# Future NEWS Heights

NO. 27 NOVEMBER 2009

YEAR IN REVIEW











# From the President

During a turbulent year, FutureHeights has moved forward in significant ways. We've made huge strides implementing our strategic plan, hired a new executive director and -by the way- launched a newspaper!

Right now, everyone is a little scared, a little concerned and a little unsure of the future. Nonprofits like ours are focused on staying open to serve our community. We are learning to be extremely prudent, even more than our lean organization has in the past.

But it's not always easy to be both prudent AND innovative. Prudence means balancing what we *want* to do with what we *can* do, given the state of the economy. There are those who caution nonprofits against moving ahead with new ideas unless they are completely funded and success is guaranteed, while others say that to truly prosper, now is the time to innovate.

And therein lies the rub: to be conservative or to be bold? I believe now is the time to **think big, be bold and be innovative.** So here are a few big ideas:

• Increase publication frequency of the Heights Observer. Hyper-local, citizen-journalism is growing. Why? Because it's relevant to our community. Greater frequency can expand the dialogue and provide more opportunity for citizens to be informed and get involved.

Reach further into our neighborhoods to encourage more citizens to write about their concerns. There are many more voices to be heard and more issues to bring to the table.
Develop new ways to support the economy through our HeightsShops program. An interactive on-line business directory and a one-day holiday shopping event that encourages people to patronize their local retailers are ways to ask shoppers to 'keep it local.'

• Grow our community partnerships in new ways. Be a catalyst, foster dialogue between organizations, and convene groups with diverse objectives to work together in the best interest of our community.

We need your help. **Think big, be bold and be innovative.** Join Future-Heights in innovating for our future. FutureHeights promotes a vibrant and sustainable future for Cleveland Heights and University Heights through innovative ideas and civic engagement

# From the Executive Director

As I look back at the past year, I continue to be amazed at the tremendous community support for the *Heights Observer* project and the work of FutureHeights.

Since its launch in 2008, the *Heights* Observer has become accepted as the authoritative source of information about the Heights. More than 380 citizens have volunteered as citizen-journalists and have written more than 1,015 stories in 19 issues. These, stories written by you, have kept us informed, told us about interesting people in our community and prompted us to action when necessary. Thirty-two citizens have volunteered as editors and 22 have helped distribute the approximately 9,000 copies of the free print newspaper every month our 14 business districts. Our latest issue had 59 local advertisers, who have been a huge source of support for the project, especially in the current economic climate. To date, our editorial committee has held four citizen-journalism training sessions and plans to hold one more before the end of the year. Thanks to all of you for helping make this project such a success!

For the second year in a row, our members met our summer membership drive challenge. FutureHeights raised more than \$15,310 in membership support during the drive and that amount was matched dollarfor-dollar by an anonymous donor for a total of over \$30,310. Thank you!

After a year of intensive focus on launching the *Heights Observer*, Future-Heights has once again begun work on other aspects of our mission –advocacy, historic preservation and supporting the local economy. In 2010, you can look forward to more community forums and neighborhood meetings.

We have an energetic and committed board of trustees, each of whom is sharing their talents and passions with us as we strive to make our community a better place. I look forward to working with them and with all of you in the year ahead.

Deanna Bremer Fisher

## News and Notes

### Staff



Deanna Bremer Fisher Has lived in Cleveland Heights for 16 years • Coauthored the nomination to have her neighborhood listed in the National Register of Historic Places • Is very happy to see more individual citizens nominating their Heights neighborhoods for listing on the National Register



#### Jane Flaherty Has lived in Cleveland Heights for 27 years • Loves working with community volunteers, business owners and organizations

#### FutureHeights in 2009

Your donation dollars remain hard at work as FutureHeights continues to focus on helping our citizens become engaged in their community in order to find innovative solutions to our challenges and improve our quality of life.

### Community forums

FutureHeights once again sponsored the Cleveland Heights Mayor's State of the City address. We also co-sponsored, with the League of Women Voters, Heights Chapter, a forum on intergovernmental cooperation and Candidates Night for the 2009 municipal elections. Executive Director Deanna Bremer Fisher moderated both events.

### Public discourse

FutureHeights continued to promote spirited discussion and debate on various topics on the Heights Observatory Forum, *www.heightsobserver. org/deck*, an online meeting space for residents to discuss issues and swap information over a "virtual back fence." We also published our first local election issue of the *Heights Observer*, which contained comprehensive candidate profiles.

