In 2018 we begin a new 3 year sidebar: Focus on prizes. Consideration by the jurors for the Festival’s top three Ohio artists. Fifty-three juried artists are eligible for ceramics, and photographs by Tremont and Northeast reflecting the ethnic diversity of the Northeast Ohio; Market vendors; Cultural—food sales by Tremont and locally owned businesses and Tremont Farmers’ non-profit organizations are joined by independent on arts and educational projects; Community—area neighborhoods and communities that make up the Greater Cleveland by exposing to the rich ethnic and cultural heritage of the many neighborhoods and communities that make up the Greater Cleveland area. The weekend Festival is comprised of four categories: visual and performing artists.

The 20th Annual Tremont Arts & Cultural Festival returns to Lincoln Park—Starkweather and West 14th Street—on Saturday, September 15th—Noon—7 pm and Sunday, September 16th—Noon—5 pm. The mission of the Festival is to celebrate the cultural and artistic diversity of Tremont and Greater Cleveland by encouraging the artistic and cultural endeavors of its visual and performing artists.

The weekend Festival is comprised of four categories or program areas which include: Children’s—hands-on arts and educational projects; Community—area non-profit organizations are joined by independent locally owned businesses and Tremont Farmers’ Market vendors; Cultural—food sales by Tremont and regional restaurants, churches, and other organizations, reflecting the ethnic diversity of the Northeast Ohio; and Artist—sales of paintings, sculpture, jewelry, ceramics, and photographs by Tremont and Northeast artists. Fifty-three juried artists are eligible for consideration by the jurors for the Festival’s top three prizes.

In 2018 we begin a new 3 year sidebar: Focus on the Artists - designed to showcase minority and underrepresented artists. Our focus has always been on diversity; however this program is about populations of artists. The artwork still needs to meet standards of artistic excellence, but there is no specific topic or theme for the artwork. We’re focusing on the people creating the art. The 2018 Focus on the Artists program emphasizes visual & performing artists from Cleveland’s Latino community featuring a Latino Emerging Artists & Latino Established Artists galleries, a Pop-up La Placita (Latino-themed marketplace), & Latino Performing Artists. The 2018 program is presented in partnership with the Hispanic Business Center, Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center, & Cleveland Ward 14 Councilwoman Jasmin Santana.

The Art Jurors include: John Farina, Gabriel Gonzalez, and Chris Pekoc (please see article, p. 7). John, Gabriel and Chris bring a number of years of arts experience in a variety of media.

Returning this year is a Beer & Wine Garden with music and dance performances on both Saturday and Sunday on a main stage near located at W. 14th Street & Howard Avenue. The Beer & Wine Garden features craft beers and wines of ManCan, Ohio City. Sound and Stage Manager is Dennis McNulty of Slate Grey Services. Slate Grey has participated each and every year of the Festival!

Also returning for a second year is “Let’s Dance! Music and Dance From Around the World”. Britton Roberts returns as Sound and Stage Manager of the “Let’s Dance” stage. This special program and dance stage (located in the Children’s & Youth Village southeast of the Gazebo Square). In addition to providing a unique opportunity for children, youth, and their families to attend live dance performances and to participate in dance workshops, all patrons will be exposed to the rich ethnic and cultural heritage of the many neighborhoods and communities that make up the Greater Cleveland area.

For a list of performers at both the Beer & Wine Garden Main Stage and the “Let’s Dance!” Stage, check out the Festival website at www.tremontartsfestival.com.

Returning for a seventh year is Merrick House’s “Dollar Diner,” a healthy restaurant booth sponsored by Arcelormittal. As part of Merrick House’s Healthy Living Initiative, they have partnered with Molina Healthcare to create a healthy menu of items that the Merrick House youth program will help serve. (Continued on page 2.)
Tremont West Stand on Property Valuation in the Neighborhood

Over the past few weeks, Tremont West has received numerous inquiries, complaints, and concern over the County’s property valuation process and the proposed value adjustments to housing in the neighborhood. In light of this concern, Tremont West Development Corporation’s Board of Directors issued the following statement through Board resolution on August 11th, 2018:

Tremont West Development Corporation is concerned with the impact that disproportionate property valuations that affect low and moderate income residents in our community. We encourage the community to review the process to ensure the valuation was completed in a fair and transparent manner, understanding the unique conditions of our neighborhoods. Concerns over the financial barriers set forth in the appeal process, ie, the requirements for a certified appraisal which may be an undue burden to some of our neighbors.

