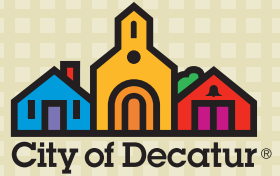


City of Decatur FOCUS

PLAYBOOK
INSIDE



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2020
Volume 30 • Number 6

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CITY OF DECATUR, GEORGIA

Decatur's 2020 Strategic Plan Kicks Off

Thursday, Jan. 23 • 7-9 p.m.
Decatur Courtyard by Marriott
Conference Center
130 Clairemont Ave.



DESTINATION: 2030

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

Decatur's Citizen Roundtables, the heart of our once-a-decade Strategic Planning process, will launch Thursday, Jan. 23, 7-9 p.m., at the Decatur Courtyard by Marriott's Decatur Conference Center. Everyone is welcome.

For the past 10 years, Decatur's leadership and city staff have been making decisions and setting yearly budgets based on

the 2010 Strategic Plan. From the Unified Development Ordinance to Better Together, public art to bike lanes, green space acquisition to downtown apartments, some of the decade's most defining initiatives began with hundreds of Decatur neighbors sharing their perspectives in a series of meetings and roundtable discussions.

Now it's time to do it all again, beginning with our Jan. 23 kick-

off meeting. Thereafter, participants will meet with their assigned Roundtable groups three times over a period of roughly two months.

Will your voice be represented? Our quest for the broadest, most inclusive process in Decatur history will only be made stronger with your participation.

Learn more and register to participate at decatur2030.com.

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TOWN

Laying Down the Law in Decatur

Annie Caiola and Elizabeth Rose are both former “big law firm” lawyers who traded downtown Atlanta for downtown Decatur – a move that aligned with the growth of their practice and their vision for the firm, whose clients range from small businesses to international corporations. Decatur’s central location, impressive office space, family focus and walkability to acclaimed restaurants made it an ideal spot for Caiola & Rose to grow its practice.

Focus on Downtown Development

legal services to a wide variety of businesses, with specializations in franchising, real estate, intellectual property, litigation and restaurant risk management.

“Professionally, Decatur has been the perfect place to grow our national law practice,” added Elizabeth Rose, who received her J.D. from Emory School of Law and is a thrice e-published author and former clerk to a federal judge. “Beyond the benefits to our practice, the quality of life is amazing: cozy residential neighborhoods, exceptional schools, unique stores and restaurants – all of which are walkable from our office.”

Since it started in 2017, Caiola & Rose has tripled its headcount from three to nine. “While growth is nice, it has never been our direct goal,” said Caiola. “Our objective is simple: attract an elite team that performs exceptional work, and the clients will follow. Decatur has been instrumental in helping us attract our team and our clients, and we’re excited to continue thriving in this vibrant business community.”



“Our goal was to create a firm where growing and established companies could partner with distinguished attorneys in an environment that was smaller, more personal, and more client-focused,” explained Anne Caiola, who graduated with her J.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and was recognized in the “Top 40 Under 40” by *The Daily Report* in 2015. The firm provides

The Decatur Focus is a joint publication of the City of Decatur, the Decatur Downtown Development Authority and the Decatur Business Association. It is a newsletter intended to provide announcements and information related to events, activities, and businesses in the city of Decatur. The purpose of the newsletter is to promote the city and encourage the exchange of information among residents, business owners and the school system. Letters to the editor, editorials or other opinion pieces are not published. All press releases, announcements and other information received for publication are subject to editing. Information found in the Focus is also posted on Decatur’s official website at decaturga.com. The deadline for submitting articles, announcements or advertising is the first day of the month preceding publication. Contact: Editor, Decatur Focus, P.O. Box 220, Decatur, GA 30031, 404-371-8386; fax 404-371-1593; email: decaturfocus@decaturga.com.



DECATUR CITY COMMISSION

George Dusenbury.....Commissioner
Patti Garrett.....Commissioner
Lesa Mayer.....Commissioner
Tony Powers.....Commissioner
Kelly Walsh.....Commissioner

The new City Commission elected a mayor and mayor pro tem in early January, but that information was not available at press time.



Decatur Downtown
Development Authority®

BOARD

Chris Sciarone, Chair
Darren Comer • Linda Curry
Tony Leung • Noah Peeters
Lisa Turner



DECATUR BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Susan Sparks.....President
Daryl Funn.....President-Elect
Jill Joplin.....Treasurer
Emily Holden.....Secretary
Kyle Williams.....Past President

Design and layout: Lampe-Farley.com

Information for the FOCUS should be submitted by mail to Editor, Decatur Focus, P.O. Box 220, Decatur, GA 30031, or by email to decaturfocus@decaturga.com.

City Commission Taps Emerging Nonprofit to Manage Legacy Park

Resident applications needed for expanding board

At its Dec. 2 meeting, Decatur's City Commission voted unanimously to develop a formal agreement with a local nonprofit, the Decatur Legacy Project, to manage operations at Legacy Park. This type of partnership with a nonprofit entity was recommended in the Legacy Park master plan.

Much like the City of Atlanta's relationship with the Piedmont Park Conservancy, the arrangement allows for a dedicated, not-for-profit entity to manage day-to-day operations, schedule event and meeting spaces, and seek revenue opportunities to offset the property's ongoing maintenance costs.

The Decatur Legacy Project – also known as Legacy Decatur – was initiated by the city in 2014 as a vehicle for honoring our approaching bicentennial celebrations in 2023 with a series of initiatives designed to leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

Based on a similar approach found in Sugar Land, Texas, the Legacy Project is an opportunity for the city, its elected leadership, and its citizens to work together on legacy-oriented projects and initiatives. The organization's not-for-profit status allows it to pursue grants and other sources of funding not typically available to municipalities.

Reflecting its commitment to forging city/community partnership, the organization's board is composed of Mayor Patti Garrett, Mayor Pro Tem Tony Powers, and City Manager Andrea Arnold, together with four additional seats held by residents Meredith Struby, chair of the Public Facilities Authority; Allen Mast, a manager of private foundations funds for SunTrust Bank; Ed Bowen, a real estate attorney with a background in public-private partnerships; and Peggy Merriss, Decatur's former city manager.

In preparation for its pending role at Legacy Park, the organization will add two additional resident seats in early 2020. Decatur residents with an interest in the city's legacy, with experience serving on non-profit boards and the ability to work creatively to identify public-private partnerships are encouraged to apply at info@legacydecatur.org.

The organization also plans to kick off planning efforts for Decatur's 2023 200th birthday celebration and needs your help. There are already a few volunteers signed up but more residents are needed to help create a year-long calendar of events for 2023. The bicentennial tree planting program has already kicked off, with a goal of planting at least 1,000 trees on public and private property throughout the city by the end of 2023. If you are interested in working to develop ideas to mark this exciting milestone, send your name to info@legacydecatur.org.

City Commission Holiday Schedule

City Commission meetings are held on the first and third Mondays of every month unless there is a Monday holiday. The January and February meetings are affected by the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday and Presidents Day.

