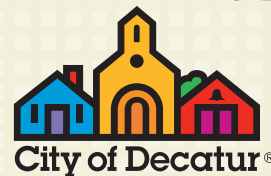


City of Decatur FOCUS

terrific
THURSDAYS
SEE PAGE 12



DECEMBER 2021
Volume 32 • Number 5

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CITY OF DECATUR, GEORGIA

WHAT A RUN!

A group of six Oakhurst residents recently completed a 48-mile run crossing the width of the Grand Canyon two times in one day. This route, known as the "Rim-to-Rim-to-Rim," is attempted by very few people annually because of the extreme distance, weather, and elevation gain that runners face.

Pictured from left: Andy Wurtzel, Adam Woodlief, Wes Bryant, Dave Brown, and Thad Gilliam. Neil Struby (not pictured) also completed the run.



DECATUR RECEIVES VOICE OF THE PEOPLE AWARD

National Research Center (NRC) at Polco and the International City and County Management Association (ICMA) have announced Decatur, Georgia, as the winner of the Voice of the People (VOP) awards for Excellence in Inclusivity/Engagement. The VOP awards are the only national awards that honor local governments based on feedback from residents.

Decatur's award recognizes its exceptionally high ratings on the National Community Survey (the NCS) and its intentional, data-informed decisions.

The National Community Survey (NCS) is a survey that provides a comprehensive and accurate picture of resident perspectives on local government services, policies, and management. Results draw from the largest resident opinion database of its kind, representing more than 30 million Americans. The NCS compares local results with benchmarks compiled from surveys conducted across the United States.



City Manager Andrea Arnold and City Clerk Meredith Roark receive the VOP Award

Decatur Launches Clean Energy Initiative

The City of Decatur has launched an initiative to develop Decatur's plan for a clean energy future. Supported by Southface Institute and Greenlink Analytics, the city kicked off a series of outreach and education events in October to inform the development of the Clean Energy Plan. Decatur is committed to protecting its community against the negative impacts of climate change and reducing its contributions to the climate crisis. The Clean Energy Plan will guide those efforts. Your input is essential to ensure that our plan reflects Decatur's values and priorities.

Community members and interested parties can participate in a series of roundtables and engagement opportunities in the coming months. A series of Decatur 202s, recorded educational sessions led by clean energy experts in Decatur and metro-Atlanta, will be released to provide a better understanding of the city's energy landscape and inform the topics discussed in roundtables.

Decatur will host virtual events to introduce the plan development process, set goals, and gather community input.

Decatur Clean Energy Roundtable 2: Clean Energy and Economy

Jan. 19, 2022, 6-7:30 p.m.

Link here: us02web.zoom.us/j/84381674199

Decatur Clean Energy Roundtable 3: The Built Environment

Feb. 24, 2022, 6-7:30 p.m.

Link here: us02web.zoom.us/j/82440694678

Visit cleanenergydecatur.com to learn more about this initiative, review past virtual meetings, and get involved in shaping Decatur's clean energy future.

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

Patti Garrett.....Mayor
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Development Authority®

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Design and layout: [Lampe-Farley.com](https://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.



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UPDATE:

School Property Tax Exemption

According to unofficial election results, the Nov. 2 referendum on newly proposed school property tax exemptions has passed. After the results have been certified by DeKalb County and declared by the City Commission, the new S-5 and S-6 exemptions will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2022.

The S-5 will provide an exemption on \$200,000 of assessed home value (\$400,000 of appraised value) for seniors age 65-69, if their household federal adjusted gross income is less than \$53,000. The S-6 exemption will qualify homeowners age 70 and above for a reduction of \$200,000 of assessed home value (\$400,000 of appraised value) without an income cap.

A separate S-3 partial school exemption for homeowners age 70 and above has been in effect since 2002. The majority of senior homeowners already have the S-3 on their accounts. Homeowners with the S-3 will be granted the new S-6 exemption automatically because the eligibility requirements for these two exemptions are the same. Homeowners who applied for the S-3 during 2021 for tax year 2022 will also automatically receive the S-6 exemption.

The city will begin accepting applications for the S-5 exemption after Jan. 1, 2022. Homeowners who turned 70 during 2021 and homeowners who are over 70 but never applied for the S-3 exemption will need to apply for the S-3/S-6 after Jan. 1. Applications will be due by March 15, 2022, to receive the exemption on the first installment property tax bills, which will be issued April 1, 2022.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the city will allow an electronic option for filing new school homestead exemption applications. The application procedures haven't been finalized yet. Updates about application procedures will be posted at decaturga.com/homestead.

Holiday Schedule for Solid Waste and Recycling Services

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

Saturday, Dec. 25 (observed Friday, Dec. 24)

Regular service for Thursday, Dec. 23, will be on Wednesday, Dec. 22

Regular service for Friday, Dec. 24, will be on Thursday, Dec. 23

Regular service for Monday, Dec. 27, will be on Tuesday, Dec. 28

Regular service for Tuesday, Dec. 28, will be on Wednesday, Dec. 29

NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY

Saturday, Jan. 1 (observed Monday, Jan. 3)

Regular service for Monday, Jan. 3, will be on Tuesday, Jan. 4

Regular service for Tuesday, Jan. 4, will be on Wednesday, Jan. 5

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

Monday, Jan. 17

Regular service for Monday will be on Tuesday, Jan. 18

Regular service for Tuesday will be on Wednesday, Jan. 19

The full holiday sanitation schedule for 2022 can be found online at decaturga.com/sanitation and in the 2021 November Focus.



TALLEY STREET WALKING SCHOOL BUS

Safe Routes to School is a Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) pilot program championed by former Decatur Commissioner Fred Boykin that succeeded and was picked up by the City of Decatur. It encourages kids to walk to school with their parents, teachers, school staff and older kids. Most of our schools have an organized walk at least once a month. You may have encountered a "walking bus" on those days – sometimes with 40 or more people. The idea is to get people walking. Some parents will drive their kids to a part-way point so they can join in.

