



The Living City Project



Saturday April 26th Declare in partnership with the city of Dayton will be hosting the Living City Project city-wide clean up! Last year we had over 800 volunteers serve across 32 neighborhoods to remove more than 137 tons of trash & debris from the streets of Dayton! The goal of the Living City Project is to develop community pride by inviting our neighbors to join us as we clean our neighborhoods, giving our city a fresh start and encouraging residents to help us keep our communities clean.

Local churches, neighborhood associations, volunteer groups and businesses in the Greater Dayton area are partnering with Declare and the city of Dayton for this city-wide cleanup. On April 26, hundreds of people will gather across the historic neighborhoods of Dayton to pick up thousands of pounds of trash. The event allows residents from across the city to serve right in their community this spring!! For those coming from outside of the city, this is a great opportunity to lend support and learn while serving alongside neighborhood leaders of Dayton.

This annual cleanup and the after parties that follow bring neighbors together to serve one another and celebrate! Many friendships and partnerships have been developed during these annual cleanups as we put in work to make the Gem City Shine!

For the cleanup, prior registration is not required, but it does help the event place participants

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A Look into the Future of Chaminade Hall



Chaminade Hall. Photo courtesy the University of Dayton via its website.

Few buildings on the University of Dayton campus can boast the activity that once took place in Chaminade Hall. In its heyday, it flaunted a cafeteria bustling with students, a growing library, several study spaces, pool tables, bowling alleys and top floor apartments. Now the only thing that remains is its name, as it stands mainly empty and unused.

Can it be reinvented? Named after founder of the Society of Mary, Father Chaminade, the 120-year-old building sits in the middle of campus as a marker of UD history. Built in 1904, it housed things such as the Central Library in 1916, a student cafeteria in 1947, and a “Skylight Lounge” in 1957.

It held educational classes until 2014 when the School of Education and Health Sciences moved to what is now Fitz Hall. Failing to meet safety standards, the building closed that same year.

Today, the building is used for storing things such as COVID-19 supplies, as it’s unfit for any student or faculty activity. Part of the reason it closed was its absence of handicapped accessible bathrooms and the stairwell’s lack of doors that proved to be a fire hazard.

Many students today see the building as merely abandoned, and when asked if they knew anything about the building, answers varied.

“What even is Chaminade Hall? I’ve never step foot in there,” said senior KinsLeigh Jones.

“I know it’s one of the oldest buildings,” noted senior Giselle Franco.

“It looks pretty empty to me,” said junior Noah Garrick.

Aimed at saving the once historic building, the

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Beta Eta Omega Chapter Celebrates 117th Founders’ Day



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated, Beta Eta Omega Chapter celebrated its 117th Founders’ Day with a luncheon held at the grand Dayton Arcade, 35 W. Fourth Street, Dayton, Ohio on Saturday, March 22, 2025. The theme was “Honoring the Past, Embracing the Present, and Soaring into the Future!”

Beta Eta Omega Chapter was chartered on June 8, 1934, and has a strong history of leading the charge to provide “service to all mankind”, including hosting 5 Great Lakes Regional Conferences, Founding the Al-Ka-Pals Youth Organization (1950), and launching the Scholarship Loan Fund

(1953). It is the home of Mrs. Bernice Irene Sumlin, the 19th International President & CEO, and has produced notable leaders such as Mrs. Charlene Truitt Nelson, 27th Great Lakes Regional Director, and Ms. Kasey Coleman, Former International 2nd Vice President. Education remains a priority with the

Susannah B. Anthony/Hattie B Wells 8th Grade Recognition and the Ebony Jewels and Gems Cotillion, which has awarded over \$846,000 in scholarships.

The outstanding Co-chairs for this magnificent event were Mrs. Porscha Coney and Mrs.

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Local Teen One of 10 Finalists for Ohio Youth of the Year

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio (WKBN) — A local teen is making Youngstown proud by being recognized as one of the best and brightest in Ohio.

The Boys and Girls Club of Youngstown stopped by the First News station Thursday afternoon for a tour. One member, Jeremiah Robinson, is one of ten finalists vying for Ohio

Youth of the Year. The honor celebrates leadership, service, and resilience in teens across the state.

“It’s a great opportunity. I feel like I’ve worked for this my whole life. The Boys and Girls Club has started me off since I was eight till now, and I’m just glad that I was chosen,” Robinson said.

The Youth of the Year Awards Luncheon will be held on April 3 in Columbus.



Jeremiah Robinson

Flyer Nation Build Through Habitat for Humanity



Yalonda and her children receive new home.

For Yalonda, becoming a homeowner means far more than just having a place to call her own—it signifies a life-changing opportunity for her and her family. Born and raised in Dayton, Yalonda has spent the past 50 years deeply rooted in her community, embracing its values and contributing to its well-being. Her passion for helping others, both personally and professionally, makes her the perfect partner for this year’s Flyer Nation Build through Habitat for Humanity of Greater Dayton.

As a State Tested Nursing Assistant (STNA) for 25 years, Yalonda has dedicated her career to caring for others. Her compassion and commitment shine through in her work, and that same dedication has carried over into her Dayton Habitat journey. One of the most rewarding aspects of the Dayton Habitat program has been the required

sweat equity hours. Working alongside other partner families and volunteers, Yalonda has gained hands-on experience in home construction—skills she never imagined she would learn. From hanging drywall to installing cabinets, she now feels confident in her ability to maintain and repair her new home. More than just learning new skills, she has also built lasting relationships and found support within the Dayton Habitat community.

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Dayton’s program also requires all partner families to complete at least 60 hours of homeownership courses. These classes prepare families for the responsibilities of owning a home, covering topics such as budgeting, maintenance, and financial literacy. For Yalonda, the most valuable lesson was money management—learning to prioritize needs over wants.

This knowledge has not only empowered her to become a more responsible homeowner but also provided her with tools she can pass on to her six children, three of whom still live at home.

Currently, Yalonda and her children live in a home that lacks basic necessities, including a shower, air conditioning, and sufficient space. Their new home, built through the Flyer Nation Build, will promote

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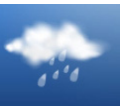


# Around DAYTON

Miami Valley Weather

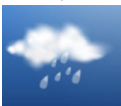
Saturday

Rain  
High 77  
Low 62



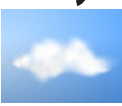
Sunday

Rain  
High 70  
Low 58



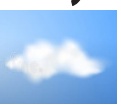
Monday

Cloudy  
High 57  
Low 37



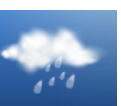
Tuesday

Cloudy  
High 54  
Low 46



Wednesday

Rain  
High 76  
Low 63



FLYER NATION BUILD



Flyer Nation Build Opening

Are you ready for this? The Flyer Spirit is coming back to Edgemont thanks to the partnership between Habitat for Humanity of Greater Dayton and the University of Dayton School of Business Administration! Join us as we open our second Flyer Nation Build.