To resolve conflicts with the city Schools of Decatur calendar, this schedule moves the Feb. 17 meeting to Feb. 24 (after winter break), and moves the Sept. 21 meeting to Sept. 28 (after fall break). The July 6 meeting is eliminated to allow for a small break in the summer.

If the school calendar changes or urgent matters arise, the calendar may be modified and the City Commission may hold a called meeting, if needed.

The 2020 Schedule

Monday, Jan. 6	Monday, July 20
Tuesday, Jan. 21	Monday, Aug. 3
Monday, Feb. 3	Monday, Aug. 17
Monday, Feb. 24	Tuesday, Sept. 8
Monday, March 2	Monday, Sept. 28
Monday, March 16	Monday, Oct. 5
Monday, April 6	Monday, Oct. 19
Monday, April 20	Monday, Nov. 2
Monday, May 4	Monday, Nov. 16
Monday, May 18	Monday, Dec. 7
Monday, June 1	Monday, Dec. 21
Monday, June 15	

ESB Community Plastic Survey

The results of the community plastic survey are in, and can be found on the Decatur Environmental Sustainability Board page at decaturga.com/bc-esb.

Holiday Schedule for Solid Waste and Recycling Services

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 20

Monday services will be on Tues., Jan. 21

Tuesday services will be on Wed., Jan. 22

Presidents Day, Monday, Feb. 17

Monday services will be on Tues., Feb. 18

Tuesday services will be on Wed., Feb. 19

Commissioners Cup Awarded

Kristin and Colton Ebersold, 208 Maxwell St., are the winners of the Commissioners Cup for 2019. Each year the cup is awarded to one residence that displays excellence in festive decoration. This home appeared to have a too-big Christmas tree that pushed right through the roof.

The festive tree, glowing with bright lights and garlands on the porch, included a treetop that poked out of the roof, adorned with a Christmas star. The oversized ornaments hanging from the porch made this home a festive and joyful sight. The Ebersolds would like to give a special thanks to Kevin Arne at the Decatur Makers Space for assisting in making this happen. Decorate Decatur runners-up were 950 Clairemont Ave. and 211 W. Hill St.

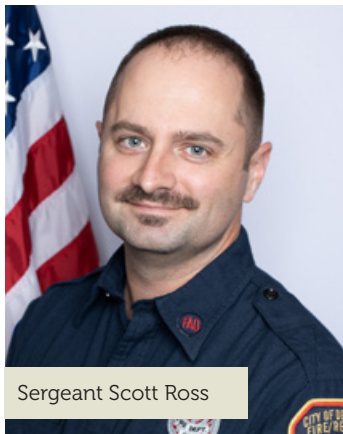


CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Captain Jeremy Storey and Sergeant Scott Ross for their promotions within the City of Decatur Fire Department.



Captain Jeremy Storey



Sergeant Scott Ross

Sign Up for Text Alerts

Interested in receiving news alerts and important updates from the City of Decatur via text message? Text CODAlerts to 313131 to join the list.



Help shape Decatur's next ten years.

Once every decade, the Decatur community comes together to talk about what we want our city to be. What emerges from the process is the **Strategic Plan**, a guide for setting our priorities, policies, and projects for the next 10 years.

It's now time to do it all again. Check it out online, register, join us for the **January 23 kick-off**, and help shape the future you want to see.

VISIT AND REGISTER TODAY: DECATUR2030.COM



DESTINATION: 2030

GET MOVING!

Decatur Running Group

Beginning Feb. 6, Decatur Active Living will host a running group on Thursdays in February at 6:30 p.m. The run will start and end at Decatur Recreation Center, 231 Sycamore St., and is co-led by Decatur Active Living and Decatur Active Living Advisory Board member Mike Johnson.

Decatur Outdoor Group

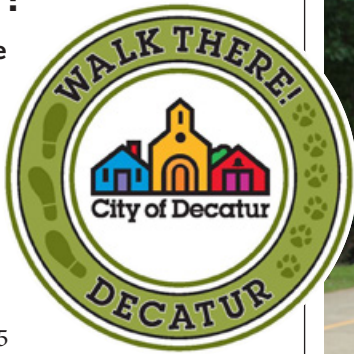
Decatur Active Living would like to invite community members out in nature for some adventure. The Decatur Outdoor Group will meet to plan outings. If you are interested in joining, contact Sara Holmes, sara.holmes@decaturga.com or 678-553-6559.

Walk There, Decatur!

Show us where you walk and receive a free light.

The city of Decatur, with its tree-lined streets and more than 60 miles of sidewalks in 4.5 square miles, is a great location for walking. WalkScore.com rates Decatur as the most walkable city in Georgia with the highest walk score.

Take a photo of yourself, or friends and family, walking in Decatur and show us where you walk. Post the photo on social media and tag the photo with #iwalkdecatur #whereiwalk and @beactivedecatur; then show your post to the staff at the Visitors Center, 113 Clairemont Ave., to receive a free Walk There, Decatur! light – so you can be seen when walking at night. The promotion will last until March, or while supplies last.



Save the Date:

Decatur Streets Alive Returns May 3

Decatur Streets Alive will return on Ponce de Leon Avenue in downtown Decatur on May 3. Are you interested in helping to make this year's event a success? We are looking for planning committee members, activity partners and sponsors. For more information contact cheryl.burnette@decaturga.com or visit decaturga.com/streetsalive.



Decatur Receives Voice of the People Award

The National Research Center and Polco have announced Decatur as a winner of the Voice of the People award for Excellence in Community Engagement. This award is given to top-performing jurisdictions that best listen and act for the benefit of their communities. Based on responses from the National Citizen Survey, now called the National Community Survey (NCS), residents in our community reported the highest ratings for this category compared with all other participating jurisdictions.

The National Community Survey reports resident opinion and satisfaction with local government and services with a scientific, representative sample approach. Results are then used to inform budgeting, performance measurement and program planning.



Decatur Salutes Hometown Heroes

The Decatur City Commission gave out 10 Hometown Hero awards at the December DBA Holiday party. The recipients, pictured, are Lisa Daly and Jim Rabb, Thanh Doan, Jennifer Gonzalez, Happy Harold, Ashley Howle, Carroll Knabe, Terrie Moore, Clare Schexnyder, and Alix Wagner.

Hometown Heroes are people who volunteer their time and who often work behind

the scenes to make our community a better place. They do not get paid for what they do but are invaluable to our community.

Decatur began the Hometown Hero program at the close of the Hometown to the World Festival during the 1996 Olympics. The 14-day festival was a success because of the hundreds of volunteers who helped.

Since the first ceremony in 1996, the City

Commission has presented the awards annually. With the 2019 presentation, Decatur now has 352 Hometown Heroes. Descriptions of the Heroes along with who nominated them can be found on the city's website. Photos of all of the Hometown Heroes are on the "Hero Wall" in Decatur City Hall.



Homestead Exemptions Reduce Taxes

If you live at the property you own, you may qualify for one or more homestead exemptions or assistance programs for city taxes in 2020.

General homestead exemption:

Homeowners who reside at their home are eligible to apply online or in person. In 2019, this exemption reduced property taxes for eligible homeowners by \$283.

