

PLATT PARK *Post*

The Official Newsletter of
Platt Park People's Association
July / August 2020
www.3pa.org



The Platt Park Post is Going Digital

by Nora Weiser

What do meetings, happy hours, birthday parties, doctor's appointments, and school have in common with the Platt Park Post? Well, during this pandemic, they're all going virtual. That's right – this will be the last hard copy of the Post for some time as we shift to publishing editions digitally for the foreseeable future.

While having the print edition delivered to your doorstep is our preferred way to reach you, we've had to get creative about how to fund this endeavor during these challenging times. Despite the all-volunteer team behind the Post, the expense of design, printing, and delivery exceed our current budget. The Post is supported by Platt Park Peoples' Association (3PA) dues as well as loyal neighborhood business owners through their advertising dollars. Especially for our local restaurants and retail shops, we know that now is not an easy time for them to spend those dollars – particularly when many of them are not yet able to fully reopen.

We've packed some great content from new contributors into this issue, and hope we'll have more neighbors contribute articles for upcoming digital issues.

Want to help us get back to physical issues as soon as possible? Here are ways you can help!

Visit 3PA.org to:

- Join your neighborhood association for just \$20
- Make an extra donation to 3PA, every little bit helps
- Sign up to receive 3PA emails and we'll let you know when each issue is online
- Follow 3PA on Facebook: facebook.com/plattpark3pa/
- Contribute an article or story idea by emailing board@3PA.org
- View current and past issues of the Platt Park Post at: 3pa.org/newsletter
- Consider supporting your favorite local business by covering a year of their advertising costs: \$426/yr for a small ad, \$636 for a medium, and \$846 for a large ad placement. Digital issues will include ads just like the print edition!
- Join Next Door, nextdoor.com, as a Platt Park resident – we'll post a notice and link when new issues of the Post go live on the 3PA website.

If you enjoy getting the Post delivered to your door, we hope you'll also enjoy reading it online. And, with your support we hope to get back to the printed version soon!

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!

www.3pa.org

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*"A change in the weather is sufficient to recreate the world and ourselves."
- Marcel Proust*

Neighborhood Notes

Covid-19 edition part deux. In case you haven't noticed, that darn pandemic is still hanging around—not that you'd know if you swung by Wash Park to join a sweaty basketball game or wanted to jump in on a little volleyball action—looks a bit 'life as normal' out there on so many levels. I love my Platt Park home, but have to admit escaping these four walls and engaging in some human social interaction has become quite appealing of late. I did some bike riding up in the mountains the other day, *sans* mask, and I felt like a puppy let out of its crate. Recently, I enjoyed some social-distance dining at one of our local restaurants for the first time in about four months. The self-indulgent thrill of ordering from a menu and having it delivered by a smiling (I assume) waitress was overwhelming.

On the serious side, I sincerely hope all is going well for you and your loved ones. For some this has been a very trying time indeed. The pandemic can at times seem like much-ado-about-nothing until it hits home or close to home then all that changes quickly. But numbers of infections and deaths are increasing, not decreasing, and it is just our resolve that is weakening, not the virus. I have loved the spirit of 'we are all in this together' which has largely pervaded our neighborhood from my perspective.

I don't know what the future holds, but eventually this too will pass and those lucky enough to be "Pandemic Survivors" will have both inspiring and sobering stories to tell down the road.

I poked around the neighborhood a bit just to check in on some of our favorite businesses to see how, and if, they are surviving all of this. Here are a few of those stories.

It's been an adventurous ride for Emily Rodriguez, owner of the Ruffly Rose. Amongst a few predictable upheavals Emily also gave birth to a little girl in April just to add a layer of excitement to all this. She said it was difficult pivoting when all this hit. The greatest financial challenge was all the weddings that canceled which represent a significant portion of her business—providing flowers for those events. Ruffly Rose during the height of the 'stay at home' order would set up flowers outside on Pearl Street where people could, on the honor system, take what they wanted and Venmo her the money. She said it worked well. I thought that was a cool reflection of all of you out there. Since things have opened up more, business has been great, although the wedding portion will not return for some time. Overall, she is surviving just fine. I asked her if there was anything she wanted to say to the neighbors and she simply left it at "I love them." Okay...mic drop.

