



E·C·G·R·A
ERIE COUNTY GAMING REVENUE AUTHORITY

**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT
FOR
MAY
2022**

Knight, Ericka

From: Sparber, James
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 9:42 AM
To: Knight, Ericka
Subject: FW: Local Share Assessment Payment Notification - Erie County

Please see below. Jim

From: RV, BFM Gaming <RA-BFM-Gaming@pa.gov>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 2:07 PM
To: Sparber, James <JSparber@eriecountypa.gov>
Subject: Local Share Assessment Payment Notification - Erie County

Dear Mr. Sparber:

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Race Horse Development and Gaming Act 42 of 2017, the Department is required to distribute quarterly the Local Share Assessment collected for interactive gaming and slots to the municipalities in which a licensed gaming entity is located. This distribution is based on the interactive gaming and slots local share assessment amount collected plus the slot machine license operation fee amount collected over Summit Township's budget limitation.

Erie County: \$728,350.14
Land Bank Jurisdiction: \$728,350.15

An ACH for the first quarter of 2022 payment in the amount of \$1,456,700.29 should be deposited in your bank account within 7 - 10 business days. This payment includes the Interactive gaming local share assessment of \$34,403.54, the Slots local share assessment of \$441,253.75 and the slot machine license operation fee of \$981,043.00. Any reductions to the Gross Interactive Gaming Revenue (GIGR) and Gross Terminal Revenue (GTR) for promotional items is the result of the Gaming Bulletin 2015-01 and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's April 28, 2014 decision in Greenwood Gaming and Entertainment Incorporated v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Revenue (90 A.3d 699 (Pa. 2014)).

If you have any questions, please let me know.

BANK 067

Thank you.

Jennifer Heckert | Division Chief
PA Department of Revenue
Bureau of Fiscal Management | Gaming Division
1147 Strawberry Square | Harrisburg PA 17128
Phone: 717.346.4004 | Fax: 717.787.6738
E-mail: jeheckert@pa.gov
www.revenue.pa.gov

① ERIE COUNTY 067-021010-042100
 $728,350.14 \times .55 = \$400,592.58$

② ECGRA 067-021050-042100
 $728,350.14 \times .45 = \$327,757.56$

③ Landbank 067-021018-042100
 $\$728,350.15$

TOTAL 1,456,700.29

March 2022

Meeting with Executive Director
Ongoing Social Media Management
Ongoing Consulting
March Comms

IMPLEMENTED

18 Total March posts
18 Total graphics created
Special Events Grants Award Receptions

IN PROGRESS | 2022 Grant Releases and Graphics

Annual Report
Holiday Graphics

IN PLANNING

Grants Events
Parks Fields & Trails 2 year report
ECGRA Playbook
Roadshow Tours

April 2022

Meeting with Executive Director
Ongoing Social Media Management
Ongoing Consulting
April Comms

IMPLEMENTED

- 45 Total April posts
- 30 Total graphics created
- Special Events Grants Award Reception
- Media Advisory, distribution, and pitching
- Press Release and distribution

IN PROGRESS | 2022 Grant Releases and Graphics

- Annual Report
- Holiday Graphics

IN PLANNING

- Grants Events
- Parks Fields & Trails 2 year report
- ECGRA Playbook
- Roadshow Tours

Business

ErieMade Business Academy: Reimagining Entrepreneurship

New ECAT Mentorship program exemplifies creative alignment

by **Matt Swanseger** ⌚ April 20, 2022 at 10:00 AM



Kristen Santiago, owner of Gone Local Erie retail shop and Ivy + Atlas business consultancy (and 2021 honoree of Erie's 40 Under 40), has embraced her role as project consultant and business assistance specialist at the ErieMade Business Academy, a cohort of 21 creative entrepreneurs conducted through the Erie Center for Arts and Technology (ECAT).

Few would argue that Erie is undergoing a rebrand. What remains to be seen, however, is its ultimate direction — and just as important — who has a say.

If entrepreneur mentorship programs like the [ErieMade Business Academy](#) have anything to do with it, the answer will be *anybody* who has the drive and desire to, regardless of who they are or where they come from.

Combining the resources of [Bridgeway Capital's Creative Business Accelerator \(CBA\)](#), the Western Pennsylvania Entrepreneur Diversification Fund, [Erie Arts and Culture](#), and the [Erie Center for Arts and Technology \(ECAT\)](#), the ErieMade Business Academy is aimed at transforming the "American dream" from theory into practice for historically disenfranchised populations.

For many would-be entrepreneurs, the gap between aspiration and attainment is not a matter of ability; it's a matter of accessibility. Because they cannot or do not know how to access the necessary financial, educational, and motivational resources, their ideas often fall by the wayside. This represents a huge loss

to communities socially, economically, and culturally as huge stores of creative potential go essentially untapped.

