neighbors can make the changes they like to see in their neighborhoods.

Frequent speakers include:

### **Officer Anthony VandeVoorde, Lansing Police Department**

Neighborhood Watch is an organized effort by concerned citizens to improve the quality of life in their neighborhood. In cooperation with the Police Department, neighbors work to safeguard each other's homes and reduce the risk of crime in their community. Officer VandeVoorde provides crime activity updates at each meeting.

### **Carol Wood, Council Member**

Carol is an at-large member of the Lansing City Council. Wood assumed office in 2000 and is the Committee's go-to-person for special topics affecting city residents. Wood's current term ends on December 31, 2023. Wood doesn't shy away from any complaint and brings a wealth of knowledge and action to meetings.

## Code Compliance Manager

The Code Enforcement Division aims to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Lansing residents through the preservation and improvement of the housing stock by assuring safe, decent, and sanitary housing while conserving the integrity of Lansing neighborhoods.

## Brian T. Jackson, City Council

Brian is honored to represent the people of Lansing's Fourth Ward. He was elected to the council in 2017 and his current term expires in 2025.

## Chief, Lansing Police Department

Since 2000, Lansing Police Chiefs including Mark Alley, Teresa Szymanski, Mike Yankowski and Darryl Green, have regularly attended the Crime & Safety Meeting to address neighbors' concerns and complaints.

The committee strives to bring in speakers to address current safety trends and identified interests of residents. If there is a topic you'd like to see addressed, please contact WNA Crime and Safety at [board@wnalansing.com](mailto:board@wnalansing.com).

The Crime and Safety meets the 4th Tuesday of each month. The location will vary throughout the neighborhood. Watch for meeting information at [WNALansing.com](http://WNALansing.com) or on our Facebook group at [Facebook.com/groups/WestsideNeighborhoodAssociation](https://Facebook.com/groups/WestsideNeighborhoodAssociation).

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# Construction Update

*Submitted by the Michigan Department of Transportation*

## **What is Being Done?**

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) will invest approximately \$82 million to rebuild I-496 and perform preventive maintenance and repairs on 17 bridges between Lansing Road and the Grand River.

I-496 will be widened to improve operations by connecting the Lansing Road and M-99 ramps with an auxiliary lane. This project will include resurfacing and sidewalk ramp upgrades along the I-496 service drives between M-99 (Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard) and the Grand River, as those routes will be utilized as detours throughout the project.

Funding for this project is made possible by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's Rebuilding Michigan program to rebuild the state highways and bridges that are critical to the state's economy and carry the most traffic. The investment strategy is aimed at fixes that result in longer useful lives and improve the condition of the state's infrastructure.

## **When Will This Be Done?**

Work began in April 2022 and will be finished in 2023.

## **How Will Traffic Be Affected?**

In 2022, I-496 will be detoured onto the service drives (Malcom X and St. Joseph streets) between M-99 and Grand Avenue. Access to the Downtown area will not be affected.

In 2023, at least one lane of I-496 will be open in each direction, with major work occurring between Lansing Road and M-99.

Ramp and bridge work is expected to impact surface streets as well. Announcements will be made in advance of these traffic impacts.

## **Project Background**

Original construction of I-496 was completed in 1970. Over the past 50 years, the pavement has served its purpose and is showing noticeable signs that it is ready to be replaced. I-496 was also built for speeds of 55 mph, having been raised to the current 70 mph speed limit throughout the years. Now that motorists are driving faster, some areas may currently feel a bit uncomfortable to drive. Rebuilding I-496 will provide a stronger roadway that is safer and feels more comfortable to drive.

With little argument that I-496 needed to be reconstructed, MDOT set out to work with local partners to determine the least impactful method to complete 2 miles of heavy, urban freeway reconstruction through Downtown Lansing. With the convenient use of



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detours utilizing St. Joseph Street and Malcolm X Street, the project team opted to perform the work quickly, as opposed to smaller projects spanning throughout many years. In general, access to and from I-496 and the surrounding communities should continue to remain open with little change. It is anticipated that no driver should experience more than 10 additional minutes of travel through the project area. This inconvenience will be traded for a new roadway – requiring minimal maintenance for years to come – by the completion date set in September 2023.

## For More Information

Call the MDOT Lansing Transportation Service Center at: 517-335-3754. Questions and comments can be e-mailed to the project team at MDOT-I496@michigan.gov. For updates, go to Michigan.gov/MDOTProjects or Twitter.com/MDOT\_LanJxn.

## Remembering a Westsider: Oscar Bernard “Bernie” Stallworth, Jr.



Thanks to contributions from neighbors and funds from the WNA board, a beautiful dogwood tree will soon be planted at the intersection of West and Lenawee in memory of Oscar Bernard “Bernie” Stallworth, Jr., who was tragically killed in a house fire at McPherson and Lenawee in November of 2021. Bernie spent his whole life on the Westside, as a 1988 graduate of Sexton High School, a 2019 inductee into the Sexton Athletic Hall of Fame for his performance on the 1987 wrestling team, and a long-time small business owner of Bernie’s Lawn Care.

