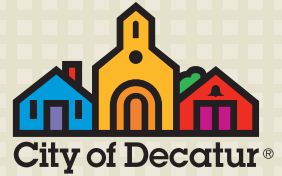


# City of Decatur FOCUS



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024  
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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CITY OF DECATUR, GEORGIA



## DECATUR SALUTES 2023 HOMETOWN HEROES

The Decatur City Commission awarded 17 Hometown Hero awards at the DBA Holiday party in December. Hometown Heroes are people who volunteer their time to make our city a better place to live. Often working behind the scenes, these selfless heroes 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 and with the 2023 presentation, Decatur now has more than 406 Hometown Heroes who are featured along the "Hero Wall" in Decatur City Hall. Descriptions of the Heroes along with who nominated them can be found on the City website, [decaturga.com/hometownheroes](https://decaturga.com/hometownheroes).

*Commissioner Kelly Walsh recognized Neil Norton as a Hometown Hero during a December City Commission meeting as he was unable to attend the awards ceremony*



### Congratulations to Decatur's Hometown Heroes for 2023

Marjorie Cooper  
Nancy Eilen  
Peter Helfrich  
Peter Morich  
Colleen Morich  
Neil Norton  
Dan Peterson  
Eric Canosa  
Shell Ramirez  
Emily Saliers  
Amy Ray  
Pete Schwartz  
Rachel Schwartz  
Shawn Vinson  
Joyce Washington  
Ivie Wildman  
Amy Wilson

## Cara Scharer Appointed Assistant City Manager of Public Works

**C**ara Scharer was recently appointed the Assistant City Manager of Public Works in November and oversees the Departments of Public Works and Parks and Recreation. Prior to her appointment, she served as the City's Senior Engineer for almost two years. Cara is originally from Chicago, but also spent time in Tennessee, and has lived in Atlanta for the past 17 years. She has a civil engineering degree from Christian Brothers University where she played soccer and currently resides in Decatur with her spouse and three children.



In her new role as Assistant City Manager, Cara will now be involved in infrastructure capital projects and maintenance on a larger scale in addition to leading our city's Public Works teams.

Before serving the City of Decatur, Cara was an engineering consultant in the private sector for 15 years where she was an engineer-of-record for water resources, green infrastructure projects and project manager for innovative urban design projects. Some of the upcoming work she is excited about includes collaborating with DeKalb County to address concerns on North Decatur Road, the multi-use path on South Columbia Drive, working together with a diverse team of stakeholders to implement the goals and objectives identified in the City's 2030 Strategic Plan, and upcoming Safe Streets for All Action Plan.

When not working, Cara enjoys reading, triathlons, visiting Decatur's coffee and book shops, and spending time with her family.

### Commission Salutes DHS Ivy League

Mayor Patti Garrett recently presented the DHS Ivy League a certificate of appreciation in December on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Department for their work removing invasive plants at McKoy Park.



### Arborist Earns Statewide Honors

Congratulations to our City Arborist **Kay Evanovich** on being named 2023 Arborist of the Year by the Georgia Arborist Association. Kay is a passionate public servant and has dedicated her life to promoting, protecting, and advocating for trees and a greener community.

**Read the Decatur Focus online at [decaturga.com/focus](https://decaturga.com/focus).**

Limited copies also available at Decatur City Hall, Decatur Visitors Center, and Decatur Recreation Center.

**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](mailto:decaturfocus@decaturga.com), or by using the submission form found at [decaturga.com/focus](https://decaturga.com/focus).

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](https://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; email: [decaturfocus@decaturga.com](mailto:decaturfocus@decaturga.com).



#### DECATUR CITY COMMISSION

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

The 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

Conor McNally, Chair  
Noah Peeters, Vice Chair  
Tony Leung, Treasurer/Secretary  
Darren Comer • Linda Curry  
David Harry • Lisa Turner



Jill Joplin ..... President  
Sean Crotty ..... President-Elect  
Maria Alvarez ..... Treasurer  
Carolyn Ficken ..... Secretary



# 2023 Welcoming Businesses Named

The Better Together Advisory Board in partnership with the Decatur City Commission presented the fourth annual Welcoming Business Awards to Rebel Teahouse, Cremalosa, and The Cereal Lab 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 to encourage businesses to prioritize inclusivity as a “best practice.” 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.