Jude Shingle, arts program director at ECAT and a 2016 alumnus of Erie's 40 Under 40, doesn't believe there is a resource problem. "It's getting people to see that the resources are for them, or to understand the resources exist, or talk about them in a different way. That's the work."

Building awareness is a lot easier, though, when you're building it right in front of them. Location is one reason why ECAT, housed in the extensively remodeled former Wayne School in the heart of Erie's lower east side, was such a perfect match for ErieMade. Generously equipped and beautifully appointed with 80,180 square feet of studio, conference, and activity spaces, ECAT has already been helping area middle and high school students reframe their expectations of what's possible with its clean, open, naturally lit atmosphere.

"Environment shapes attitude," affirms Shingle. Now it's doing the same for entrepreneurs-in-training. In turn, the ErieMade stakeholders hope that the new businesses can go on to reshape *their* environment by creating quality jobs, reactivating post-industrial spaces, reviving Main Street corridors, and elevating underserved populations. There are many inner-city neighborhoods — especially as one radiates further out from State Street — that could reap huge rewards from that investment, the area around East Avenue being one of them.

The other reason ECAT allied itself with ErieMade (through the Bridgeway CBA) is its philosophy. Explains Shingle: "We have an approach to career development that's very holistic. So it's not just about giving educational resources, it's also thinking about the whole person, and what barriers do you have to getting an education? Then we wrap support services around that."

Confirming that alignment is Katie Johnson, associate director of the CBA at Bridgeway Capital, who at times sounds like she's paraphrasing Shingle. She refers to Bridgeway as a "social impact investor" driven to "invest in small businesses that are women-owned, BIPOC-owned, veteran-owned, and those located in low to moderate income areas." In short, she says, the "overall reason for Bridgeway is to provide capital options for people who have barriers to capital." She calls ErieMade "one of the programmatic expressions of what we do."

Johnson explains that in order to "access capital as a tool to create resilient businesses," prospective entrepreneurs must demonstrate "capital readiness" by preparing or repairing credit, creating a business plan, filing paperwork, obtaining licenses and clearances, etc. Grooming participants for capital readiness is one goal of the ErieMade Business Academy (in particular to apply for \$2,000 grants through the PA Council on the Arts). The other is instilling a genuine belief and confidence that their business plans can succeed far beyond the scope of the six-month program, which officially wraps up late summer.

"It's about empowering the members of the community who are living in this part of town, to invest in and see themselves as business owners — to find a truly viable career in it," Shingle says.

Heading these efforts at the ground level is project consultant and business assistance specialist (and a 2021 honoree of Erie's 40 Under 40) Kristen Santiago. Despite being just 28 years old, she coaches from a wealth of experience as the owner of two successful area businesses, the locally-themed retail shop Gone Local Erie and the small business and entrepreneurial consulting firm Ivy + Atlas. Under her tutelage is a cohort of 21 designers, artists, designers, craftspeople, micro-manufacturers, and makers from the greater Erie region, painstakingly selected from a pool of 40 applicants.

"It was a really competitive process. And it was really exciting," Santiago recalls.

At the start of the program in early February, Santiago met one-on-one with each member of the cohort to get a grasp of their individual goals, visions, and circumstances and design a personalized curriculum around their needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Group presentations are given once a month at ECAT to break down high level topics that are applicable to any business, while Santiago continues to hold individual coaching sessions bimonthly by video conference.

In the end, Santiago says the program "is going to be different for everybody. Everybody works at their own pace. You'll have somebody who will attack and do their entire business plan, and then you'll have others who do it section by section, working more slowly and methodically. We need to acquaint ourselves with their working style and how they can be best held accountable."

Echoes Shingle: "The way we've really marketed this program is 'We're going to meet you where you are.' You're part of a cohort. Everyone's figuring this out together. And that's extremely valuable because being an entrepreneur is terrifying ... we're super excited because we just saw a diverse pool of applicants who typically don't see themselves as, and may not even use the word 'entrepreneur' to describe themselves."

So even if homework and tutoring sessions are the bulk of the ErieMade Business Academy, there is still tremendous benefit in attending monthly class. "Not only do you get training on a topic that can be applicable to most or all of the people in the room, but you also get to hear from other people, hear their stories and struggles," says Santiago. "It's really easy to sit there and think, 'Oh my gosh, this person's at this level there, and they've accomplished this and did that and where am I at and what have I done?!' But the second that the walls come down and people start being transparent and vulnerable, everybody else in the room understands it's not a new thing — it's a universal issue."

