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WESTMINSTER LIBRARY RENOVATION

This past June, a half million dollar renovation of the Westminster Community Charter School Library began. The two-story brick building has undergone extensive renovations to not only repair the 80-year-old structure but also to purposefully update the environment to support a vibrant, innovative space to serve 550 students and their parents. Renovations were funded by M&T Bank. The Annie E. Casey Foundation also contributed \$50,000 to support the creation of the Parent Achievement Zone.

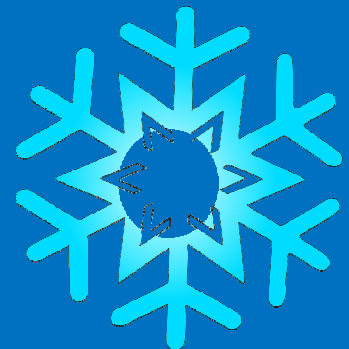


The new library boasts 24 new desktop computers, extensive seating for reading or working, and hundreds of new books, audio visual materials and other resources. There is also a designated programming space for BPN’s ‘Parent Achievement Zone,’ which will support parents in meeting goals related to financial stability, career success and family well-being.

“Libraries and their mission to provide open access to information, knowledge and opportunity are vitally important, and we need to ensure that our schools can best serve students and the community now and also in the future,” said M&T Bank Chairman and CEO Robert G. Wilmers.

“I couldn’t be more thrilled about the Westminster Community Charter School’s new library and parent center,” said Amoretta Morris, Director of National Community Strategies at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “There is mounting evidence that two-generation approaches work, and this is an incredible example of partners coming together under one roof to seamlessly equip children and parents with the tools and knowledge they need to thrive.”

If you haven’t done so already please stop by and take a look and this amazing space!



ABOUT BPN

- Public/ private partnership seeking to improve academic performance at the neighborhood’s three schools while revitalizing the surrounding community
- In Partnership with M&T Bank
- Non-profit organization managed by M&T Bank



Buffalo Promise NEIGHBORHOOD

## FREE FUN FAMILY ACTIVITIES



Looking for fun-family activities this winter? As part of the Strong Community Schools Initiative through Buffalo Public Schools, Highgate Heights Elementary and Westminster Community Charter School open their doors on select Saturdays from 9 a.m. until noon. Begin the day with a nutritious breakfast, experience activities such as crafts, cooking, escape room, sports, adult workshops, fresh fruit and vegetable farmers market, to name a few and enjoy a complimentary lunch in our dining room. Look for flyers at your school for dates and please be our guest at these educational and fun-filled family events-you won't want to miss it! Our doors are open to everyone!



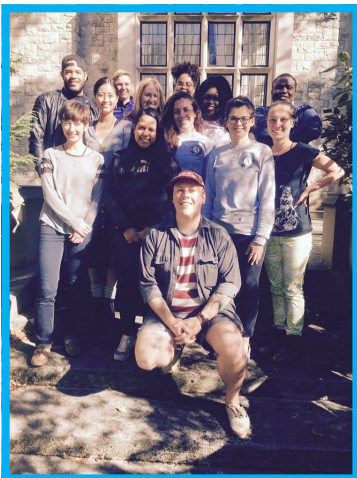
## UPK LIBRARY FIELD TRIPS

In order to improve our pipeline from Children's Academy by EduKids to Westminster Community Charter School, our Pre-K students are taking weekly field trips to the Westminster Community Charter School library. Classes are greeted by Mrs. Venator, school librarian, and walk through the halls of the school. Mrs. Venator reads a book that correlates to the Pre-K curriculum and provides a fun extension activity. Students are then able to interact with current Kindergarteners – their favorite part!

It's a great opportunity for our preschoolers to see friends that graduated last year and get to know the Kindergarten teachers. All of this will make the transition to Kindergarten at Westminster so much easier for our children! We hope that the weekly trips serve as a bridge to the next education step and thereby increase the community feeling at Buffalo Promise Neighborhood schools.



## AMERICORPS PROGRAM



Each school year, in partnership with The Service Collaborative of Western New York's ABL program (America Builds Lives through Education), Buffalo Promise Neighborhood welcomes a team of full-time AmeriCorps members to work with our students at both Highgate Heights Elementary and Westminster Community Charter School. Our AmeriCorps members take on many roles both in and out of the classroom.

They serve as mentors, role models, tutors and assistants that help contribute to a positive learning environment for the students. When they are not assisting in the classroom or working with our afterschool programs, they are often working hard to plan and facilitate fun activities and events for our students and their families. This past fall, the members put on a harvest festival where they painted faces, did crafts, and played games with the students. They will also help to create a winter wonderland for the whole family to enjoy at our Saturday Academy. Our AmeriCorps members are truly outstanding and have become an integral part of our school communities!

## MENTOR SPOTLIGHT



For nearly 25 years, M&T Bank has partnered with Westminster Community Charter School to pair employees with students in a mentoring relationship. This program is still running strong, and BPN has now partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Erie County to provide support for this essential program. These mentor relationships are proven to have a positive impact on the child and the volunteer.