# Pet Spotlight: Grimm, Jake and Ringo



**Grimm** is a 10 year old black cat that lives on Westmoreland Ave. He is currently beginning to show his age with some white hairs popping up everywhere. His hobbies consist of yelling at his person when she goes into the basement, harassing his brothers, and needing to have teeth pulled every time he goes to the vet - also eating everyone's food. He was the remaining cat in his litter at the vet's office he was adopted from, and got the attention of his Forever Family by attempting to pick-pocket a purse. He dislikes the basement, and will voice his displeasure by yelling at the basement door.

**Jake** is a very handsome 9 year old tuxedo cat that, depending on the day, has the pleasure (or displeasure) of living with Grimm. Affectionately called Kitty Cat Dog by his person, Jake is ALL about getting belly rubs. When he isn't busy demanding them, or hiding from his brothers, he is busy watching the neighborhood people (and other cats!) through the various windows. He used to be an indoor-outdoor cat, but definitely finds the 100% cushy indoor life more to his liking. He dislikes being forced into playtime or being snuggled outside of his carefully scheduled slots for both activities.



**Ringo** is the baby of the family at 7 years old, and definitely acts like it! While he won't steal food from his brothers, he thoroughly enjoys trying to steal his person's food whenever the opportunity presents itself. From time to time he will steal Jake's perch at the window, but is mainly content to have long cuddle sessions with his person at their desk.

And while he refuses to admit it, he also gets a lot of enjoyment from being carried like a baby from time to time. He dislikes being moved at all once he has settled down and does his best to make you feel guilty for even trying.



*A home once stood between the sycamore and present south entrance of Riddle Elementary.*

*Photo from R. Riddle*

# Meeting Friends Old and New! The ‘Riddle Sycamore’

*By Heidi Frei Clancy*

As a youngster, Ralph Riddle Jr. walked Washtenaw east headed for afternoons of fun and adventure with friends and family in the neighborhood, shaded along the way by trees lining the street.

Fast forward a few decades, subtract several homes plus

a portion of Washtenaw St. and the area is now home to the school that bears his mother’s name, Vivian Riddle Elementary. The south entrance, facing what was then a portion of Washtenaw St., welcomes the smiles, laughter and hope of generations of young Lansing students beneath the canopy of a towering American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) tree. Although sycamore trees grab attention for their intriguing, mottled bark, this monoecious (both male and female parts on the same plant) mammoth has remained in the background rather unnoticed for some time. Just how long remains uncertain.

Like many of us, the Riddle Sycamore has reinvented itself throughout its life. In 1911, it shaded the front porch of a newly constructed 1314 W. Washtenaw St. home, evident by the placement of the tree along the former street corridor in the Taylor Subdivision near the edge of city limits. Unpaved streets adjoined what remained of the McPherson farm to the immediate west. Many years later, and post expansion of Lansing, plans were made to improve educational facilities in the era of segregation and bussing, and a new, modern school would be built in the footprint of several blocks of homes, named in honor of the life and the legacy of service of Mrs. Vivian Riddle. Though the home at 1314 was raised, the sycamore was spared.



*1314 W. Washtenaw St. home & sycamore companion pictured in the 1960s.*

*Photo from CADL.*

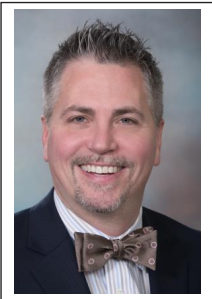


*Measuring 5-7 friends in circumference (or 13 feet and nearly 4 feet in diameter) this neighborhood elder enjoys hugs and love from little ones daily! Photo from R. Riddle.*

Today, its 72' canopy provides shade uniting both sides of what was once a neighborhood street. Like the Riddle family themselves, its strong roots in the Westside neighborhood provide strength and service to the community. Based on its size this sycamore likely was one of the first members of our neighborhood as it is at least 120 years old and could be as much as 150 to 200 years old.

However old it is, this centenarian is living its best life with love and hugs from little Riddle Rhinos! These second grade scientists spent an afternoon learning some basic forestry skills including how to measure tree diameter, circumference, and span of canopy.

Special thanks to the staff at Riddle Elementary including Kyron Harvell and Holly Daniels, the inquisitive minds of little Riddle Rhinos, Ralph Riddle Jr. and family for sharing a fall afternoon with the Riddle Sycamore!



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## Chris Swope

### Lansing City Clerk

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**Proud Resident and Advocate of  
The Westside Neighborhood!**

**Services of the Clerk's Office include:**

- Voter Registration
- Absentee Ballots
- Notary Public Services
- Business Licensing
- City Council Agendas & Minutes
- Passport Services



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[www.lansingmi.gov/clerk](http://www.lansingmi.gov/clerk)

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# Neighborhood Involvement

**Westside Wee Ones** is a group for families living in or near Lansing's Westside Neighborhood. We schedule get-togethers for children and parents/grandparents/caregivers to socialize. The discussion board is a great space to share local resources and advice. Find us on Facebook!