Although the anxieties and doubts surrounding entrepreneurship are universal, the language around it is often not. Therefore, Shingle says, it's been important to adapt that lexicon in a manner that suits anyone — whether or not they're not from a business background or even speak English as their first language. Santiago feels honored to work with the three New Americans in the program, who were variously recruited through Erie Arts and Culture and their CHROMA Guild (Santiago thanks Kelly Armor, folk art director) and the City of Erie's New American Council (kudos to Niken Astari Carpenter, New American liaison).

Technology can also be a hurdle for some, especially to those who didn't grow up with it. Santiago says Patrick Moran, emerging technologies librarian at the Erie County Public Library, has been instrumental in getting them up to speed through Blasco's Idea Lab, an adult maker space that offers free access to equipment and classes. "It's a lot of connecting the dots."

Whether there are future iterations of ErieMade remains to be seen, but everyone sounds optimistic. "A lot of businesses are already working on their business plans and making leaps. Some people have already gotten grants and have just done great things. So we know that this is working really well," enthuses Johnson, who has seen similar programs flourish in Pittsburgh and elsewhere throughout Bridgeway's 15-county footprint in Western Pennsylvania.

"I'm floored to be part of this program and having an impact on so many businesses. Because I know how hard and how lonely it can be," admits Santiago. "And also to have the support of organizations like ECAT and Bridgeway and Erie Arts and Culture — all of the pieces are working together in such a cool way. If the same marrying of all the resources could happen in other sectors of this city, amazing things would happen."

"I digress. That's another article for another day."

One we certainly hope to write.

Matt Swanseger can be reached at mwsanseger@eriereader.com

Innovation From the Other Side of the Tracks

How Erie's PACA is making history and revitalizing downtown

by Amy VanScoter ⌚ April 25, 2022 at 1:00 PM



DAVE SCHREODER / PACA

The Performing Arts Collective Alliance (PACA) is making good use of the former Mayer Building just past the West 15th Street railroad tracks on State, playing host to not only thespians in its second floor theater, but also painters, sculptors, photographers, videographers, musicians, jewelry makers, dancers, fitness instructors, yogis, martial artists, and creative entrepreneurs of all sorts.

If you are starting to venture downtown again, you may be surprised by the surge of energy and excitement on upper State Street on a Friday or Saturday evening. Cars lined up and down the street, a diverse crowd, various forms of art and culture, and the community experiencing everything from live music, theater, fine art, poetry, pottery, photography, and yoga all in one place. Creatives of all kinds are coming to [PACA](#) (Performing Artists Collective Alliance) to unwind, experience, socialize, and practice their crafts.

Affectionately known to many as the PACA Building, the structure is officially named the Mayer Building. Recently listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#), the five-story, masonry, Classical Revival-style building located at 1501-1509 State Street is just south of the 15th Street railroad bridge in Downtown Erie. Outside business

entrances include [Cornerboy Collection Clothing](#), [City Gallery](#), the main PACA entrance, and [First Amendment \(FAT\) Tees](#). The building was constructed in 1899 but its windows, doors, and wood storefronts likely date to 1908, when the building underwent extensive reconstruction after a devastating

fire. The elaborate history and industrial details of the Mayer Building are just a part of what attracts so many to venture inside.

"The first thing you see when you walk in is the original Lackawanna Steel Company staircase, topped with 100-year-old Pennsylvania slate," says Mark Tanenbaum, PACA's executive director. "You can ride in the oldest working elevator in Erie County." The elevator was installed in 1913 at the height of a typhoid epidemic, when the fourth floor was used to house the sick and the dying. "We've salvaged lighting and fixtures from the Erie Coke plant and other local historic properties. Our new arts and entrepreneur center features a stone wall hewn by members of Henry Mayer's Army company, the Pennsylvania 102nd. In the back of the building is the only physical evidence remaining of the Great Mill Creek Flood of 1915 — a bent i-beam that was used to shuttle cargo off boats running the creek. There's history everywhere you look."

The Mayers owned 1501-1509 State Street until the Great Depression, running their paving and construction company from an office on the second floor and renting the remainder of the space to a variety of commercial and light manufacturing tenants. The Mayer Building housed many food-related businesses due to its location across the street from the Central Market, a major food hall constructed in 1899, until its closing in 1958. City directories reveal that some businesses housed in the Mayer Building were the National Market Company (meats), Public Grocery Supply, Weaver Ice Cream Plant, C.A. Curtze Groceries (a successor to the Lake City Spice Mill), Grant Harnon, J.A. Schreiner Liquors, and Arcade Market, a grocery whose mosaic sign is partially preserved on the building's south storefront above FAT-Tees today.