## Rebel Teahouse

Nominated by Shirley Baylis

Owner Christine Nguyen

Business opened in October 2022

Rebel Teahouse is an artisanal bubble tea café with a focus on creating a welcoming, inclusive, and diverse environment, which is reflected in both their employment practices and their customer base spanning all ages, races, gender, and other identities. They have a major partnership with the Global Village School and also provide support to Families of Children Under Stress (FOCUS). They proactively applied for and received the Decatur Downtown Development Authority’s façade grant to install an automatic door to help customers with accessibility issues.

## Cremalosa

Nominated by Truett Ford

Owner Meridith Ford

Business opened in February 2020

Cremalosa was nationally recognized by *Food & Wine Magazine* in 2021 as having



“the best ice cream” in the state of Georgia for its authentic Italian gelato. They create a welcoming, inclusive, and diverse environment aimed at all people and provide an accessible space for those with physical disabilities, even beyond what is required by law. They possess a diverse staff, including people of color, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals. They’ve instituted pronoun buttons and pins for customer purchase, as well as encouraging staff to proudly portray their pronouns on their aprons. The gelato shop frequently engages in community activities by hosting spirit days for schools and other non-profit organizations, as well as donating gelato to organizations like Embrace Refugee Birth. Their hiring practices include training

staff on customer service best practices—first and foremost, to be friendly to everyone no matter their race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, or situation.

## The Cereal Lab

Owner Cynthia Hernandez

Business opened in November 2020

The Cereal Lab is a unique desserts restaurant dedicated to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and diverse environment with friendly and diverse staff members. In combining an innovative desserts concept with a nostalgic feel, they create a fun and inviting atmosphere that attracts customers of all ages, races, genders, and other identities.

## Holiday Sanitation Schedule Reminder

### MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

**Monday, Jan. 15, 2024**

Regular service for Monday will be Tuesday, Jan. 16

Regular service for Tuesday will be Wednesday, Jan. 17

### PRESIDENTS DAY

**Monday, Feb. 19, 2024**

Regular service for Monday will be Tuesday, Feb. 20

Regular service for Tuesday will be Wednesday, Feb. 21

## Property Tax Exemption Updates

A majority of voters approved expansion of property tax exemptions in the referendum held on November 7, 2023. The election results have since been officially certified by DeKalb County and declared by the Decatur City Commission.

### GH-1 Exemption Increase

Voters approved an increase in the amount exempted by the GH-1 basic homestead exemption from \$25,000 to \$40,000. The increased savings will automatically be applied to tax bills that will be issued on April 1, 2024. Homeowners who already have the GH-1 do not need to reapply.

### GH-2 Exemption Increase

The GH-2 exemption for homeowners over the age of 65 will be expanded from \$10,000 to \$15,000 in assessed value. This expansion will be granted automatically to homeowners who already have the GH-2.

### LT-1 Exemption

This new land-trust exemption will allow an exemption on owner-occupied homes on land managed by a 501(c)(3) whose primary mission is affordable housing, such as the Decatur Land Trust. Eligible residents may call 404-370-4100 or email [taxes@decaturga.com](mailto:taxes@decaturga.com) for application instructions.

### GH-3 Exemption Expansion

The GH-3 income-based exemption for homeowners over the age of 62 has been expanded. In addition to increasing the exemption amount, it also increases the annual income limit for GH-3 eligibility from \$50,000 to \$60,000 in Georgia taxable income. Note: Georgia taxable income generally excludes retirement income. Owners who were not previously eligible may apply in-person or online under the higher limit at [decaturga.com/homestead](http://decaturga.com/homestead). Homeowners who already have the GH-3 do not need to reapply.

### S-5 and S-6 Expansion and Extension

The S-5 income-based exemption for homeowners age 65-69 and S-6 exemption for owners over 70, originally scheduled to expire at the end of 2023, have been extended for five years. The previous income limit for the S-5 was \$53,000, which has been increased to \$62,000 in household federal adjusted income. Homeowners who already have the S-5 or S-6 do not have to reapply. Owners who were not previously eligible for the S-5 due to age or income may apply in person or online at [decaturgatax.com/homestead](http://decaturgatax.com/homestead). Homeowners who had the S-5 and have since turned 70 may apply for the S-6 in-person or online.