Staff at Tremont West has received numerous petitions from neighborhood residents. Strongly opposing the property value assessments, the lack of clarity around the method of assessment and the barriers to appeal including the need to complete an independent appraisal. Tremont West agrees with the request for an extension outlined in the petition. We have contacted local activists and will continue to support the efforts of residents.

Tremont West is concerned about the impact that a yet to be determined correlated tax increase may have on many long-time residents that are Seniors and/or are on a fixed income. We continue to try to find opportunities for low and moderate income individuals to own and rent in the neighborhood. Our goals outlined in our strategic plan, we see these as potential opportunities to achieving a socioeconomically integrated community. Taxes on properties that have risen as much as 400% will no doubt unfortunately impact low and moderate income homeowners. It will also impact rent in the neighborhood, pushing rents up to reflect baseline property ownership costs. Short-term we hope to see the County take an active role in helping resolve individual issues around property valuation while long-term Tremont West will work with policy makers to ensure that people are not in jeopardy of being displaced by astronomical increases in property taxes.

Arts Renaissance Tremont presenting their 28th Season of “Giving Voice to Great Music!”

Arts Renaissance Tremont (ART) has earned the reputation of being the cultural landmark of Cleveland’s Tremont neighborhood since 1991. Over the past 26 years, the ART concert series has become a musical destination for ALL of Greater Cleveland, and for everyone who wishes to hear beautiful world-class performances by extraordinary local musicians – from exceptional young artists and faculty at nearby conservatories (Shaker Hts. High School, Cleveland School of the Arts, Oberlin Conservatory, Cleveland Institute of Music), to Cleveland’s extraordinary community college music programs, and the performances of our renowned Cleveland Orchestra. Our home is in Tremont’s historic, landmark – Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ (2592 W 2nd St. Cleveland Tremont). It serves as a gathering place to our local community and its citizens, ART brings the performing arts as well as the music to our audiences. ART is attended by our 75-95+ volunteers (volunteer board of trustees) and has no paid staff; musicians receive negotiated honoraria. Operating costs are covered by an annual fundraising campaign, freewill donations and a few generous sponsors.

We welcome your inquiries and contributions, and are always seeking concert sponsors - individual and businesses. Please contact ART founder/director/chair, Paul Ferguson, at chpaluck55@yahoo.com, or email: chpaluck55@gmail.com, for information.

ART is an exceptional community resource - positively impacting the local economy and contributing to the vibrancy of Tremont. We invite you to meet our 27th Season of 30 concerts for the Pilgrim Food Pantry. In addition to the 27 concert series, ART brings music to children in neighborhood schools, community centers, Step in Out programs for seniors, giving concerts at a nursing homes, and libraries through Arts Renaissance for Kids, or ARK.

Arts Renaissance Tremont presents 2018-19 Season:

The 2018-19 concert information is managed entirely by volunteers with the assistance of one member of The Cleveland Orchestra, Dina Kuznetsova, soprano. Paul Ferguson, artistic director, and our volunteer board of trustees.

For 2018-19 concert information, see the Tremont Arts Festival at tremontartsfestival.com. We’re also on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/tremontartsandculturalfestival/

Employment Access Survey

Hello! My name is Maureen Riley, the new AmeriCorps VISTA at Tremont West Development Corporation. Some of my main roles during my service of year is working towards creating an Employment Access Program for the Tremont neighborhood. Tremont West aims to become a platform for residents to find and obtain jobs in the community, as well as connecting residents to the proper training, and eliminating transportation barriers. If you are a resident or an employer in the Tremont neighborhood, please feel free to contact me through the Employment Access Program, or at 216-575-0920 ext. 108! Thank you!