The crossing guards have developed a special relationship with the kids who walk as well.

Our Safe Routes to School program participants are this month's Walk and Roll Stars. Walk On!



CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

Monday, Dec. 28-Saturday, Jan. 9

City of Decatur residents can drop off live Christmas trees at Decatur Legacy Park (the former Childers Home), located at 500 S. Columbia Dr. Follow the signs and leave your tree to the right of the chapel. Please don't leave Christmas trees anywhere else on the property.

Boards and Commissions Openings

The Decatur City Commission is accepting statement of interests from residents for volunteer service on the Better Together Advisory Board, Active Living Board, Environmental Sustainability Board, the Historic Preservation Commission, Lifelong Community Advisory Board, and the Public Facilities Authority. Descriptions of the board responsibilities and access to the Statement of Interest form can be found at decaturga.com/resident-boards-commissions. You can return the form via email to City Manager Andrea Arnold at andrea.arnold@decaturga.com or mail it to her attention at City of Decatur, PO Box 220, Decatur GA 30031.

ABOUT THE BOARDS

Better Together Advisory Board

The Decatur City Commission established the Better Together Advisory Board in 2016 to guide and advise the commission and the community around issues of equity, inclusion and engagement. The board also serves as advocate and advisor in implementing the recommendations of the Better Together Community Action Plan for Equity, Inclusion and Engagement. The plan contains specific action items for individuals, organizations, and local government to undertake to cultivate a just, welcoming, inclusive, equitable and compassionate city.

The board meets the first Tuesday of every month, 6:30-8 p.m., at Decatur City Hall, City Commission Conference room.

Active Living Board

Active Living Advisory Board members are appointed by the Decatur City Commission to serve as advocates and advisors to the Active Living Division on projects and programs that help citizens safely incorporate physical activity into their daily routines.

The board meets the first Tuesday of each month, 8 a.m., at the Decatur Recreation Center.

Environmental Sustainability Board

The Environmental Sustainability Board

(ESB) provides recommendations to the City Commission regarding the city's environmental regulations, plans and initiatives. The ESB also assists with implementation of city projects that affect the natural environment to protect and improve the quality of life for citizens and property owners in the city of Decatur.

Four active committees are responsible for researching specific issues and making recommendations to the board: Natural Systems, Resource Conservation, Energy and Transportation, and Education and Outreach. Upcoming projects for the ESB include the Green Restaurant Recognition program, festival waste management, the 2018 Decatur Focus Green Insert, and serving as liaisons for the Stormwater Master Plan.

The board meets the third Friday of each month at 8 a.m. at the Decatur Recreation Center.

Historic Preservation Commission

The commission was established by local ordinance to ensure that renovations and new construction in Decatur's five Local Historic Districts are consistent with the character of the neighborhood. The five districts are the McDonough-Adams-King's Highway District, Ponce de Leon Court, Old Decatur, Parkwood, and the Clairemont Historic District.

The commission must approve exterior projects to homes located within these districts by issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness before a building permit can be issued. Some projects may be administratively approved through the issuance of a Certificate of Exemption.

The board meets on the third Tuesday each month at 6:30 p.m. at Decatur City Hall, City Commission Meeting room.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals was established by local ordinance. It conducts public hearings on appeals from decisions of the zoning administrator and of the UDO administrator and considers requests for variances from zoning requirements.

The board meets on the second Monday of each month, 7:30 p.m., at Decatur City Hall, City Commission Meeting Room.

Lifelong Community Advisory Board

The Decatur City Commission authorized the creation of a Lifelong Community Advisory Board in 2013 to assist with the expansion and implementation of the city's Lifelong Community initiatives, including those in the 2010 Strategic Plan. One component of a Lifelong Community is the ability to age in place.

The board meets on the fourth Monday of each month, 6:30 p.m., at Decatur City Hall, City Commission Conference room.

Public Facilities Authority

The City of Decatur Public Facilities Authority (PFA) was created by the Georgia General Assembly in 2017. The PFA meets annually, typically in January, and thereafter as needed.

Focus Combined for January and February

The January/February issue of the Focus is a combined one and will come out mid-January instead of the first week. The deadline for submission of information for both January and February is Dec. 10. Send information to decaturfocus@decaturga.com.

Recycling Reminder

Glass must be placed in a separate bin from your other curbside recycling. Any bin will work, or you can request a red bin by contacting Public Works at sanitation@decaturga.com or 404-377-5571. Our glass is sent to Strategic Materials in College Park where it gets converted for use in new glass containers, fiberglass and more.

Neighborhood Cleanup Days Wrapping Up

Saturdays through December 11, beginning at 7:30 a.m.

The City of Decatur is hosting Neighborhood Cleanup Days on Saturdays, through December, to allow residents to dispose of bulky materials that would not normally be placed in Pay-As-You-Throw bags. Every street in the city has been assigned a Saturday. See the instructions noted here, and find the date specified for your street. Please read carefully to note changes.

All items to be collected should be placed at the curb no later than 7:30 a.m. This ensures that we do not have to rerun routes for late set-outs. Collections run until 3:30 p.m. or until finished – whichever is sooner.

If you have questions, contact Sean Woodson, sean.woodson@decaturga.com, or 404-377-5571.