### Key Dates

Age-based exemptions depend on the age of the applicant as of **January 1**. The time period to apply for a new exemption will end **March 15, 2024**, in order for the exemption to appear on first installment 2024 tax bills which will be issued April 1, 2024. A homeowner applying for income-based exemptions may show their 2022 income tax return to demonstrate eligibility if their 2023 return is not ready yet. Further information on Decatur's exemptions can be found at [decaturga.com/homestead](http://decaturga.com/homestead).

## More Than 600 Holiday Cards Collected for Seniors

The Decatur Fire Rescue organized a campaign to collect holiday cards for seniors to encourage gratefulness and connection in our community. More than 600 greeting cards were collected with the help of Decatur employees working in various departments like Parks and Recreation, Decatur Police, and community volunteers. Many of the cards were handmade by children who participate in programs with the Parks and Recreation Department. The cards were delivered to local senior facilities during the holiday season with hopes of bringing joy to our Decatur seniors.



**BODY20**, the 20-minute technology-enhanced workout, has arrived in Decatur at 163 Clairemont Ave. Commissioner Tony Powers, DBA President Jill Joplin, and Business Development Manager Shirley Baylis (not pictured) attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the grand opening of the gym in December.



## Supervisor and Facility Manager Lee Williams Retires After 23 Years

Lee Williams, longtime center supervisor and facility manager for the Decatur Recreation Center, retired in December after 23 years of service. His career with Decatur started in 2000 with the Decatur Children and Youth Services Division. He received the Thomas O. Davis Service Award in 2015 for his work in the community including teaching children how to ride bikes safely, managing sports camps, and actively participating in the Safe Routes to School program. Lee is originally from Alberta, Alabama, and was responsible for daily operations and maintenance of the Decatur Recreation Center along with coordinating classes and overseeing the staff. What he enjoyed most about working in the center was seeing young people come to the facility and get something out of the experience that will help them in life as they get older. Upon his retirement, Lee says he is excited to get some home projects done and start his own business. We are grateful for Lee's contributions to Decatur over the years and wish him good luck on future endeavors.



## DHS Girls Cross Country Team Earns State Title



Congratulations to the DHS Girls Cross Country Team for winning the Georgia High School Class 5A State Championship two years in a row in 2022 and 2023. This feat is unprecedented in their sport and the City of Decatur proclaimed Monday, November 27, 2023 as Decatur High School Girls Cross Country Team Victory Day to celebrate this achievement.

## WALK & ROLL SUPERSTAR

Meet **Peter Wakefield**, our January/February Walk & Roll Superstar. Peter and his family have lived in Decatur since 2001, and he is a professor at Emory, where he directs the undergraduate program in the Institute for Liberal Arts. He is a dedicated cyclist and a familiar face around town to many. Peter was introduced to biking in 1980 when he did an independent study of Romanesque cathedrals in France—which included 1,000 miles by bike over six weeks. Peter fell in love with cycling and has enjoyed car-free living ever since.

The arrival of Peter's two kids was an invitation for him to discover the joys of the cargo bike (his model was called "Big Dummy," which even now makes Peter chuckle). He still runs into neighbors who recall him hauling around both kids at the same



*Peter is second from right in this photo.*

time on the back of that beloved bike. Peter has seen firsthand how bikes bring communities together. Peter also witnessed Decatur's strong sense of community during his time as a "Bike Dude" when his kids were at Clairemont and Westchester elementary schools.

The Bike Dudes did skits and promoted biking and walking to school at the Friday Community

Circle gatherings, and they gained a kind of cult following. Peter fondly remembers another Bike Dude playing "Grandma Bike Dude" while wearing an aluminum "dress," and there was a running joke about the Bike Dudes' dislike of kale. In joining the ranks of Bike Dudes—that is, the group of parents promoting walking and rolling to school—Peter felt he'd found a community that deeply shared

his values. He credits city employees Greg White and the now-retired Cheryl Burnette with promoting active living and also cultivating a fun environment where citizens can get involved. Peter especially enjoys the new bike track downtown and goes out of his way to ride on it every day.

Nominate a Walk & Roll Superstar by visiting [bit.ly/walk-and-roll-decatur](https://bit.ly/walk-and-roll-decatur).

# Neighborhood Cleanup Days Return!

Saturdays, March 2-June 1, Beginning at 7:30 a.m.

The City of Decatur is hosting Neighborhood Cleanup Days on Saturdays starting in March 2024 through June 2024, 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 schedule below to find the date specified for your street. Please read carefully to be observant of changes. If you have any questions, contact Sean Woodson at [sean.woodson@decaturga.com](mailto:sean.woodson@decaturga.com) or 404-377-5571.