Tremont Arts & Cultural Festival

Admission to the Tremont Arts and Cultural Festival is free. The Festival is presented by Merrick House, Tremont West Development Corp., Cleveland Council Members Kerry McCormack (Ward 3), Jasmin Santana (Ward 14) and Anthony Brancatelli (Ward 12). The Festival is sponsored by the contributions of the citizens of Cuyahoga County through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture and Merrick House. Ear Press, Cleveland State University Architects, Carolyn Bentley of Howard Hanna Realty, and Integrity Realty.

Sponsors of Merrick House programming include “Dollar Diner” Healthy Restaurant sponsor ArceolarMittal.

Our thanks to Chris Blue, our Graphics & Linalogical Coordinator, our Jurors, Dennis McNulty and Slate Grey, Britton Roberts, Merrick House, and all the artists who submitted their interest in the festival. Please check out our website at www.tremontartsandculturalfestival.com. For all info and updates, please follow us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/tremontartsfestival/
TREMONT HISTORY PROJECT
Continuing the story of a Tremont artist, Anthony Eterovich.

AN EARLY TREMONT ARTIST:
During his lifetime Anthony Eterovich participated in more than one hundred and fifty exhibitions, including the Cleveland Museum of Art May Shows, the Circle Gallery, the Butler Institute of American Art, the Chautauqua Institute, and many others.

Eterovich’s work has been seen collectively in only two solo exhibitions during his lifetime. He had twenty oil paintings on view at the Women’s City Club in 1956 and a charcoal drawing show at the Intown Club in 1963.

Anthony's paintings incorporate abstract portraiture or photo-realistic cityscapes. His work is known for color and imaginative, almost whimsical choices of subject matter. Eterovich was influenced by his immigrant Croatian family, living through the Great Depression and serving in the Army in World War II. Artistic influences on his work include Cleveland School artists John Teyral, Carl Gaertner, Edmund Brunckner, Viktor Schreckengost, and Daniel Boa to name a few. He admired Renoir, Degas and Manet for color, and Hopper and Estes for cityscapes.

Anthony Eterovich taught for more than forty years for the Cleveland Public School System. He chaired the art department at Rhodes High School from 1962 to 1978. In 1994 a classroom was named for him at the new Cleveland Institute of Joseph McCullough Building. His artworks are in the permanent collections of the Butler Institute of American Art, the Cleveland Institute of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Artists Archives of the Western Reserve and ARTneo. Information is from Anthony’s Biography by his daughter, Karen Eterovich-Maguire.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS: NOVEMBER 10 (Tentative), Saturday, noon. Tremont History Project presents a guest speaker, John Righetti who will speak on the subject of Carpatho-Rusyns. Who they are and who they were. They were a large immigrant population to the Tremont area and Cleveland in general. These people were also known as Rusyn, Lemko, Ruthenian, Carpatho-Russian. They constructed one of the first Cultural Gardens in the University Circle area.

Look for more information in next month’s INSIDE TREMONT. We will give you the location and also a date.

Dear Inside Tremont Readers,
I am a Tremont resident, and I am the Operations Coordinator and Art Gallery Coordinator at the Stocker Arts Center at Lorain County Community College. I wanted to let you know that we will be showing the work of Anthony Eterovich at the Beth K. Stocker Art Gallery in November and December of this year. “A Thrilling Act: The Art of Anthony Eterovich” will open on Thursday, November 29th with an Opening Reception from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm and will run through December 14th with regular gallery hours, M-F 10:00am - 2:30pm and also be open December 15th and 16th during the last weekends’ NEOS Dance Theatre’s ballet productions, “A 1940’s Nutcracker.”

This exhibit is currently on display at The Southern Ohio Museum in Portland, Ohio, and will then travel north to Stocker Arts Center in Elyria, Ohio.

I am writing in the hopes that the Tremont History Project will share this information in the continued article in September. I welcome you and all of my Tremont neighbors to come out and see these exquisite paintings and drawings by Anthony Eterovich.

The Southern Ohio Museum: http://www.somacc.com/

Stocker Arts Center: https://www.lorainccc.edu/stocker/

Thank you! 
– Beth A. Bryan

Towpath Trail Construction
Contact If you need to talk with someone regarding the current construction of the Towpath Trail, please contact Daniel Medes, Area Engineer, Cuyahoga County at 216-348-4073, 216-701-1160 or dmerdes@cuyahogacounty.us.