GS-1 exemption: The GS-1 saved most eligible homeowners \$1,579 in 2019. You qualify to apply if you're at least 62 as of Jan. 1 and your total household income does not exceed \$25,000.

S-1 exemption: The S-1 saved most eligible homeowners \$202 in 2019. You qualify to apply if you are 62 or older as of Jan. 1 and the household income of you and your spouse does not exceed \$10,000, excluding retirement income. Pensions and Social Security income do not count toward income for this exemption, but income such as salary, wages, rental income, dividends and interest are included.

GH-2/S-4 exemption: Regardless of income, owners who are 65 as of Jan. 1 are eligible to apply for the GH-2 and S-4. The S-4 exempts owners from school taxes. This exemption is in effect through 2021, subject to renewal or change through legislation and a referendum. S-4 savings vary based on the value of the home. The GH-2 saves homeowners about \$113 a year.

S-2 and S-3 school exemptions:

Owners who are 70 may file for the S-3 regardless of income. Owners over 80 with income under \$40,000 may apply for the S-2 exemption. These exemptions do not reduce taxes while the S-4 is in effect. However, the city encourages homeowners to apply for these exemptions in case of changes to the S-4.

Disabled veterans can qualify for an exemption saving up to \$2,926 if they reside at the property and have a 100 percent disability per the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Tax deferral allows owners 62 and above to defer taxes on the first \$100,000 of assessed value of their home, payable with interest upon the sale or transfer of the property, allowing a deferral of up to \$3,417 annually. Additional conditions apply.

Year's support provides an exemption of taxes for one year upon the death of a spouse if approved by the DeKalb County probate court.

Un-remarried surviving spouses of U.S. service members, peace officers, or firefighters killed in the line of duty may qualify for additional exemptions.

Rehabilitated historic properties may qualify for preferential tax assessments.

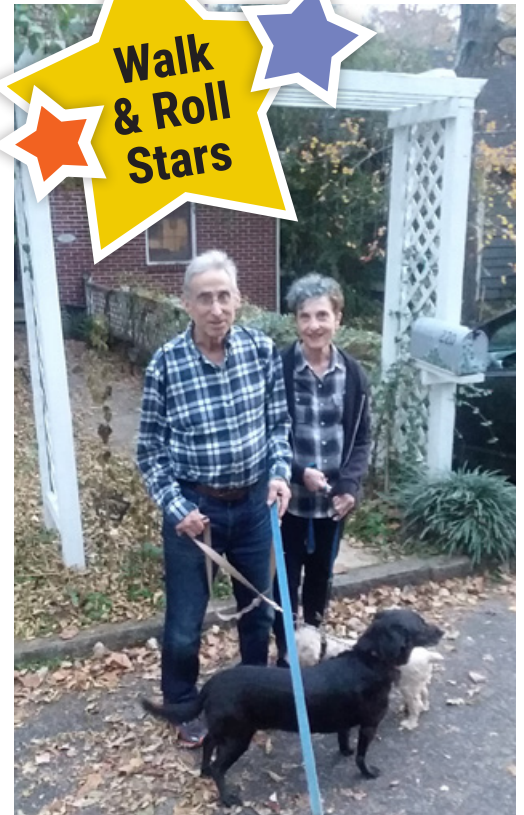
Your potential tax savings for each exemption will vary in 2020 depending on millage rates.

Once you have applied for an exemption, you do not need to re-apply. But you'll need to apply if you qualify for a new exemption based on age, income, if you are a new owner, or if you have moved within town. If you have only applied with the county, you must also apply with the city.

The city can accept homestead exemption applications for 2020 anytime between now and April 1. However, homeowners are encouraged to apply for any new exemptions by March 16 in order for your exemptions to appear on the first installment 2020 property tax bill.

For details on how homestead exemptions are calculated or to apply for the general homestead exemption online, visit decaturga.com/homestead. Applicants for all other exemptions can apply in person at City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St., Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Walk
& Roll
Stars**



January's Walk and Roll Stars are longtime Decatur residents **Richard Cohen** and **Marti Keller**. They are mostly retired but work from home, significantly reducing their commute. While exploring new neighborhoods is one of their favorite activities, they walk to Oakhurst Village or downtown Decatur for most of their errands and needs. They usually have three dogs with them and are known to many neighbors more by their dogs than anything else – as is true for many dog-walkers.

Richard and Marti walk whenever they can, whether for their dogs, their errands or as a “mood enhancer.” They even get out when it rains, although then they are merely “around the blockers.” Both believe that walking (and exercise in general) has tremendous health benefits, whether physical, emotional, or even spiritual. Marti, in particular, attests to this after spending three months in a wheelchair following a foot injury.

Walking has become more a habit than a practice or activity in the lives of Richard and Marti, and that makes them this month's Walk and Roll Stars.

Capoeira and Little Shop Receive Welcoming Business Awards

The Better Together Advisory Board in partnership with the Decatur City Commission gave the inaugural Welcoming Business Awards to Capoeira Maculele Decatur and Little Shop of Stories at the DBA Holiday Party in December.

Better Together established the Welcoming Business Award to reward and publicly recognize leadership actions that create a welcoming and inclusive business environment in Decatur and encourage businesses to prioritize inclusivity as a “best practice.” These descriptions are from the submitted nominations:

Capoeira Maculele Decatur

Francisco Antonio Rodrigues da Silva, known as Mestre Fran, moved to Atlanta in 2002. Since 1991, Mestre Fran and Capoeira Maculele have worked to promote an organi-

zation that values all dimensions of the human being, including the physical, moral, and spiritual. He has focused on awakening the talents of his students, elevating the awareness of society, and encouraging the practice of Capoeira as an art, fight, and a means of social, cultural, and athletic integration.

Capoeira Maculele has been in Decatur since 2011 and teaches capoeira and Brazilian culture to kids and people of all ages, races, sexual orientations and genders. They also have students with disabilities training Capoeira in downtown Decatur.

Little Shop of Stories

Little Shop of Stories believes that all children need to see themselves in books. They sponsor a variety of programming to encourage community involvement, such as Celebrating Diverse Voices, On the Same Page, book groups, and the Year of Kindness. The effort

to be inclusive has changed how Little Shop does business, from their ordering to their story times, to calling on publishers to include more diverse voices.

Little Shop collaborates with community organizations to bring diverse authors and voices to Decatur and has partnered with the Decatur Education Foundation, City Schools of Decatur, Better Together Advisory Board, Refuge Coffee Company, and the Atlanta School for the Deaf, to name a few.

They are pictured receiving a colorful Welcoming Business welcome mat, a certificate and a window cling from Better Together Advisory Board members David Lewicki and Syreeta Campbell. If you have experienced a welcoming business deserving of this award, nominate them in 2020. For information about Better Together visit decaturga.com/welcomingbusiness.



Beer Festival Continues to Give Back

The Decatur Craft Beer Festival continues to hold true to the original goal of supporting local nonprofits that make a difference in the city of Decatur. In 20 years and 21 festivals, the organization has given \$1.35 million in grants to nonprofits each year at the Decatur Business Association's annual holiday meeting.

The 2019 recipients were:

Amplify My Community, Inc.