Other retail uses of the past included furniture, wallpaper, tile, sporting supplies, plumbing and heating supplies, and paper goods. The large open spaces on the building's upper floors were used for a variety of light industrial purposes, such as a refrigerator company, knitting and woolen mills, printing and engraving, an electrotype maker, and a manufacturer of paper coin wrappers. The building has housed an undertaker, a business college, a roller rink, and the office of a drive-in theater company.



Anthony Morelli of Off Constantly Comedy performs during the opening weekend of RandyBillDuck's fourth floor music and entertainment studio. Photo by Dave Tamulonis.

The current tenants of PACA are just as diverse with 50 percent being women and 25 percent BIPOC. They include the new [Foundation Art Academy](#), [Erie Clay Space](#), [Paintology](#), photographers, musicians, videographers, and media production businesses such as [Randy BillDuck](#), Sanz Studio Productions, [Crew Life Productions](#), and numerous other artists, jewelry makers, sculptors, and movement artists who practice and teach fitness classes, dance, yoga, and martial arts in the newly renovated PACA Movement Center on the fifth floor. The [PACA Movement Center](#) is also a collective space of its own, available for movement instructors and entrepreneurs to rent for classes and workshops.

"Artists get inspired by looking at art in other spaces," says Ken Falkenhagen, PACA administrator. "And it's not just inspiration. When artists open themselves up to other media and genres, the juxtaposition of the two styles can have a transformative effect." Falkenhagen notes that PACA's artists work together on the entrepreneurial side, too. "As a young artist or entrepreneur, it's nice to have mentors in the building who

have done it all before. For example, if you're a new photographer trying to make a living at it, we can pair you with a professional in our building who's been doing it for 20 years."

The Mayer Building has seen steady improvement and economic growth since it was purchased by PACA in 2016. With Mark Tannenbaum as executive director, what was at first a theater on the second floor with 11 tenants will grow to more than 40 tenants following a fourth floor build-out in the spring of 2022. The property value has tripled since the purchase, increasing from \$265,000 to \$700,000 after a roof installation in 2020. The spirit of the collective is felt and seen throughout the building and to the betterment of the community as PACA continues to pay 100 percent of all Erie City, school, and county real estate taxes.

"PACA aims to be self-sustaining. It seems wrong to meet that goal by taking money from schoolkids and first responders. It's about more than art; it's about being stewards for the community at large. We're all in this together," said Tanenbaum.

While most organizations struggled during COVID, PACA saw their biggest growth with a 14,000-square-foot new roof installation, two new ADA-compliant ground floor restrooms, a new custom LED marquee above the main entrance, an upgraded fire suppression system, and a new art gallery called the Skinny Gallery which connects the main inside entrance of PACA to City Gallery. PACA was also the only local theater to continue producing plays during the lockdown (in-house and live-streamed) according to an action plan developed with the PA Dept of Health.



Bassist Tony Grey, drummer Michael Hibbler II, and pianist Nicholas Nasibyan perform during a recent installment of the PACA [LIVE!] concert series, which has been live-streaming nearly every Sunday since the summer of 2020. Photo by Dave Schroeder.

Live-streamed Sunday music events — [PACA \[LIVE!\]](#) — continued to be offered free of charge for more than a year during the pandemic, and at the time of this publication have continued for nearly 80 weeks.

PACA also provided more than \$10,000 in COVID relief to the artist/entrepreneur community in the form of rent rebates/forgiveness. A new partnership with Eagle's Nest was created to provide summer Shakespeare camp to underserved middle schoolers. The collective has continued thriving during these most unprecedented times.

PACA continues to move forward with plans for a green roof, new performance spaces, and room for more entrepreneurs. "PACA has always followed our motto — *Live Forward* — and we do that every day. We've set the stage to create a public green space and solar panels on our new roof. It will create a cool

gathering space on top of our building, but it's environmentally friendly and will save us \$8,000 a year in energy costs. That's money we can put back into programs that turn artists into entrepreneurs," said Tanenbaum.

You can follow PACA on Facebook or paca1505.org for the latest concerts, theater and news from the collective.

Awards and Accomplishments

2015 Disrupt Erie Award winner, Innovation Collaborative

2020 Greater Erie Award for Preservation Excellence, Preservation Erie

2021 Leadership Award winner, David Schroeder, Erie Arts and Culture

2021 Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Grants awarded by ECGRA, Erie Community Foundation, Erie Arts and Culture, Erie Insurance Exchange, PA Council on the Arts, PA DCED

2021 Erie Gives Day raised more than \$17,000, top 25% of all organizations in dollars raised and top 8% in number of donors

Executive Director, Mark Tannenbaum sits on the Erie City Historic Review Commission

Amy VanScoter is a PACA Board Member and the coordinator of the PACA Movement Center where she teaches Slow, Mindful Yoga classes. She can be reached at avanscoter@gmail.com

Girard's Mission Main Street

How the town's citizen-led revitalization is bringing Main Street back

by Erin Phillips ⌚ April 25, 2022 at 10:30 AM



Girard's first public mural was funded in part by the organization Downtown Girard. Main Street business owner, Eliza Wolfe, was one of the artists who volunteered their time to create this mural dedicated to celebrating the history of Girard.