### **Building community**

As of October 2009, FutureHeights had published 19 issues of the *Heights Observer* community news. A product of the organization's 2007-2010 strategic planning process, the *Heights Observer* was funded with start-up grants from the Cyrus Eaton Foundation, the Dominion Foundation, and the Katherine and Lee Chilcote Foundation. It receives ongoing funding through paid advertising.

More than 9,000 copies of the free newspaper are printed each month and delivered to more than 178 locations in the Heights and a growing list of home subscribers. More than 380 citizen-journalist volunteers have written stories, fulfilling the project's mission of community advocacy, informing and involving citizens, promoting public discourse, and spurring economic development. The project continues to promote increased citizen interaction and participation in local public life.

To support citizen-journalist volunteers, FutureHeights conducts workshops on basic news writing taught by professional journalists and mentors those who have story ideas.

2009 summer interns Kaitlin Bushinski and Jeremy Hebebrand added their journalism skills to the important work of covering our community.

We want to hear about what is important to you and invite you to send in your story. Go to *www.heightsobserver.org* and sign in at the member center. For assistance navigating the site, call Deanna or Jane at the FutureHeights office.

#### Promoting local sustainability

Since 2002 the HeightsShops program has recognized significant contributions local, independent businesses make to the economic fabric of the community. At this year's 5th Annual Best of the Heights Awards a record number of people voted for their favorite local businesses.

Sadly, FutureHeights suspended its successful Gift Certificate Program in February 2009, when our supplier, Certifichex, filed for bankruptcy. Our HeightsShops Committee continues to evaluate options for replacing this popular program.

Cleveland Bridge Builders completed a survey to help FutureHeights better understand the needs of local businesses and the value they see in their relationship with us. We continued our collaboration with COSE on the I Buy Northeast Ohio, customer loyalty program, which rewards consumers for shopping with local businesses. And, with the financial support of COSE and the Great Lakes Independent Business Association and planning support from a group of John Carroll University marketing students, we are sponsoring the first Shop Around the Heights event on Nov. 21.

#### **Creating partnerships**

FutureHeights continues to partner with WJCU 88.7 FM to produce a weekly, local news segment.

Many organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, the CH-UH Public Library, the CH-UH City School District, the cities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights, the Home Repair Resource Center, Heights Community Congress, Heights Youth Club, Heights Arts, Heights Parent Center, and more contribute regular articles to the *Heights Observer*. Nonprofit and neighborhood groups are increasingly connecting with their constituents through the *Heights Observer*.

#### **Promoting our community**

FutureHeights co-sponsored tours of Grant Deming's Forest Hill neighborhood, which has been nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, Heights History Day at the library, and a lecture on how the older and historic homes that we have in abundance in the Heights can be "green" and sustainable. We also marched in our first University Heights Memorial Day Parade.

#### Looking to the future

In 2010, we'll expand our outreach into Heights neighborhoods and encourage even more citizens to become engaged through the *Heights Observer*, volunteer opportunities and neighborhood meetings; increase our support of the local economy through special events and programs; and continue to collaborate with neighborhood groups and fellow nonprofits to sponsor events and issues-based forums that keep citizens active and involved.

Thank you for your investment in us during these difficult economic times. Careful stewardship has enabled FutureHeights to continue to build its civic engagement programs and become an even more vital force for positive change in our community. Thank you for being a part of a bright future!

# Meet the 2009 FutureHeights Board of Directors



Gina Cheverine President

Lives in the Oxford neighborhood of Cleveland Heights • Enjoys organizing her neighborhood around important issues facing inner-ring suburbs• Is chief program officer for the YWCA Greater Cleveland



Mark Majewski Immediate Past President Owns Northstar Planning and Design LLC • Likes benefiting the community through his involvement with FutureHeights • Is an avid gardener and tinkerer



**Toby Rittner** Vice President Is president and CEO of the Council of Development Finance Agencies • Believes FutureHeights programs, such as the Heights Observer, have had a real impact on the Heights • Serves on the Cleveland Heights Cable Television Commission and volunteers with Interfaith Hospitality Network, Hands-on Northeast Ohio and the Cleveland Foodbank