I also caught up with Brian Forrester, the manager of Uno Mas which is a sister restaurant to Bird and Kaos Pizza. Brian said they immediately pivoted to a take-out only mode when initial lockdowns started. In addition to the Pearl Street location, Uno Mas has two other locations—one in Capitol Hill area, and one in Fort Collins. Those both shut down, but the owner, Patrick Mangold-White elected to keep this, the flagship, going—good news for us taco lovers out there. Brian said the neighborhood response was amazing and because of that they were able to retain 100% of their staff. The city allowed take-out alcohol which helped the bottom line considerably. I guess a little margarita action smoothed the stay at home blues—who knew? Once the restau-

Hey Neighbors

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Continued on page 3

Neighborhood Notes, *cont. from page 2*

rant opened again in June, with the addition of the back-patio seating, they have been running at maximum capacity. Revenue is still down about 20% over what would be a normal summer, but they are getting by fine for now.

If there is an anchor business on Pearl Street it would have to be the Sushi Den empire. They opened around the first of July for dine-in at the Izakaya Den location. I asked how that is being received and was told they are staying 100% booked out for at least two weeks in advance. Anyone surprised? Side bonus fact: The Denshu Den construction project going on at the site of the old Gaja Bistro building has been put on indefinite hold until all of this passes and we get back to some version of a new normal.

So, I'm sure each business, like each of us, is having its unique challenges. Overall, it seems our local businesses are getting along thanks to the continued and intentional support of Platt Park's great neighbors. The shops and restaurants on Pearl and Broadway add so much to what make this such a special place to live. It probably goes without saying, but let's keep patronizing locally whenever we can so when the Covid-smoke clears everyone is still standing!

There is one new business to highlight in this issue. Not a totally new business as it opened in 2019, but it slipped under my radar. **Elite IV Lounge** opened last year and honestly, I initially thought it was just a new name on the beauty parlor that previously occupied the location. I couldn't have been more wrong about that. 'IV' is not in this case the Roman numeral for '4', as I supposed, but rather stands for IV as in Intravenous, you know like when you get the old needle in the arm and they put stuff in you (sorry for using such highly technical terms). I spoke with one of the owners, Jessie Russell, about the business. She said they use the IV treatment to get fluids, nutrients, and medications into the body quickly and effectively. They offer treatments for a variety of things ranging from hang-over recovery (must have been a doozy), altitude sickness, athletic recovery and performance, immune system boost, and a host of other things. You can drop by for a single treatment or purchase a package so you can take advantage of their services on a regular basis. Trained nurses administer the IV and patrons can relax in their comfortable facilities during treatments. Treatments take about 30 minutes. Elite IV is located at 1229 S. Pearl Street, or check them out at medicalspa-denverco.com

Covid realities have hit us hard here at the Platt Park Post as well, as we've lost some advertising revenue during

all this. We'll be taking a break from the print version for a few months until we can catch up. In the meantime, you can find issues of the Post online at 3PA.org/newsletter. Hopefully we'll be back up and running with print versions again soon. Stay safe and healthy in the meantime, and enjoy this most unusual summer!

See you around the neighborhood,

Tom Snyder



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Fresh Food Connect is Live in Platt Park!

Fresh Food Connect (FFC) is a Denver-based non-profit whose mission is to reduce food insecurity. Just as Uber and Lyft leveraged technology to turn regular people into cab drivers, the FFC app helps turn backyard gardeners into partners in the fight against food waste and hunger. According to FFC board member and Platt Park neighbor, Jack Fritzinger, the organization was founded to help solve “the zucchini problem” by linking home gardeners who find themselves with excess produce with local food rescue organizations.