In Sinclair Lewis' 1920 opus, *Main Street*, he writes: "I think perhaps we want a more conscious life. We're tired of drudging and sleeping and dying. We're tired of seeing just a few people able to be individualists. We're tired of always deferring hope till the next generation. We're tired of hearing the politicians and priests and cautious reformers (and the husbands!) coax us, 'Be calm! Be patient! Wait! We have the plans for a Utopia already made; just give us a bit more time and we'll produce it; trust us; we're wiser than you.' For ten thousand years they've said that. We want our Utopia *now*—and we're going to try our hands at it."

While these words were written 100 years ago, they still feel inherently relatable. In recent years, it has become a priority for small cities and towns to reclaim and restore their historic Main Streets from economic abandonment and structural neglect. And while in the City of Erie this reclamation is largely happening at the overarching hands of local corporations and large private donors, in the smaller boroughs throughout Erie County, in particular in Girard, it is happening because of the people who live and work there, who are trying their hands at creating their own Utopia on Main Street.

I've recently become very familiar with Main Street Girard as I have partnered with the borough to learn, write about, and share some of the success stories of Main Street building restorations (in particular, those using Girard's Facade Grant Program, which is a 1:1 matching grant program using funding provided by the

[Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority's Mission Main Street program](#) for property owners on and around Main Street to use for exterior improvements). In learning the stories of the people who own property on Main Street, I have come to find a passionate group who all truly care about making their town as beautiful, successful, and idyllic as possible. Among this group is Val Mininger, co-owner of the [Crick Coffee House and Eatery](#) at 236 Main St. W, who has made it her personal mission to revitalize Main Street, and to give the people of Girard something to be proud of.

"We travel a lot and go to a lot of small towns with Main Streets and every shop is always full and busy. We need to have that here and there's no reason why we shouldn't. So we tried to do something different that could also then act as a starting point, and that would bring people not just from Girard, but from other places. People won't come to Girard for one consignment store, or one little gift shop, but they will come to walk the whole street and stop in each place," Mininger explained.

While Mininger's business (established in 2017) is somewhat new to Main Street, there are some who have been there for years and watched the gradual revitalization with appreciation. Eliza Wolfe has owned Eliza's Pottery and Main Street Art at 138 Main St W since 2005 and has been a great advocate for Girard's rebirth for years: "I was one of the businesses here before the revitalization started and it was really depressing. I tried to be there as a shining light and a lot of people did start coming in."

"A lot of building owners have taken advantage of the grant program and it's really wonderful to see the place come alive," Wolfe continues. "I believe that it's very uplifting for people to drive through and see that there is a business here, it's not just an empty space going to waste. It's a vibrant, alive town, and seeing work done gives me hope."

Wolfe's building is one of many that has a rich history, tied to the early success of Girard. Built in 1861, it was once a saddlery, harness, and leather goods shop, and now, being renovated, restored, and freshened up, it provides a great example of how to be the steward of a building, and how building owners can, in turn, be stewards of the town.

Melinda Meyer, president of local nonprofit [Preservation Erie](#) touches on the importance of preserving the history of small town Main Streets like Girard: "Not that we need the experts to tell us; we seem to know it instinctively. Research shows that people love to live near and visit well-cared-for and interesting historic places, especially downtowns. And downtown Girard has such a cool history with ties to the Erie Extension Canal, the railroad, and, of course, showman Dan Rice. Its history and historic buildings with

their unique and beautiful architectural details are part of what makes Girard special." And Girard's special and unique history largely still remains in its historic buildings which can tell that history by simply existing.

Dan Rice, a famously eccentric man who lived in Girard in the mid-1800s (when he wasn't traveling the country with his circus acts), succeeded in helping to put Girard on the map. He was nationally visible (he helped inspire the character of "Uncle Sam" and even ran for president at one point). He dedicated the nation's first Civil War Memorial in 1865 which still stands at the center of Main Street, separating East from West.

