

## Russell Neighborhood welcomes Blue Palm Accessories

A special welcome to Blue Palm Accessories which recently opened at 2001 W. Broadway. The store sells women's accessories and houses a beauty salon. Store manager Regina Whitlow says that her daughter, who owns the boutique, wanted to open the store within the Russell neighborhood to provide residents an affordable and convenient place to shop.

Welcome to the Russell Community!



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## Russell Choice Neighborhood Planning Initiative NEWSLETTER



## Gigabit center provides 'super-fast' Wi-Fi experience to visitors

Mayor Greg Fischer and the PNC Foundation teamed up on May 10th to announce the opening of the PNC Gigabit Experience Center at the Louisville Central Community Center. The Gigabit Center will offer visitors free access to super-fast Wi-Fi and the use of laptops. Information collected at the PNC Gigabit Experience Center will also help guide Louisville Metro on the best ways to expand access to super-fast Wi-Fi to other parts of the Russell neighborhood in the future.

"The growth of Louisville's digital economy must be inclusive of all residents no

matter their ZIP code — for the budding entrepreneurs and innovators of today and for the families of tomorrow," Mayor Fischer said. "The PNC Gigabit Experience Center allows residents of Russell and the entire city to realize the potential that technology has for the future of our community and economy."

This pilot phase of the PNC Gigabit Experience Center will be open through July. The effort is part of Louisville Metro's digital inclusion strategy which includes increasing home internet access and helping residents obtain the skills

necessary to succeed in a 21st Century economy.

The Gigabit Experience Center will be open at LCCC through July from:

- Monday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.
- Tuesday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.
- Wednesday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.
- Thursday-Friday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Saturday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Gigabit Experience Center was made possible through support from the PNC Foundation, Next Century Cities, Living Cities and the Louisville Metro Government.



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# 2017 Cultural Pass is available



As school wraps up for the summer, Mayor Greg Fischer is reminding parents and caregivers that there are plenty of learning opportunities for Louisville students of all ages over the next three months thanks to the 2017 Cultural Pass.

The Cultural Pass supports and encourages life-long learning by providing free access to 38 of Greater Louisville's arts and cultural institutions for children and young adults to age 21. The pass is valid from June 3 to August 12 and provides a one-time free general admission at each of the participating institutions.

This year's pass is being presented by Churchill Downs in partnership with the Mayor's Office, the library, the Arts and Culture Alliance and the Fund for the Arts. Passes can be obtained at any branch of the Louisville Free Public Library and passholders are encouraged to visit as many venues as possible.

In addition to the Cultural Pass, the Library Foundation is once again offering the summer reading program. This 10-week program encourages kids and teens to read for fun over the summer by offering prizes and incentives.

*For more information, or to pre-register for Summer Reading, visit [LFPL.org/SummerReading](http://LFPL.org/SummerReading), or call (502) 574-1620. For more information about other summer programs please visit [www.visionrussell.com](http://www.visionrussell.com).*

# LCCC, community celebrates the legacy of Sam Watkins



More than 100 community, civic and business leaders gathered to recognize the contributions and celebrate the retirement of Sam Watkins Jr. during the *Sam Watkins Jr.'s Legacy Celebration* on May 18. Watkins served as President and CEO of Louisville Central Community Center for 28 years and during his tenure, worked to develop programs and services that aligned with the organization's mission of promoting greater self-reliance and independence for families within West Louisville. This focus included creating more economic opportunities within the area and working to revitalize portions of West Louisville.

Selected highlights of Watkins'

achievements include the development of "The Old Walnut Street" complex—a \$13 million project that led to the creation of 110,000 sq. ft. of commercial space at 13th and Muhammad Ali Blvd and the opening of Mini-Versity West Child Development Center to ensure children within the Russell neighborhood had access to quality childcare that is focused on preparing students to enter school, ready to learn.

More recently, Watkins served as a co-chair for one of the Vision Russell task forces and a member of the coordinating committee. His work played a pivotal role in the development of the Vision Russell Transformation Plan,

and the award of \$29.5 million Choice Neighborhood Initiative Implementation grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The event included musical and arts performances, a video tribute and remarks by members of LCCC's Teen Leadership Council. Rev. Dr. Kevin W. Cosby, senior pastor at St. Stephen Baptist Church, delivered the keynote address.