Attendees will have the opportunity to sign up for priority volunteer dates, explore Edgemont and meet the partners who are making this project possible. We cannot wait to see you there!

Friday, March 28, 2025  
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm  
720 Maitland Ave  
Edgemont, OH 45417

Let us know that you will be there using the QR code to the right:







937.586.0860  
DaytonHabitat.Org/  
FlyerNation

## Flyer Nation Build Through Habitat for Humanity... Continued from Page 1

vide them with a safe, comfortable environment where they can thrive. Having a stable home will allow Yalonda to continue pursuing her education and fulfill her dream of becoming a nurse. Meanwhile, her children will have the space and resources they need to

explore their interests and work toward their own aspirations, like Christian leadership, video games, or hair design. This new chapter is a testament to Yalonda’s unwavering determination and strength. Her journey to homeownership has not been easy, but her perseverance and commitment

to improving her family’s future have made it all worthwhile. Through the support of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Dayton and the Flyer Nation Build, Yalonda and her family are stepping into a brighter future—one built on a foundation of hope, hard work, and community.

## Photos with the Easter Bunny at The Greene

The Dayton Weekly News

Published By  
Dayton Weekly News  
PO Box 1895  
111 E. Fifth St.  
Dayton, OH 45401  
(937)397-7796  
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Event details  
Event by: The Greene  
• Sat, Apr 05 2025  
Noon - 6:00pm  
• Sun, Apr 06 2025  
Noon - 6:00pm  
• Thu, Apr 10 2025  
4:00pm - 7:00pm  
• Fri, Apr 11 2025  
2:00pm - 7:00pm  
• Sat, Apr 12 2025  
Noon - 6:00pm  
• Sun, Apr 13 2025  
Noon - 6:00pm  
• Thu, Apr 17 2025  
4:00pm - 7:00pm  
• Fri, Apr 18 2025  
2:00pm - 7:00pm  
• Sat, Apr 19 2025  
Noon - 6:00pm  
Show more dates  
• Easter Fun at The Greene! Brunch, Photos & More!  
Spring into the season with an egg-stra special celebration at The Greene! Bring the little ones (ages 10 & under) for a fun-filled brunch with the Easter Bunny—complete with donuts, crafts, and unforgettable

memories! Plus, the first 75 kids will receive an Easter Goodie Bag!  
• Brunch with the Bunny – April 13 | 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
• Center Court (Rain or shine! Seating in a covered tent)  
• Enjoy donuts & milk (while supplies last)  
• Make an Easter craft  
• Capture the moment with Bunny photos  
And don’t forget—Photos with the Easter Bunny are happening April 5 - April 19 in Center Court at The Greene Connect Building, with professional photography by Schwabe Studio!  
Photo Hours:  
• Thursdays: 4:00 - 7:00 PM  
• Fridays: 2:00 - 7:00 PM  
• Saturdays & Sundays: 12:00 - 6:00 PM  
**Make this Easter one to remember—hop on over and join the fun!**

## DML Adopts Patron Appointment Plan for Southeast Branch

Beginning Monday, March 31, through Friday, May 30, patrons who wish to visit Dayton Metro Library’s Southeast Branch Monday-Friday between 2:30-4 pm can now do so by making an appointment. Thirty patron appointments will be available each day. Appointments to visit the Branch can only be made online (same-day walk-in appointments will not be accommodated). Appointments are

available for all ages and may be made in one of three ways: Visit DML’s online appointment system, visit the Branch during other open hours, or call the Library’s Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665. Visit DaytonMetroLibrary.org/locations/3/ directly to make a patron appointment. While the Southeast Branch has been closed between 2:30-4 pm, Monday-Friday, this new policy will allow for con-

sistent access while managing the volume of patron visits. Appointment times can be used to access the Library’s services, such as computer use, browsing the Library’s collections, checking out materials, obtaining staff assistance, etc. Additional information and/or questions about this policy may be directed to the Library’s Ask Me Line.

## The Living City Project... Continued from Page 1

where most needed. Visit LivingCityProject.org to learn more and click “Volunteer” to register. The event will be as follows:  
Location:  
• 0+ host sites across Dayton. See LivingCityProject.org for locations  
Times:  
• 8:30 am – Register or Sign-in  
• 9:00-11:45 am – Cleanup Event  
• 12:00 pm – After Party and lunch at Hope Hill Church or Revival Center Ministries  
Thank you to Kettering Health and CareSource for sponsoring this event! “The Living City Project has had a major im-

pact on decreasing blight across the city of Dayton over the past few years and your efforts continue to move Dayton in the right direction.” - Jeffery Mims, Dayton Mayor  
“This event is very important for our neighborhoods. It makes an enormous impact in a three-hour period on a single day. It helps give our neighborhoods a clean slate. Sometimes between litter and dumping, it becomes so overwhelming for some of our neighborhoods. The Living City Project really helps with neighborhood pride and taking ownership of your block, your street and your neighborhood as a

whole.” - Mike Squire, City of Dayton Division Manager of Community Engagement  
“This citywide cleanup is such a simple but beautiful way that we can partner together to make an impact, share God’s love, and our love for one another. As Pastor Joel Burton always said, "Let Love Lead!" - Caleb Ingram, Declare  
Declare has held many events uniting thousands across the Greater Dayton region since 2014. For more information email connect@declare.org or visit www.Declare.org to learn more.

## Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Beta Eta Omega Chapter Celebrates 117th Founders’ Day... Continued from Page 1

Shalay Pitts. The Mistress of Ceremony was Ms. Myra Bozeman. The welcome was provided by Mrs. Cynthia Booker-Neilson, President. An introduction was provided by Ms. Kamesha Johnson. The invocation was provided by Mrs. Brittany Lewis. The history was provided by Mrs. Paula Cosby, Historian. A smooth, welcoming musical performance was provided by Mr. Ric Sexton, Saxophonist. Introduction of the guest speaker was provided by Mrs. Carla Scott, Vice President.