All items to be collected should be placed at the curb no later than 7:30 a.m. to ensure that crews do not need to be rerun for late setouts. Collections run until 3:30 p.m., or until finished, whichever is sooner.

- 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

March 2

Oakhurst Neighborhood #1

First Avenue  
Second Avenue (100 to 600 Block)  
Third Avenue (400 to 900 block)  
Fourth Avenue  
North Fourth Avenue  
Fifth Avenue  
Gordon Street  
Northern Avenue (north side only)  
Oakview Road (1000 to 1700 Block)  
Maxwell Street  
East Lake Drive (400 to 600 Block)

March 9

Oakhurst Neighborhood #2

East Lake Drive (100 to 300 Block)  
Winter Ave (east side only)  
Johnston Place  
Bryan Place  
Beatty Place

Madison Avenue  
Third Ave. (100 to 300 block)  
Feld Avenue  
Leyden Street  
Cambridge Avenue  
Hood Circle  
W. College (Mead to Cambridge)  
Park Place  
Fair Park Lane

March 16

Oakhurst Neighborhood #3

Spring Street  
Fayetteville Road  
Underwood Street  
W. Pharr (100 to 500 block)  
Russell Street  
East Lake Drive (700 to 1000 block)  
McKoy Street (500 to 700 block)  
Adams Street (1000 to 1100 block)  
Lenore Street  
Sterling Street  
South McDonough Street (800 to 1000 block)  
Lenore Place  
Oakhurst Common Drive

March 23

Oakhurst Neighborhood #4

West Hill Street  
East Hill Street  
East Benson Street  
West Benson Street  
McKoy Street (100 to 400 block)  
Adams Street (600 to 700 block)  
South McDonough (600 to 700 block)  
Green Street (100 block)  
Oakview Road (400 to 800 block)  
Mead Road  
Olympic Place  
Jefferson Place

March 30

MAK Neighborhood

Ansley Street  
Greenwood Avenue  
Greenwood Place  
Evans Drive  
Kings Highway  
Adams Street (100 to 500 block)  
South McDonough Street (100 to 500 block)  
West College Avenue (100 to 700 block)  
West Dougherty Street  
West Davis Street  
West Hancock Street  
East Hancock Street  
East Davis Street  
College Place

## April 13

### Winnona Park Neighborhood

S. Columbia Drive  
Commerce Drive (railroad  
underpass to S. Columbia)  
Conway Road  
Hargrove Townhomes  
Avery Street  
Hilldale Drive  
Winnona Drive  
Poplar Circle  
Bucher Drive  
Derrydown Way  
Heatherdown Road  
Shadowmoor Drive  
Inman Drive  
Missionary Court  
Candler Oaks Lane  
Kirk Road  
Kirk Crossing  
Mimosa Drive  
Mimosa Place  
Missionary Drive  
Oldfield Road  
McKinnon Drive (Decatur only)  
Midway Road  
Clarke Hill Subdivision

## April 20

### College Heights Neighborhood

South Candler Street  
Bruton Street  
Green Street (200 block)  
Buchanan Terrace  
Driftwood Terrace  
Driftwood Place  
Park Drive  
Candler Drive  
East Pharr Road  
McClellan Street  
Garland Avenue  
Griffin Circle  
Brower Street  
Chevelle Lane  
Candler Pointe  
Park Drive  
Overlook Bluff  
West Dearborn Circle

## April 27

### Decatur Heights Neighborhood

Barry Street  
North Candler Street  
Pate Street  
East Maple Street  
Village Walk  
Sycamore Street  
East Ponce de Leon Ave. (400 to  
1100 block)  
Ponce de Leon Court  
Hillyer Place  
Sycamore Place  
Oak Lane  
Mountain View Street  
Hillcrest Avenue  
Springdale Street  
Glenn Street  
East Howard Avenue

## May 4

### Decatur Heights Neighborhood

Grove Street  
Hickory Street  
Lockwood Terrace  
Sycamore Ridge Drive  
Renfro Court  
Fitzgerald Court  
Wilburn Court  
Grovemont Court  
Woodland Court  
Pinehurst Street  
Poplar Street  
Ridgeland Avenue  
Sycamore Drive  
Springdale Street  
Sycamore Station  
Fairview Street  
Glendale Avenue  
Glenn Circle  
Pinecrest Avenue  
Mt. Vernon Drive  
Forkner Drive  
Old Decatur Circle  
Glenn Court  
Townsend at Decatur  
Townhomes  
Moda Townhomes  
Regency Townhomes

