

SOUTH SIDE SLOPES TODAY

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE SOUTH SIDE SLOPES
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Community Meetings in 2021

May 11 - via Zoom

July 13 - Picnic - TBD

Oct. 12 - TBD

Dec. 14 - Holiday Party TBD

All Slopes residents welcome!

Visit southsideslopes.org
for Zoom info and other updates.

Hello neighbors!

Without question, 2020 and much of 2021 will go down as one of the most challenging and stressful times in recent history. In March of 2020, I was privileged to be elected president of the South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association (SSSNA) and have been lucky enough to be in community with valued partners and fellow board members as we forged a path forward.

The SSSNA is made up of volunteers who have dedicated themselves to improving the lives of our neighbors and community. We have done this through organizing community events, advocating for the neighborhood, working with officials to elevate public safety concerns, addressing the housing supply, and creating, maintaining and improving the public gardens and green spaces in the Slopes.

While we've shifted to meeting virtually, our commitment to the organization's mission remains unchanged. In many ways, the past year gave us an opportunity to reassess our strategies and forced us to be agile in responding to the ever-shifting needs of our community and the neighbors most impacted by the pandemic.

Some of our recent efforts include:

- *Donating \$5,000 to The Brashear Association and partnering on a dollar-for-dollar match campaign that ultimately raised more than \$11,000 for their food assistance program.*
- *Donating \$1,000 to the Hot Metal Faith Community for their efforts in homeless outreach and \$4,000 for The Brashear Association's holiday children's gift drive.*
- *Organized the first ever "virtual" StepTrek. Thanks to many of you, the 20th annual StepTrek raised the most funds to date – allowing us to give back more to the community!*
- *Funded a South Side Park wetlands study – the first step in developing an ADA trail on the back side of the Bandi Schaum Community Garden.*
- *Formally recognized as a Registered Community Organization (RCO) by the City of Pittsburgh. In addition to being recognized on official maps, brochures and directories – it means we have a larger voice in the future of our neighborhood. As an RCO, we are entitled to advance notification of public hearings, guaranteed meetings with developers/applicants prior to a public hearing and partnership on a potential new Neighborhood Plan in coordination with the Planning Commission.*

I could not be prouder to be part of these efforts to prioritize those who have been most impacted. It is also why we included some suggested resources in this edition (see p. 4). While not exhaustive, we hope they are helpful.

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Thank you for being a friend (of StepTrek)

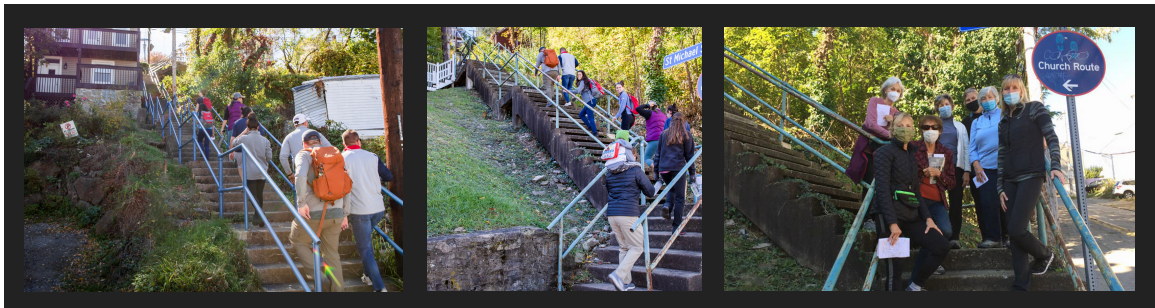


During a year of uncertainty and changes, the generosity and support of the community made StepTrek's 20th year one of the best ever.

In a "normal" year, the first Saturday in October hosts StepTrek, where the marketplace at 21st & Josephine Streets teems with trekkers waiting to hit the streets and steps. In year's past, on that first Saturday in October, urban hikers weaved, climbed and navigated their way around the neighborhood using the thoughtfully created StepTrek map as their guide. However, in 2020, StepTrek "day" turned into StepTrek "week" (Oct. 1-7) and was a completely self-guided, socially distanced trek through the neighborhood.