The guest speaker was Dr. Ashley Jordan, President and CEO of the African American Museum in Philadelphia, PA. Dr. Jordan is also a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated. Dr. Jordan’s message centered around the need for audacious freedom. She challenged everyone to a call of action for such a time as this, encouraging everyone to never lose the ability to be audacious. Realizing ordinary people have always made extraordinary contributions, Dr. Jordan exclaimed the urgency to echo the power of our history, maintain economic power and education power as everyone soars into the future. Frederick Douglas once said, “We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and the future”, emphasizing the importance

Guest Speaker, President, Vice President and Co-Chairmen

Guest Speaker and Co-Chairmen

of learning from the past to build a better future. The celebration included a special presentation of a new Beta Eta Omega Chapter award, the Soaring Star Award. It was presented to Mrs.

Stacey Benson-Taylor, former Montgomery County Recorder, for her outstanding service to the community. Mrs. Benson-Taylor was extremely grate-

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# National

## Social Media Calls for Black People to Stay Home on Nation Day of Action April 5th

Black folks on social media are warning Black Americans not to participate in an upcoming global protest against the Trump administration and Elon Musk.

On Saturday, April 5, thousands of people in the U.S. and around the world are preparing to protest Trump in what they are calling “Hands Off! National Day of Action.”

According to Third Act, one of the organizations that helped put together this massive protest said the event is meant to stand up against those who believe they can take whatever they want—our democracy, our future, our rights. So far, more than 600 events have been planned across all 50 states. Events have also been planned in Europe and Canada.

Indivisible, another organization helping to mobilize, prompted the protest on BlueSky, writing, “Donald Trump and Elon Musk think this country belongs to them. They’re taking everything they can get their hands on and daring the world to stop them. On April 5, we’re taking to the streets na-

tionwide to fight back with a clear message: Hands off!”

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt pushed back against the protest, saying they will never work to deter the President from further pushing his agenda.

“Anyone who thinks protests, lawsuits, and lawfare will deter President Trump must have been sleeping under a rock for the past several years,” Leavitt said in a statement to USA Today . “President Trump will not be deterred from delivering on the promises he made to make our federal government more efficient and more accountable to the hardworking American taxpayers across the country who overwhelmingly reelected him.”

Black voices on social media took these words to heart and warned Black people of the dangers they could face if they participated in the upcoming protests. Youtubers twins hang out and put together a montage video of the warnings from Black social to share the sentiment with other Black folks.

“Stay out of the way,” one user in the video said. “Do something that will help you become more progressive in your com-

munity. Be more self-sufficient.”

A young Black TikTok also discussed the fear she had for her people who might want to show up and protest.

“All my black folks y’all better not be out there trying to rally. Make sure on April 5th that you are at home, at work and minding your business, reading a book, learning a new skill, but make sure you are not at that rally. She continued, “If we show up it’s not going to turn out pretty. It’s going to get ugly.”

It’s worth mentioning that some Black commentators on the post said they were still protesting no matter what. And although many are warning Black people not to protest in the streets, it hasn’t stopped them from boycotting in other ways.

As NewsOne has previously reported, Target is still having a rough go of it since the company announced back in January that it was ending its DEI initiatives, including a three-year program that focused on building Black careers. The decision by Target, which appears to coincide with the Trump administration’s white nationalist warpath on all things diversity, equity



and inclusion, has resulted in multiple nationwide boycotts that appear to have successfully affected the retail chain’s bottom

line. Trump’s time in office is just beginning and protests have only just begun as well. Black America

has always been a force for resistance, but will it be the same this time around?

# Editorial & Comments

*Something to Consider:*

## The Grass is Always Greener on the Other Side, But it Can Still be Difficult to Mow

By: Brenda Cochran  
Assistant Editor

This saying refers to people thinking that all things are better than what they have or somewhere else especially when they are out of reach, but if we could reach them, we could be disappointed. It is a saying that can remind you to be satisfied for what you have and not to imagine that something else is better just because you can’t have it.

“The Grass always looks better on the other side of the fence” in human terms refers to what is out of reach or unavailable may appear to be greater than what it really is. In other words, people are never satisfied for what they have.

This saying or cliché is probably one of the most widely used by the human race. Can you recall the first time you asked a parent what this phrase meant? I was told that this old proverb was simply meant that people seem to always think they would be happier or better off in life in a different set of circumstances or place.

The fact is that many don’t realize that they already have so many perfect things in their lives. Think about it. They or (you) have friends, spouse or partner, job, house, etc. The sad thing is that it usually takes losing or nearly losing what they have in order for them to realize how much it means to them and how happy they were with what they had.

Don’t you agree that we take too many things for granted? Simple things like freedom, health, and food in the refrigerator, love and of course friend-



Brenda Cochran

ships. I suppose we often take all of these for granted because they have always been in our lives. The more frequent they appear in our lives, the more we grow a certain expectation for them to always be around.

I suppose it takes a lot of emotional stability to be content with what you have or be able to resist the temptation of thinking that other people have it better.

There are so many examples of not realizing what you have until it’s nearly gone and sometimes, the dream and the desire for something are much more appealing than actually getting the thing that you think you want. It could be a new car, a big bank balance, that handsome specimen you would love to have. You might think that any one of these things would make you so happy, but when you get it, you may feel empty and unsatisfied. The fact is that the deception with seeing things that you think will make you happy is that you only see the good side of those things. Once you have them, you will see it without those rose-colored glasses and experience the lesser or bad side

of it. This may leave you thinking it was better when you were just dreaming about it.

Remember – the grass is really not greener than yours. They are both hard to mow.

It seems that our key to having a happy life is being content with who you are and where you are right now. This doesn’t mean that you should settle for the average life or a life that you are not happy with. You can still work hard to get where you want to be, achieve the goals and dreams you have, but don’t forget the present moment for that future happiness that you think you will achieve by copying someone else’s life.

It seems that everyone always wishes for something they don’t have. You might want to be like someone else in certain ways, or you want to live someone else’s life because you think yours is just not that great, but the truth is, you may not have an easy life, but remember it is your life.

Remember too, that you don’t really want to be that person who slaves for years to make millions of dollars, while all you really want is someone who loves you and friends that care about you.

The next time you think someone has it better than you, stop and think about how others may think you have it better than them. The grass on your side may just be greener.

### Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Beta Eta Omega Chapter Celebrates 117th Founders’ Day... Continued from Page 2

ful, thanked the Chapter and commented, “Success is not about the seat you hold; it’s about how you serve in the seat you have the privilege of holding.” The celebration also included a presentation of a proclamation by the Ohio Secretary of State, Mr. Frank LaRose.

The beautiful celebration of sisterhood and service reflects mutual support, friendship, and shared history of purpose. Beta Eta Omega Chapter President, Mrs. Cynthia Booker-Neil-



Co-chairmen with Soaring Star Award recipient Mrs. Stacey Benson-Taylor and Saxophonist



son extends a heartfelt thank you to the Co-chairs for their exemplary leadership and committee members for organizing and

successfully executing a most memorable Founders’ Day Celebration.