## May 11

### Great Lakes

Clarion Avenue  
Nelson Ferry Road  
Woodlawn Avenue  
Plainview Street  
Coventry (Nelson Ferry to Scott  
Boulevard)  
Fairfield (Coventry to  
Woodlawn)  
Vidal Blvd.  
Lamont Drive  
Garden Lane  
Beaumont Avenue  
Oakland Street  
Montgomery Street  
Fairview Avenue  
Ponce de Leon Place  
Northern Avenue  
Wilton Drive

## May 18

### Great Lakes

Clairemont Avenue (100 to 800  
block)  
Champlain Street  
Seneca Street  
Erie Avenue  
Huron Street  
Michigan Avenue  
Superior Avenue  
Lucerne Street  
Geneva Streets  
Church Street (600 block To  
1335)  
Knob Hill  
Glen Lake Commons  
Willow Lane  
Pensdale Road  
Eastland Drive  
Parkside Circle  
Brownstones  
Landover Drive  
Ferndale Drive  
North Decatur Road  
Scott Blvd (800 to 1300 block)

## May 25

### 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 to Scott Boulevard)  
Merrill Avenue  
Pope Circle  
Harold Byrd Lane South  
Walden Square Way

## June 1

### Lenox Place

Greenwood Circle  
W. Howard (300 to 900 block)  
Patillo Way  
Eastlake Drive (2300 block)  
Atlanta Avenue  
Hibernia Avenue  
Braeburn Lane  
Ridley Lane  
Adair Street  
Cottonwood Place  
Emerson Avenue  
West Ponce de Leon Avenue (600  
to 900 block)  
Drexel Avenue  
Devonshire Avenue  
Hampshire Avenue  
Lansdowne Avenue  
Melrose Avenue  
Chief Matthews Drive  
East Parkwood Road  
West Parkwood Road  
Upland Road  
Wimberly Court  
Parkwood Lane  
Pinetree Drive  
Scott Boulevard (100 to 700  
block)  
Swanton Hill Subdivision  
Charter Square



## Introducing Online Quarterly Playbooks

As part of its commitment to enhancing accessibility and staying current with the digital age, Parks and Recreation is revamping its Playbook publication.

Starting this year, the Playbook will be segmented into quarterly publications. These segmented Playbooks aim to provide residents with more targeted, timely information, catering to your evolving needs throughout the year.

Playbooks will be posted online at [decaturga.com/playbook](https://decaturga.com/playbook), allowing for easy access to the latest information on upcoming events, news, and program details.

If you prefer a printed copy, all three city recreation centers — Decatur, Ebster, and Oakhurst — will have the most current Playbook available.

Moving forward, Parks and Recreation will also have a dedicated section in every edition of the Focus to help keep the community in the loop.

## Financial Sustainability Strategy

The Decatur Parks and Recreation Department has been working with consultant 110% Inc. since fall 2023 to develop a financial sustainability strategy for the next 3-5 years. The process involves:

- Education and training for staff, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board members and City Commissioners
- Service category development
- Beneficiary of service analysis
- Cost of service analysis
- Recommended fees and charges to inform the department's FY24-25 fee schedule
- A sustainable infrastructure and capital projects strategy
- An implementation plan

The project is expected to take six to eight months from kickoff to completion with plans to inform the FY2024-2025 proposed budget for Parks and Recreation. Look for an update in each Decatur Focus through June 2024 with progress and highlights for this project.

## Social Nights for Teens and Pre-Teens

From January through March, the Ebster Recreation Center is hosting Pre-Teen Night and Teen Social Night every other Friday, catering to ages 10-17. These evenings are designed by teens for teens, to promote positive relationships and youth development. They will feature diverse activities like basketball, dodgeball tournaments, trivia nights, and much more. There will also be separate sessions for 6th-8th graders on Jan. 12, Feb. 2, and March 8; and for 9th-12th graders on Jan. 26, Feb. 23, and March 22.