Growing from the vision of three Denver-based non-profits, Denver Food Rescue, Denver Urban Gardens, and Groundwork Denver, the group encourages gardeners to sign up via Fresh Food Connect’s mobile app and indicate when they have extra produce. From there, a local nonprofit operator receives or picks up the donations from their doorstep to redistribute it in their local communities. Currently serving 70 neighborhoods in Colorado, Iowa, and Wisconsin, FFC hopes to go national with its proven, hyper-local mobile app concept.

“Gardeners know the power of growing their own food, and now more than ever, they see it is time to use that strength to support the community at large,” says Helen Katich, FFC’s Interim Chief Executive Officer. “We know that ensuring food security leads to better health outcomes for everyone, and we also know that this work involves everyone. Fresh Food Connect ensures that gardeners are a piece of the solution,” Katich notes. Neighbors are encouraged to plan and plant gardens for abundance. Particularly during these challenging times, when more and more families are finding themselves food insecure, Fresh Food Connect can help neighbors help neighbors to support and strengthen our Platt Park community.

You can help combat hunger while building community resilience, one zucchini at a time! To download the free mobile app or for more information, visit www.freshfoodconnect.org.

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The Revolution Will Be Global and Must Be Local

by Nora Weiser

Much like the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, issues of societal inequity are global, but can only be resolved by the steps we take locally. People around the globe are falling ill from the novel coronavirus, but we sport masks and keep our distance to protect our friends, families, and neighbors locally. Similarly, oppressed groups around the world are protesting in revolt of systemic inequality, but we must change our own daily actions to fix unfair and unbalanced systems and institutions.

As if the pandemic were not adequate evidence to show that we are all connected as human beings, the revolution happening in the streets of Denver, and in streets across America and around the world, is yet another reminder. And while our country has grown more divided on so many issues, perhaps we can finally find the common ground that once linked us together. Neighborhoods become communities when neighbors agree to celebrate our differences, and fight to ensure those differences never lead to unequal treatment for any segment of our population. Neighborhoods can also recognize that they may be “non-racist” but that they can do the hard work to be actively “anti-racist.”

Platt Park is a welcoming and friendly neighborhood that offers a great quality of life with access to public transportation, local businesses and services, parks and outdoor space, and proximity to downtown making for an easy commute. But how diverse are we? According to Statisticalatlas.com, among the 2,578 homes and 5,393 residents of Platt Park, 90% of us are White, 6% Hispanic, and just 1% Black. I know my neighbors, and I know this community, and it is a community that eschews racism. What the numbers show, however, is that through generations of systemic racism, people of color have largely been excluded from our wonderful community with its excellent quality of life. Despite our good intentions. This is due to many socioeconomic factors which in turn are due to many institutional, and intentional, racist policies that run throughout the fabric of our nation. As just one example, lack of access to education early in life sets a person up for limited job opportunities, lower wages, inability to save, and may exclude them from ultimately purchasing a home. Certainly in Platt Park where Zillow notes the median home price now tops \$671,000, many people who might wish to live here are excluded *de*

facto— they have no means to overcome the hurdles society has put in place to keep them from getting here.

This is not an accusation or a criticism, it is a realization that all of us need to make to understand why there is such a tremendous outpouring of frustration, pain, and anger. It is not just about racism. It is not just about police brutality. It is about the ongoing unfairness that has kept Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color (BIPOC) from equal access to the American dream. It is impossible to pull yourself up by your bootstraps if someone is keeping you from getting boots.

Now that we know the data. Now that we see the problems, however uncomfortable to face, what steps can we take to address them? How can we offer more affordable and diverse housing options in Platt Park? How can we encourage and support minority-owned businesses? How can we ensure good schools with equal access to education and resources? How can we keep the issue at the forefront to avoid inaction? How can we be neighborly locally to drive the change that is needed nationally? With a neighborhood median annual income of \$97,917, what can we fund to ensure progress is made? When we fight to keep out multifamily housing, group living, and affordable housing options near our transportation hubs, what are we really fighting to preserve? And what might we gain by fighting for something, for someone, different instead? If we switch our perspective from NIMBY to YIMBY, how much more vibrant might our already wonderful neighborhood be?