JOIN US FOR

SATURDAY  
APRIL 26

LIVINGCITYPROJECT.ORG



# Arts & Entertainment

## DML and DPAA Partner for Free Ticket Performances

Dayton Metro Library and Dayton Performing Arts Alliance (DPAA) are again partnering to provide free tickets to various performances in 2025. Tickets will become available via phone or online registration on Wednesday, April 2, at 10 am for the following performances:

- Masterworks: Dvořák’s Cello Concerto**  
Adrian Daurov, cello  
Neal Gittleman, conductor  
Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Overture from Don Giovanni  
Antonín Dvořák: Cello Concerto in A major  
Igor Stravinsky: Petrushka  
Show dates and times:  
Friday, April 25 and Saturday, April 26, 7:30-8:30 pm  
Location:  
Schuster Performing Arts Center, 1 West 2nd Street, Dayton, 45402  
About the program:  
Cellist Adrian Daurov returns to the Schuster to perform the Dvořák Cello Concerto, one of the most lyrical and monumental concertos in the cello repertoire. Surrounding the piece are two brilliant works that are comedic though a tad eerie  
**Stravinsky's Petrushka ballet score and Mozart's Don**
- Giovanni Overture.**  
Ann Hampton Callaway  
Neal Gittleman, conductor  
Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra  
Show date and time:  
Saturday, May 3, 7:30-8:30 pm  
Location:  
Schuster Performing Arts Center, 1 West 2nd Street, Dayton, 45402  
About the program:  
Tony-nominated pop/jazz singer-songwriter, Ann Hampton Callaway joins Neal Gittleman and the Philharmonic on the DPO stage for a night of classics made famous by some of the biggest names in the business – Barbra Streisand, Carole King, Patti LuPone, Liza Minnelli, Karrin Allyson, and Michael Feinstein, to name a few! Spoil yourself with a spell-binding show of rousing showstoppers, exquisite ballads, and lovely symphonic harmonies.  
**Ballet: Pointes of View**  
George Balanchine: Allegro Brillante  
Andrea Schermoly: Klein Perspectives  
Sanjay Saverimuttu: Anagapesis  
Qarrianne Blayr: World Premiere  
Show dates and times:  
Friday, May 9 and Saturday, May 10, 7:30-8:30 pm  
Location:  
Victoria Theatre, 138 North Main Street, Dayton, 45402  
About the program:  
Enjoy a night of classical and contemporary

ballet and witness the astounding talent of Dayton Ballet’s dancers. Pointes of View showcases choreography from one of the most influential choreographers of the 20th Century, George Balanchine, to up-and-coming choreographers making their mark in today's ever-evolving ballet stages. This performance is sponsored by Larry and Abbie Trittschuh. Additional Information: To register for up to four free tickets to these performances, please visit or call the Box Office at 937.288.3630. The Box Office is open Tuesday through Friday, 10 am-6 pm. Patrons may also register online. When registering online, seating will say General Admission. Specific seats will be assigned closer to the event. DML patrons should have a Dayton Live account created in advance. Accessibility accommodations can be requested at this time. Upon registering, tickets will be reserved, but patrons must show their Dayton Metro Library card upon receipt. A limited number of tickets for each performance will be available first come, first serve. Tickets cannot be exchanged or refunded for cash value. Cancellations will need to be handled through the Box Office. For more information and an online DPAA registration link, visit DaytonMetroLibrary.org or call the Library’s Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.

sources the Library offers with the rich, diverse musical talents of Dayton area artists. Here’s the lineup for the Tiny Stack 2025 season:  
Midwestern Mrs. May 15, Burkhardt Branch  
Jewelless Imani, June 15, Vandalia Branch  
Freakquency, August 21, West Carrollton Branch  
Matthew Bruce, September 18, Northmont Branch  
K Carter, October 16, honoring Outreach Services, location TBA  
Sessions are free and open to all ages. Each show is on a Thursday and begins at 6 pm. Artists will play their original music. For more information about Tiny Stacks and this year’s artists, visit DaytonMetroLibrary.org/TinyStacks.

## Tiny Stacks @ DML Returns for 4th Season

Dayton Metro Library, WYSO of Yellow Springs, and DATV are partnering to present the fourth season of reimagining music in the Library stacks with the Tiny Stacks Music Series. This initiative, sponsored by Friends of the Dayton Metro Library, aims to connect musicians, books, and patrons in one spot. The public is invited to engage in the vast re-

## Clarence “Chet” Willis of The Ohio Players dies at 74

We are sad to pass on the news of the passing of guitar great Clarence “Chet” Willis , a member of the legendary Ohio Players for a half century. Hailing from Dayton, Ohio, Willis’s musical journey commenced in his youth, drawing inspiration from late-night radio broadcasts, church services, and local musical talents. His early career saw him playing guitar for a local gospel group called The Gospel-teers, as well as several local R&B groups. He was influenced by 1960s guitar greats Jimi Hendrix and Carlos Santana, but developed his own style. In 1975, Willis’s prowess on the guitar led to his recruitment by the Ohio Players, where he was affectionately nicknamed “Chet.” His tenure with the band coincided with their golden era, contributing to gold and platinum mega-hits like “Funky Worm,” “Rollercoaster,” “Honey,” “Skin Tight,” and “Fire!” His rhythmic precision and soulful licks became a cornerstone of the band’s distinctive sound, blending seamlessly with their



horn-driven arrangements and dynamic stage presence. In 1979, during a transitional phase for the Ohio Players, Willis, alongside fellow members James “Diamond” Williams and William “Billy” Beck, ventured into a side project that culminated in the formation of the band Shadow. Shadow released three albums on the Elektra label between 1979 and 1981, including “Love Lite,” “Shadow,” and “Shadows in the Street,” showcasing their versatility and commitment to musical innovation. But Willis, who relocated to Georgia late in life, remained part of the core group The Ohio Players well into the 21st Century, with a sound that was essential to the group’s success.

