

# PLATT PARK *Post*

The Official Newsletter of  
Platt Park People's Association  
Jan. / Feb. 2020  
[www.3pa.org](http://www.3pa.org)



## A Beautiful Day in Our Neighborhood

by Nora Weiser

If you watch the news or scroll through social media these days, it is easy to find yourself in a negative mindset. So much of what people say and do lately seems to come from a place of selfishness, lack of concern for others, dishonesty, and downright ill-will. Perhaps that's why good old-fashioned kindness has been having a moment. This is evidenced by the sudden resurgence in popularity of Mr. Rogers, who has become synonymous with kindness. With a recent documentary (*A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, HBO), a major motion picture starring Tom Hanks (*Won't You Be My Neighbor*, Focus Features), and memes galore, Mr. Rogers seems to be everywhere. At a time when hate seems so prevalent, perhaps a kindness backlash is exactly what we need!

With a new year, and a new decade, fast approaching, one of the most rebellious acts may be to choose kindness, help others, and do the right thing. After all, looking for a silver lining pretty much requires that there be some dark clouds around. But, as Mr. Rogers famously learned from his mother, when we are feeling scared or overwhelmed by bad situations, we should look for the people doing good and helping. "You will always find people who are helping."

You can make Mr. Rogers proud right here in our very own Platt Park neighborhood. There are many opportunities to pop on your cardigan, help, get involved, and spread kindness:

- Drop off non-perishable foods and supplies for South Highschool's Food Pantry (1700 E. Louisiana). Right now, they are in need of unopened laundry detergent in small bottles or pods.
- Donate gently used toys, puzzles, and games to the Platt Park Children's Center (1601 S. Clarkson).
- With so much retail business moving online or to big box stores, small businesses are struggling. Help Platt Park's neighborhood businesses thrive by doing your shopping, and planning meals, at the many wonderful shops and restaurants on South Pearl Street.
- Volunteer with A Little Help (720-242-9032) to connect with elderly neighbors who might be struggling with loneliness, or just need help shoveling their walkway.
- Post a yard sign that lets neighbors and visitors alike know they are welcome in Platt Park – from "Hate Has No Home Here" to "No matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbors" to simply "Love Thy Neighbor."

There are as many ways to be a helper as there are people and programs in need of help. When Mr. Rogers asks, "Won't you be my neighbor?," the answer should be a resounding "Yes!"

The Platt Park People's Association, a city of Denver Registered Neighborhood Organization, serves more than 3,000 homes and businesses in the neighborhood bounded by Broadway on the West, Downing on the East, I-25 on the North and Evans on the South. 3PA membership is open to all neighbors and business owners who live and own property within these boundaries. Have a voice in your neighborhood and with the city: Join 3PA.

Check out our website. Stay informed, learn about upcoming events, and more!

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For all 3PA and Platt Park Post communications email: [Board@3PA.org](mailto:Board@3PA.org)

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# Neighborhood Notes

*"I was going to quit all my bad habits for the new year but then I remembered that nobody likes a quitter."*  
-Anonymous

Regardless of how you are doing with your New Year's resolutions, I hope things have gotten off to a rousing start in your world so far in 2020. With a national election on the horizon you know things will not be dull, and it seems the local scene in Denver is always in the throes of some entertaining upheaval so we will just buckle up and get ready for the ride. Fortunately, on the most local level, our beloved neighborhood, life seems to be pretty good—lots going on but mostly heading in positive directions. Let's get you caught up.

Quite a few changes are happening on the western edge of the neighborhood along South Broadway. The VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) has had a presence along the thoroughfare for many decades. Originally, they owned the building at 1545 S. Broadway; they then moved to their current location at 1350 S. Broadway. VFW posts exist to support veterans in all manner of ways and the Posts have long been places for social gatherings and shared camaraderie. Membership, for various reasons, has been in steady decline over the years making operating many VFW Posts difficult. Such was the case with the Broadway Post with its 8,700 square foot building, so in December the building was sold for \$2.1 million. The building was purchased by an investor who also owns the Luv Bridal building across the street. They are currently in discussions with various parties to put in a restaurant, and intend to spend between \$400,000 to \$500,000 to renovate the space. The developer hopes to honor the VFW by keeping the mural of the American flag intact and perhaps use some of the old elements of the VFW post in the new project. Stay tuned.