December 4

Westchester Neighborhood

Westchester Drive
Dogwood Way
Maediris Drive
Harold Byrd Drive
Clairemont Avenue (900 to 1100 block)
Ridley Circle
Mockingbird Lane
Chelsea Drive
Kathryn Avenue
North Parkwood Drive

Coventry Drive (North Parkwood Drive to Scott)
Merrill Avenue
Pope Circle
Harold Byrd Lane S
Walden Square Way

December 11

Lenox Place

Greenwood Circle
W. Howard (300 to 900 block)
Patillo Way

Acceptable Items

- Yard trimmings
- Building materials (that are not from the work of private contractors)
- Tires
- Furniture
- Appliances (not containing Freon)
- Trash that would not normally be placed in Pay-As-You-Throw bags

Unacceptable Items

- Liquids
- Dirt
- Bricks
- Blocks
- Stone, rocks, or concrete
- Motor vehicle batteries or parts

Eastlake Drive (2300 block)
Atlanta Avenue
Hibernia Avenue
Braeburn Lane
Ridley Lane
Adair Street
Cottonwood Place
Emerson Avenue
W. Ponce de Leon Avenue (600 to 900 block)
Drexel Avenue
Devonshire Avenue
Hampshire Avenue

Lansdowne Avenue
Melrose Avenue
Chief Matthews Drive
E. Parkwood Road
W. Parkwood Road
Upland Road
Wimberly Court
Parkwood Lane
Pinetree Drive
Scott Boulevard (100 to 700 block)
Swanton Hill subdivision
Charter Square

RECYCLE YOUR BROKEN, USELESS & OBSOLETE ELECTRONICS

DECEMBER 18

SATURDAY • 9 AM TO 1 PM

Styrofoam recycling too!

Details: decaturga.com/electronic recycling

Decatur High School

TRINITY PL.

COMMERCE DR.



City of Decatur
Electronics
Recycling

E. COLLEGE AVE.

Cortland Apartments

Agnes Scott



S. CANDLER ST.

ENTER HERE

COLUMBIA DR.

TALLEY ST.

DECATUR PUBLIC WORKS

2635 Talley St.

Drop off in back

Gardening Among the Graves Update

Friends of Decatur Cemetery's (FODC) Tuesday gardeners have uncovered another hidden treasure in the Old Section of Decatur Cemetery – a low brick wall surrounding the Orphans Home lot (tour stop 22). The large marker “Marble Hill Sunday School” belies the history of the site where lie the remains of 30 young children from Decatur's Methodist Children's Home, most of whom died in the early 20th century of common childhood maladies. Curiously, the home weathered the Pandemic of 1918 with no deaths.

For those unfamiliar with the Orphans Home, it was founded in Norcross in 1871

and later moved to Columbia Drive. Today that site is Legacy Park.

Next time you're wandering Decatur Cemetery, stop to admire the work of the “Tuesday Crew” and think about the young ones whose lives were part of the legacy of our popular Decatur greenspace.

To learn more about Gardening among the Graves contact Jim Rabb (jimrabb1884@gmail.com) or FODC (friendsofdecaturcemetery@gmail.com).



Discovered: this low brick wall surrounding the orphans home lot

Help Children and Seniors Celebrate with Virtual Giving

A Season of Giving/Christmas

Decatur will go virtual once again, and your help is still needed as we get closer to our goal. Thanks to generous donors, we were able to purchase gifts for our senior residents and to provide a gift card for the parent/guardian of each child. These gifts will make a lasting impact on these residents.

They will always remember the generosity of strangers who cared.

Donations are still needed to help cover the cost of the gifts. Help us continue to provide happy memories of the holidays. We appreciate everyone who helped make it possible last year.

We are grateful for those of you who have already helped us to make happy holidays this year.

Go to legacydecatur.com and designate your donation to A Season of Giving/Christmas Decatur. Legacy Decatur is a 501 (c) (3) registered charity.



Commissioners Cauldron Awarded to the Calcutt Family

This year's Commissioner's Cauldron winners are the Calcutt Family, 115 Fayetteville Rd. The scene is described as follows:

A burned-out car parked in front, skulls on the gate,
Skeletons swinging hint that horrors await.
Cemetery Swamp's got the creepy catch of the day.
Watch your step! . . . or you just might become 'gator prey.
These bone-headed boaters create a "grave" risk.
If the canoe tips over, you'll swim with the fish.
As did every "body" here who found themselves dead.
Just look all around and count all those heads.
Resting in pieces, bones everywhere.
RIP headstones show how they care.



Decatur Community Food Forum

Sat., Dec. 11 • 10-11:30 a.m. • Legacy Park, 500 S. Columbia Dr.

In partnership with Food Well Alliance and the Atlanta Regional Commission, the City of Decatur applied to develop the Atlanta region's second City Agriculture Plan and has been chosen to move forward with the next step of the selection process – holding a Community Food Forum for Decatur residents. The Community Food Forum is an opportunity for residents to learn more about the City Agriculture Plan process, voice their support for a strong local food system, and ask questions.

The City Agriculture Plan program aims to bring local governments together with their communities to create plans incorporating urban agriculture and local food into the next phase of cities' development. Food Well Alliance and the Atlanta Regional Commission will select one city to develop a City Agriculture Plan in 2022. The Community Food Forums will inform the selection process by assessing the readiness and enthusiasm of each city to participate in the comprehensive and inclusive planning process.

Decatur residents are encouraged to reflect on how support for local growers and increased access to local food and agricultural goods can enhance their vision for Decatur's growth, and to attend the forum to learn more.

Register for the forum at cityofdecaturcommunityfoodforum.eventbrite.com. Can't make it on Dec. 11? Visit forms.gle/A32Ybd1hoMxeXexm6 to share feedback or ask questions and a representative from Food Well Alliance will get back to you.

Decatur Honored for Excellence in Financial Reporting

Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the City of Decatur for its comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. The report has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the report.

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

WELCOME!

Decatur welcomes London Bridge Academy of Excellence as a new business in July 2021. Located at 431 W. Ponce de Leon Ave., Suite 7, London Bridge offers tutoring services for ages 5-13, and part-time preschool services for ages 3-5, conducted by a licensed teacher with more than 10 years' experience.



INVASIVE PLANTS HIGHLIGHT

Nandina and Chinese Holly

As part of the five-year woodland restoration and regeneration project at Legacy Park, Trees Atlanta, in partnership with the City of Decatur, is overseeing the removal of non-native invasive plant species on the site. Starting in December, efforts will focus on Nandina and Chinese holly.