Join us for weekly playdates:

1st and 3rd Mondays at 4:30 p.m. at Osborn Park  
2nd and 4th Fridays at 4:30 p.m. at St. Joseph Park

*Scan to visit the Westside Wee Ones Facebook group!*

**The Westside Home and Garden Gang** is a Facebook group where gardening-minded neighbors can share information about plant care and the great outdoors. We have organized plantings around the neighborhood in the past and are always looking for more helping hands to beautify our neighborhood. We also use the Facebook group to share local items of interest that pertain to gardening and home maintenance and improvement. If you're interested, you can search for Westside Home and Garden Gang on Facebook or contact Jeff Wood at [L.jeffwood@gmail.com](mailto:L.jeffwood@gmail.com).

## Beautifying the Westside

Thanks to the neighbors who came out to clean up and beautify St. Joe's Park on May 14! The city of Lansing provided bags and gloves, and picked up all the trash that was gathered by our volunteers.

Winter in a high-traffic area does a number on our parks, our volunteers made a huge difference - and the park looks great!

To those who couldn't make the cleanup: your help is still needed! When walking around the neighborhood, grab a few pieces of trash, or just keep your yard or your street free from trash.





# City Clerk's Office Update

*By Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope*



## **Elections in 2022**

We have three elections scheduled this year. A special election was held on May 3 for the Lansing School District, and the State Partisan Primary will be held on Aug. 2 and the State General Election on Nov. 8. Voters now have many more options to make their voice heard.

I encourage every voter to take advantage of the opportunity to vote from home (also known as absentee voting). If you are interested in being added to our automatic application list so you receive an application to vote at home for every election, you can do that online at [LansingVotes.com](https://LansingVotes.com) or by calling (517) 483-4131.

You may return your absentee ballots to any City of Lansing election drop box. There are 15 drop boxes located throughout the city, and we have one right in our Westside Neighborhood at the Letts Community Center.

Forty days before every election, I open the South Washington Election Unit for regular business hours, as well as extended evening and weekend hours, to allow one-stop in-person voting until 4 p.m. on the Monday before the election. Located at 2500 S. Washington, the Election Unit offers free parking. The Election Unit is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and is open until 7 p.m. on Wednesdays.

The City Clerk's Office on the 9th floor of City Hall is also open to voters during regular business hours (Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.) for voters to request their absentee ballot and register to vote.

## **Voter Registration at Your Local Clerks up to and including Election Day**

There is no longer a deadline for voter registration. Forty days out through Election Day, a Lansing City citizen can come to either City Clerk's office location with proof of residency to register and vote in one visit.

Prior to 14 days before an election, U.S. citizens can register to vote at the Clerk's Offices, Secretary of State Branches, by mail, or even online with your Michigan driver license or state ID. It is very easy to register to vote online at [Michigan.gov/Vote](https://Michigan.gov/Vote). One does not have to wait until they're 18 years old to register to vote. If someone is 17 ½ years old, they can register NOW! No need to wait.

## **US Passport & Notary Services Available by Appointment**

If you need to apply for a U.S. Passport, you need to make an appointment through our website [LansingMI.gov/Clerk](https://LansingMI.gov/Clerk) or call (517) 483-4131. We also provide notary services

for Lansing City residents at \$5 per document by appointment too.

Bradly and I are proud to have been part of the Westside Neighborhood for over 20 years and I have been proud to be your clerk for 16 years. If the Lansing City Clerk's Office can ever be of service, please contact us by email at [city.clerk@lansingmi.gov](mailto:city.clerk@lansingmi.gov), phone (517) 483-4131 or through Facebook @lansingclerkswope.

## Northwest Initiative - Summer Programs

NorthWest Initiative is gearing up for a very active summer with programming for kids, seniors and all residents of the Westside! Follow us on Facebook for up-to-date details and exciting news, and contact us for volunteer opportunities!



### Food Distribution

Our Outreach team gets busy twice a month putting together boxes of food staples (fruits, vegetables, and when available, dairy and prepared foods) received through GLFB to help keep food on your table. Come see us!

- 1st and 3rd Wednesdays every month, 12-2 p.m.
- ID required. No zip code restrictions.
- No cost, one box per family/car

### Mobile Farmers Market

We're bringing the farmers market to you! We will be traveling to at least four locations with affordable, seasonal produce. Check Facebook weekly for updates or contact us with any questions!

Thursdays, July 7 - October 6

- Scheduled times for each location will be available on Facebook or our website after June 30.
- EBT (bridge cards), SNAP, WIC, Senior Market Fresh Coupons, cash and credit accepted. DUFB is in the works, we're awaiting confirmation.
- Planned locations: Capitol Commons Senior, The Abigail and Riverfront Apartments (and more to come!)

### Contact Us!

- Facebook: [Facebook.com/NWLansing](https://www.facebook.com/NWLansing)
- Phone: 517-999-2894
- Email: Outreach: Elvin Caldwell – [elvin@nwlansing.org](mailto:elvin@nwlansing.org)  
Food Systems Program – [foodsystemsni@gmail.com](mailto:foodsystemsni@gmail.com)

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