#### Michael Wellman Vice President

Is an architect with Richard L. Bowen & Associates • Is concerned for the community in which he lives and desires to make it better • serves on the Cleveland Heights Board of Zoning Appeals



Hugh Williams Secretary

Has lived in University Heights for 12 years • Is director of operations for the Cleveland Foodbank • Wants to see the Heights become THE place to live for progressive minded, intellectually stimulating people of all origins



Patrick Paoletta

Is vice president of commercial banking for First Merit Bank • Likes to be involved in the community and help add direction • Formerly of Shaker Heights, he has lived in Cleveland Heights for 11 years



#### Lloyd Bell

Has two children thriving in the CH-UH school system • Is director of the corporate finance group of Meaden & Moore, Ltd. • Is a 15-year resident of Cleveland Heights



Deborah Edwards Is a partner at Boommodern, a gallery specializing in iconic 20th Century modern furniture and design • Is a 16-year resident of Cleveland Heights • Animal advocate, dog lover and sailor • Passionate about maintaining the life, diversity and energy of our first-ring suburbs!



Judith Miles Is an attorney with the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office • Is a small business consultant• Lives in the Oxford area of Cleveland Heights



#### Vince Reddy

Is project manager for Cleveland Public Art • Loves Cleveland Heights and the standard-setting role it plays in Greater Cleveland • He also worries about the city's fragility • Executive committee member of the Ohio Planning Conference, Cleveland Section



Bob Rosenbaum Is owner of The Market-Farm LLC, and 25-year journalist and publisher • Believes transparency and civil discourse are the keys to a strong community • Father of 3, and an avid sailor and lifetime Heights resident



Lisa Smith Is Marketing Manager for Cuyahoga Community College • Is a 9-year resident of Cleveland Heights • Loves all the Heights has to offer from great restaurants to one-of-akind shops



Clare Taft Is is an associate at Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff LLP • Is a 10-year resident of Cleveland Heights • Loves the character of the neighborhoods and homes in Cleveland Heights.



Tim Wojnar Is president of Priva, LLC, an Internet consultancy located in Cleveland Heights • Is a 12-year resident of Cleveland Heights • Is an avid traveler and martial artist

Our thanks to former board members Yemi Akande, Greg Donley, Andrea Morris, Sarah Wean and Jessica Schreiber for their years of dedicated service to the mission of FutureHeights.





Our Mission

FutureHeights promotes a vibrant and sustainable future for Cleveland Heights and University Heights through innovative ideas and civic engagement.

FutureHeights values:

- Active and informed citizen participation in community decision making
- Innovative ideas in addressing the challenges of inner ring suburbs
- Open and effective communication and partnerships among nonprofits, schools, local business, city government, and citizens
- A thriving local business community
- Historic neighborhoods and commercial districts
- High quality and sustainability in design and architecture
- A regional approach to innovation, planning, and development

FutureHeights is a 501 (c) (3) organization.

# Join Us

Your tax-deductible membership contribution goes directly to supporting the community-based programs and projects of FutureHeights that help strengthen our wonderful neighborhoods. Join online today at our secure website, www.futureheights.org, or by calling 216-320-1423. FutureHeights 2163 Lee Road, Suite 103 Cleveland Heights, OH 44118 www.futureheights.org Nonprofit Organization US Postage PAID Cleveland, Ohio Permit No. 920

### 2008 Financial Statement

Unaudited condensed statement of activities

Revenue and Support Grants	¢44.000
	\$44,000
Memberships	23,991
Annual fund	6,465
Interest Income	946
Product Sales	200
Online Auction	18,354
Advertising Revenue	24,330
Misc.	11,956
Total Revenue and Support	130,242
Expenses	
Program	\$101,486
General and Administration	40,252
Fundraising	1,960
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Total Expenses	143,700
Change in Net Assets	(13,458)
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	89,742
Net Assets at End of Year	\$76,284
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The FutureHeights financial year begins January 1 and ends December 31. FutureHeights is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Contributions to FutureHeights are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. FutureHeights participates in GuideStar, the online standard for nonprofit accountability. Please visit GuideStar.org to view the organization's Annual Form 990 and other organizational information.



### Be Local. Buy Local.

Purchase the I BUY NEO community card for \$10 and use it in the Heights and at thousands of participating NE Ohio local, independent businesses for cash rewards and donations to local nonprofit organizations (such as FutureHeights). Purchase online at www.ibuyneo.com, by telephone at 216-320-1423 or e-mail us at info@futureheights.org and we'll get the card to you.