With their evergreen leaves and red berries, holly plants are a celebrated symbol of winter. Because of their tolerance of drought, heat and cold, they also are popular low-maintenance additions to gardens. While the United States is home to several native holly varieties, the non-native Chinese holly (*Ilex cornuta*) in the U. S. dates to the early 1900s, to plants brought from China by a plant hunter named Frank Meyer, who worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Chinese holly can grow as large shrubs, thick hedges or trees. It features dark green, glossy leaves with a lighter color underneath. Leaves are rectangular, 7 to 9 inches long, with four spines (one at each corner). In Georgia, a variety called Burford holly (named for Thomas Burford, who was superintendent of Atlanta's West View Cemetery) features rounded, shorter leaves of 2 to 3 inches.

While not part of the holly family, Nandina is another evergreen plant with berries (or "drupes") that is causing concern from invasive growth. Native to China, Japan and India, it was brought to the United States in the early 1800s as an ornamental plant. This leafy shrub can grow up to eight feet tall and features numerous stems that look like bamboo, earning it the common name of "Heavenly Bamboo" or "Sacred Bamboo." Leaves are 1- to 2-inches long, oval-shaped and pointed.

Both plants have an extensive root system that allows them to spread out in search of water and sprout in other areas. The berries, while toxic to humans and pets, are transported and dropped by birds, which also contributes to the plants' spread. (If ingested in large quantities, Nandina berries also may be toxic to birds.) In forested lands, dense thickets of both plants crowd out native plants and decrease biodiversity.

To remove Chinese holly, use clippers or a saw to remove branches until only the central stump remains. Use a shovel to gently dig around the shrub base, being careful not to cut off the supporting roots. (Leaving any roots will allow the holly to return.) Then, rock the plant back and forth until you can pull it out. (Deep-soaking the roots with water several days before may ease this process.) Revisit the area every two to three weeks to remove any roots left behind.

To remove Nandina, cut off flowerheads with pruning shears. Seedlings are easy to pull up by hand, but mature plants will require more extensive digging. Loosen the soil around the plant (about 6 inches from the base) with a garden fork, levering the soil upward. Dig as deep as possible until the plant starts to lift out of the ground. Work the fork under the base and lift out the plant. Be sure to remove all stray roots. Careful treatment with a weed killer may be required.

Dispose of invasive plant material carefully. The Georgia Invasive Species Task Force recommends bagging materials to help prevent their spread; freezing seeds, fruits and cuttings to make them nonviable; and pruning or removing invasive plants before they produce fruit or seeds. Always wear gloves and other protective clothing.



Chinese holly



Nandina

DHA Receives Awards for Trinity Walk and Oakview Walk

Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) has been honored nationally and regionally for its transformation of the former Gateway Manor and Oakview Apartments into Trinity Walk and Oakview Walk. Recent awards include:

- Award of Excellence from the Southeast Regional Council of NAHRO (National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials)
- Award of Merit from NAHRO
- Regional Excellence Honorable Mention from the Atlanta Regional Commission

The two apartment communities were revitalized over five years in three phases: Trinity Walk I & II (renovation of 121 units at 421 W. Trinity Place) and Trinity Walk III (razing and rebuilding 34 units at 111 Oakview Rd. and renamed Oakview Walk Apartments). The new construction replaced outdated, 50-year-old buildings with energy-efficient one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments, plus numerous onsite amenities such as children's playgrounds, outdoor gathering spaces, raised garden beds and walking trails. Indoors, the centrally located community Resource Center features a fully equipped computer room, recreational area, kitchen, classrooms and laundry facility. The project was undertaken as a partnership between by DHA, the City of Decatur, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), City Schools of Decatur, Hudson Housing Capital, Sugar Creek Capital and Bank of America Merrill Lynch.



DECATUR RETAIL INCUBATOR PROJECT IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The D.R.I.P is officially open at 431 W. Ponce de Leon Ave. Three online businesses, ABETTERBUZZ Brand Goods, Dope Coffee Company, and Royal Thanaka Natural Skincare, are experimenting with brick-and-mortar storefronts. The three were selected by the Decatur Downtown Development Authority. For more information, visit decaturga.com/thedrip.



HOPS AT THE HISTORY CENTER

Author Neely Young Discusses Influential Georgians

Georgia Made: The Most Important Figures Who Shaped the State in the Twentieth Century

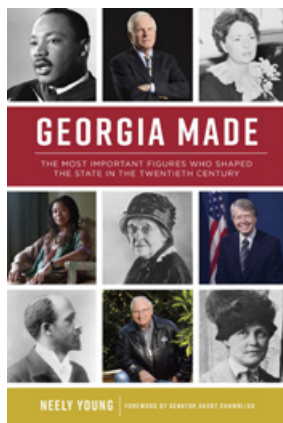
Tuesday, December 14 • 6-7 p.m. • Historic DeKalb Courthouse

In *Georgia Made*, author and longtime journalist Neely Young takes the reader on a journey through the lives of the most influential Georgians of the 20th century.

The people mentioned in this book are some of the most consequential figures who helped Georgia develop into the diverse and prosperous state it is today. Influential people like Martin Luther King Jr., Jimmy Carter, Alice Walker, “Hammerin’ Hank” Aaron, Ted Turner, and many more, whose trades varied from sports, art, business, civil rights, to changing lives in immeasurable ways.

Neely Young is a proud journalist and native of Decatur, Georgia. He graduated from the University of Georgia and worked for decades for newspapers in Valdosta, Marietta, Canton, Dalton, and Clayton County, working as both editor and publisher. He became CEO of Morris Newspaper Corporation in 1986, and has served as a curator to the Georgia Historical Society and frequently wrote articles for *Georgia Trend* magazine.

Tickets are \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members, and \$5 for the virtual option. Visit decalb-history-center.square.site/ to purchase tickets.



Bahá'ís Mark Solemn Anniversary

Saturday, Dec. 4 • 3 p.m.

Alongside Bahá'ís in more than 100,000 localities around the world, Decatur Bahá'ís and their friends are marking the 100th anniversary of the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with a series of community activities throughout the fall, including a public, virtual event on Saturday, Dec. 4, at 3 p.m. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (1844-1921) was the eldest son and successor of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was renowned as a champion of social justice and an ambassador for international peace by people of all religions and backgrounds in every space he entered.