In addition to Dan Rice, another family that put Girard on the map was the Battles family, an influential group who settled in Girard around 1822. The Battles Museum, which lies south of Main Street on Walnut, contains a mansion, a family farmhouse, and acres of preserved farmland, is currently owned, operated, and maintained by the Hagen History Center. But the Battles family made their mark on Main Street as well, in the form of a bank: [The Battles Bank](#). The bank was constructed around 1893 by farmer, lawyer, and businessman Rush Battles. Rush died in 1904, and his wife Charlotte and daughter Elizabeth kept the bank running for decades, and did so famously, even through the Great Depression.

The bank still stands as an architectural reminder of those times, although today owners Gina and Jon Welch have found a reuse for the building in the creation of [Full Circle Winery](#). They have completed major restoration work on the building, while still making sure it remains recognizably a bank and the couple are proud to share their vision and dream with the people of Girard. Gina Welch reflects on the building's personal connection: "When we were engaged, this building was a jewelry store and we actually bought our rings here. So we've literally come *full circle* to have this place here in Girard. It's a great little town here and it's extremely important that we're here in the community of Girard."

The combination of restored historic architecture, a rich and interesting history, a cohort of business owners putting in hundreds of hours of work, as well as the support of local government means that

Girard's revitalization is palpable, noticeable, and organic.

Girard Borough Manager Rob Stubenbort is excited about the changes he sees happening every day in his borough: "As the hub of the West County, Girard Borough is in a perfect position to offer shops and services for our borough and our unique, yet quintessential, small-town vibe is an attraction for Erie County and beyond." Stubenbort mentions a council that was recently created called Downtown Girard, a group of elected officials and community members who have come together to help manage grants, offer support to business owners, and secure funding.

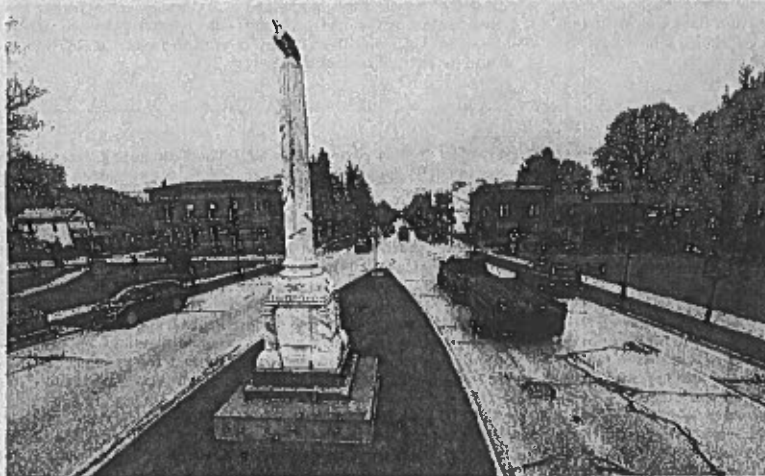
Melinda Meyer comments on the creation of this group: "The residents of Girard have such pride in the community and are incredibly engaged. This is how the borough was able to create Downtown Girard ... Since its formation in 2018, Downtown Girard has issued more than \$100,000 in grants for property improvements, supported creation of the first mural in the downtown, pursued National Register listing for a downtown historic district, and led work on a master plan, which is still in-process. The folks in Girard love their community and are willing to get involved, and it shows."

The Girard Borough Council has also made some improvements and changes that have helped draw attention to Main Street and make it more inviting, including ornamental lighting, landscaping, and event support. They have also eliminated paid parking on Main Street to encourage visitors to stay, shop, and support downtown. It is also worth mentioning that there are multiple historic commercial properties currently up for sale on Main Street, including the iconic Girard Dinor and neighboring Treehouse Tavern.

The people of Girard are no longer "deferring hope till the next generation;" they recognized that a change needed to happen and are working to make that change for themselves. If you are not from Girard, or do not frequently pass through it, perhaps make it a point to stop and visit soon. Take a nice summer drive, get some lunch at The Crick, meander your way through vintage consignment shops and Eliza Wolfe's art gallery, pass by the 1865 Civil War Memorial, have a glass of wine at Full Circle while enjoying the historic architecture, and see for yourself all that Main Street has to offer these days.

Erin Phillips runs [Old Erie On Foot](#), an in-depth look at local architecture "by foot, stroller, papoose, bike, and occasionally minivan."

Circus and canal history sparks interest in Girard



A monument, erected in 1865 to those who died in defense of the country, overlooks downtown Girard on April 26. Pennsylvania Route 20, looking east, doubles as Main Street through the small, historic town in western Erie County. GREG WOHLFORD/ERIE TIMES-NEWS

National Register designation sought for downtown

Valerie Myers Erie Times-News | USA TODAY NETWORK

Even local history buffs are learning a thing or two about Girard as the borough works toward National Register of Historic Places designation for its downtown.