In support of the event, 41 individuals "stepped up" and with a \$100 donation and became a Friend of StepTrek. If you would like to try out one of the mapped courses, visit the StepTrek website at steptrek.org to download a map and find your way around a new corner, street or section of the Slopes.

SAVE THE DATE: StepTrek 2021 will take place on Saturday, Oct 2. Fingers crossed it will (again) be an in-person event!!



The struggle is real: parking in the city

SUBMITTED BY BRAD PALMISIANO, SSSNA BOARD MEMBER

We all know that parking in the South Side Slopes can be trying at times. The SSSNA reminds all neighbors to be respectful of each other when parking and to try to abide by City of Pittsburgh parking laws as much as possible. This means parking as far away from corners as you can, knowing that firetrucks or ambulances may need to take those corners in the event of emergency. Be respectful of no parking and fire lane signs. Also please try to respect curb cuts and not to park over the water/gas shutoff valves on sidewalks when you must park partially on the sidewalk. If you have to park in a bad spot because nothing else is available, please move your car as soon as a real spot opens.

If we all take a few moments and think about how our parking impacts our neighbors we can get along with the limited parking available. e vehicle would prevent the free movement of a public transit vehicle. To learn more about Pittsburgh's parking enforcement, visit: <http://www.pittsburghparking.com/enforcement>.

Adopt-a-Step in the Slopes

SUBMITTED BY LUCIA SANCHEZ
MADRIGAL, SSSNA BOARD MEMBER

The South Side Slopes' Adopt-a-Step program was pioneered in summer 2020.

The program was born as a necessity to continue the neighborhood volunteering cleanup events and summer traditions while maintaining the physical distancing that 2020 required. Group cleanups were organized in small, masked, socially distanced meetups, but the majority of the participants chose to "adopt" a step on their own time -- they maintained a set of steps and kept it clean of debris and weeds.

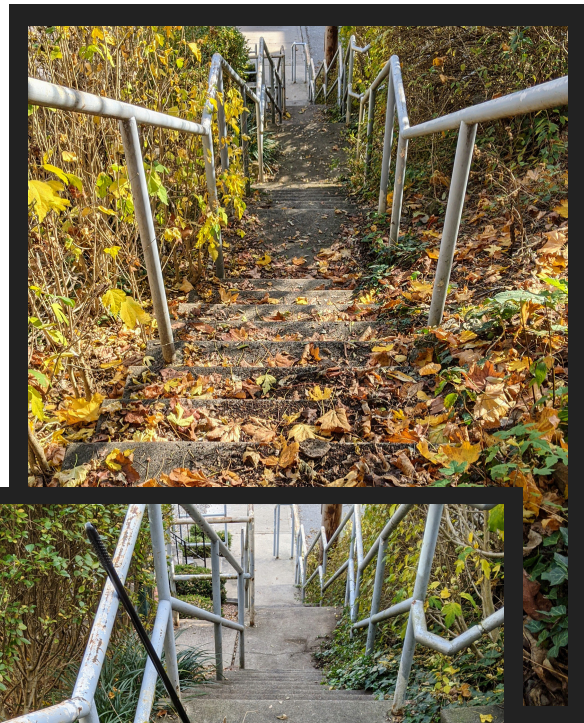
In addition to the Adopt-a-Step program, the SSSNA hosted a team in Pittsburgh's 2020 Garbage Olympics to help clean up the Jurassic Valley in South Side Park.



Above: South Side Slopes 2020 Garbage Olympics Team

A total of 19 volunteers working a combined 38 hours gathered 30 bags of trash, 40 tires and 10 cubic yards of debris!

Thank you to all who took time to help out and clean up the neighborhood. If you would like to adopt a step in 2021 or to join a clean-up event when the weather breaks, please sign up for our eblasts at southsideslopes.org or follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/southsideslopes.