To host a community-based concert series on the Decatur square, to engage the community and raise funds and awareness for Decatur Cooperative Ministry's work to alleviate homelessness in Decatur and DeKalb County.

Better Living Together

To provide community and engagement activities to make residents more aware of the proposed community at Legacy Park. Funds will also help enhance the website and create

promotional materials to engage other communities and groups.

Day League

Day league has completed more than 100 sexual assault exams. Funds will pay for supplies not covered by other grants for future exams.

Decatur City Dance

Provides community dance performances in ballet, jazz, modern and tap. Student dancers learn how to balance classes and rehearsals with family responsibilities and school.

Decatur Cooperative Ministry

To provide longer-term shelter to help residents of Decatur for up to six months. Families receive the time they need to stabilize, build resources and increase self-reliance.

Decatur Education Foundation

Continued work to educate the community about the disparity that exist in outcomes between black and white students. City Schools of Decatur will continue its efforts to raise awareness about racism and inherent bias. DEF would like to fund events and initiatives during the school year that support grassroots organizations to build bottom-up support for equity in schools.

Decatur Makers

To fund Phase One of a DIY laser cutter to meet the needs of a growing community and accommodate bigger projects.

more ►



Beer Festival Proceeds

continued from page 9

Decatur MLK Jr. Service Project

To help support the annual project, which assists low-income senior homeowners, who reside in the city, by providing house maintenance and repairs free of charge.

Decatur Robotics, Inc.

To purchase an enclosed trailer to transport team equipment to competitions, demonstrations, and parades.

DeKalb History Center

To purchase one or two additional stacking map cabinets to store maps that are housed in the archives. Both current cabinets are completely full.

Furnish with Love

To furnish three apartments currently in design with beds, sofas, kitchen tables, and other needed items.

Global Village Project, Inc.

To provide art-related activities vital to STEAM curriculum, including a partnership with Synchronicity's Playmaking for Girls, teaching artists in music and performing arts.

L'Arche Atlanta

To help purchase a wheelchair-accessible van and cover annual costs related to transportation, such as gas, title and insurance.

Mead Road Mardi Gras

To pay for the police presence and the block party festival.

Oakhurst Cooperative School

To offset the expenses for the Beat the Street for Little Feet race so that the community event's revenue goes more toward benefiting the students of OCP.

Our House

To support the Early Childhood Education program, designed to mitigate the worst effects of homelessness on children by preparing them for school success and providing parents with free, safe and reliable childcare.

Threshold Community Program

To provide support to the fitness program and supply participants with bicycles and protective gear.

DYC To Host Community Dance

Saturday, Feb. 29 • 5 to 8 p.m.

Decatur Recreation Center Gym, 231 Sycamore St.

The Decatur Youth Council (DYC) is hosting an intergenerational community dance and you are invited. The DYC is a youth leadership board under the direction of the city and each year it plans a community event.

This year DYC members want to bring the Decatur community together with a family-friendly "throwback" dance. There will be music, food, dancing and a silent auction. Proceeds from the auction will benefit a local nonprofit organization. For more information and to purchase tickets, go to decaturga.com/dyc. (Please note that children attending the dance must be accompanied by an adult.)



FEMA Encourages Communities to Put a Freeze on Winter Fires

Home fires occur more in winter than in any other season. As you stay cozy and warm this winter season, be fire smart! The most frequent concerns are:

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas created when fuels such as gasoline, wood, coal, and propane do not burn completely. Install carbon monoxide alarms and test them at least once a month.

Winter storms can cause dangerous conditions: blinding wind-driven snow, extreme cold, icy road conditions, and downed trees and power lines can all wreak havoc on our daily schedules.

Home fires occur more in winter than in any other season. Heating equipment is involved in one of every six reported home fires, and one in every five home fire deaths.

- 890 people die in winter home fires each year.
- \$2 billion in property losses occur each year from winter home fires.
- Winter home fires account for only 8 percent of the total number of fires in the United States, but result in 30 percent of all fire deaths.
- Cooking is the leading cause of winter home fires.
- A heat source too close to combustibles is the leading factor contributing to the start of a winter home fire (15 percent).
- 5-8 p.m. is the most common time period for winter home fires.

Generators: While useful during power outages, portable generators used improperly can cause carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electrical shock or electrocution, and fires. Keep portable generators outside, away from windows, and as far away as possible from your home.

Candles: Winter is the peak time of year for home candle fires. Each year between 2013 and 2017, an average of 7,900 home candle fires were reported. Keep anything that can burn at least three feet from any heat source, such as fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators or space heaters.

Electrical Fires: Roughly half of all home electrical fires involves electrical distribution or lighting equipment. Another half involves other known types of equipment like washer or dryer fans and portable or stationary space heaters. Plug only one heat-producing appliance (such as a space heater) into an electrical outlet at a time.

For more information on how to prevent winter fires, visit usfa.fema.gov/winter and nfpa.org/winter.

Celebrate Black History Month

Starting in 1926 and initially celebrated as “Negro History Week,” Black History Month was created to celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans and to recognize their contributions to U.S. history.

Black History Month became a nationally observed event in 1976 on the 50th anniversary of its first iteration. Since that year, every Black History Month has had a theme, and the theme for 2020 is “African Americans and the Vote.” A significant election year, 2020 also marks the 150th anniversary of the 15th Amendment (1870), which gave black men the right to vote (black women followed 50 years later with the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920). Many black men and women played critical roles in the passage of these amendments, much as they have in so many other aspects of our history and continue to do so with respect to voting rights and beyond.

Today we use Black History Month as an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments and achievements of people throughout the African diaspora, both at home and abroad. In that spirit, Better Together and Little Shop of Stories offer the following selections for young and not-so-young readers to explore the achievements, struggles, and stories of our shared history.

Lillian’s Right to Vote by Jonah Winter
As Lillian, a one-hundred-year-old African American woman, makes a “long haul up a steep hill” to her polling place, she sees more than trees and sky – she sees her family’s history. She sees the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment and her great-grandfather voting for the first time. She sees her parents trying to register to vote. And she sees herself

Marching in a protest from Selma to Montgomery. This is a simple tale, wonderfully told, and published in time for the 50th anniversary of the voting rights act.