## Valentine's Day Festivities

On Friday, Feb. 9, a Valentine's dance party awaits 3rd-5th graders, encouraging them to dress in their Sunday best for an evening filled with music, dancing, cookie decorating, and card making at Ebster Recreation Center at 6:30 p.m. Additionally, on Wednesday, Feb. 14, the Oakhurst Recreation Center invites K-2nd graders to a Valentine's PJ Party at 5 p.m. Wear your favorite PJs for a night of sweet treats, photo opportunities, and a bundle of fun!







## Introducing the 2024 Senior Party Pass

Join us for a year of exclusive active senior celebrations with the 2024 Senior Party Pass. Experience monthly themed events at the Decatur Recreation Center, for just \$50 annually (\$60 for non-residents) or pay \$5 per party. Mark your calendar for our upcoming celebrations, and RSVP to [demetri.wheeler@decaturga.com](mailto:demetri.wheeler@decaturga.com). Purchase your pass at [register.communitypass.net/cityofdecatur.89iol,.m.m.m.m...m](http://register.communitypass.net/cityofdecatur.89iol,.m.m.m.m...m).

**Valentine's Party** Feb. 14, 11 a.m. RSVP by Feb. 9.

**St. Patrick's Day Party** Mar. 13, 11 a.m. RSVP by Mar. 8.

Scan the QR code to see the latest Playbook, and dozens of programs for active children, youth, adults, and seniors.



## Meeting Previews

### State of the City Address

**Tuesday, January 23, 5:30 p.m.**

**The Chapel on Sycamore, 318 Sycamore St.**

Join the DBA for the State of the City address presented by Mayor Patti Garrett. The meeting will also include the State of the City Schools address.

### Black History Month Program with Mayor Emerita Elizabeth Wilson

**Tuesday, Feb. 27 at 5:15 p.m.**

**Ebster Recreation Center, 105 Electric Ave.**

Join the DBA and City of Decatur for the Black History Month program presented by Mayor Emerita Elizabeth Wilson. This year we will highlight and acknowledge the significant impact Black Americans have had on the arts — music, visual arts, TV and film, cultural movements, and more.



## DBA Elects 2024 Officers

The Decatur Business Association elected its 2024 officers at the December Holiday Party. Pictured L-R are Caroline Ficken, Secretary; Maria Alvarez, Treasurer; Sean Crotty, President Elect, Jill Joplin, President.



## Worthmore Jewelers Spotlight on Decatur's longstanding jeweler

Worthmore Jewelers is one of only a handful of jewelry stores that can be found in Decatur. The Decatur store has been open for approximately 16 years, and the original location in Midtown Atlanta has been around for 30 years.

Harris Botnick, one of the owners of Worthmore Jewelers, says that the idea of opening his own jewelry store came after noticing that there were not many shops that catered to everyone including same-sex couples. He wanted to create a safe place for anyone—regardless of age, sex, race or religion—to come and shop.

Wearability, affordability, and uniqueness are also at the heart of the business. Harris says that it is not just the price of the jewelry itself but the actual item that determines what jewelry pieces he sells. Worthmore Jewelers specializes in offering unique jewelry created by small, independent designers. They have options for every budget.

When asked why they selected Decatur as their second location, Harris says that he appreciates Decatur's "hip" small-town feel with a community that strongly supports small businesses.

Before going into the jewelry business, Harris had studied film. The Georgia native was introduced to the industry by his then girlfriend Geri Botnick (and now wife and one of his business partners) when she got him a job in retail jewelry. Once immersed in the world of jewelry, he discovered how fascinating the industry was since it was full of different stones and techniques and there was always something new to learn. You can find Harris going back and forth between both stores and may even run into his daughter as she is now part of the business.

Harris credits his employees for the success of Worthmore Jewelers and says that while jewelry is very special, it is the relationships and the stories and the meaning behind the jewelry that drive his team.

Visit [worthmorejewelers.com](http://worthmorejewelers.com) to learn more.



## Dancing Goats Customers Host Staff Appreciation Dinner



A potluck celebration took place at Dancing Goats in November to honor the staff who work at the Decatur destination that serves as a home away from home to many. The idea of an appreciation dinner was inspired by Tahereh Ahdieh (a Dancing Goats regular) and championed by more than 20 regular customers who contributed a vast array of food and desserts. Many staff members were able to take part in the celebration and were grateful for the recognition from these customers. Those present were asked to write a message to the staff indicating how Dancing Goats serves as a community for them. The community members involved are thankful for the assistance of Peyton, the manager of Dancing Goats, for helping coordinate the event.



