

## Spring 2018



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### IN REMEMBRANCE



### 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

With profound sadness, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood reflects on the loss of M&T Bank Chairman Robert G. Wilmers. Mr. Wilmers was a pioneer in urban public education reform, believing that all children should have an opportunity to receive the best education.

With Mr. Wilmers' support, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood became a community, bringing together bankers, educators, philanthropists and families. We will continue his mission, and ensure that the children and families in our community are afforded every opportunity to learn and grow.



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## SATURDAY ACADEMY 2017-18

Saturday Academy season is winding down with only 4 Saturday's remaining in the 2017-18 school year! Remember our doors are open to everyone!

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.



## BASKETBALL 101

Students from Highgate Heights and Westminster Community Charter School had the opportunity to participate in the University of Buffalo's Basketball game in February. Students were selected as a result of a yearlong Attendance Competition at their respective schools.



Thank you UB and M&T Bank for coordinating these efforts! Congratulations to all of our dedicated students!



## BLACK HISTORY PROGRAMS

Westminster students, grades K-8, sang songs, recited poems and told stories based on the popular children's book *"Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History"* by Vashti Harrison, celebrating the contributions of African American women throughout history. This award-winning book recently won the prestigious NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Children's Literacy.

Lorna Hill, Founder and Artistic Director from Ujima Theatre Company, said a few words to wrap up the program focusing on our school community's proud history celebrating Black History Month.

In addition for the month of February Highgate Heights teachers and students decorated hallways with the theme: "Young, Black & Gifted." Teachers also organized an assembly where students sang songs, performed dance routines and read poetry.





## DR. SEUSS—READ ACROSS AMERICA



On a snowy March day, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Children's Academy celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday and Read Across America.

Read Across America is an initiative created by the National Education Association that began in 1997. One part of the project is National Read Across America Day, an observance in the United States held on the school day closest to March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss.



## AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS



BPN Volunteers are an essential part of our after-school program at Westminster Community Charter School.

Nearly every day, students and volunteers play games, work on crafts, become Reading Superheroes, and talk about their days.

Students have also been able to take part in Junior Achievement (learn more in this newsletter!) in after-school, learning real life skills for all grade-levels!



## CHILDREN'S ACADEMY AT GERARD PLACE

Construction is well underway at Buffalo Promise Neighborhood's second Children's Academy on the Gerard Place Campus scheduled to open in the third quarter of 2018.

Approximately 100 children will be able to attend the new Children's Academy, including those who live within the BPN service area, have siblings who attend one of the BPN schools or if their parents are residents of Gerard Place. The original Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Children's Academy opened in late 2013. Both facilities will offer educational programming managed by EduKids.





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## FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood in partnership with the African Heritage Food Co-op will continue to sell farm fresh seasonal fruits & vegetables in 2018. 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.



Interested in becoming a African Heritage Co-op member? Price of membership is \$50 per year. Benefits include discounts, fiscal perks, voting rights and committee/board participation.

Visit African Heritage Food Co-op at [myahfc.com](http://myahfc.com) for more details.

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT—JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood thrives because of its partnerships. We recently spoke with Alycia Ivancie, Senior Education Manager, with Junior Achievement of WNY (JA).



JA relies on volunteers to run its program. Volunteers come from business and community to present programs that focus on financial literacy, work-readiness and entrepreneurship. Programs are available for students in grades K-12 and curriculum is relevant to all students since it teaches real life skills. The lessons are designed to be fun and interactive, with lots of game play, stickers, posters, etc.

BPN has been partnering with JA for 4 years, with M&T employees training to volunteer at BPN schools. In Alycia's words, "The partnership between JA and BPN has been tremendous in so many ways. We have always had a strong relationship with M&T Bank but the partnership with BPN has brought it to the next level. We knew there was a way to reach more students if we had more volunteers and this allowed us to do more on both fronts! It felt like a very natural partnership, as our two organizations seem very like-minded, and use the resources we have to help prepare students to succeed in their future endeavors. For us, it's always been about reaching more students in a meaningful way. But in order to do so, we need to engage enough volunteers and secure funding resources to make it possible. It can be a delicate balancing act."

The partnership with BPN has strengthened JA's relationship with M&T through awareness. Alycia explains, "One of our greatest challenges at any company we work with is always awareness, so the partnership has helped create "buzz" around volunteering. The staff at BPN are great advocates. Now if someone is interested in getting involved at M&T, they know where to start. Since we started working with BPN, we have grown each year. In 2015-2016 we jumped to 45 volunteers suddenly M&T was our Top Volunteer Company! In 2016-2017 we had 59 volunteers – 2017-18 can only be better!"

What would Alycia say to people interested in volunteering? "Anyone that is eager to work with students and share their "real world" perspectives with kids should just do it! You don't have to have a teaching degree or a background in finance, just a willingness to share. JA does a good job making the materials very easy to use and our staff, as well as BPN's, provides great additional support!"

If you are interested in getting involved contact the JA office directly at (716) 853-1381 or visit the website [www.jawny.org](http://www.jawny.org)