We may not have all the answers, but if we are willing to ask the tough questions and listen to those who are directly impacted, we will be well on our way to making our neighborhood a diverse urban environment that doesn't just tolerate differences but celebrates diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Even if we are just now fully awakening to the idea that we may be part of the problem, Platt Park can be a powerful part of the solution.

***“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”
-Chinese proverb***

Farmers Market Health and Safety

by Nicole Jarman, South Pearl Street Farmers Market

The Colorado Department of Agriculture has declared Farmers Markets critical businesses, and we believe that the less hands touching food the safer it is. We also believe local food supports the local economy, supports our neighbors, and nourishes our soul as much as our stomach. Please help us keep the Market going and open by following our guidelines. The South Pearl Street Farmers Market opened on Sunday, May 17, and after a few weeks of operation, we have evolved our protocols to ensure the safest operations for the health and well-being of everyone involved.

The following procedures were updated as of June 12, 2020:

- Four entrances. You may enter the market at South Pearl Street and Iowa, the east and west side of Florida, and about half-way down the block between Arkansas and Florida. The added entrances have helped with flow, monitoring traffic, and are hopefully more convenient for our shoppers.
- Lines on Florida will queue down the alley instead of further down Florida into residential streets.
- We've added additional shifts for volunteers to act as market ambassadors. If you're interested, please email nicole@hobnobevents.com.

The following procedures instituted in May remain in place:

- Monitor and limit the number of customers in the market at a time.
- Increased space between booths to allow for physical distancing.
- Hand sanitizer provided from our partner Big C at entrances.
- Handwashing stations and hand sanitizer at the information booth.
- Market Boxes available for those who would like fresh food and produce but are uncomfortable or unable to come to the market. Visit: SouthPearlStreetMarket.com to access the online store.

Additionally:

- We have been given the green light to bring back non-food related vendors, which means you can get knives sharpened at the market again, buy pillows and baskets, etc.
- Music, kids' activities, and special events continue to be on hold until local government officials tell us it is safe to resume.

- We continue to work closely with the CDC, Colorado Farmers Market Association, the CSU extension, our local health department, and the Office of Special Events to ensure we are operating in a safe environment for our vendors, our patrons, and our team.
- Those are the things we are doing – here are some things you can do as a Market goer:
- Patrons are asked to take their food to go and enjoy at home, in the park as a picnic, etc. rather than at the Market.
- Try something new! Vendors are finding it increasingly difficult to promote their product without being able to sample. Please support them by purchasing something new to you – if you are disappointed with your purchase bring it back and let them know, they want to ensure your happiness!
- Please be considerate of our residents and dispose of trash in receptacles, be conscious of our neighbors' yards, and wear your mask when leaving the market until you get to your car.
- Support our South Pearl Street merchants. Our small businesses have been hit, they need your support more than ever, and they are open!
- If you are sick, please stay home.
- If you bring your own bag please pack it yourself, do not hand to vendors to pack and please wash regularly.
- Wear a mask.
- Please allow vendors to handle their products and hand them to you.
- Please be efficient with your shopping time.
- Use cashless payment methods whenever possible.



A graphic sign for the South Pearl Street Farmers Market. The sign features a decorative border with a honeycomb pattern and bee illustrations. At the top center is a circular logo with a street lamp and the text "SOUTH PEARL STREET". Below this, the words "FARMERS MARKET" are written in large, bold, black, distressed-style letters with a white outline. Underneath, the location and hours are listed: "1400 - 1500 block of South Pearl Street" and "9am to 1pm every Sunday". A note states "*Observing COVID-19 Safety Regulations*". At the bottom, it says "Skip the line and order online at southpearlstreetmarket.com".