Coincidentally a new restaurant has opened its doors in the original VFW building (1545 S. Broadway). **Gypsy House Café** began serving guests in early fall 2019

offering a wide assortment of yumminess. If the name sounds familiar, that's because the café was originally located at 1279 Marion Street in Capitol Hill where it began in 2004. Neighborhood and lease changes caused the owners and sisters Doniece and Dena Derani to seek a new location. The building is hard to miss, situated between Certified Tattoo Studio and Alternation Brewing Company it is painted with brightly colored murals on both the front and sides. The interior has a bohemian vibe with warm eclectic decorations and an assortment of tables, couches, and semi-private spaces for eating and gathering. Doniece and Dena want the place to be a welcoming space for the community. Like the former location, the café has live music, comedy, poetry readings, a yoga studio in the lower level, and is adorned with works by local artists.



Gypsy House Café is also about the food. The Derani sisters have deep Mediterranean roots and the cuisine reflects that. Menu favorites like falafel, pitas, Greek salads, hummus, and much more reflect their culture. More traditional café fare is also offered. It is a fun place and definitely worth crossing to the west side of Broadway to check it out. Hours of operation are daily from 10 am till 10 pm each evening.

Moving into the recently vacated home of Acero Urban Cantina is a new Cajun restaurant **Magnolia Cajun Dining** (1446 S. Broadway). If you are like me, more than once I've been befuddled that Lucile's Creole Café inexplicably closes each day at 2:00 leaving me nowhere to go for that late-night Gumbo craving. Enter Magnolia to satisfy all cravings for traditional Cajun fare. Chef and co-owner Eric McDaniel, along with his wife Katie O'Loughlin, grew up in Louisiana surrounded by Cajun food and culture. It has been their passion to bring authentic Cajun food to the adventurous palates of fellow Denverites.

The menu certainly lives up to the billing. Fans of Cajun food will find Cajun staples like Shrimp

*Continued on page 3*

## Neighborhood Notes, *cont. from page 2*

Remoulade, Seafood Gumbo, and Crawfish Etouffée along with some lesser known specialties (Swamp Witch Po-Boy) some of which came from Eric's grandmother. Eric and Katie have taken pains to ensure the flavors are authentic, even shipping in spices and fresh Louisiana crawfish to ensure the flavors are just right. The space has been lightly renovated. There is a full bar. Magnolia is open daily for lunch from 11 am until 2 pm, and again for dinner from 5 pm until 10 pm.

Before we leave Broadway here's one for my fellow skiers and riders out there. **Meier Skis** has taken over the space at 1775 S. Broadway as their new manufacturing and retail outlet. Ski equipment is generally dominated by large international companies but a few small, locally-made companies are making an impact in the marketplace. Meier skis and snowboards are all handmade using Colorado aspen and beetle-kill pine. Visitors are welcome to drop by and watch the manufacturing process. The company makes 16 different skis and snowboards, and they will even make custom gear for you. The company employs 13 people and as Ted Eynon, the owner says "...we're trying to show that you can make manufacturing still work here in the United States."

**A few things I know and don't know...** I don't know what is going on over at **Pasquinis** (1310 S. Broadway). It has been closed and undergoing a significant remodel, but as of this writing no new intel on what is planned.... I do know that Toshi and Yasu Kizaki, owners of Sushi Den, purchased the old Gaia Bistro building (1551 S. Pearl St) and are in the process of building something new. Brilliant minds would speculate it will be another restaurant but I don't know the details. The name **Denchu Den** has been floating about.... I do know the old **Buchtel Motors** (1230 S. Pearl St) site sold for the princely sum of \$3.9 million, but I don't know what is planned for the site. Guessing not another auto garage.

And finally, a last thought for the beginning of your new year...Benjamin Franklin once said,

*"Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each year find you a better man."*

Indeed.

See you around the neighborhood,

*Tom Snyder*



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# There is No Box

by Nora Weiser

People love to talk about “thinking outside the box”, but to paraphrase the movie *The Matrix*, there is no box. Too often, whether due to fear of change or contentedness with the status quo, we feel confined by parameters purely of our own making. When struggling with a challenge, we focus on what we cannot do rather than what we can. We focus on what could go wrong rather than what might go right. We rail against “the box” yet feel comforted by the clear limitations it provides. Thinking leads to movement and progress comes from that momentum. But when we believe there is a box, ideas have no space to even take that first step.

Throughout the holiday season, you undoubtedly found yourself tested and stretched thin many times. Whether you felt overwhelmed in the midst of wrapping gifts, or overburdened with personal obligations, heading into the new year is a great time to stop and take a few minutes to consider how things might be different. Instead of the “shoulds” and “musts”, think instead about the “what ifs.” Reconsider your processes, re-prioritize your to-do list, and most of all remember that when you start feeling like the Grinch, it's usually because you have been busily constructing your box. Stop feeling limited by a non-existent box!