The borough will host a public meeting on the initiative Thursday at 6 p.m. at the Girard Borough Building Social Hall, 34 Main St. W.

The borough, in partnership with the nonprofit Downtown Girard Inc., is working to revitalize the town's Main Street commercial district. National Register listing can help leverage additional funding and additional interest in the town.

See GIRARD, Page 2A

"I thought it was named for an early family, maybe even ancestors of Tom Ridge."

Rob Stubenbort
Girard borough manager

Girard

Continued from Page 1A

Consultants have prepared and submitted Girard's application for National Register listing to the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board. The board is expected to review the application in June.

If recommended, the application then would be considered as early as July by the National Park Service, which oversees the National Register of Historic Places listing of historic sites worthy of preservation.

Corry's downtown historic district was added to the National Register on April 11. Lawrence Park, North East and Waterford also have historic districts listed on the National Register.

Girard is known locally for its circus past. The town was the winter home of showman Dan Rice's nationally known circus before the Civil War. The National Register application includes that history and more.

"The information on the history of Girard is outstanding. I learned so many things," Girard Borough Manager Rob Stubenbort said. "I knew a great deal about Girard history, but this has details about things like the hat shops, different groceries and restaurants that were here back when."

"It's just an amazing document, and one of the best reads of a 100-page document I've had," Stubenbort said.

Stubenbort's favorite "new" fact is how Ridge Road, Route 20, got its name.

"I thought it was named for an early family, maybe even ancestors of Tom Ridge," Stubenbort said. "But it actually got its name from being the second (topographic) ridge from the lake. When it went in, the road was ideal because it was gravel, which means less dust in dry weather and that it doesn't hold water in wet weather."

"That was fun for me to learn," Stubenbort said.



Dan Rice, who wintered his circus in Girard for about 10 years in the 1850s, appeared in his famous red, white and blue outfit at the Democratic Convention held in New York City in June of 1868. Some claim the Uncle Sam character was modeled after Rice. PROVIDED BY RANDY MARSHALL

The town can use its history to attract new businesses and visitors. Properties included on the National Register also can qualify for state and federal tax credits for preservation and improvements to help get businesses in to generate tax revenues.

Preservation Studios of Buffalo, New York, was hired to prepare Girard's National Register application.

"Girard's early history, especially the canal and Dan Rice, was really, really interesting for us, too," said Derek King, a

Preservation Studios partner who led the Girard application process. "It was great to learn more about 19th century history we weren't familiar with, including Dan Rice's impact on the town and its early development."

Rice wintered his circus in Girard beginning in 1853. The troupe returned to Girard each fall with a parade to the town from the nearby Erie Extension Canal.

Girard celebrates its circus heritage with a Dan Rice Days festival each August.

A \$20,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission and a \$10,000 grant from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority helped fund historic district planning costs.

The National Register application is part of a larger master plan for Girard's downtown that includes an inventory of town assets, historical and otherwise; a branding and marketing strategy to promote Girard to visitors; and guidelines for building and infrastructure improvements and maintenance.

Thursday's meeting on the National Register application is the second of two public meetings on the process. The turnout for the first meeting, held in March, was "spectacular," Stubenbort said.

"Quite a few people attended and had a lot of really good questions," he said.

Contact Valerie Myers at vmyers@timesnews.com. Follow her on Twitter @ETNmyers.



Downtown Girard, looking west, is shown on April 26. Pennsylvania Route 20 doubles as Main Street through the small, historic town in western Erie County. GREG WOHLFORD/ERIE TIMES-NEWS

Mercy Center for Women needs votes to win \$25K for community garden

Erie Times-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Mercy Center for Women is trying to win \$25,000 from State Farm for a community garden on Erie's east side and needs the public's help.

The Erie center's "Care and Feeding of Our Neighbors" project is seeking the money for a community vegetable and meditation garden at the Mercy Anchor Community Center in the former Holy Rosary School, 1012 E. 28th St. State Farm Neighborhood Assist will award \$25,000 grants to the top 100 online vote-getters. To vote up to 10 times a day, go to neighborhoodassist.com. Voting ends May 6. Winners will be announced June 7.

Mercy Center's project is among the top 200 finalists selected by The State Farm Review Committee from 4,000 submissions, according to a news re-

lease from the center.

Online information about Mercy Center's entry says: "The neighborhood includes low to moderate income households of all ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds who will welcome a source of fresh fruits and vegetables. The meditation garden will provide a peaceful, tranquil place for neighbors to get acquainted."

The projected cost to complete the garden is \$38,375 and Mercy Center has received \$12,000 from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, according to the entry information. The garden would be located in a green space next to the former school, which is being converted into 13 apartments for homeless and low-income women and children, plus the site of Dress for Success Erie, a food pantry, thrift store, community room, health services and day care.