Above: "Adopted" steps around the neighborhood got a makeover. (Before: top photo / After: bottom photo)

Finding help during these trying times

Many in our neighborhood are hurting and may need some help during the pandemic. It can be hard to know where to go and find assistance, below is a list of organizations, programs and companies that can help.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

United Way of Southwestern PA: Call 2-1-1 for help finding food, housing or financial assistance.

Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging:

Seniors registered with program can get free takeout meals at one of six locations between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Mon., Wed. and Fri. Call 1-800-344-4319.

Brashear Association: Food pantry operating a grab-n-go service Tues. & Thurs. 12-4:30 p.m. by appointment. Call 412-431-2236 to register.

HOUSING/EVICTION HELP

The Urban Redevelopment Authority Housing Opportunity Fund: Offering help with rent payments due to COVID-19-related losses in work and wages. Call 2-1-1 or text your zip code to the United Way at 898-211.

Neighborhood Legal Services: Eviction proceedings have been temporarily halted. Also, shutoffs of gas, water and electric have been halted until further notice. Find out more at: <https://www.nlsa.us/covid-19>.

Allegheny Co. Housing Authority: Working with residents who have had their work hours reduced due to COVID-19 crisis. Call 412-355-8940.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Dollar Energy Fund: One-time assistance grants of up to \$500 are available to limited-income households. Call 1-800-683-7036 for more info.

Hebrew Free Loan Assoc. (non-sectarian): Sign up for 100% free financial coaching and counseling sessions. Also offer low-interest bridge loans for those affected by the pandemic. Call 412-422-8868.

HEALTH INFO & HELP

Allegheny County Health Dept: Get local info on COVID-19 at www.alleghenycounty.us.

Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics

Anonymous: Offer virtual meetings online.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services:

Crisis Hotline—1-800-662-HELP (4357).

UPMC Crisis Services—1-888-796-8226.

Peer Support & Advocacy Network—412-227-0402.

South Hills Interfaith Movement's

CheckMates: Seniors who are feeling lonely and isolated can stay connected with weekly, confidential phone call. To enroll, call 412-854-9120, ext. 116.

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In other community news, on Monday, Feb. 8, there was a 4-alarm fire that tore through a historic building on 11th & E. Carson Streets. The building housed the South Side Chamber of Commerce, J Master's Barbershop and two residential tenants who lost everything. Thankfully, everyone is safe and the amount of support shown by the broader South Side community is testament to the strength and resilience of the community.

We are deeply committed to continuing to work together and building a community where everyone in the Slopes thrives. I look forward to once again enjoying a laugh, a meal and a hug with you – our cherished friends and neighbors - hopefully very soon.



Stay safe,

Blake M. McLaren
President of SSSNA

Exciting things happening in South Side Park

SUBMITTED BY KITTY VAGLEY, FRIENDS OF SOUTH SIDE PARK (FOSSP)

Spring is in the air, and there is a lot going on in South Side Park in 2021. There are five major areas of work planned, according to Friends of South Side Park (FOSSP), a neighborhood group focused on making the 65-acre park a more useable community asset.

The biggest project this year the first phase of the park's Master Plan. The City of Pittsburgh's expects work to begin on a new playground, an entrance from S. 18th St., a basketball court and a parking lot near Quarry Field, as well as the construction of the first part of a stormwater swale. View the entire South Side Park Master Plan here: <https://pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/south-side-park>.

Friends of South Side Park (FOSSP) is coordinating the reforestation of the park. This entails clearing the grapevine and other roots that remain following the Allegheny GoatScape goat herd's "work" of eating invasive plants last summer. The goats will return August 2021 for another month of munching. Side note: FOSSP is working to bring back goat yoga this year. Stay tuned!