The Beautiful Green Deeds of Platt Park

by Jen Grauer, Platt Park Green Team

I've been taking a lot more walks these days and have been trying to mix up my routes, and I've been impressed to see so many "beautiful green deeds" taken on by our neighbors! Have you noticed these "beautiful green deeds" too?

GREEN CITY COMPOST BINS

Decomposing food in landfills creates methane gas which is a contributor to climate change and 21 times more potent than CO₂. Call 311 to get your compost bin, or share a bin with a neighbor. Use it for all your food scraps, greasy pizza boxes (which cannot be recycled), tissues, paper towels, waxed paper, napkins, weeds, grass, house plants, small branches, pet hair, popsicle sticks, wooden chopsticks, coffee grounds, tea bags, and more. All these items can be included because commercial composting facilities get much hotter than home composting. Along with recycling, composting can help Denver become a zero-waste city!

RECYCLE, REUSE, RENEWABLES

Recycled rainwater. Coloradans can collect rainwater in two barrels that total 110 gallons. Water your plants, flowers, garden, and save money on your water bill!

Reusable grocery bags. Even though we may not be allowed to have our groceries packed into our reusable bags in the store right now, our neighbors have found a workaround! They put all their purchased food back in the cart and then pack into their own bags in the parking lot.

Renewable solar energy. From young couples to single seniors, renting or buying, more and more homes are making use of our fabulous sunshine and south facing roofs! In 5 years will Platt Park be a model of alternative energy with solar panels on nearly every pitched roof and a quiet electric car plugged into every garage? Bye, bye brown cloud!

FARMER'S MARKET

Platt Park is lucky to have Denver's best farmer's market in our very own neighborhood. Buying local from small farms is good for our economy, air, and water. Before buying ask where the farm is located and how they manage pests and weeds. Paying a little more for organically grown/chemical-free, local produce is money well spent, and recognizes the true cost of good food.

PRODUCTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

Grass lawns are the #1 irrigated "crop" in the U.S. It's great to see so many homes in Platt Park have replaced a portion or all of their infrequently used front, side, or city right-of-way grass with more earth-friendly options – and are tending to them more sustainably as well:

- Food gardens and/or food supporting pollinator gardens that put soil and water to productive use. Growing your own produce or planting pollinator gardens makes a difference. Pollinators are required for 80% of our flowering plants—without pollinators, the human race cannot survive. The many yards brimming with flowers and succulents add happy color to our neighborhood and attract a wide variety of bees and butterflies.
- Xeriscaping that uses minimal water and features gorgeous, native plants.
- Native Buffalo grass that never grows very long, looks great when self-seeding, needs less water, and is drought tolerant!
- A chemical-free lawn. Keep the weeds pulled early in the season, over-seed, and apply compost to the lawn. To learn more, search online for "City of Boulder Organic Lawn Care Guide."
- Gas-free lawn mowing. A Swedish study found that one hour of using a gas mower has the same carbon footprint as a 100-mile car trip. About 17 million gallons of gas are spilled every year from refilling mowers, that's more than the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, still being cleaned up! A self-powered push mower or a quiet electric mower are climate-friendly alternatives.
- Chemical-free gardening. Hand pulling weeds is hard work, but it is work worth doing to keep our air and drinking water cleaner through reduced pesticide use. And, with your local gym closed, it's a great way to burn calories and build muscles. Win-win-win! Have a chemical-free yard? Let others know you care and inspire others to support our pollinators with a "People & Pollinators" sign for your yard! These are usually available for a \$10 donation, however, if you contact Joycejoyce@peopleandpollinators.org—and mention this article—a sign will be delivered to you for free!

WANT TO BE PART OF PLATT PARK GREEN TEAM?

Contact 3PA online at www.3pa.org/contact-us. And, know that you are already an honorary member by choosing more and more ways to green up our neighborhood from your very own home!

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