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refugees.org

Dear Tom —

The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) is pleased to share our Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 2021. We want to take this opportunity to tell you about a few of our accomplishments as we resettle refugee and immigrant clients across the country with expert assistance. Our successes would not have been possible without your continued support and commitment.

While FY 21 brought many challenges worldwide with the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, USCRI grew as a team, finding new and creative ways to help some of the world's most vulnerable people.

USCRI was able to respond swiftly and efficiently as new crises emerged. When the need to evacuate American allies out of Afghanistan became clear so quickly after the Taliban takeover last August, USCRI mobilized immediately to serve 73,827 Afghans under Operation Allies Welcome, giving thousands of families a new start at a safe life in the United States.

We hope you find the information in our Annual Report to be exciting and informative.

At USCRI, we are immensely grateful for your support and commitment to our organization. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have comments or questions about this report or wish to discuss ways that you can sustain our efforts. I can be reached by phone at 703-310-1130 extension 3035 or email at ksturtevant@uscmail.org.

Sincerely,

Kevin Sturtevant, CFRE
Vice President, Strategic Development
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

Thank you for
shepherding so many
great projects at
USCRI from ECGRA.
Your assistance has
come at such
key moments
in the
past two
years!

Questions? Phone: 703-310-1130, ext. 3025 Email: donations@uscridc.org

The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants is a 501(c)(3) organization, EIN 13-1878704. Your donation to USCRI may qualify as a charitable deduction for federal income tax purposes. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this contribution.



Erie Homes For Children & Adults

April 21, 2022

Perry Wood
Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
5340 Fryling Rd, Ste 210
Erie, PA 16510

Thank you!

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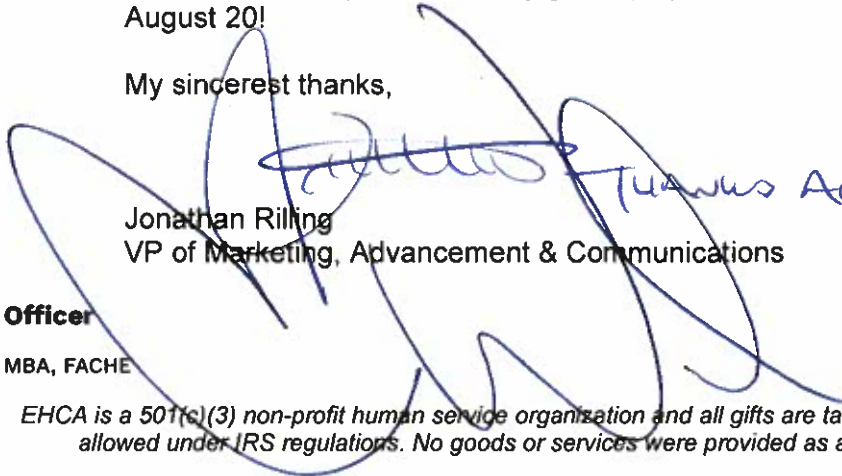
Dear Mr. Wood:

Thank you so very much for your gift to EHCA's (Erie Homes for Children and Adults) annual Victory Ride. We are so grateful and overjoyed by the support of our community for this event, the day will surely be a memorable one. Cash, in-kind donations, registrations for the ride, and guests at the party continue to grow, thanks to generous people like you!

Last year, thanks to some very dedicated riders, and led by the Chrome Angels Motorcycle Club, EHCA enjoyed a record breaking event netting more vital proceeds than any other Victory Ride in history! This year, we are planning a Victory Ride like no other! Riders and volunteers are working to ensure the safety and joy for individuals with disabilities planning to take the ride of a lifetime. Your contribution will make Victory Ride 2022 an even bigger success, helping us in our mission to assist people with disabilities to live rich and fulfilling lives.

Perry Hi-Way Hose Company is the perfect venue for Victory Ride 2022, scheduled to take place on Saturday, August 20. With plenty of space for music, raffles, games, and awesome event merchandise, you will definitely want to be there – even if you don't ride! Our clients and everyone who cares about them are extremely grateful for your generosity. You can learn more about EHCA and the Victory Ride at www.ehca.org or by contacting me at 814.315.1855 or jonathan.rilling@ehca.org. I look forward to seeing you on August 20!

My sincerest thanks,


Jonathan Rilling
VP of Marketing, Advancement & Communications
THANKS AGAIN, PERRY!

Chief Executive Officer

Charles R. Walczak, MBA, FACHE

EHCA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit human service organization and all gifts are tax deductible to the full extent allowed under IRS regulations. No goods or services were provided as a result of this donation.