City of Cleveland Holiday Waste Pick-Up Schedule Bulk Pick-Up (3 items only) in Tremont will be Saturday, September 8th (note the 1 day delay for the Labor Day Holiday.)

Holiday Waste Pick-Up Schedule

![Holiday Waste Pick-Up Schedule](image)

City of Cleveland
Holiday Waste Pick-Up Schedule
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DO YOU NEED NEW WINDOWS, ROOF REPAIRS, OR OTHER HOME IMPROVEMENTS?

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Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Cleveland offers a Home Repair Loan program to help you with energy-efficient repairs, allowing you to save money and upgrade your home affordably.

Our Home Repair Loan program will assist you with job specifications, cost estimates, contractor solicitation, and project oversight.

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818 Studios Committed to Tremont Arts
Written by Jimmy Perkins.

818 Jefferson is more than just a Tremont address. It is also the new home of 818 Studios and a variety of services provided by owner and photographer, Barbara Merritt. Located above Fahrenheit, the studio offers an art gallery for local artists as well as space for portraits, groups, product, and fine art photography. Merritt also specializes in dog and pet photography. This is the second gallery operated by Merritt in Tremont, but the first since the early 2000’s. Just as she did then, Merritt hopes to provide a home and resource to artists and art lovers in Tremont.

Barbara, a previous longtime Tremont resident, has lived and worked in the neighborhood for most of her life. She was involved in the opening of Flying Fig and you can still catch her one night a week at Edison’s Pub. “This neighborhood has always felt like home to me—I always come back,” said Merritt. Her connection and commitment to Tremont is what drove Merritt to once again provide photography services and space for artists. She has been a photographer since 1995, opened her first photography business in 1997, and previously had a gallery above Tremont’s Fifth Third Bank on Professor. She is currently a featured artist at the Cleveland Downtown Hilton and has been featured in nineteen Cleveland based exhibitions since her start.

Merritt admitted her love of art and photography is like an addiction and she hopes to offer other passionate artists more opportunity. “I believe art is a group effort. I want to work with local artists and offer a public space,” said Merritt. “Art is good for the wellbeing for this and any community,” she continued.

818 will take part in future Walkabout Tremonts, will host Pop-Ups, and will continually look for ways to get artists involved. The studio could also consider adding a darkroom down the line. The gallery is also planning an opening event for late September.

Merritt’s services are available Monday through Saturday by appointment. Anyone interested in photography services or collaboration on the Pop-Up space should contact Barbara at barbrammerritt@gmail.com.

Gallery updates as well as upcoming events will be shared through 818’s social media as well as the studio’s website: www.merrittphoto.com or @barbrammerrittphoto.

Welcome to Tremont, Fr. James Roach, New Pastor at St. John Cantius Church!
Fr. Jim has been an ordained priest for over thirty years. He grew up in Eastlake attending Borromeo High School in Wickliffe, although his family was originally from the E 72nd and Superior Avenue area. He finished his high school seminary education at St. Joseph in Parkersburg, West Virginia after the school in Wickliffe closed. He graduated from Borromeo College, then St. Mary Seminary to complete both a Master of Divinity and a MA in Theology.

Fr. Jim enjoys art and culture and has a great appreciation for the past. He played the organ for nearly 35 years through the diocese and acted as music director to several churches including St. Bruno Polish Church in Chicago. Fr. Jim serves as the chaplain for the Cleveland Browns and is a 4th degree Knight of Columbus.

Welcome to Tremont, Fr. Jim! Since the annual St. John Cantius Polish Festival on Sunday, September 2nd for a fun time, great food, dancing and music.

REZILITY - Are you looking to connect with Tremont in a unique and resourceful way? Connect with Rezility, a new mobile resource app, to find services and community events in your neighborhood! We share important information about education, job training, financial counseling and child care. Download today – it’s free!