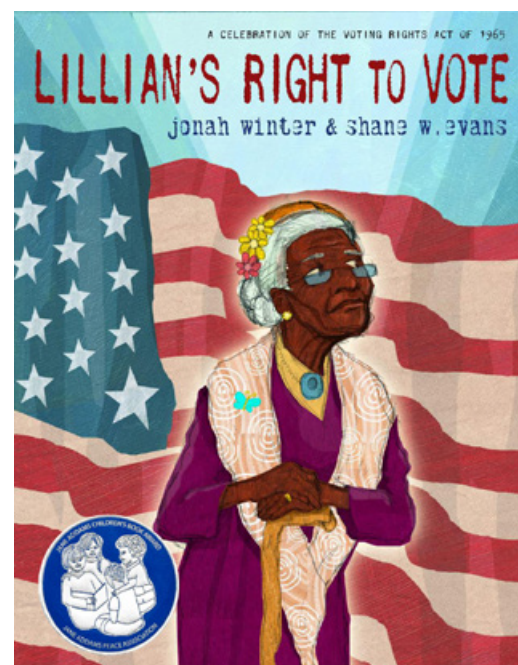
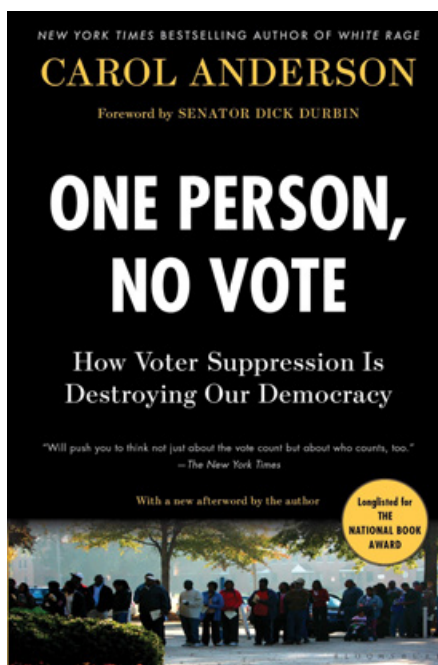
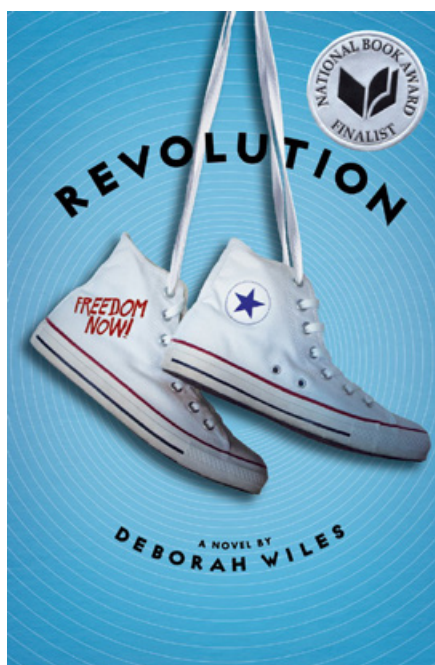
Revolution by Deborah Wiles
Set in 1964 during Freedom Summer in small-town Mississippi, Revolution is about Sunny, a 12-year-old white girl who cannot

accept her new stepmother and stepsiblings, and Raymond, a black boy who is impatient for integration to open the town’s pool, movie theater and baseball field. The isolated world of the town is upended as civil rights groups descend to register voters and integrate schools.

While the novel is fiction, Deb Wiles has grounded the historical elements by providing real-life excerpts from contemporary newspapers, leaflets and brochures of the Ku Klux Klan, and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee instructions on how to react to arrest while on a picket line. All of these visceral historical elements serve to make Sunny and Raymond’s experiences resonate more fully with the reader as they come of age in a tumultuous time.

One Person, No Vote by Carol Anderson
(also comes in a Young Readers edition)

In *One Person, No Vote*, Carol Anderson has detailed the slow retraction of voting rights since the landmark Supreme Court 2013 Shelby ruling. It is a fascinating, if harrowing, look at how our right to vote has been slowly eroded in counties across the United States while most of us are completely unaware. An eye-opener of a book.





Enjoy Winter Beauty at Decatur Cemetery

Everyone needs a little peace after a busy holiday season and before the stirrings of spring are in the air. Even in the stillness of winter Mother Nature is preparing for a big springtime show. Visit the Decatur Cemetery and observe the changes in the landscape as the season progresses from winter to spring.

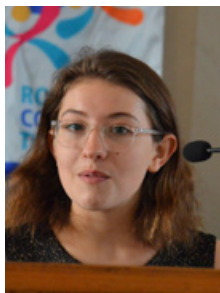
Take a deep breath of the crisp air. Look up at the blue sky. Notice the shapes of the bare trees, hidden during warmer months. Bring your binoculars and watch the winter birds. There's much to be learned about the changing seasons in a cemetery.

Self-guided walking tours are available at the office off Bell Street. Contact Friends of Decatur Cemetery at friendsofdecaturcemetery@gmail.com for more information.

Interact Club President Visits Rotary Club

In November, Zoe Stephens, president of the newly formed Interact Club at Decatur High School, addressed the Rotary Club of Decatur to share the club's plans for Thanksgiving and Christmas service projects. Interact clubs, part of Rotary International, bring young people 12-18 together to develop leadership skills while discovering the power of "Service Above Self," the Rotary motto.

For more information about the Decatur Rotary Club, visit decatur-rotary.org.



Williams Teusink Welcomes New Attorneys

Gala Villahoz and Caela Abrams have joined Williams Teusink as associate attorneys. Gala previously worked for the McDeer Firm, where she acted as in-house counsel for a national residential and commercial real estate company. She earned her Juris Doctorate from Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law in 2016 and her Bachelor of Science from Georgia Institute of Technology in 2012.

Caela earned her Juris Doctorate from Georgia State University College of Law in 2019 and her Bachelor of Arts from Emory University in 2016. Gala and Caela both specialize in real estate and corporate litigation.

Williams Teusink, a seven-attorney law firm in the historic High House on Sycamore Street, assists clients statewide to navigate both transactions and litigation in matters of real estate, business, and government.

February is Love Your Library Month

During February, stop into the Decatur Library to show your love, or donate online at dekalblibraryfoundation.org. In 2019, the DeKalb Library Foundation supported more than 300 programs not funded by tax dollars.



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Preschool Registration Now Open at DFUMC

Decatur First United Methodist Church, 300 E. Ponce de Leon Ave., has opened registration for its 65th year of preschool education. The half-day program, for children ages 12 months through 4 years, operates 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Monday through Friday. One year olds may attend one or two days a week; two year olds may attend two, three or five days a week; three year olds may attend three or five days a week; and four year olds may attend five days a week.

The goal of the program is to help each child develop a wholesome self-concept, an eagerness for learning, an appropriate value system for social growth, and the ability to think and work independently. Classes offer opportunities to play and learn while developing readiness for learning academic skills.

The program features:

- A Christian environment
- A low child-teacher ratio
- Large classrooms, outdoor playgrounds, and a rainy day indoor playroom
- Music every day for every class
- A weekly worship service for the 4s and 5s, led by the ministers of the church
- Teachers who attend at least four preschool workshop classes each year and are CPR/First Aid and Safe Sanctuary trained. All have completed nationwide background checks.
- Special programs: storytellers, musicians, puppet shows, science (units for 4-year-old and five-day 3-year-old classes), Fun Fitness on Fridays
- Field trips to Stone Mountain Park, Fellinis, and the Chattahoochee Nature Center
- Handwriting Without Tears curriculum for 4-year-olds
- An active parent group
- Spanish instruction is included weekly for 3-year-old and 4-year-old classes
- Magical Mornings, once a month, includes musicians, puppet shows and magic shows
- A seasonal garden for the children to help maintain and watch plants grow
- An active parent group with volunteer activities
- Weekly summer camps offered in June.