## Dixie Twin Drive-In Receives New Sign



HARRISON TOWNSHIP, Ohio) – On Friday, Dixie Twin Drive-In in Harrison Township screened their first movie since fall of 2024. We caught up with drive-in management and community leaders ahead of the reopening. “The local people love the Dixie Drive-In, they consider it a very important part of the community, and many of the local parents grew up going to the Dixie,” says Dixie Twins CEO Al Bell on what the 69-year-old drive-in movie theater means to the people of Harrison Township. Bell says that their old sign, which was at

the front of the property, was like a landmark in the community. The township’s Communications Manager Nathan Edwards says many were devastated when the sign was destroyed by Hurricane Helene in the fall of 2024. Edwards says, “The sign was a landmark, and we were very sad when it toppled down, but we knew that this community would rally together, rally behind the drive-in, and continue to come out here for a wonderful movie-going experience.” While the drive-in is working with the township to replace their sign, the last weekend in march will serve as their soft reopening for 2025.

Over the weekend, movies like “Wicked” and “The Substance” will be hitting the screens at Dixie Twins, and if you decide to make your way to the theater, you may even get some free popcorn. “This is a great experience, not only for adults, but also for kids. It’s a family viewing experience, so you can come on down now and enjoy the Dixie, and within the next month or so, you’ll see a brand new sign to boot.” The soft re-opening of Dixie Twin will continue from now up until Sunday, and their new sign is expected to be finished by Mid-April.

## DML Welcomes Black Women Filmmakers for Workshop

Dayton Metro Library will host a Workshop for Black Women Filmmakers on Friday, May 16, 4-7 pm, in the Main Library’s Bassani Theater Off Third, 3rd Floor. Registration opens on Tuesday, April 1 – spots are expected to fill up quickly for this unique event. DML has partnered with the Dayton Black Women’s Film Festival

to present this hands-on workshop led by two accomplished Black women filmmakers: Kaliah Ware and Selena Burks-Rentschler. This interactive workshop will be divided into three key areas of focus: directing, writing, and acting, while providing an inspiring and interactive environment. Participants will be encouraged

to engage with each discipline and collaborate with fellow creatives. Ware and Burks-Rentschler will give real-time feedback and share insights from their experience in the industry. For more information and to register, visit DaytonMetroLibrary.org or call the Library’s Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.

## DML Introduces Reading Railroad Initiative

Dayton Metro Library is launching a new storytime series called Hometown Heroes Family Storytime, which will be held one Monday a month throughout the year in the Children’s Creativity Space at the Main Library, from 5:30-6:30 pm. Kids of all ages and caregivers can enjoy fun-filled sessions with books, songs, and activities. Each Hometown Heroes session will also have a special guest reader from the Dayton area. Registration is not required. The Hometown Heroes Family Storytime schedule is as follows:  
April 7: Jeffery Mims, Mayor of the City of Dayton  
May 5: Dr. David Lawrence, Dayton Public

School District Superintendent  
June 2: Mr. Moses Mbe-seha, co-founder of The Conscious Connect Community Development Corporation  
July 7: Rodney Veal, an independent choreographer, interdisciplinary artist, educator, and producer  
August 18: Willis “Bing” Davis, an internationally recognized artist, educator, and community activist.  
September 8: Jeff Jackson, co-owner of the Wright Dunbar Cigar Shoppe in Dayton’s Historic Wright Dunbar District  
October 6: Michael Carter, Senior Advisor to the President of Sinclair Community College  
November 3: Darius Beckham, a former senior

policy aide to the City of Dayton’s mayor.  
December 1: Carl Kennebrew, International President of the IUE-CWA.  
This Hometown Heroes series is part of DML’s Reading Railroad Initiative, which aims to link DML’s communities through literacy. The initiative is dedicated to fostering a love of reading and learning for Black boys and young men. It offers storytelling experiences, curated book selections, signature events, and mentorship from community leaders so that patrons are encouraged to view reading as a tool for self-discovery, empowerment, and lifelong success.



# Education

## CSU 1890 Land-Grant Hosts Open House



Joel Barhorst, Sustainable Agriculture senior, watches drone landing during the 2024 Open House.

WILBERFORCE, OH — The public is invited to join Central State University 1890 Land-Grant Programs for a two-day event: the 2025 Land-Grant Open House and Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activities Day on Friday, April 25, and the Urban Farmer Youth Symposium and 4-H Youth Day on Saturday, April 26.

Attendees will explore groundbreaking research and hands-on demonstrations at Central State University's campus, 1400 Brush Row Road, Wilberforce. They will have the opportunity to engage with faculty, students and community partners as the university celebrates achievements

and innovations in Land-Grant programs.

The April 25 event will feature undergraduate students who have been involved with research in agriculture, nutrition and health and natural resources. A highlight of the event will be student oral and poster presentations. Research faculty will showcase their research and discoveries. Participants are also invited to learn about Extension activities and experience robotics demonstrations, nutrition workshops and more. While at the event, participants can also attend a tree-planting ceremony to commemorate Arbor Day.

The April 26 event will focus on the Urban Farmer Youth Initiative, which

promotes students learning entrepreneurship with agricultural farms in urban areas. The youth who have been involved in the program will be demonstrating their skills and knowledge. A highlight will be a farmers' market featuring products grown and created by the youth.

The university will celebrate its enduring commitment to empowering communities through agricultural and educational excellence. Registration for the free luncheon is required by April 14.

For more information, visit <https://www.centralstate.edu/news/land-grant-open-house-research-day-4-h-youth-symposium-2025>. Watch a promotional video.

## The Dayton Leadership Academy Girls' Basketball Team Made History



The Dayton Leadership Academies girls' basketball team made history this season, clinching the 2024-2025 charter middle school championship with a thrilling run. Despite a shaky 6-4 start, the team rallied on a remarkable six-game winning streak to finish the season as champions. Led by Captain Marjae Linder, who earned MVP honors with over 35 points and 15 steals, and Co-Captain Nyasia Henry, who averaged 5 blocks, 3 steals,

and 6 points per game, the squad showcased grit and determination. Players Cyseli Coleman, Amiyah Jones, Jaeviana Allen, Jaida Smith, Sa'vonna Clemons, and D'myia Lynch all contributed to an aggressive defense, averaging over 10 steals per game.

Guided by Head Coach, Marceline Perry and Assistant Coach, Kailyn Mason, the team overcame adversity, playing shorthanded after losing four players to school

transfers and personal reasons. With the unwavering support of first-year Athletic Director, Nick Kreischer and Team Manager, Shaquille Clemons, they delivered Dayton Leadership Academies its first championship in 11 years. Their triumph is a testament to resilience, teamwork, and the strong leadership culture of their "Leader In Me" school.

## Springboro Schools Receives Auditor of State Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting

SPRINGBORO, OH (March 2025) — Springboro Schools has been honored with the Auditor of State Award in recognition of its exemplary financial reporting and clean audit reports. The district is among an elite group, with only 13% of Ohio's 6,000 govern-

mental entities receiving this distinction.