Energy Assistance Programs
The Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) offers several programs to income-eligible Ohioans to assist in paying their utility bills and improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Household eligibility is based in part on income; details and specific guidelines for the following assistance programs can be found here: http://development.ohio.gov/s/is_energyassists.htm. To apply for HEAP or HWP, download the application at the above webpage or visit Tremont West and meet with the Property Manager, (216) 533-5612.

Safety Updates
Monthly reports are sent out via e-mail regarding Crime and Safety in the Neighborhood. If you would like to be added to the Safety Update mailing list, please contact Tremont Safety Committee at cbiggers@nearwestsafety.org.

Employment Guide
Tremont West offers a comprehensive employment resource webpage including the following programs and resources: Employment Resources and Training; Programs for the Formerly Incarcerated; Workshops and Apprenticeships; Resources for Those with Disabilities; Programs for Spanish Speaking Populations, Veterans and Senior Citizens; Adult Education and GED courses. www.tremontwest.org/index/employment-guide, 216-575-0920, ext. 102

Neighborhood Retail Assistance Program
The City of Cleveland’s Economic Development Department can assist small businesses with financial packages of both loans and grants to improve the interior and exterior of their store fronts.

Commercial Space for Sale or Lease
Are you looking to lease, purchase or market commercial space in Tremont? See current Tremont Commercial Properties at: www.retailspacelcleveland.com/tremontneighborhood.htm or www.tremontwest.org. Remember, if you are planning to open a business in Tremont, you must contact the City of Cleveland to see what variances or permits are required for your desired location. The Department of Building and Housing can be reached at 216-664-2282. There are some great loan reimbursement programs through the city and county for vacant building rehab, storefront renovations, signage and Brownfield clean-up. Please contact Tremont West for more information at 216-575-0920, ext. 113.

The Storefront Renovation Program
The City of Cleveland’s Tremont Renovation Program is an exterior rehabilitation program that combines financial incentives (rebate or loan) with free City design assistance. The City partners with neighborhood Community Development Corporations to implement the program in the neighborhood. Please call Khalid Hawthorne at 216-575-0920, ext. 113.
Convergence-continuum presents the world premiere of The Casual Tree Ward by Cleveland playwright Robert Hawkes. The goddess Freyja (or is she?) is tending Yggdrasil, the World Ash Tree (or is it?), trying to protect it from ever increasing drought. Should she continue to refuse the help of the feisty, amorous water bearer? Does the world really depend on this single tree, or is this a self-generating myth? All is made clear (or is it?) when Odin, the One-Eyed God (or is he?) shows up to resolve all questions and save us all (or can he?). The Casual Tree Ward is directed by Susan Soltis. The cast features actors Andrea Belser, James Rankin, and David Munnell.

The Casual Tree Ward opened Friday, Aug 24 and runs Thurs-Sat at 8 pm through Sept 15 at the Liminis Theater, 2438 Scranton Road. Fri & Sat tickets are $20 general admission, $15 seniors (65+), $10 students. Thurs discount tickets are $15, $12 and $8. Reservations and information at convergence-continuum.org and 216-687-0074

Tremont residents are admitted free for Thursday performances (Aug 30, Sept 6 & 13). Call ahead to reserve a seat!
**Block Club Happenings** is compiled by Tremont West staff with direct input from Block Clubs.

**Auburn-Lincoln Park**

Block club members and employees from neighborhood businesses and organizations met at the Mercy church complex at W. 11th Street and Kenilworth after the Labor Day holiday to discuss the latest happenings.

Tremont West is in the process of finalizing Park Clean-up & Annual Summer BBQ. A special thank you to the group of parents who pitched in to make the park spic and span and to everyone who joined in the events.

An Annual BBQ & neighborhood clean-up will be held every Sunday at Lincoln Park from 4:00 to 7:00 pm (rain or shine). Neighborhood residents are encouraged to visit the Auburn Block Club Facebook page at www.facebook.com/auburnblockclub for monthly meeting notices and volunteer opportunities.