Kevin Fields replaces Watkins as President and CEO of LCCC and is charged with expanding on the momentum Watkins helped to create.



## WOW event celebrates the women of Beecher Terrace



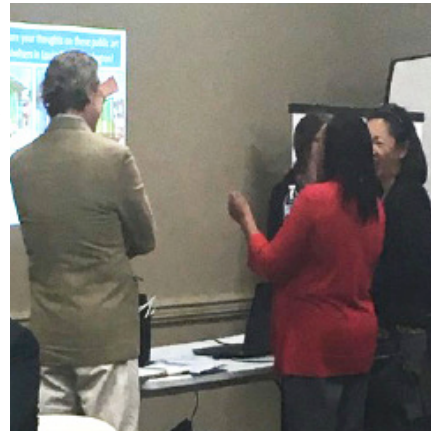
Nearly 80 women who live in Beecher Terrace were treated to an evening of fun during a pre-Mother's Day "celebration" and community engagement event that was hosted by Urban Strategies. Urban Strategies is working with the Louisville Metro Housing Authority to provide case management and other supportive services to Beecher Terrace residents.

The event was open to all female residents of Beecher Terrace, and attendees were treated to food, music and free giveaways. Participants could also sign up for case management while learning more about the services that are available for residents through the Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant and other Vision Russell Initiatives.

Over the next five years, Urban Strategies will host similar events to ensure Beecher Terrace residents receive the information, support and services they need throughout the redevelopment process.

## LMHA hosts feedback session for action activities

Representatives from LMHA and Louisville Forward hosted a community meeting in April to collect feedback on four key "action activities" that will be implemented this year within the Russell Neighborhood.



The activities include: developing SMART bus stop shelters that will serve as public art while providing shelter for those who use public transportation; improving Sheppard Park by adding a spray ground and restrooms; developing new uses for four vacant lots within the neighborhood; and creating dynamic "gateways" into the Russell Neighborhood by adding murals on some of the railroad overpasses that run between 13-15th streets.

Several dozen Russell residents and community members participated in this session. Attendees offered feedback and shared other ideas that reflect their vision for these four action activities. The information collected is being used to further enhance the proposals. If you were not able to attend the meeting, but would like to provide feedback please email [action2017@lmha1.org](mailto:action2017@lmha1.org).

The action activities are being funded through a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Choice Neighborhood Initiative program and an additional \$375,000 commitment from the Louisville Metro Government.

## LCC signs on as co-developer for planned arts and culture district



On April 24, Mayor Greg Fischer and Councilwoman Barbara Sexton Smith joined the Concerned Pastors of Russell and representatives of the Louisville Central Community Centers (LCCC) to announce that LCCC will serve as a co-developer for a planned Arts, Cultural and Commercial District. The focus area for development spans from 6th and 21st streets along West Muhammad Ali Boulevard and is designed to generate additional interest from businesses that may be considering relocating to the area. The planned Arts, Cultural and Commercial corridor will harken back to the period when the area was commonly known as Old Walnut Street and served as a vibrant entertainment district for the African American community.



The idea for reviving an Arts, Cultural and Commercial District along Muhammad Ali Blvd. was first detailed in 2015 by LCCC founder Sam Watkins and the organization's president, Kevin Fields, as part of LCCC's West of 9th Street Vision. The idea was further explored and shaped during a visit in 2015 by the American Institute of Architects' Sustainable Design and Architecture Team. The concept and the need for LCCC to play a leadership role in the development received support from the Concerned Pastors of Russell—a group of ministers who lead churches located in the Russell neighborhood.

"The leadership and support LCCC and the Concerned Pastors of Russell has provided is invaluable to our efforts to transform the Russell community and sustain the changes we are collectively working towards," said Mayor Fischer.

Fields says LCCC is excited about the leadership role the organization is playing to bring about changes to the area and what it will mean to the families within the Russell neighborhood.

"LCCC is grateful to the Concerned Pastors of Russell and Mayor Fischer for supporting our vision to develop a new arts and cultural district within West Louisville," said Fields. "Not only will these changes help to create a number of tourism destinations, it will also help to bring increased economic opportunities to this neighborhood and restore it to the vibrant and diverse neighborhood that residents were proud to call home."