Attend an Open House on either Monday, Jan. 27, or Thursday, Jan. 30, 9:30-11 a.m. Visitors are welcome to visit classes at any time by appointment. For more information, call Beth Buyert or Sara Jones, 404-378-4541, ext. 111; email preschool@decaturfirst.org; or visit decaturfirst.org.

Clarity Fitness Opens Body Positive Gym

Clarity Fitness opens its headquarters and fitness facility at 1 W. Court Square, Suite 100, in January. A grand opening celebration is set for Saturday, March 28, at 3 p.m., and the Decatur community is invited.

The 7,000-square-foot facility offers individualized support tailored to each member's fitness journey, with an emphasis on getting healthy from the inside out. The gym is equipped with a 500 square-foot AstroTurf area, cardio equipment, a multi-station cable unit, dumbbells, barbells, kettle bells, private personal training rooms, and open floor plans to encourage peer collaboration.

Members have access to personal trainers who are well versed in safe fitness, healthy mindsets, and the use of body-positive terminology. Each month, the team will offer free workshops for members, in which local fitness experts, influencers, community leaders, and health and wellness organizations will speak about their fitness journeys, specializations, and/or current wellness industry finds.

For more information on becoming a member visit calendly.com/clarityfitness/gym-membership-consultation. For more information on Clarity Fitness visit clarityfitness.com. Continue the conversation on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.



S.T.A.R Afterschool Celebrates Black History Month

The community is invited to join the Decatur Housing Authority's S.T.A.R. afterschool program for their annual Black History Month Celebration, Thursday, Feb. 13, at 6 p.m. in the Ebster Recreation Center Gymnasium.

Join a Krewe for the Mead Road Mardi Gras Parade and Party

Saturday, Feb. 8 • 1 p.m.

Every winter, a marching beat and the blare of horns can be heard in Oakhurst as the Mead Road Mardi Gras (MRMG) parade marches past Harmony Park. The parade culminates at the Imperial restaurant with a live performance by City Schools of Decatur students. Attendees can purchase Cajun food and beverages.

Decatur residents Emily and David Berg launched this homegrown event in 2003 with just a few neighborhood kids on wagons and tricycles. Since then, the parade and party

have grown in size, and the event has turned into a community fundraiser. Last year, MRMG raised more than \$10,000, which was donated to the Decatur Education Foundation to support music and arts programs for City Schools of Decatur (CSD). Since 2014, MRMG has helped purchase instruments, sheet music, audio equipment, costumes, and an airbrush makeup system – and every school in the district has benefited.

If you've got elementary school-aged kids in CSD, you can march with their school's

krewe, or you can grab some friends and create a community Krewe. A Krewe is a group of people who dress up, march (no motorized vehicles allowed), play instruments and toss beads. A panel of judges will choose the "Best Community Krewe."

For event details and to sign up for a Krewe, visit meadrdmardigras.org, and "like" the Facebook page, facebook.com/meadrdmardigras. *Laissez les bons temps rouler!*



Francine Reed Returns for Black History Month Concert

Francine Reed returns to Eddie's Attic for Decatur's annual Black History Month concert on Sunday, Feb. 23, 6 p.m. (Doors open at 5 p.m.). Tickets are on sale now for \$25 at eddiesattic.com – and they'll go quickly. The annual Black History Month concert is presented in honor of Mayor Emerita Elizabeth Wilson. Francine has performed in the concert every year since its inception in 1995



DBA
Decatur Business
Association

Tuesday, Jan. 28

January Membership Meeting and State of the City Address

Decatur Courtyard by Marriott,
130 Clairemont Ave.

5:15 p.m. Networking Reception

6 p.m. Decatur's Mayor delivers the annual State of the City Address

Sponsored by Decatur Development Authority and Decatur Courtyard by Marriott

Tuesday, Feb. 25

Mayor Emerita Elizabeth Wilson presents Black History Month Program

Decatur Courtyard by Marriott,
130 Clairemont Ave.

5:15 p.m. Networking Reception

6 p.m. Conversation with Louis Gosset Jr.

The program will feature a moderated conversation with actor Louis Gossett, Jr., known for his role as Gunnery Sergeant Emil Foley in the 1982 film "An Officer and a Gentleman" and as Fiddler in the 1977 ABC television miniseries "Roots." He will speak about his latest role as Will Reeves in the HBO series "Watchmen" (filmed mostly in downtown Decatur), black commerce, and his Eracism foundation. The program will begin promptly at 6 p.m.

The event is free and open to the community, however, tickets are required. Space is limited. Tickets are available at freshtix.com/events/decatur-black-history-program until February 21 or until sold out. Note: you must have a ticket to enter the event.



Indigo Girls Headline Amplify Decatur

Saturday, April 25 • 3-11 p.m. • Decatur Square

Tickets are now on sale for the fifth annual Amplify Decatur Music Festival, featuring the Grammy-award-winning Indigo Girls; Son Volt; The Cactus Blossoms; and Michelle Malone. Come and enjoy a day of community spirit, with food from local Decatur restaurants and craft beer offerings from Three Taverns Brewery and Creature Comforts Brewing Co.

The festival is presented by Lenz, produced in partnership with Eddie's Attic, and benefits Decatur Cooperative Ministry. General Admission tickets are \$55, VIP tickets are \$155, and a limited number of Premium VIP tickets are \$275. VIP tickets include seating, a dedicated bar, and bathroom facilities. VIP seats are positioned in front of the general admission section. The Premium VIP section includes seating positioned directly in front of the stage, and access to the VIP section.

Tickets can be purchased at AmplifyDecatur.org and EddiesAttic.com. Net proceeds from the festival, including ticket sales, will be directed to Decatur Cooperative Ministry (DCM) to support its ongoing efforts to prevent and alleviate homelessness in Decatur and DeKalb County. Amplify's concerts have generated more than \$235,000 for DCM since 2011.

The 2020 Amplify Decatur Concert Series will also feature a free concert on the Decatur square on Friday night, April 24, as well as three nights of music at Eddie's Attic, April 24-26. Artists will be announced soon.

Sponsors: Leafmore Group, Decatur Package Store, and Natalie Gregory & Co. are sponsors in addition to Lenz. Three Taverns and Creature Comforts are also major sponsors and will be the exclusive beer providers for the festival.

Join the Love Run 5K on Feb. 29

Join DeKalb County District Attorney Sherry Boston for the fifth annual Love Run 5K to benefit the Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence. The event begins on the Decatur square and will include free food and giveaways at the finish, a Zumba warmup, and local community agencies on site to share information. Discounts are available for students and groups of 10 or more.

For more information, contact Roz Harris at reharris@dekalbcountyga.gov. To register, visit runsignup.com/Race/GA/Decatur/LoveRun5K.



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Song at First Sight • Jan. 23-25

DHS Chorus to Perform at GMEA Annual Conference

After a competitive audition where Decatur High School students showed they can sing music they've never seen before, the DHS Chorus was selected to perform with the Georgia Music Educators Association's (GMEA) All-State Reading Chorus.

The students' audition assessed their proficiency in sight-singing five eight-measure examples that required them to know key signatures and solfege (a method where each note in a scale is pronounced as its own unique syllable), harmonies with notes in the same key signature (diatonic harmony), and harmonies with notes that are not in the key that the music is in (chromatic harmony) and that contain varied meters and rhythms.