In addition to the award, Springboro Schools also received a 4-star STARS rating—the highest level possible—for open and transparent government in public records and financial information.

The Auditor of State's

Office presents this award to local governments and school districts that meet stringent audit criteria, including timely financial reporting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), strong internal controls, and no audit findings.

Springboro Schools remains committed to financial responsibility, transparency, and excellence, ensuring that taxpayer funds are managed with the highest level of integrity.



### A Look into the Future of Chaminade Hall... Continued from Page 1

two more stories to make it six floors, and from the committee's research, widening its footprint to make it a total of 120,000 square feet.

What would it be used for? As Krysiak and Fitz have often said that keeping everything "student-centric" is a must. Up on the list of possible ideas is a 24/7 one-stop shop for all student services, which would be led by the Blue Sky Initiative. More meeting rooms and study spaces would also be included, similar to those in Kennedy Union.

Whether the building is renovated or demolished, one decision remains clear, the name of the building stays the same. Committee members who surveyed Marianist folks on campus found that while there was no nos-

talgia for the building itself, there was an attachment to the name.

Fitz, in an interview with this reporter, recalls the Blessed Chaminade statue standing outside Kennedy Union and says that while students may not know the history of the building, "I'm sure they know who it is named after."

One of the biggest challenges the committee faces is meeting the needs of everyone. "Things have changed so much since the first committee was formed," said Krysiak, "we really want it to be pedestrian friendly for students." The committee hopes to complete and present its investigative report to President Spina in June 2024.

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Morning Worship Services.....10:00 a.m.  
WEDNESDAY  
AM Prayer Meeting.....9:30 a.m.  
Bible Study.....11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.  
Saturday  
Bible Study.....11:00 a.m.  
**Pastor Cory J. Pruitt**  
1501 W. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Dayton, OH, 45412





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**Rev. Gerald A. Cooper, Pastor**  
937-268-6729 ~ Office 937-267-9804 ~ Fax  
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Church School 9:00 a.m.  
Worship Services 10:00 a.m.  
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Fax: 937-223-8872  
Email: greater\_allen\_ame@att.net



  
Church Sunday School.....9:15 a.m.  
Sunday Worship.....10:45 a.m.  
Women's Bible Study - Monday.....6:30 p.m.  
Noonday Bible Study - Wednesday.....12:00 p.m.  
Prayer Meeting - Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.  
Bible Study - Wednesday.....7:30 p.m.


**Believers Christian Fellowship Church**  
3010 McCall Street, Dayton, OH 45417  
Tel. No.: 937-279-9343, Fax: 937-279-9342  
Toll Free: 1-844-679-9343  
email:bcfchurch@swohio.twcbc.com  
Sunday Service.....9:30 a.m.  
Church School - Sunday.....8:45 a.m.  
& Wednesday.....1:00 p.m.  
Bible Study/Prayer Meeting - Every  
Wednesday starting at.....6:00 p.m.  
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Other Ministry  
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937-222-4373 - Office - Email: offices@bmbcd Dayton.org





SUNDAYS  
Church School 9:30 a.m.  
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.  
WEDNESDAY  
Bible Study 12:00 noon  
Word & Worship 6:30 p.m.  
Bethel services are aired on DSTV Time  
Warner Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m.  
and Saturdays at  
9:00 p.m. Time Warner Cable 992

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Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.  
Mid Week Prayer Service 7:00 p.m.  
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D.Min., Pastor  
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Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.  
Wednesday  
Prayer/Bible Study, 12:00 & 7:00 p.m.  
Evening Prayer, 6:30 p.m.



**Dixon United Methodist Church**  
1691 Infirmary Rd. – Dayton, OH 45417  
Church Phone:  
(937) 835-3366  
Email:  
Dixonumc1691@gmail.com  
Website:  
Dixonumcd Dayton.org  
Sunday School.....10:00 a.m.  
Sunday Morning Worship.....11:00 a.m.  
Midweek Bible Study- Wednesday.....  
6:00-7:30 p.m. Via Zoom  
Prayer Meeting - Saturday.....10:00 a.m.  
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# Religion

## Church Offers Free Clothing for People in Need

FAIRBORN, Ohio (WDTN) — A church in Fairborn is helping to lighten the load, giving clothes to people who need them.

The Free Clothing Closet started about 15 years ago in the basement at the First Church of God Tabernacle in Fairborn when the pastor and some church members saw a need for it.

“The stories that they tell, it touches their heart of families that come in. There’s a reason that we feel it’s worthwhile,” says Lowell Lay, the pastor of the church.

Opening its doors, anyone can come in and fill a bag full of clothes for free with no questions asked.

“Two teenage boys came in from the community, and they came down and got their clothes, came back upstairs, and one of them said, ‘I’m so excited. I’ve got my school clothes now.’ Through that it showed us the need and the appreciation,” recounts Lowell.

Every time they open, they serve about 80 to 130 people, and it’s all made possible with volunteers and donations. They accept new and gently used clothing.

Dee Blevins has taken on the role of coordinator for the last eight years.

“It truly is a blessing for us to be able to serve the public,” says Dee. “I have people who say ‘I have a job. I can pay the rent. I buy food, but I cannot put clothing on all these kids’.”

Paula Scott has been volunteering for about two and a half years.


“It’s just wonderful to get to know the people. And I just love people. So, this is perfect for me and I love to give,” says Paula.

Over time, the closet has grown along with the number of donations and volunteers.


The Free Clothing Closet is open in the winter every other Monday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. In the spring, it’s open every Monday.

They say they are always in need of donations.


To donate, you can always come to the church when the Free Clothing Closet is open. You can also call Dee at 937-233-1951 or 937-469-1119.



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BE STILL, AND YOUR SOUL WILL SPEAK



“He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” Luke 22:41-42 NIV




Vietnam Veterans  
Pinning Ceremony and Lunch  
Turner Dodge House  
100 E. North St. Lansing, MI  
March 29th at Noon  
Registration at 11:00 AM (DD214 REQUIRED)  
RSVP: GENE NETHAWAY  
989.834.2438  
EMAIL: HANDSOMEGENES125@GMAIL.COM

“Sometimes I’m up, sometimes I’m down, Oh, yes, Lord. Sometimes I’m almost to the ground; oh, yes, Lord. Chorus: Nobody knows the trouble I’ve had; nobody knows but Jesus. Nobody knows the trouble I’ve had, Glory, Hallelujah!”  
<https://youtu.be/O977I4bkv-U> Nobody Knows The Trouble  
On Saturday, March 29, I will attend my first National Vietnam War Veterans Day Pinning Ceremony. I know of no other service members who’ve suffered and been more disrespected and more overlooked and underserved than our Vietnam Veterans. To this date, these Veterans hold the highest number among the 22 Veterans who daily end their lives by suicide.  
I share this brutal truth with a personal understanding as a two-time survivor of attempting suicide. O, I thank God for sparing me for such a time as this. I intend to engage Space for Grace W.O.W. United Church of Christ, DBA The National Restoration to Military Families Team, to reach as many of my fellow Veterans and civilians as possible with my story, which includes a tale of hope and redemption.  
Indeed, nobody knows the trouble we’ve overcome and the post-war trauma with which we live; nobody knows but Jesus, from whose stripes we are healed. Glory Hallelujah!