The program will include music, storytelling, and a screening of a new film titled “Exemplar.” This film is a tribute to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s life and work and also explores how, by championing the oneness of humanity through his words and deeds, he offered a challenge to the stale assumptions and prejudices of the age, and gave stimulus to a process of unification which continues to this day. The event is free and all are welcome. For more details and to RSVP, or to connect with the Decatur Bahá'ís, visit decatur-bahais.org.



Youth Support Burn Victims

The Decatur Prevention Initiative Youth Action Team joined Decatur Fire/Rescue to bring awareness to the need for support for Burn Survivors by planting 300 pinwheels at a display at Fire Station One. Each pinwheel represented one of the burn survivors treated at Grady Hospital in an average month. For more information about the Decatur Prevention Initiative and its Youth Action Team, visit decaturpi.org.

CFM's Jenna Mobley Recognized by Georgia Trend 40 Under 40

Community Farmers Markets (CFM) is proud to share that Jenna Mobley, its long-time educational director, has been recognized by *Georgia Trend* as one of the state's best and brightest leaders under 40 in 2021.

Jenna is an educator at heart, having taught garden and kitchen classes in Atlanta Public Schools and throughout the Atlanta

community. Her career began in 2008 and since then she has become one of the leading proponents (and providers) of increasing educational resources for social justice, food access, and environmental education.

At Community Farmers Markets, Jenna leads community outreach efforts at schools, senior centers, and other neighborhood

spaces, gathering the community around local food and sharing financial incentives that make the locally grown food available at our farmers markets more affordable and accessible. Her work is crucial to CFM's mission to develop a local food infrastructure for long-term sustainability and meaningful community impact.

Amplify Donates \$50,000 to Decatur Cooperative Ministry



Amplify My Community has announced a \$50,000 gift to Decatur Cooperative Ministry (DCM) to support the organization's efforts to prevent and alleviate homelessness and poverty in Decatur and DeKalb County. The unrestricted gift was made possible by funds generated at the Amplify Decatur Music Festival, held in October, and is the largest in Amplify's history.

The festival was presented by Lenz and produced in partnership with Eddie's Attic. Amplify Decatur featured performances by Indigo Girls, John Paul White, Shawn Mullins, Rodney Crowell, Blind Boys of Alabama, The Cactus Blossoms Duo, Michelle Malone, and others.

DCM offers several housing and prevention programs, including:

- **Hagar's House:** An emergency night

shelter and assessment center, providing up to 90 days of night shelter for families with children.

- **Family House:** A transitional housing program, providing housing and supportive services to move families from homelessness to self-reliance in six months.
- **Family Success:** A program offering permanent supportive housing to chronically homeless families (those with extensive histories of homelessness who have at least one member with a diagnosed disability). Their families receive long-term support and services, ensuring lasting housing stability.
- **Project Take Charge:** A homelessness prevention program providing emergency assistance (in the form of rent/

mortgage and utility assistance) to at-risk families, seniors, and veterans in danger of eviction, foreclosure, or disconnection of utility services.

Sponsors include Leafmore Group, Decatur Package Store, Iris and Bruce Feinberg, Oakhurst Realty Partners, Natalie Gregory & Partners, Savannah Distributing Co., Three Taverns Craft Beers, and Creature Comforts Brewing Company.

To date, Amplify has donated more than \$450,000 to locally oriented anti-homelessness and poverty-focused organizations, including more than \$285,000 in Decatur.

The 2022 Amplify Decatur Music Festival will be held on Friday, April 22, and Saturday, April 23, but performers were not confirmed by press time. For more information visit amplifymycommunity.org.

DECEMBER 2, 9, 16, & 23

terrific THURSDAYS

• HOLIDAY FUN IN DECATUR, GA •

LITTLE SHOP OF STORIES

Spend \$100 on Terrific Thursdays and receive a \$10 gift card to use in 2022.

TREEHOUSE KID & CRAFT

OLIVE BRANCH

\$10 off purchases of \$50 or more on Thursdays

ECODENIZEN

20% off all men's products Dec. 9 + more specials each week.

Deals + Discounts + Holiday Events!

Enjoy holiday shopping, algorithm-free at Terrific Thursdays, extra special shopping days when our local shops stay open late with special **sales, treats, and pop-ups**. Enjoy **free warm cookies, cocoa, and gift wrapping** for your Decatur-bought gifts at the Visit Decatur tent on the square where our DJ keeps things lively. Watch our social media for dinner and drink specials, too!

DEC. 2 Tree Lighting

Enjoy **holiday carols**, warm cookies, hot cocoa and “**snow**” on the square. At 7 p.m. sharp, **Santa** himself flips the switch to light the tree above the east entrance of the Decatur MARTA station. And this year Mrs. Claus will light a **second tree** at the same time on West Ponce on the lawn of the First Christian Church of Decatur, 601 W. Ponce de Leon Ave. **FREE!**

DEC. 5

Menorah Lighting

Join in the Chanukah celebration on the square 4:30-6:30 p.m. Enjoy hot drinks, **latkes**, music, and photos with **Mr. Dreidel!** Chabadintown.org. **FREE!**

ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING



Get Gifty. Shop Local.

SQ/FT

TA-DA!

THE 2021 DECATUR ORNAMENTS ARE HERE

Artist couple Katherine and Kyle Allen, a potter and painter respectively, collaborated to create the tenth edition of Decatur's holiday ornament. There are **four different designs** – a wreath, a candy cane, a tree with lights and a blue ornament. Buy them now (\$18 each) at Wild Oats and Billy Goats, 112 E. Ponce de Leon Ave. and other Decatur shops including Little Shop of Stories, Homegrown, Sq/Ft, Eco-Denizen and more. All proceeds from the ornament sales go back into creating the 2022 ornament.