All-State Reading Chorus includes 100 of the most highly literate choral musicians in high schools across Georgia. They gather and perform in conjunction with GMEA's annual conference in Athens, GA, Jan. 23-25. Dur-

ing that weekend, the students will spend six to eight hours per day sight-reading 80-plus compositions from various historical periods and styles under the direction of Professor Jeffrey Bauman, the director of choral and vocal activities at Young Harris College.

In the conference's closing event, they will perform a free public concert at First Baptist Church Athens, where they will read five to six of their favorite pieces from the compositions they studied, and one work that they will sight-sing for the audience for the first time.

Other Upcoming DHS Performances

The Laramie Project • Jan. 30-Feb. 2
Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old college student, was brutally beaten and left to die on the plains outside Laramie, Wyoming, because he was gay. Created in response to his murder, this documentary-style play pres-

ents perspectives on the crime gathered from more than 200 personal interviews, news reports, courtroom transcripts, and more.

42nd Street • March 12-22

Peggy Sawyer gets her big break in this Tony Award-winning musical featuring "We're in the Money," "I Only Have Eyes for You," and "Lullaby of Broadway."

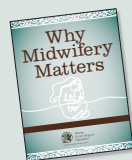
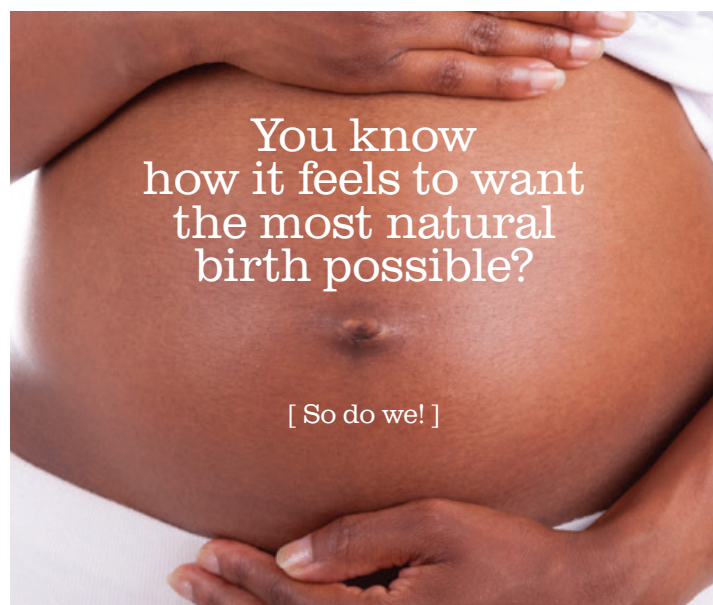
Singing in the Rain • April 16-19

Renfro Middle School students will open their umbrellas and kick up their heels on the DHS stage with this classic show.

Spring Chorus Concert • May 12

With nearly 200 students, the DHS Choir presents a diverse selection of music showcasing major historical periods and world music.

Visit DecaturPerforms.org for the latest information and tickets.



Visit MyFemaleDoctor.com and download our guide to *Why Midwifery Matters*.



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Core Dance Presents Spring Fieldwork Sessions

Core Dance invites artists to register for the Fieldwork spring session. Participants will meet weekly to share works-in-process and exchange peer feedback, with incisive and stimulating critiques guided by an experienced facilitator. Fieldwork is for creators – solo performing artists, writers, composers, choreographers, playwrights, multidisciplinary artists, poets, vocalists and more.

Fieldwork artists will meet for six weeks to share in a process and progress with objective, non-directorial, artist-to-artist facilitated feedback in a studio setting. Fieldwork workshops are non-curated performance opportunities available to artists of all mediums – dance, theater, spoken word, music, visual art, and more.

The six-week session begins after the free open trial day, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Registration is \$75 for the six-week session and participation in the showcase on Sunday, April 5. Space is limited to 10 artists per session. Register online – or you may bring a check or cash to the first session. Call 404-373-4154 or email info@coredance.org for more information.

Lunchtime in the Studio

Feb. 20 and April 23,
Noon-1 p.m.
Core Studios, 139 Sycamore St.

Through Lunchtime in the Studio, members of the Decatur community can actively participate in the stimulating environment of Core Dance. The company uses dance

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to connect us and Lunchtime in the Studio amplifies their purpose. A complimentary

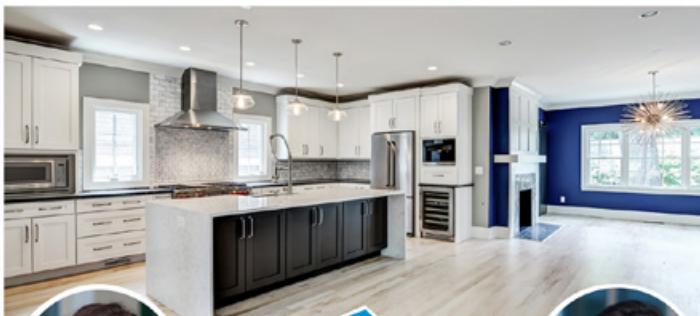
lunch will be served in the warm-and-welcoming studio on the square in downtown Decatur.

Visit coredance.org/lunchtime-in-the-studio.html to register.

DHS Snapshot Photography Club Exhibit Opens Jan. 26

Wild Oats and Billy Goats, an art gallery at 112 E. Ponce de Leon Ave., will kick off 2020 with a Decatur High School Snapshot Photography Club exhibit. The club looks forward to showing their photographs in a gallery and have been working hard throughout the school year to produce photos for the exhibit.

The exhibit will open Jan. 26 with an evening reception and will run through Jan. 30. "Displaying the student photography is a great way for us to give back to the community where we do business and that supports us," said Kim Jacobs, Wild Oats and Billy Goats manager.



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Mix, Mingle & Mocktail Event to Raise Awareness and Funds for Mental Health

Friday, Jan. 31 • 7-10 p.m.

Join the Decatur Education Foundation (DEF) at the reboot of the Joe's Fund benefit – Mix, Mingle and Mocktail for Mental Health. The re-envisioned event will raise awareness and dollars for Joe's Fund – the behavioral health fund of the Decatur Education Foundation. Joe Bodine, a 2015 graduate of Decatur High School, lost his battle to addiction in 2016. To honor his life, his family established Joe's Fund to support adolescent mental health and prevent adolescent substance misuse.

DEF will host Mix, Mingle and Mocktail at ColorWheel Art Studio, 508 E. Howard Ave. Mix with friends, new and old, mingle over delicious food catered by Oakhurst Market, and enjoy a mocktail – sample creative and delicious alcohol-free beverages from the

Universal Joint.

The event will also feature other non-alcoholic libations: juice shots to give you a healthy buzz and coffee drinks to warm you up. The Benders, a popular local band, will keep the energy up with their tunes and inspire some dancing. The evening's proceeds will help fund more counseling groups at DHS's Decatur Student Center, as well as critical teacher training to address suicidal ideation, and substance misuse counseling for students who need it.