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# Platt Park Loses Two Venerable Citizens

by Greg Pulliam . . . . .

In the spring of 2019, a bomb cyclone (or, “bombogenesis,” if you prefer) hit Denver and Colorado, literally uprooting a 40-foot Colorado blue spruce at the southeast corner of Platt Park. Several weeks later, Denver Parks and Recreation’s Forestry Field Operations (Denver Forestry) took down its nearby twin due to Ips beetle (also known as engraver beetle) infestation. According to Mike Swanson, Interim City Forester, the trees were approximately 50 to 60 years old. Denver Forestry replaces approximately 1,200 trees annually throughout Denver’s parks and parkway system.

Those who observed the uprooted tree may have been surprised to note the shallowness of the tree’s roots. We all carry a picture in our minds that the size and sprawl of a tree’s roots are something of a mirror image of the tree we see above ground. According to Mike, “a lot of the time with conifer failures in this area, we see not root failure so much as we see the soil failing around the tree.” He goes on to explain that “factors that contribute to soil failures include saturated or water-logged soils. It rained quite a bit prior to the snow and high winds that day and the soil had a reduced ability to effectively anchor the tree roots.” So, basically the weather leading up to and during the bomb cyclone were indeed the perfect storm to cause the majestic blue spruce to fail. “March 13, 2019 was a good day for any tree to fail,” Mike concluded.

On April 19, Denver Forestry planted two young Lebanon cedars (also known as cedars of Lebanon or *Cedrus libani*) near the location of the two departed Colorado blue spruce trees in the park’s southeast corner. Eight other trees were also planted in Platt Park that day: two English oaks; two tulip trees (also known as tulip poplars or *Liriodendron tulipifera*); and one each of white oak, Oregon white oak, catalpa, and golden rain tree.

Mike explained that the trees were chosen both for experimentation and survivability. Denver Forestry is always looking for new species to plant to expand what he calls the “plant palette” and increase sustainability through the diversity of Denver’s urban forest. He went on to add that they also always plant species that are tried and true. In this case, the Lebanon cedar and Oregon white oak came in as the experimental varieties, while the tried-and-true English oaks, catalpa, golden rain tree, and tulip trees were shoe-ins to thrive.

Diana Anick and her family donated the English oak and white oak in memory of her father, Donald J. King, who

loved trees and being in nature. The donation was made through the Park Legacy Program (<http://theparkpeople.org/What-We-Do/Park-Legacy-Program>) of The Park People, which has its offices in the Fleming Mansion at the northwest corner of Platt Park. Under the Park Legacy Program, Tribute Trees can be planted in any of the more than 200 Denver parks for a donation of \$500 per tree.

Oh, and about those Ips beetles—Mike Swanson shared a few comments about them and other threats to Denver’s urban forest. “Ips beetles are always in our forest, and most conifers can “pitch” the beetle out,” said Mike, “but when their population increases, seemingly a cyclical event due to some natural event such as mild winters or drought, their galleries riddle the cambium layer just under the bark and even healthy trees across Denver can be affected.” But there is hope! Proper cultural practices, such as consistent and appropriate watering, can assist the trees in staving off bark beetle infestations; but, when beetle populations over run the trees’ natural defenses, Denver Forestry finds that proper use of insecticides is the next best management strategy.

While working hard to combat threats to Denver’s green canopy and ensure a thriving urban forest for Denver citizens, Mike’s goal is that “there should be no removal of trees in Denver, only the replacement of trees in Denver.” By focusing their strategic plan on education and outreach, proper maintenance programs, and a solid planting program, Denver Forestry hopes to make that goal a reality.



# Voters Flip the Denver Public School Board in November Election

In the latest Denver Public School (DPS) Board election, voters spoke out clearly in favor of change. With the complex issues facing DPS, the Platt Park Post wondered what that change means for DPS schools, teachers, students, and parents. Former DPS Board director, Jeannie Kaplan, worked to move the Board in this direction, and answered some questions about how this new group of Board directors might impact DPS's direction.

Platt Park Post (PPP): Why was this past election so important?

Jeannie Kaplan (JK): The philosophical direction of the Board changed from strong "education reform" to a 5-2 majority in favor of strong, traditional, neighborhood schools. The focus is on transformation without the disruption of school closures, co-locations, or accountability based solely on test scores.

PPP: What do you see as the main differences between the DPS Board's reform members vs. the union-backed Board members who now hold the majority of Board seats?