ORNAMENT UNVEILING



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EVERYDAY HOLIDAY MAGIC

Twinkling lights, holiday music, festive window displays – Decatur is filled with surprise and delight throughout the season! Look out for our new **walk-through light displays** on the square and in Oakhurst – perfect for selfies! Share with #holidaysindecaturga.

NEW LIGHT DISPLAY



DEC. 16 Guy's Night

Decatur shops open their doors for an evening focused on mens' shopping. (Guys, relax! We promise it will be fun!)

CHECK OUT THE D.R.I.P. DECATUR'S RETAIL CO-OP POP-UP

The Decatur Retail Incubator Program (aka the D.R.I.P.) is bringing homegrown, small businesses to 431 West Ponce de Leon Ave. The inaugural group of **pop-ups** are **Dope Coffee Company**, **ABETTERBUZZ Brand Goods**, and **Royal Thanaka Natural Skincare**.

THE D.R.I.P.



DEC. 23 "Desperation" Thursday

Look for last-minute sales from our local shops.

STAY TUNED FOR UPDATES

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MESSAGE FROM THE DECATUR PARENTS NETWORK:

Raising Whole Children in a Positive Way

Last month Decatur Parents Network (DPN) talked about how the Search Institutes' 40 Developmental Assets help children and youth grow into happy, healthy, and responsible adults. DPN encourages you to download the list from their website and keep them handy for inspiration and guidance. Ask your child to check off all the assets they believe they have in their life – you might be surprised that there are many in place already.

The Decatur Parents Network website is a hub of information, including web resources, videos, book recommendations, and organizations that support families. Here are three books you might think of gifting your family this holiday season:

Teach Your Children Well: Why Values and Coping Skills Matter More Than Grades, Trophies, or "Fat Envelopes," by Madeline Levine, PhD

Confronting the real issues behind why we push some of our kids to the breaking point

while dismissing the talents and interests of many others, Levine shows us how to shift our focus from the excesses of hyperparenting and the unhealthy reliance on our children for status and meaning to a parenting style that concentrates on both enabling academic success and developing a sense of purpose, well-being, and connection in our children's lives.

The Self-Driven Child: The Science and Sense of Giving Your Kids More Control Over Their Lives, by Ned Johnson & William Stixrud

The Self-Driven Child offers a combination of cutting-edge brain science, the latest discoveries in behavioral therapy, and case studies drawn from the thousands of kids and teens the authors have helped over the years to teach you how to set your child on the real road to success. As parents, we can only drive our kids so far. At some point, they will have to take the wheel and map out their own path. But there is a lot you can

do before then to help them tackle the road ahead with resilience and imagination.

Too Much of a Good Thing: Raising Children of Character in an Indulgent Age, by Dan Kindlon, PhD

Dr. Kindlon delineates how indulged toddlers become indulged teenagers who are at risk for becoming prone to, among other things, excessive self-absorption, depression and anxiety, and lack of self-control. Too Much of a Good Thing maps out the ways in which parents can reach out to their children, teach them engagement in meaningful activity, and promote emotional maturity and a sense of self-worth.

Look for more book recommendations and resources at decaturparents.net. For a list of the 40 Developmental Assets from the Search Institute, visit the Building Assets page. Follow and subscribe to the Decatur Parents Network at decaturparents.net/subscribe to find the latest updates, events, and opportunities to volunteer.

Music Together Offers Winter Classes

Music Together of Decatur will continue to deliver programs to families with young children this winter – outside, bundled up, and six feet apart. Babies, toddlers, preschoolers and the grownups who love them will come together each week to sing, dance, and jam to a whole new collection of music. Customizable gift certificates are available in any amount so you can give the gift of music to a favorite mom, dad, baby, toddler, or preschooler. Classes start Jan. 3. See a full schedule of music classes and register at MusicTogetherOfDecatur.com.



Run with the Dogs 5K Returns

Saturday, Jan. 29 • 9 a.m.
Renfro Middle School
220 W. College Ave.

Lace up those running shoes and grab that leash – the Run with the Dogs 5K is back. This year's Pup Trot and 5K race, now in its 18th year, will start and finish at Renfro Middle School – and the 5K race features chip timing for the first time ever. The new 5K course is a scenic run through the MAK and Oakhurst neighborhoods.

Don't miss the chance to earn the coveted long-sleeved race T-shirt with original artwork by Adam Pinsley of the Face of the Race dog. Proceeds from the event provide support for team uniforms, equipment, transportation, and much more. Register early and bring friends and family, both two-legged and four-legged! To register, visit our website at rwtd5k.com or look for us on Facebook and Instagram.



Holiday Marketplace + Café 30th Anniversary

Clairemont Elementary School, 155 Erie Ave.

Online: through Dec. 11 • In-person: Friday, Dec. 10, 5:30-9:30 p.m., and Saturday, Dec. 11, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

This year, the Clairemont Elementary PTA will host the 30th anniversary of the Holiday Marketplace online and in person. The marketplace will run through Dec. 11. The in-person event will take place at Clairemont Elementary.

For the previous three decades, volunteers have come together to transform Clairemont Elementary school into a European-inspired market where artists and makers from all over the region gather to sell one-of-a-kind artwork, crafts, gifts, and more. The community tradition went online last year due to COVID, but the Clairemont community is excited to return to an in-person marketplace this year while also offering the online option.

Safety precautions are in place with a limited number of vendors inside the building to ensure both vendors and shoppers have a comfortable and enjoyable experience. The Holiday Marketplace is entirely produced by a volunteer committee that, in partnership with

the school PTA, works tirelessly from June until December to produce this annual event. Together they look forward to welcoming back local sponsors like Decatur CoWorks, Natalie Gregory/COMPASS, and Visit Decatur, as well as new and returning artisans and participants, neighbors, and especially alumni.

As a special tribute, the school will offer community members the opportunity to permanently dedicate individual auditorium chairs with the purchase of engraved plaques. The money raised by dedications will be used for various school enhancements not budgeted for by the City Schools of Decatur. This annual marketplace is the largest fundraiser for the school and all proceeds help directly fund educational programs, teacher grants, student field trips and other enhancements to the student experience at Clairemont.