DEF Executive Director Gail Rothman believes this new version of Joe's Benefit is better aligned with the mission of the evening. "Joe's mom shared with us that one of



Joe's favorite phrases was, 'Tell me I can't' – as in dare me to do something you think isn't possible," she said. "In that spirit and to raise awareness of the issue of substance misuse among our youth, we invite our guests to enjoy a fun, "dry" evening out.

"There is a myth in fundraising that you have to loosen people up with alcohol so they will be more generous," she continued. "But we know that our community will give wholeheartedly so that our kids get the help they need. In the spirit of Joe, we say, 'Tell us we can't raise funds without serving alcohol.' I believe we will do just that."

To purchase tickets for Mix, Mingle & Mocktail, go to decatureducationfoundation.org/joesbenefit.

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NEWS FROM AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE

ASC Receives Grant to Support Postgraduate Success

Agnes Scott College (ASC) has been awarded a \$2.715 million grant from the Goizueta Foundation to enhance SUMMIT – the college's signature experience, and prioritize postgraduate success for all students, which has been identified as a college-wide goal.

With this funding, Agnes Scott students can more confidently and knowledgeably take advantage of the full breadth of opportunity afforded by a liberal arts education.

Specific activities will include:

- Digital skills boot camps via the college's Center for Digital and Visual Literacy;
- Increased access to career coaching and on-demand, interactive, personalized career assistance;
- Guaranteed applied or experiential learning for students across all disciplines with fully integrated professional development;
- Speakers and events designed to provide students interaction with nationally known role models, local leaders and alumnae from various fields to help them envision their own postgraduate success.

Funding will also support the implementation of Sophomore Class Atlanta Leadership Experience (SCALE), which currently is piloting and will fully launch in 2022. SCALE will provide students with opportunities to apply the learning from their leadership curriculum and explore hands-on experiences in Atlanta-area organizations. This real-world experience will come at a critical collegiate juncture – as students prepare to declare their majors.

This program will strengthen the professional preparation, confidence, knowledge of career options and career readiness of underserved populations – such as first-generation college students and Pell grant-eligible students – who are more likely to need funding for internships and access to professional communities. It will also serve employers in Georgia, as roughly 50 percent of Agnes Scott graduates remain in the state, and will support the goals of the region relative to educating and enhancing social mobility for women.

The Goizueta Foundation has supported Agnes Scott and SUMMIT in the past. The new emphasis on postgraduate success amplifies the shared values and strategic priorities of these two organizations and demonstrates the power of working together to create positive change.

ASC Launches Course for Sophomores

Agnes Scott College's new SUMMIT course – the Sophomore Class Atlanta Leadership Experience (SCALE) – will launch in the spring semester. The course will be required for all sophomores starting in 2022, but sophomores, juniors and seniors may opt in to the course for 2020 and 2021.

Designed in response to student input, this one-credit interdisciplinary course will be taught by faculty from multiple disciplines and supported by staff from Agnes Scott's Gué Pardue Hudson Center for Leadership and Service and the Office of Internship and Career Development.

Through both academic and field learning, students will gain experience and shadow leaders in businesses and nonprofit organizations in and around Atlanta to deepen their knowledge, build career literacy and equip themselves for postgraduate success.

Current community partners include: AT&T; Atlanta Birth Center; Atlanta Dream; Atlanta Music Project; Campus Community Partner Foundation; Decatur Housing Authority; Fernbank Science Center; Girls Going Global; Love E Fashion; Morehouse School of Medicine; New American Pathways; Partnership for Southern Equity; Refugee Women's Network, Inc.; Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance; Stanley Black and Decker; Synchronicity Theatre; Tapestry; The Friends School of Atlanta; The Lola; Wayfinders LLC; and Zoo Atlanta.



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Friends School Names Summer Camp Director

Hannah Ellwood has been named summer camp director for Friends School of Atlanta. Hannah teaches fourth grade at FSA during the school year. She has had previous camp experience working for a school summer program, where she supported new counselor training and assisted the summer camp director for many years.



FSA will continue to offer STEAM-based camps in technology, environmental science, math, drama, and visual and digital arts. New offerings will include sessions in sewing and fashion and instruction in American Sign Language. The FSA Summer Camp program includes sessions for children ages 5 to 15, with before care, starting at 8:30 a.m., and after care, which runs to 6 p.m.

Registration for FSA Summer Camp 2020 will open in mid-January. Visit friendsschoolatlanta.org for more information and links to registration.

Stay Up-to-Date with CSD's District Dispatch Newsletter

CSD District Dispatch, the monthly e-newsletter for City Schools of Decatur, goes out the Thursday after the monthly school board meetings and includes school stories, updates, and photos about the district. Visit csdecatur.net/subscribe to begin receiving it. Please note: all current CSD parents are automatically enrolled in this newsletter when they register their students.

College Heights PTO's Annual Bid for Chicks

Friday, March 6 • 7-11 p.m.

The College Heights PTO will host the annual Bid for Chicks Auction at the DeKalb History Center, 101 E. Court Square. The auction will transport attendees on a Polynesian adventure with a Little Luau theme. Tickets are \$50 per person and include a Hawaiian-themed dinner and drinks, as well as a live and silent auction. All proceeds from the auction will go to the College Heights PTO, which in turn supports the College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center.

For tickets, visit tinyurl.com/BidforChicksLittleLuau. For more information about College Heights or the PTO, visit csdecatur.net/eclc.



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Glennwood's Casino Night and Auction

Saturday, Feb. 29 • 7-10 p.m.

Glennwood Elementary's PTA will hold its annual Casino Night and Auction at Color Wheel Studio, 508 E. Howard Ave. Tickets are \$50 per person, which includes unlimited drinks and hors d'oeuvres. You will also receive a supply of casino chips to try your hand at the casino tables – blackjack, roulette, craps and poker, complete with professional dealers.

Come and check out some amazing auction items, including a Flock of Eagles private performance, vacation homes, local restaurant gift packages, and much more. All proceeds go to Glennwood Elementary's PTA. To buy your tickets or for more information, visit glennwoodpta.org/auction.



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Police Salute Crossing Guards



Decatur Active Living and the Decatur Police Department held a breakfast for the crossing guards during Crossing Guard Appreciation Week.

#decaturpd #loveyourcrossingguard #saferoutetoschool

#decaturga

Show off your Decatur on social media and share it with your neighbors. Email your news and photos to renae.madison@decaturga.com.



Congrats to Deputy Chief Morrison

Deputy Fire Chief Vera Morrison has been elected to the board of directors for the Boys and Girls Club of Metro Atlanta. She will serve with the DeKalb chapter, which has three clubs.

#deputychiefvera
#decaturfirerescue

Citizen's Police Academy Class of 2019



Congratulations to the graduates of the 27th Decatur Citizen's Police Academy – the class of 2019. The group of community members completed the 10-week course, investing their time in getting to know the officers and the department. If you are interested in attending a future Citizen's Police Academy, contact Lt. Jennifer Ross, jennifer.ross@decaturga.com.

#decaturpd #citizenspoliceacademy #salutetotheclasseof2019

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