Let's meet one of the matches now! Sydney Godwin, the "Big," is an analyst in the Compliance Risk department at M&T Bank. Ta'Naye Lemon, the "Little" is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader at Westminster Community Charter School. They couldn't be a more perfect pair! The two go on outings together at least twice per month, partaking in everything from bowling, to Build-a-Bear, to baking cookies together.

When Sydney speaks of Ta'Naye, her eyes light up and she will tell you how kind Ta'Naye is to her siblings. Ta'Naye often makes sure that she can bring things home to share with them when she and Sydney are on an outing together. In Sydney's words, "Ta'Naye is so funny and sweet. And she's full of energy, until we get in the car, and she falls asleep every time! She even asks how long the ride home is so she can catch a nap (her words!)."

Sydney's favorite part of mentoring is how excited Ta'Naye is to see her, introducing her to people as her "sister." Ta'Naye even asked Sydney if they will still be "big sisters" when they're old. Sydney also loves how wonderful Ta'Naye's family is, and how they treat her with respect and trust. Ta'Naye has met Sydney's entire family, and everyone just loves her. She has baked cookies with Sydney's mom, learned to swim at Sydney's grandmother's house, and asks Sydney to put her spelling tests up on her refrigerator!

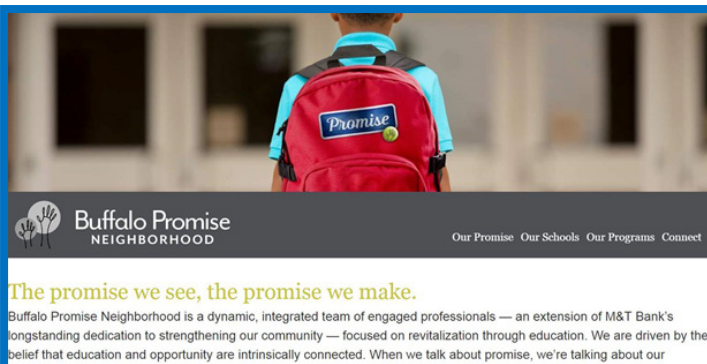
## JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood is proud of its partnership with Junior Achievement of WNY and recently held a recognition breakfast for our Junior Achievement (JA) volunteers from M&T Bank. JA volunteers work with classrooms at Highgate Heights Elementary and Westminster Community Charter School to deliver the important message of work-readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy skills.

Since 2015, sixty-eight M&T employees have taught the JA curriculum to over 400 students.



## WEBSITE LAUNCH



Buffalo Promise Neighborhood is excited to announce the launch of our new website.

Dynamic content presents the story of how our schools, programs, and people are impacting the community. News, events, and updates are designed to keep you connected with all that's happening in the neighborhood.

Please visit the new and improved [BuffaloPromiseNeighborhood.org](http://BuffaloPromiseNeighborhood.org) to learn about where we've come from, and together, where we're headed.



We're on Facebook and we think you are too!  
Like our page, **Buffalo Promise Neighborhood**, to stay up to date with all footprint news!



Only have a Twitter? Not a problem! We're there too!  
Follow us @BuffaloPN



Don't have either? Find us on LinkedIn! **Buffalo Promise Neighborhood**



**Buffalo Promise**  
NEIGHBORHOOD

## FARM FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES



Buffalo Promise Neighborhood in partnership with the African Heritage Food Co-op will continue to sell farm fresh fruits & vegetables in 2018. Produce is seasonal but past boxes have included: red cabbage, apples, cauliflower, grapes, collard greens, broccoli, kale, mustard greens and sweet potatoes to name a few. A full box is \$30 and a half box is \$15. If you are interested in hearing more please contact Beverly David-Lewis at (716) 536-9395.

BPN Community Council would like to thank the following community partners for making the Holiday Food Basket a success:

- \* African American Food Co-op
- \* City of Buffalo
- \* Highgate Heights PS#80
- \* M&T Bank
- \* National PanHellenic Council
- \* Nazareth Missionary Baptist Church
- \* Rich Products
- \* SONYMA
- \* United Methodist Church
- \* University District Block Club Coalition
- \* University District Community Development Assoc.
- \* Wegmans
- \* Westminster Community Charter School

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT—WEGMANS



We recently spoke with Michele Mehaffy, Consumer Affairs Manager for the Buffalo division of Wegmans Food Markets. Michele assists in the planning and execution of community charitable investments as well being the media spokesperson for the Buffalo division, which includes 13 stores in Buffalo, Jamestown and Erie, Pa.

Wegmans mission is to help customers live healthier, better lives through food and to work with community organizations that are making a huge impact on Western New York, like our Buffalo Promise Neighborhood. They also work with organizations like the Food Bank of WNY and the United Way to help in their mission to strengthen our communities.

Wegmans has been working with BPN for the past 2 years, and has been a proud supporter of our annual holiday food drive for a bit longer. They also support our Parent Achievement Zone whenever possible, whether through food demos or flu shots. They recently hosted two author visits at Westminster and Highgate Heights, in conjunction with the WNY Children's Book Expo.

When asked what she is most proud of Michele stated "When we're able to help organizations when they need it most, especially around the holidays. Whether it's through food donations or volunteering, it makes me proud to work for a company that truly values community engagement and giving back."

It goes without saying that Buffalo Promise Neighborhood is proud to call Wegmans one of our community partners!