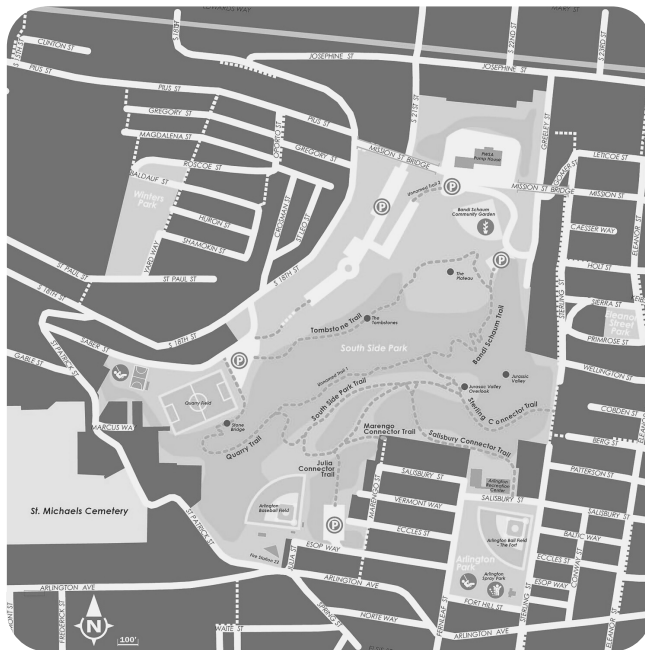
The third area of focus is the beautification of the Mission Street entrance across from the PWSA pump house. The Student Conservation Association (SCA) will work with FOSSP this summer on improvements to the area.

The fourth project planned is the creation of a new ADA trail near Bandi Schaum Community Garden. A URA Neighborhood Initiatives Fund grant to the South Side Community Council has funded the design and engineering of the trail. A search is underway to find additional funding for the trail's construction in 2022.

The final park project involves the Watershed Task Force and Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy working on an illustrative concept plan to address erosion issues on the trails, recommend parking lot reorganization and identify potential opportunities for green stormwater infrastructure. The plan is expected to be completed this spring.

Want a hiking tour of the park? Or, interested in volunteering?

Contact FOSSP at:
Friendsofsouthsideparkpgh@gmail.com



Calling all amateur photographers!

1st annual Slopes photo calendar contest opens April 15



To celebrate the unique beauty and interesting views of the neighborhood, the SSSNA is calling for photo submissions for our first-ever calendar contest! Winners will be included in a forthcoming 2022 photo calendar, which will be available for sale in fall 2021.

Photographs can range from a vista you enjoy while walking the dog or an interesting vantage point neighborhood and what it meant to you. We only ask that it be a scene from South Side Slopes and include a short caption.

- Contest submission **opens on April 1** and runs through July 1, 2021.
- Digital images only (JPG, PNG, or GIF taken from a 3 megapixels camera (or higher).
- Limit of three photo submissions per person.

Full entry rules and instructions can be found on our website at **southsideslopes.org**. The top 12 photos (one for each month in the calendar) will be judged and selected by the SSSNA board. However, the calendar's cover photo will be decided by a public vote starting in July. Get outside and get snapping!

E. Carson St. Update

*SUBMITTED BY BLAKE MCLAREN,
PRESIDENT SSSNA*

The East Carson Street Safety Improvement Project runs along the 2.5-mile stretch of E. Carson Street between Smithfield and 33rd Streets. It includes milling and resurfacing, signage and signal upgrades, concrete pavement patching, drainage, guide rail, ADA ramps, curb and sidewalk, pavement markings and other construction. Additionally, changes intended for pedestrians - such as bump-outs, high visibility crosswalks, countdown signals, etc. - will be incorporated. Beginning in March, crews begin installation of curbs and medians, replacing sidewalks and installing new lights signals at intersections. In the fall, new ADA ramps, sidewalks, curbs and drainage will be constructed.

Single-lane restrictions on E. Carson Street between Arlington Avenue and 22nd Street will continue Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Parking and sidewalk restrictions between 5th and 22nd Streets will continue around-the-clock.

The project is on track to conclude in the Spring 2022. More information at www.penndot.gov.