# Supporters 2008–2009

Foundation Support Great Lakes Independent Business Association The Bregenzer Fund of the Cleveland Foundation The Cyrus Eaton Foundation The Katherine & Lee Chilcote Foundation The Paintstone Foundation Anonymous The Wolpert Fund of the Cleveland Foundation

#### **Business/Nonprofit Support**

Academy Music Studios Alladin's Eatery Amy R. Roth & Co. Anonymous Ardmore Tree Service Ascherman Photographers Atma Center - Yoga for EVERY Body Biers and Cowells Big Fun Big Fun Toy Store Bodega Bold Alternatives BOOMModern Bremec On the Heights Garden Center Brennan's Colony Cafe Tandoor Cedar Fairmount SID CGB Tech Solutions CH Teachers Union Chestnut Hills Yoga City of Cleveland Heights CityMusic Cleveland CL Barber Salon Family Hair Design Cleveland Botanical Garden Cleveland Cinemas **Cleveland Restoration Society** Cleveland Zoological Society Clyde's Bistro & Barroom Cozy at Home Pet Sitting and Dog Walking Cutri Photo Arts Dewey's Pizza Dobama Theatre Dogtopia Daycare for Dogs Doty & Miller Architects Elizabeth M Woda, Esq. Focus Educational Services, Inc. Forest Hill Home Owners Inc. Genie Repros, Inc Geraci's Restaurant Grace Chin Design Grace Partners LLC Gray & Company, Publishers Green Tara Yoga and Healing Arts Greener Home Services Hang It Up! Framing Gallery Heights Arts Heights Center Ltd. Heights Mini Storage Heights Parent Center Heights Rockefeller Building Hollis Automotive, Inc. Inspiral Motion International Partners in Mission Isle of Beads I.A.C. Business Communications, Inc. ID Breast Cancer Foundation Jillian's Billiards Club John Florian Koncar Interiors Jubilee! Gifts in the Heights June Greenwald Antiques , Karma Yoga Cleveland Kathy the Coach La Tea Dolly - Tea Parties for a Princess Liquid Planet Mac's Backs Paperbacks Marchetti Company Melt Bar & Grilled Merritt Bakery & Café

Mitchell's Fine Candies Mo & Son Inc. Motorcars Honda Nela Florist Nemastil Home Inspections Nighttown Organizing 4 U Pacific East Restaurant Pentagon Gallery and Frame Pizzazz On The Circle Priva Quintana's Barber & Dream Spa Reflections Interior Design Revive Fair Trade Richard Carla for Hair Sanctuary by joyce Secic Statistical Consulting, Inc. Seitz-Agin Hardware Shawn Paul Gustafson Simply Charming Boutique Skov Šilk Something Dada South Overlook: A Jazz Combo St. Paul Men's Council Starbucks Coffee Company Strategic Pricing Associates Studio Taylor Table 45 Taste The Chautauqua Institution The Cleveland Free Clinic The Cleveland Museum of Art The Fairmount Group The Grog Shop The Home Repair Resource Center of Cleveland Heights The Little Gym The Market Farm The Stone Oven Bakery and Cafe The Union Club of Cleveland The Well Dressed Food Company Three Gates Massage-Karan Shelley Tobi Jewelry Verne & Ellsworth Hann, Inc. Vidstar Video Vixseboxse Art Galleries Washington & Lee Service Wood Trader Your Business Zagara's Marketplace

#### Individuals

Louise Acheson Mark & Kathryn Adams Tom & Laurie Adams **Rick Adante** Stanley & Hope Adelstein Daniel & Chantal Akerib Laurie Albright Anonymous Patricia Anderson William Annable Anonymous Carol Armbrust Dan & Becky Austin Sherry Ball Ken Barcus Anonymous George Barletta Russell Baron Pam Barr Dennis & Kathy Barrie Jim & Marjorie Bashaw Christine Bates Margaret Baughman Daniel Beach David Beach & Constance Magoulias Ed Becker Jerry & Maureen Belinson Lloyd & Betsey Bell Jeffrey & Joan Bendix Steven & Cheryl Bennett Clurie Bennis David Benson Marcie Bergman Gladys Bergson Thomas & Dorothy Bier Michael & Jennifer Bier

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