The Irishtown Bend Block Club met at Hoopples on Wednesday, July 11th. Lt. Michael Betley from the MetroHealth Medical Center and the City of Cleveland brought a draft to the next block club meeting for input and discussion. Lt. Betley also went to all the Hispanic owned properties in Lincoln Park to discuss the health and wellness program and requirements. We heard about upcoming events such as the block club’s kick-off of the Arts in August series. The Block Club extended an invitation to community members to join in with the officers to make the neighborhood guidelines and focus of the block club more accessible to members and to bring a draft to the next block club meeting for input and discussion.

Lt. Betley also went to all the Hispanic owned properties in Lincoln Park to discuss the health and wellness program and requirements. We heard about upcoming events such as the block club’s kick-off of the Arts in August series. The Block Club extended an invitation to community members to join in with the officers to make the neighborhood guidelines and focus of the block club more accessible to members and to bring a draft to the next block club meeting for input and discussion.

The Irishtown Bend Block Club is the Community Relations Office for Tremont West located at 216-575-0920 ext. 106 (scottrosenstein@tremontwest.org) or scottrosenstein@tremontwest.org. Please join us for our next meeting on Tuesday, September 27th, 6:30pm at St. Michael Church ground floor meeting room. Bring a neighbor and join us!

**Clarksenton Neighborhood Association**

For current information please visit our website: www.clarksenton.com

**North of Literary**

The North of Literary (NOL) Block Club's most recent gathering was Thursday, August 23, and served as the block club’s annual summer potluck picnic and social. A group of about 25 picnic goers enjoyed food and fun on one of the park’s three large lawns. Stay tuned for details on our Fall block club meetings and other community events. For more information on our block club and activities, please check out our Facebook page, or contact Co-Chairs, Chris Roy (chrisroy@haymarket.com) and Sharon Kipp (skipp@haymarket.com).

**South of Jefferson**

The August 14th meeting of the South of Jefferson block club was held at Roosevelt Post 58. Cleveland Police Sgt. Tim Maffo-Judd led off the meeting by updating the members on recent safety related developments and to take any questions. The sergeant noted a recent robbery and the persistent problem of dogs barking on city streets. Plans were solidified for the SOJ Summer party to be held at 4pm on Saturday, August 25th at the home of Co-Chair, Shawn Brown (sabrown@key.com) of MetroHealth Medical Center and the City of Cleveland. For questions about the block club, and its meetings & activities, please contact Metro North Chair, Sue Korsch, or Scott at Tremont West, 216.575.0920 ext. 106 (scottrosenstein@tremontwest.org). Please join us for our next meeting on Tuesday, September 18th, at 7 PM, at Post 1 Polish Veterans Alliance. We look forward to seeing you there.
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John Farina, a Long Island, New York native, came to Cleveland in 1991 and now resides in the Collinwood neighborhood of Cleveland with his husband, Adam Tully. John and Adam are co-owners of Maria Neil Art Project. For four years (2013-2017) and around 30 exhibits the Maria Neil Art Project operated a commercial art gallery in the Waterloo neighborhood of Cleveland, specializing in emerging and established Cleveland artists. John and Adam are currently doing pop-up art shows in a variety of venues. John chairs the WATERloo Arts & Entertainment District Merchants Association. John served as the Executive Director (2014-2017) of ARTneoh, the museum of Northeast Ohio art, leading the 30 year old organization through a relocation and revitalization. Farina has served in leadership positions for several social service and arts organizations including SPACES, the AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland, the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Beck Center for the Arts. He has managed successful levy campaigns for Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, the Cleveland/ Cuyahoga County Port Authority, Cuyahoga County Public Library and the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities. In 2014, he was the co-chair of the highly successful six-day Festival Village for Gay Games 9 and is an active participant in many area organizations including the Print Club of Cleveland and the Cleveland International Film Festival. In 2015, the AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland honored Farina with the ArtCare icon award for his commitment to the HIV/AIDS and arts communities.