New SSSNA board member focus: Jami Szalla

Jami Szalla, a fifth-generation Pittsburgher, was born and raised on Wellington St. in the South Side Slopes. A proud Carrick High School graduate, she attended Edinboro University of Pennsylvania where she received a degree in forensic accounting. Later, she earned her CPA while working as an internal auditor for the Department of the Navy in Washington, DC. Missing family, friends, and the city she loved, Jami returned to Pittsburgh in 2017 to take an accounting job with UPMC.

Over the next year, she and her now-husband, Dan, purchased and renovated their 1888-built home on Eleanor St., just a few blocks from her childhood home. Recently, Jami and Dan opened Hilltop Coffee (www.hilltopcoffeepgh.com) - a community-focused café on the corner of Eleanor & Arlington. In her spare time, Jami enjoys participating in community events, reading historical fiction, gardening, traveling and running.

Welcome to the board, Jami!

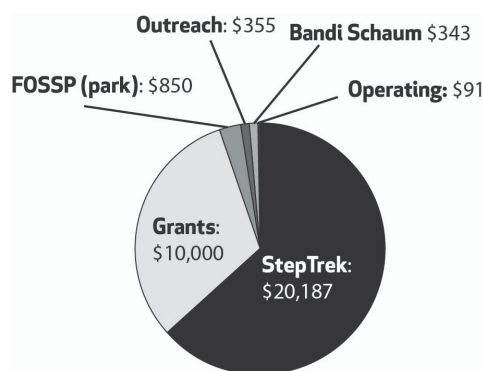
Looking back at 2020: Treasurer's recap

SUBMITTED BY CARA JETTE, TREASURER OF SSSNA

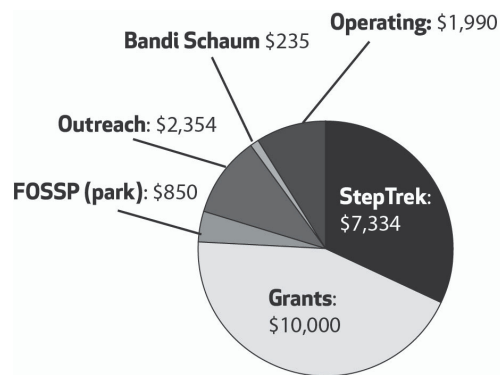
As we all know, 2020 was a difficult year financially for many. However, thanks to the generosity of StepTrek sponsors and attendees, the South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association (SSSNA) had a successful budgetary year. Items to highlight are:

- The SSSNA Board donated \$10,000 to assist neighbors this year via the Brashear Association and the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community.
- SSSNA received a \$2,500 grant from the CDBG for communications with neighbors.
- Since StepTrek was a virtual event this year, the expenses were much lower than normal.
- No money was spent on our canceled annual summer picnic. And, instead of a holiday party, we delivered \$500 in gift cards to volunteers and survey respondents.
- Zoom fees replaced meeting room rental fees after March.

We hope to spend more money to support the community with more volunteer days and more meet-ups and celebrations! Here is an overview of our revenue and expenses for 2020:



TOTAL REVENUE = \$31,816



TOTAL EXPENSES = \$22,763

Have a green thumb? Get a garden plot!

Whether you want to grow veggies for yourself and family or enough flowers to fill your vases all summer long, consider getting a garden plot at Bandi Schaum Community Garden. Garden plots are leased through the City of Pittsburgh for \$20 for a 3-year lease.

Lease a plot:

<https://pittsburghpa.gov/dpw/garden-plots-form>



Use your passion and pride for good: Community volunteers needed!

Want to make a difference, get outside, meet new people and have some fun? Whether it's helping to clean up a litter-filled street, planning a community gathering, writing an article or photographing the neighborhood -- we're always looking for folks to pitch in, use their skills and enthusiasm to help make the Slopes a better place to live!

For questions, ideas or how to get involved, email us at: info@southsideslopes.org.

South Side Slopes
Neighborhood Association
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