## Sing with Decatur Civic Chorus

The Decatur Civic Chorus invites you to join them for the upcoming season, with no pressure and no auditions. The first practice for 2024 is set for Monday, Jan. 8, at 7 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 308 Clairmont Ave. Contact Scott Keesey at [sdkeesey73@gmail.com](mailto:sdkeesey73@gmail.com) or Dan Mundy at [danielmundy@att.net](mailto:danielmundy@att.net) to confirm your attendance.



## Capoeira Classes Available in Decatur

Capoeira (pronounced ka-poo-ey-da) is an Afro-Brazilian martial art form that incorporates acrobatics, dance, fitness and music. Capoeira Maculele Decatur has been teaching this traditional Brazilian art form for more than 15 years. They are located in Core Studios in downtown Decatur and offer beginner friendly and advanced Capoeira classes for ages 2.5-5, 6-13, and older. To learn more, visit [trycapoeira.com](http://trycapoeira.com).



## Events Calendar

### JANUARY

**13-15** MLK Jr. Service Project

**16** City Commission Meeting, 7:30 p.m.  
City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.

**23** State of the City Address/DBA Meeting, 5:30 p.m.  
(Page 9)

**27** Run with the Dogs 5K, 9 a.m. (Page 14)

### FEBRUARY

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**5** City Commission Meeting, 7:30 p.m.  
City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.

**14** Valentine's Day Rose Giveaway, 5-8 p.m.,  
Decatur Square (Page 13)

**20** City Commission Meeting, 7:30 p.m.,  
City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.

**24** Love Run 5K (Page 12)

**27** Black History Month Program, 5:15 p.m. (Page 9)

Go to [visitdecaturga.com](http://visitdecaturga.com) for community events. For a full list of board and commission meetings visit [decaturga.com/calendar](http://decaturga.com/calendar)

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## District Attorney Sherry Boston Hosts 9th Annual Love Run 5K

Saturday, Feb. 24 at 8:30 a.m., Decatur Square

DeKalb County District Attorney Sherry Boston invites the community to join her for the 9th annual Love Run 5K to promote awareness of teen dating violence and raise funds for domestic violence survivors. The Love Run is a family-friendly race open to runners and walkers, and commemorates Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. This *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* Peachtree Road Race Qualifier race is electronically chip-timed as participants follow a fast-paced course through historic downtown Decatur. All registered participants receive a signature long sleeve shirt and race medal, as well as a discount to Big Peach Decatur. Proceeds from the Love Run benefit the Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence (WRCDV). Since its inception, the Love Run has raised more than \$80,000 for WRCDV. Register at [bit.ly/2XyeWst](https://bit.ly/2XyeWst). A 10% discount is available for groups with 10 or more race participants.



## Waldorf School Offers Programs for Infants and Toddlers

Registration is underway for the Waldorf School of Atlanta's winter and spring parent/infant and parent/toddler programs. Parents



and their youngest ones participate in a small community of families with children of similar ages, guided by an experienced Waldorf early childhood educator who helps them achieve developmental milestones. Families participate one morning a week for two hours (one hour for infants) over several weeks.

Parents/caregivers of toddlers will meet at a local park, and participate in a rhythmic morning of songs, movement, play, handwork, snack, and conversation. Classes with infants will take place in one of our classrooms on our campus in Decatur. Visit [waldorfatlanta.org](https://waldorfatlanta.org) for more information or contact Jolie Luba at [jluba@waldorfatlanta.org](mailto:jluba@waldorfatlanta.org).

Wishing you joy, success, and  
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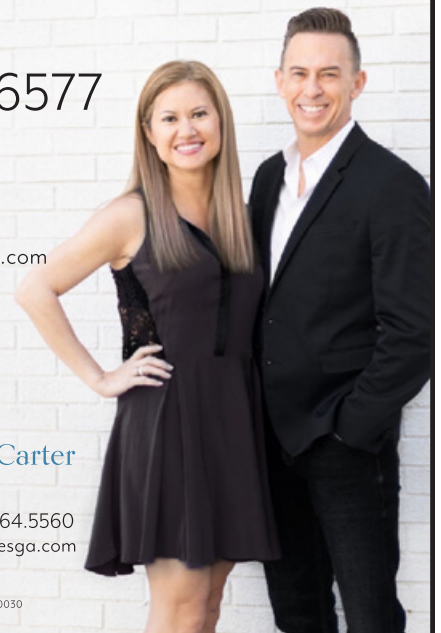
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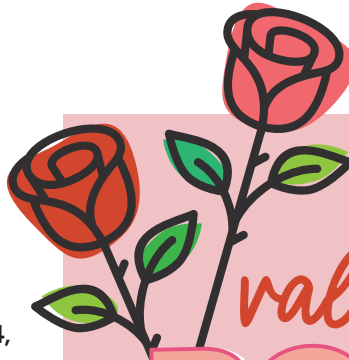
## Winter Pop-Up Book Sale at Decatur Library