Gabriel Gonzalez was born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, and moved to Cleveland, Ohio at age 3 where he grew up in the W. 25th Street and Clark Avenue area neighborhood. He attended Cleveland School of the Arts. Following graduation, Gonzalez exhibited his photography in many galleries throughout Cleveland. In 2002, he became an Artist in Residence at Cleveland School of the Arts and honored as a gifted educator. He attended Cleveland School of the Arts and honored as a gifted educator by the Scholastics Art and Writing Awards. Gonzalez continued his education at Ohio University where he studied Art and Photography. He attended Cleveland School of the Arts and was voted president of the Hip-Hop Congress - a non-profit grassroots organization that helps join the community through the arts. After returning to Cleveland, Gonzalez continued to educate at the Cleveland School of the Arts and in his community. In 2009 Gabriel received The Representative Marcia L. Fudge Distinguished Citizens Award, which recognizes those individuals who have made valuable contributions to the community through their profession. Most recently, Gonzalez was commissioned to display a mural at Hilton Hotel Downtown Cleveland, and exhibited at MOCA with Arts Collective Acerbic. He is currently working on a body of work that explores his Puerto Rican roots, while capturing images of the spirit of his people. Gonzalez is returning to Puerto Rico this summer to document the effects of Hurricane Maria a year later, but also to reconnect with his homeland. In this search Gonzalez explores how to reconcile preserving a sense of history and pride towards his Puerto Rican lineage, while maintaining a sense of place in his current American surroundings. Gonzalez regards this work as crucial to representing Puerto Rico and preserving his cultural identity.

Chris Pekoc is a native of Cleveland, and has said that his early exposure to tools and construction projects in his family’s hardware store ignited his interest in the art of assemblage. Pekoc has taught creative drawing at Case Western Reserve University since 1988. He has received five Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowships and an OAC sponsored two-month International Residency in the Czech Republic. In 2007 Chris was the Mid-Career Artist Winner in Visual Arts selected by the Board of Cleveland Arts Prize along with jury chairs. His work has appeared in more than 100 solo and group shows at institutions including the Cleveland Museum of Art, MOCA Cleveland, the Akron Art Museum, the National Gallery of Australia, and the Ueda Gallery in Tokyo. Pekoc’s work is also in permanent collections at the Cleveland Museum of Art, MOCA Cleveland, the Akron Art Museum, New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Czech Center of Photography, Houston’s Museum of Fine Arts, Harvard’s Fogg Art Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Ringling Museum in Sarasota, Florida, and the Progressive Insurance Art Collection. His late-1970s mural Night Sky is in the main hall of the downtown Cleveland’s Public Library near Public Square. Now known for his experimental mixed-media work, Pekoc creates complex collages of materials and photographs. His website is https://christopherpekoc.com.
After Cesi’s passing, HBC worked with the family to carry his legacy forward by turning the bodega into a place for people to find community. A gathering place for musicians, a destination for newcomers to learn about the City, a micro-lender for people bridging the gap between paychecks…Cesi earned the title of “Mayor of W. 25th. In 2017, Cesi passed away unexpectedly.

In 2017, the Hispanic Business Center was looking for a location to create a Hispanic/Latino business incubator program but found it challenging due to the deteriorating, dilapidated and unsafe storefront stock in the neighborhood. Due to a lack of city investment, the Clark-Fulton neighborhood did not progress like the surrounding Ohio City, Tremont, Detroit Shoreway, and Old Brooklyn neighborhoods.

After Cesi’s passing, HBC worked with the family to carry his legacy forward by turning the bodega into a business incubator for hyperlocal, resident-owned businesses that could start, build, and grow while meeting the needs of the Clark-Fulton neighborhood—home to the highest density of Latinos in the State of Ohio.

Twenty Latino entrepreneurs partook in a 4-week training program the Hispanic Business Center created to meet the needs of retail-based businesses. Seven of these entrepreneurs entered a business pitch competition that ultimately resulted in 4 businesses being awarded startup capital and subsidized space in the former bodega. You will find a Latino-owned and operated coffee and pastry shop by the name of Café Social Latinoamericano, a Puerto-Rican soup/salad/sandwich counter called Pura Cepa, and Ortiz Arts Drafts and Design—a marketing and design company. The Center is currently securing a fourth and final tenant.

Not only does this carry the legacy of Cesi forward, but it takes with it the spirit of the hard working, entrepreneurial Latinos that came to Cleveland and made Cleveland a better place by doing so. This incubator is creating jobs, tax revenues, starting new business and will inspire future Latino-owned and operated businesses to invest into their community.