For more information visit decaturholidaymarketplace.com or follow on [social@decaturholidaymarketplace](https://twitter.com/social@decaturholidaymarketplace).



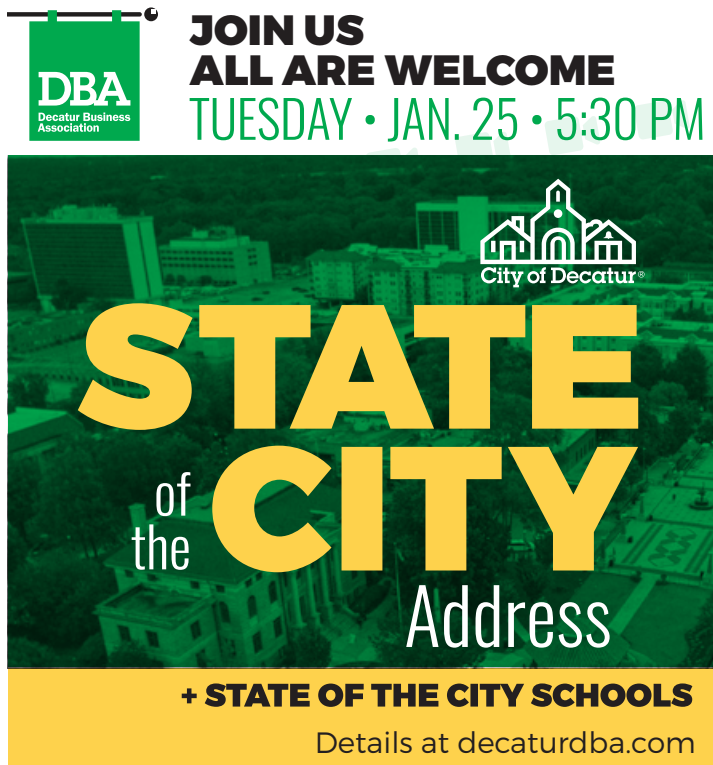
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CSD Transitions to New Fiber Network

The City Schools of Decatur recently transitioned to a fiber optic network jointly built with the City of Decatur. The new network, with an expected 20-year lifespan, provides built-in resilience not previously available, will lower operating costs, and eases CSD's implementation of future network enhancements.

The fiber network connects all CSD schools and the Facilities and Maintenance office to the district's network core in the Elizabeth Wilson School Support Center, which in turn provides the district's internet connection.

CSD tripled its internet bandwidth over the last year from 900 megabits per second to 3 gigabits per second, and each building in the fiber network has a 1 gb/s connection to the Wilson Center. The district plans to increase internet bandwidth to 6 gb/s in the

coming years, and the new fiber network affords CSD greater flexibility to increase individual schools' connection rates to take advantage of that additional bandwidth – or even greater increases in the future.

The fiber project began in 2018, when then-Assistant City Manager Andrea Arnold invited CSD to participate in creating a system to serve municipal and school locations. The fiber-optic lines that connect CSD's buildings are physically separate from the city's fiber-optic lines, and the two entities' data are kept entirely separate. Network Cabling Infrastructures Inc.'s network design and construction involved 62,850 feet of underground boring and fiber placement over 335 days. Network construction ended in June, but equipment supply chain limitations delayed CSD's transition to the new network by several months.

CSD Thanks Patricia Davis for 30-Plus Years of Service



Patricia Davis has served within the City Schools of Decatur cafeterias for more than three decades. She first walked through the school doors in 1992. In June, she officially hit her 30-year mark as a cafeteria manager. She currently manages Clairemont, Westchester, and College Heights Early Childhood Center cafeterias.



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DEF Announces New Step Up Circle Members and REACH Scholars for the 2021-22 School Year

It's been a busy few months of collaboration for Decatur Education Foundation. Two local businesses, Townley Kenton and Keller Knapp, have renewed their commitment to supporting Decatur students by becoming Step Up Circle Sponsors at the highest level of 10K and choosing to support specific DEF programs.

Townley Kenton is sponsoring DEF's REACH mentoring program and Keller Knapp is sponsoring Lighten the Load, DEF's food insecurity initiative.

REACH-Georgia is a mentoring program for rising 8th graders established by the Georgia Student Finance Commission and funded by DEF. This year, five outstanding eighth graders from Renfroe Middle School were selected to join the program, which provides guidance and support to students who demonstrate true academic promise.

This year's REACH scholars are Breana Atkins, Brihanna Griffin, Dakota Walker, Mo-

hamed Atik, Najma Noor, and Jordan Taylor. DEF has matched local community volunteers with each student to help them navigate through high school and prepare for college.

The students' selection was celebrated in November at Renfroe Middle School (RMS) with RMS Principal Greg Wiseman, some RMS teachers, the students' families, and Rob Townley of Townley Kenton. They will join the other 10 REACH scholars currently in the program. Upon program completion, REACH mentees can receive college scholarships to Georgia schools – up to \$30,000.

As DEF's other top sponsor, Keller Knapp



STEP UP CIRCLE

Realty is addressing food insecurity by collecting snacks and food for our schools' food pantries. If you would like to contribute, please bring shelf-safe, individually wrapped snacks like crackers or granola bars to their office at 715 East Lake Dr. in Oakhurst during regular office hours. By keeping the school food pantries stocked, we can ensure that our students will not go hungry.

DEF is grateful to our Step Up Circle members. If you would like to be a part of this group helping to solve the problems facing Decatur's kids, reach out to Leah Humphries (leah@decatureducationfoundation.org) to learn more.

STEP UP CIRCLE DONORS

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Oakhurst Elementary Named National Blue Ribbon School

The United States Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, recognized 325 schools as National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2021.

Oakhurst Elementary School was included in that number for its overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

According to the press release issued by the U.S. Department of Education, "The coveted National Blue Ribbon Schools award affirms the hard work of educators, families, and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging and engaging content."