The Friends of the Decatur Library is holding a used book sale on Saturday, Feb. 3, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The sale will take place on the ground floor of the library located at 215 Sycamore Street. Proceeds go to support Decatur Library programs for children, youth and adults. Shoppers will find fiction and mystery titles for all ages as well as a variety of non-fiction categories, including history, biography, sports, health and cooking. Most hardback books are \$2; most paperback books are \$1. Shoppers are asked to bring their own bags. Payment is by cash or check only.

## VALENTINE'S DAY ROSE GIVEAWAY

**Wednesday, Feb. 14, 5-8 p.m., Decatur Square**

Join us for a Valentine's Day give-away featuring free roses. There will be music, opportunities to take photos, roses, and Maggie Lyon chocolates. Grab a romantic dinner, drinks, and dessert in Decatur before or after you stop by.



*valentine's day*  
**POP-UP**  
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## Mead Road Mardi Gras Parade

Mark your calendar for the Mead Road Mardi Gras parade on Saturday, Feb. 3 at 1 p.m. The community is invited to sign up to walk or roll in the parade. Funds raised go to support arts programming in the City Schools of Decatur. The parade starts at F.Ave School at the corner of 5th Avenue and Oakview and ends at The Imperial pub. Visit [meadrdmardigras.org](http://meadrdmardigras.org) for parade details, to register your krewe, or to become a sponsor.



Since 2014, Mead Road Mardi Gras has donated \$35,000 to the Decatur Education Foundation to fund music and arts grants in the Decatur City Schools. The DEF has awarded grants to buy instruments for the DHS and Beacon Hill band programs, choral arrangements for the DHS and Beacon Hill choruses, costumes for the DHS Drama program, and instruments for the elementary schools.

## RUN WITH THE DOGS 5K

**Saturday, Jan. 27 • 9 a.m.**

The 20th annual Run With the Dogs (RWTD) 5K and 1-mile Pup Trot takes place on Jan. 27. The race, which is a Peachtree Road Race Qualifier, starts and ends at Beacon Hill Middle School and dogs are welcome.

RWTD is a fundraiser for the Decatur Bulldog Boosters, supporting Decatur Athletics at Decatur High School and Beacon Hill Middle School including 1,100 student-athletes on 57 teams in 19 sports.

Registration is required for the 5K and the free 1-mile Pup Trot. The race starts at 9 a.m. and the Pup Trot will be at 8:30 a.m. To learn more, visit [rwtd5k.com](http://rwtd5k.com).



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## Saint Thomas More Catholic School Middle School Lunch and Learn

Saint Thomas More Catholic School invites prospective parents and rising middle school students to attend their Middle School Lunch and Learn at 11:15 a.m. Participants will get a chance to meet faculty, tour classrooms, hear from current students, and ask questions. Visit [stmga.org](http://stmga.org) to register or to learn more.

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## Register for the 22nd Annual Tour deCatur 5K

**Saturday, March 16**

The Decatur Education Foundation (DEF) invites you to register for their 22nd annual Tour deCatur 5K and one-mile Fun Run. This community event will benefit Decatur students and help DEF further their mission in addressing issues such as racial and economic inequity, food insecurity, behavioral health, and learning differences.

Go to [TourdeCatur.com](http://TourdeCatur.com) to register for the 5K, the one-mile Fun Run, and the Tot Trot. Take advantage of early-bird pricing and secure your spot, plus a guaranteed race t-shirt, by registering before February 25, 2024. Mathnasium of Decatur is the presenting sponsor and will be offering math games and giveaways for kids at the event.

Visit [decatureducationfoundation.org](http://decatureducationfoundation.org) for more information about DEF's initiatives and how you can help support the next generation of kids.



[beaconhillblackalliance.org](http://beaconhillblackalliance.org)

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