LOVE YE ONE ANOTHER

## Church Turns its Vacant Land into a Huge Urban Garden, Donates 65k Pounds of Food Every Year



Mission of Mary interns on-site. Photo courtesy of mission of mary cooperative

The University of Notre Dame’s Church Properties Initiative is a project that empowers churches to use their properties for sustainable development through data-backed research.

And one of its case studies — Mission of Mary Cooperative in Dayton, Ohio — does exactly that.

A group of six people stand outside Mission of Mary farms holding huge pallets of produce.

Mission of Mary Cooperative was developed by Catholic laypeople, or non-ordained members of a church congregation — in the Twin Towers neighborhood of Dayton. They were facing two major issues: abandoned land and limited access to fresh, healthy produce.

In turn, they decided to use the vacant church land they owned for urban gardens that would feed the community.

In 2009, they planted a single garden. Today, they manage a network of six massive urban farming plots across four acres, growing over 75 different varieties of fruits and vegetables.

Every year, the gardens yield an estimated 65,000 pounds of produce for community members.

“Inspired by the Marianist charism, [MMC’s] founders navigated land acquisition, nonprofit incorporation, zoning regulations, property tax exemption, food subsidy programs, and grant applications,” the Notre Dame case study explains.

“The Mission of Mary Cooperative exemplifies the power of local initiative, rooted in faith, to transform underused property into a catalyst for community flourishing.”

A Mission of Mary farm stand selling greens

*Continued on Page 7*



# General

## Celebrate Poetry with DML

April is National Poetry Month, and Dayton Metro Library has a variety of programs scheduled for all ages.

**Featured Programs:**

**Nikki Giovanni: Celebrating the Life and Legacy of an American Icon,** Main Library, Eichelberger Forum, Thursday, April 3, 6-8:30 pm: DML will celebrate the life of poet, activist, and scholar Nikki Giovanni with an engaging and entertaining performance panel, complete with poetry, singing, and dancing. More information about this event and Giovanni’s accomplishments can be found here: <https://bit.ly/4iEAyfL>. Registration is not required, and all ages are welcome to attend.

**An Evening with david matthews\*,** Main Library, Eichelberger Forum, Tuesday, April 8, 6:30-8 pm: matthews will bring his spoken word and latest collection, Poetry Classics, to the Library’s stage. He weaves together imagery, depth, and thought-provoking themes, inviting patrons into the heart

of his work. This program will also include a conversation where the audience can engage with matthews. Registration is not required, and all ages are welcome to attend.

**Regular Programs:**

**Preschool Storytime,** Trotwood Branch, Friday, April 4, 10:30-11 am: This session of stories, songs, and other fun learning activities will celebrate poetry. (Ages 3-5)

**National Poetry Month: Dead Poets Society,** Southeast Branch, Saturday, April 5, 2-4 pm: Be inspired by poetry and watch the cult classic, Dead Poets Society (Rated PG, 1989). (Adults and Teens)

**Widely Read Book Club,** Kettering-Moraine Branch, Monday, April 7, 6-7 pm: To celebrate National Poetry Month, patrons read the following poems and come prepared to discuss: "Jerusalem" by William Blake, "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Emperor of Ice-Cream" by Wallace Stevens and "Her Kind" by Anne Sexton. Patrons may also bring a poem they love and read it to the group. (Adults)

**Coloring for Adults,** Northwest Branch, Wednesday, April 9, 10-11 am: Enjoy coloring, company, and music. This month’s themes are word art and poems made into songs. Registration is required.

**Salt Painting and Poetry,** Trotwood Branch, Thursday, April 10, 4-5 pm: Make a simple design using glue, salt, and watercolors while listening to poetry. (Grades 1-4 and Tweens)

**Open Mic Poetry Night,** West Branch, Friday, April 11, 7-9 pm: Patrons can show off their talent to the audience. Only participants need to register – a few spots remain! (Adults)

**Nation Poetry Month: Bright Star,** Southeast Branch, Saturday, April 12, 2-4 pm: Meet at the Branch for a screening of Bright Star (Rated PG, 2009). (Teens and Adults)

For more information and to register if required, visit [DaytonMetroLibrary.org](http://DaytonMetroLibrary.org) or call the Library’s Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.

\*david matthews is deliberately not capitalized.

## Enjoy Spring and Easter with DML Programs

As April approaches, so do many Spring-themed programs at Dayton Metro Library that patrons of all ages can enjoy.

**Spring Break Craft-ernoon,** Tuesday, April 1, 2-4 pm, Miamisburg Branch: Create fun and unique crafts with provided materials. (All Ages)

**Juvenile Spring Bingo for Books,** Tuesday, April 1, 2-3 pm, Vandalia Branch: Play Spring Picture Bingo and win a book! (Families)

**Spring Storytime,** Wednesday and Thursday through May 22, 11-11:30 am, Northmont Branch: Nursey rhymes, songs, fingerplays, and stories will encourage early literacy skills. (Babies and Toddlers)

**Plant Bingo,** Thursday, April 3, 6:30-7:30 pm, Miami Township Branch: Celebrate spring with a few rounds of Bingo. Win and select a seedling or cutting to take home! Registration is required. (Adults)

**Color Me Calm:** Springtime, Thursday, April 10, 5:30-7 pm, Main Library, Conference Room 1A: This month, color Spring-themed pages. (Adults)

**Imperfect Crafts,** Saturday, April 12, 10-11:30 am, Huber Heights Branch: Create art mosaics out of dried seeds. (Adults)

**Sensory-Friendly Egg Hunt,** Saturday, April 12, 4-4:30 pm, West Carrollton Branch: Kids will look for eggs inside the Library in a calmer environment. Registration is required. (Families)

**Crafty Critters,** Monday, April 14, 4:30-6 pm, Miami Township Branch: Make a Cherry Blossom tree painting this month. (Grades 1-4)