The department recognizes all schools in one of two performance categories, based on



all student scores, subgroup student scores, and graduation rates:

- Exemplary High-Performing Schools are among their state's highest performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests.
- Exemplary Achievement Gap-Closing Schools are among their state's highest

performing schools in closing achievement gaps between a school's student groups and all students.

Oakhurst was also recognized in the Exemplary High-Performing Schools category. The official ceremony will be held in Washington, D.C.

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DHS Students Bake for Good

Students from Decatur High School's Culinary Arts class are gearing up to bake for a good cause. The Bake for Good is King Arthur Baking Company's free outreach program for students in grades 4 through 12. The program has three goals: learn, bake, and share. Students at DHS will learn the math and science of making bread from scratch. With supplies from King Arthur, they will bake the bread recipe together in school to take home. The recipe makes two loaves, one to keep and one to share with someone in need or as an act of kindness.

The program allows students to pick from three different ways to Bake for Good:

- 1. Live Remote Demonstration:** These demos are designed for larger school groups, such as an entire grade level at a school.
- 2. Self-Directed:** The Self-Directed program is designed for smaller classes and groups to learn together. Perfect for individual classes, after-school clubs, scouts, and home school groups.
- 3. FCS, CTE and Culinary Arts:** This option is designed for FCS or Culinary teachers who have participated in the program in the past or are comfortable with bread making and want to teach the lesson themselves.

To learn more about the program, visit kingarthurbaking.com/about/bakeforgood.

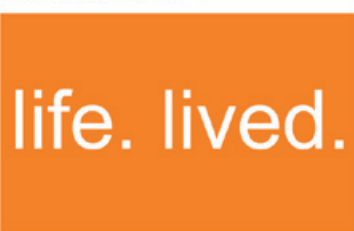



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DHS Band Students to Perform with Honor Ensembles

Students from the Decatur High School Bands have been accepted to perform with several of the most prestigious honor ensembles in metro Atlanta, including the Atlanta Youth Wind Symphony, Rialto Youth Jazz Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, Emory Youth Symphony Orchestra, DeKalb Youth Symphony Orchestra, and Agnes Scott Community Orchestra. Congratulations to these students on their hard work!

The selected students, pictured here, are Oliver Lee, Jacob Leavey, Ernesto Clarke, Rebecca Fishman, Sophia Phillips, Madelyn McElroy, Natalie Park, Lucca Elliott, Mason Hardwick, Tyler Johnson, Nina DeFilippo, Scarlett Felando, Thomas Cook, Elle Girard, and Sage Powell. Not pictured: Jackson Chapman



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Agnes Scott Launches New Graduate Programs

Agnes Scott College has announced three new graduate programs and an expansion to the post-baccalaureate pre-medical program. The additions provide new educational opportunities that will strengthen the institution's reputation of preparing students for high-demand career opportunities and professional success in today's workforce.

The new programs launching in 2022 include:

- Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- Master of Science in Medical Sciences
- Master of Science in Health Communications
- Expansion of the college's prestigious Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Program to offer students options based on their academic needs and professional goals:
 - Post-Bacc Pre-Medical Certificate
 - Post-Bacc Pre-Medical Flex
 - Post-Bacc Pre-Allied Health

These programs will also employ the latest technology to engage students. Notably, the Master of Science in Health Communications will be fully online to expand enrollment options for a diverse population of students.

For more information, explore Agnes Scott's graduate programs at agnesscott.edu/graduate-studies.

ASC Earns Diversity Award

Agnes Scott has received the 2021 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. As a recipient of the annual HEED Award – a national honor recognizing U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion – Agnes Scott will be featured, along with 100 other recipients, in the November 2021 issue of the magazine.

The magazine selected Agnes Scott as an acknowledgment of the strides the college has made in creating an increasingly inclusive community. The college published a Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) plan in the summer of 2020, a campus-wide roadmap for realizing the college's commitment to social justice. The plan elevates Agnes Scott through five core tenets: advancing a culture of anti-racism, inspiring and supporting students, developing and caring for employees, driving excellence through training, education and research, and impacting our local communities.

Agnes Scott has also been chosen by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as a Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) campus.

For more information about the 2021 HEED Award, visit insightintodiversity.com.



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Agnes Scott Ranked Nation's No. 1 Most Innovative Liberal Arts Institution

For the fourth consecutive year, Agnes Scott College ranked as the nation's No. 1 most innovative liberal arts college in U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges' rankings. Among U.S. liberal arts colleges, Agnes Scott also ranked No. 2 for best undergraduate teaching and No. 6 for social mobility. The college also maintained its No. 1 spot for first-year experiences and rose to No. 2 for learning communities, both among all U.S. higher education institutions.

The U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges' rankings are an important tool as students and their families begin to research their higher education options. More than 1,400 schools were ranked on 17 measures of academic quality, including graduation and retention rates, social mobility, faculty resources, financial resources per student and average alumni giving rate. Data is collected each spring and summer directly from the schools while a peer assessment survey to college and university leadership collects additional information to calculate undergraduate academic reputation.

Founded in 1889, Agnes Scott today represents a diverse, progressive community laser-focused on leadership development, global learning and professional success. More than 60 percent of the stu-

dent body represents communities of color with 33 percent being African American and 15 percent Hispanic. More than 40 percent are Pell Grant eligible and 32 percent are first-generation college students, both indicators of socioeconomic diversity and opportunities for social mobility.

A first-year global immersion experience, an integrated digital literacy focus and ongoing career exposure opportunities are among curriculum highlights at Agnes Scott that drive positive student experiences and professional success. These and other focus areas are part of every student's four-year journey known as SUMMIT.

To learn more about Agnes Scott College and its holistic approach to liberal arts education, visit agnescott.edu/summit/index. For the full list of rankings along with details about the measurement process, visit the U.S. News & World Report at usnews.com/best-colleges.

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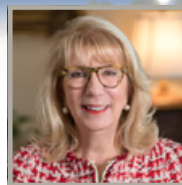
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