JK: The business model under which the DPS Board has been operating for the past decade has been based on competition, with the focus on winners and losers. With the Board majority now shifted, there will be more emphasis on more meaningful collaboration resulting in what is best for teachers, families, and students within a non-punitive atmosphere. For example, testing can be reduced, the School Performance Framework can be replaced or removed to focus on district wide improvements rather than school by school improvement, choice and charter schools

can be evaluated as to how they contribute to equity and social justice across the educational eco system.

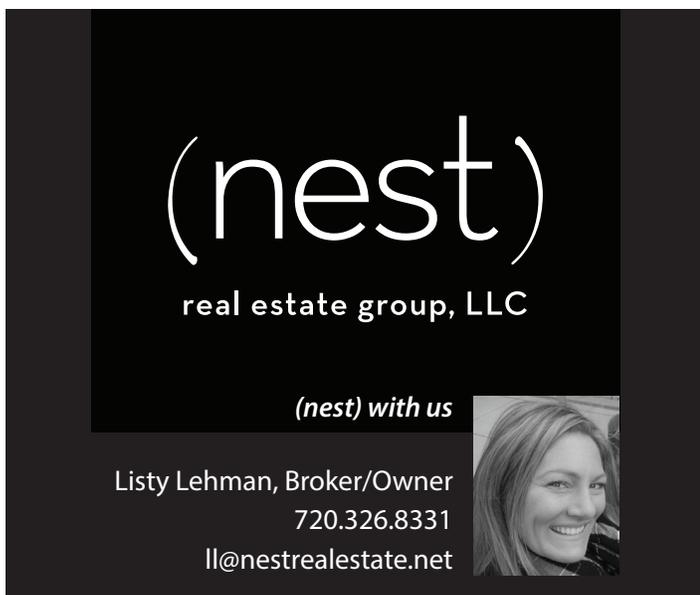
PPP: What kinds of changes do you anticipate that will be noticeable at the teacher, student, or school level?

JK: There will be more financial transparency with the ultimate goal that more money will make it into the classrooms. Communities across the city are asking for a line item budget analysis by an independent financial advisor so administrative duplications and waste can be reduced resulting in more money for classrooms. More centralized decision-making will reduce costs and increase equity. De-centralized decision-making was a reform pushed by the previous board majority, and it has led to more segregation, less equity, higher achievement gaps, and very little academic progress. We cannot afford to wait another 20 or more years for all of our students to be performing at grade level.

PPP: Did the teachers strike last year impact how voters viewed this election?

JK: Yes. Voters became much more aware of the plight of the teachers, and the reluctance of the district to negotiate in good faith. The public negotiations helped make many voters aware of the issues, and people realized that they wanted the same things the teachers were fighting for: more support, fair pay, professional treatment, and respect.

The three candidates who were sworn in on December 5, 2019 are Tay Anderson, At-Large; Scott Balderman, District 1 (which includes Platt Park); and Brad Laurvick, District 5. Now the voters who supported this change will have the chance to see if these Board members can usher in a new era for DPS that puts teachers, students, and neighborhood schools first.



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The Platt Park Post is distributed to more than 3,000 Platt Park neighbors every other month.

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Issue	Article Deadline	Advertising Deadline	Distribution
January/February	December 15	December 25	Late January
March/April	February 15	February 25	Late March
May/June	April 15	April 25	Late May
July/August	June 15	June 25	Late July
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The 3PA Board meets 2 times each quarter, if you are interested in attending a board meeting, please send an email to Board@3pa.org to request to attend and to get the date, time and location.

## DECKER LIBRARY EVENTS

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Library Hours: Monday, Tuesday 12-8 p.m.; Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 10 a.m -6 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday Closed

## Toddler Storytime, Wednesdays, 10:15 a.m.

Stories, songs, rhymes and fun for toddlers ages 18-36 months and their parents or caregivers.

## All Ages Storytime, Thursdays, 10:15 a.m.

Stories, songs, rhymes and fun for children of all ages and their parents or caregivers. Craft activity immediately follows the program.

## Baby Storytime, Wed. and Thurs., 11:15 a.m.

Stories, songs, rhymes and fun for babies ages 0-18 months and their parents or caregivers. Play and social time immediately follow the program.

## Imagination Station, Thurs. and Fri. 3:00-5:30 p.m.

Join us for a drop-in playtime on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 3-5:30 p.m. Children ages 6 months to 8 years are welcome. Caregivers must remain in the room with their children.

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Kara Duepre: Board@3PA.org