**All Abilities Adventures,** Tuesday, April 15, 10:30-11:45 am, Northmont Branch: This adventure is designed for adults of all abilities: create a craft to celebrate Spring and play a game. Registration is required. (Adults)

**Family Program: Spring Crafts,** Wednesday, April 16, 4-5 pm, Main Library, Children’s Creativity Space: Make season-inspired creations to take home. (Families)

**Hippy Hoppity Easter Fun is on Its Way,** Wednesday, April 16, 4-5 pm, West Branch: Make and wear an Easter bon-

net and paint an Easter egg. An Easter egg hunt will follow the craft activities. It begins at 5 pm and is sponsored by The Wave Network. (All Ages)

**Teen DIY: Marbled Clay Name Tags,** Thursday, April 17, 3-4:30 pm, Vandalia Branch: Use air-dry clay and stamps to make an Easter basket accessory. (Teens)

**Adult Spring Craft: Pipe Cleaner Flowers,** Thursday, April 17, 6-7 pm, West Carrollton Branch: Supplies will be limited to the first ten attendees. (Adults)

**Spring Egg Hunt,** Saturday, April 26, 11-11:45 am, Northmont Branch: Celebrate Spring with an egg hunt. First, decorate a bag, then have fun hunting eggs. Registration is required. (Families)

For more information and to register if required, visit [DaytonMetroLibrary.org](http://DaytonMetroLibrary.org) or call the Library’s Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.

# Sports

## Michael Vick Holds First Practice As Norfolk State University’s Head Football Coach



'It was great to be out here playing some football,' Vick said after practice

Michael Vick, the former football star who was hired in Dec. 2024 to coach the Norfolk State University’s football team, held the squad’s first official practice.

According to HBCU Gameday, the practice, the first of 15, was held for the Spartans’ April 19 spring game at Dick Price Stadium.

Although Vick has no head coaching experience on any level, his success as a quarterback with the Atlanta Falcons and Philadelphia Eagles convinced Norfolk State to extend an offer. The previous coach, Dawson Odums, was fired in November 2024 after four years

and a 15-31 record.

“It was great to be out here playing some football,” Vick said after the first practice, per HBCU Gameday. “The players had a lot of energy; they were enthused. They were just ready to come out here and compete, and they did a real good job of that. We just have to keep getting better every day; that’s the message.”

Spartans offensive lineman Guan Price II, who recently transferred from Hampton University, said Vick, despite his impressive on-field accomplishments, “made us feel like we’re family. He’s very welcoming, and he always takes time to talk to us.”

And if you think this would be a dream opportunity for a quarterback, you’re not mistaken.

“It’s everything a young

quarterback wishes for,” said Spartans quarterback Israel Carter, another transfer. “I’m following his path; he led the way for us. All I’m trying to do is build off what he did and implement my game into that.

Fans who want to see the team play its first game with Vick can purchase tickets at the NSU Ticket Office or online.

The City of Trotwood is calling on the community to join us for a day of service to create a cleaner and greener community. When it comes to litter, individual actions make a difference; lend a helping hand by removing litter and trash from our city. By taking pride in your community by cleaning up and not littering, you motivate others to do the same.

When others see you care for your community, they care too; one simple action can lead to behavioral changes over time.

**How Can You Help?**

- Invite a neighbor or

family member for a walk through your neighborhood. During your walk, cleanup litter that you find and dispose of it appropriately in a trash bin.

- Educate your fellow residents on the importance of litter prevention and proper trash disposal; we’re in this together.
- The City will host a community cleanup along East Main Street to clean up the Broadmoor and Old Towne neighborhoods. The city will supply gloves, trash bags, and safety vests for participants. We’re seeking volunteers, nonprofit or-

ganizations, and other stakeholders to donate their time to this endeavor.

Saturday, May 3, 2025  
10:00 am  
Trotwood Government Center, 3035 Olive Road, Trotwood, OH 45426

When you volunteer to help clean up our community, you make a tremendous difference. Strengthen community ties and unite to keep our great City of Trotwood beautiful.

## Church Turns its Vacant Land into a Huge Urban Garden, Donates 65k Pounds of Food Every Year... *Continued from Page 6*

under a white tent

The organization’s programming includes a community-supported agriculture program to sell produce to local consumers, as well as rented community garden beds, educational offerings, and a Neighborhood Food Council.

Mission of Mary also donates much of its food, or offers it on a sliding scale for families of all income levels.

“Urban farming allows us to transform spaces that have a negative impact on our community into productive and beautiful gardens,” the organization’s website shares.

“We now grow more than 60,000 pounds of food each year and we’re dedicated to putting as much of that harvest as possible on the tables of families in the neighborhood.”

The organization also supports resettlement efforts for refugees in the area and became the first

net-zero nonprofit in Dayton through its focus on renewable energy.

“Through our work, we’re building relationships with our neighbors, building a local food system, and becoming a part of the fabric of the city,” the website continues.

These efforts are not just a good way to use vacant land but a rich part of the organization’s religious roots — those of the Marianist Catholics, an approach to Catholicism developed by a French priest in 1801.

Marianists emphasized the power of small communities to “renew Christianity” following the French Revolution.

A person works in a greenhouse, wearing a green t-shirt and khaki shorts

Today, it looks like the work Mission of Mary does.

The focus on ecological development also follows the insights of Pope Francis’s term “integral ecol-

ogy,” which posits that the good of human beings is inseparable from the stewardship of the natural environment.

“In some places, rural and urban alike, the privatization of certain spaces has restricted people’s access to places of particular beauty,” Pope Francis wrote in 2015.

“In others, ‘ecological’ neighborhoods have been created which are closed to outsiders in order to ensure an artificial tranquility,” he added. “Frequently, we find beautiful and carefully manicured green spaces in so-called ‘safer’ areas of cities, but not in the more hidden areas where the disposable of society live.”

A community garden full of raised beds in Dayton, Ohio

The neighborhood that houses Mission of Mary’s gardens is a heavily impoverished area in Dayton, according to Notre Dame. Bisected by an intersection in the 1960s, the area

was also economically devastated by industrial decline.

In 2020, the area had a median household income of \$17,500, with 76% of children under the age of 5 living in poverty.

While faith-based in nature, the management of the gardens has taken skill and collaboration with government financial assistance programs, private grant funding, and more. It is this flexibility and determination that make it a success story.

“By meeting the lived reality of neighbors living in poverty, MMC ensures that the value it creates in cultivating underused land directly benefits nearby residents,” the case study concludes.

“MMC’s incremental cultivation of vacant land — and relationships — has prepared the soil for further investment in the community’s flourishing.”

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