PLAZA MIDWOOD
circa 1903

The Spirit of PLAZA MIDWOOD

Fall 2026

www.plazamidwood.org

CELEBRATING 123 years 1903 - 2026

2026 QUARTERLY MEETINGS:

January 28
April 22
July 22
October 28

Save the Dates!

6:30 pm
at
The VanLandingham Estate

Can't make a meeting?
Stay informed:

- *Sign up for e-newsletter at plazamidwood.org*
- *Facebook.com/PlazaMidwood*
- *Instagram.com/plaza_midwood*

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...and More

ONE NEIGHBORHOOD, ELEVEN ARTISTS, AND A WHOLE LOT OF TALENT

Don't Miss the Second Annual Artists Studio Crawl on October 10 from 11 am - 5 pm.

You are invited to step inside the studios and homes of Plaza Midwood's most accomplished working artists—many of whom have honed their craft for over 30 years. These are deeply committed professionals whose work reflects mastery, experimentation and vision. Their work speaks to decades of exploration and excellence. During the Crawl, you'll meet the artists, learn about their creative process and can purchase original works. Discover the depth of Charlotte's art scene—right here in the heart of Plaza Midwood. Walk it, bike it, bring a friend, buy something beautiful.

Start your journey at Wiloe Home & Gift located at 1520 Lyon Court.

- You can pick up your tour map there – as early as Friday, October 9—so you can hit the streets first thing on Saturday morning if you want to.
- Or come to the shop Saturday morning, where there will be a fun drop-in workshop from 11 am till 2 pm hosted by ARTS+. No registration or cost will be required.

Pro tip: Club Road alone has four studios within a few hundred feet, so start there and work your way out. For more details, visit *www.facebook.com/PlazaMidwoodArtCrawl/*.

MEET THE MAKERS: Here are this year's talented artists, ready to welcome you to their studios:

1. GARY RUBIN, *Potter*

1708 Dearmon Drive

Work will be in backyard studio, clearly marked. Head down sidewalk and driveway to studio. Demos 11-11:30 am & 2-2:30 pm,10 people max per demo.

2. DEE BLACKBURN, *Painter*

2000 Club Road

and

LYZ KELK, *Painter & Mixed Media*

2000 Club Road

Work from both artists will be displayed in yard and in studio behind home at end of driveway.

continues on pg 8

FALL EVENT CALENDAR

Oct 24
FALL CRAWL –
10 am-6 pm
Midwood Park
See pg 9

Oct 28
PMNA QUARTERLY MEETING
6:30 pm
VanLandingham Estate
See pg 22

Nov 14
CHARLOTTE MARATHON CHEER STATION
9 am — The Plaza between Chestnut and Kensington Avenues
See pg 11

Nov 15
MIDWOOD GIVES & GATHERS
2-5 pm
VanLandingham Estate
See pg 6

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from Lindsay McCleary

RUNNING OF THE BALLS…

One of my favorite events that PMNA ever hosted! Did I actually run in the race? I did not. But did I love what it represented? Absolutely.

I attended the Holiday Ball workshop at Resident Culture in 2019. Santa's helpers were there teaching us how to assemble the balls using chicken wire—without getting bloody fingers. Santa himself was there taking pictures with the kids. It was fun, festive, and seemed to exist for no other reason than bringing the community together for the holidays.

It was joyful. And I loved it.

This year, we'll be kicking off the holiday season with **Midwood Gives & Gathers,** a new PMNA holiday event centered around giving back and coming together as a neighborhood.

Lindsay, David and Henry McCleary at Resident Culture in 2019.

We'll have a Holiday Ball-making workshop, Santa for photos, crafts for the kids, music, festive drinks and bites, and more.

And because we can't quite let the spirit of Running of the Balls go, we're creating a Running of the Balls route through the neighborhood that we'll share with local run clubs. So whether you're a serious runner or simply someone who enjoys a festive stroll, you may find yourself chasing a few Holiday Balls around Plaza Midwood this holiday season.

We're also bringing a little friendly neighborhood competition into the mix. We'll be inviting neighbors to deck out their streets and compete for **Best Decorated Street**—because if there's one thing Plaza Midwood knows how to do, it's go all in.

At the heart of Midwood Gives & Gathers will be a toy drive to support our neighbors and help make the holidays a little brighter for local families who could use some extra cheer this year.

I hope you'll join us. Bring the kids. Bring a neighbor. Bring a toy. Come make a Holiday Ball, grab a drink, take a picture with Santa, cheer on the runners, and spend a little time simply being together.

Because at its best, that's what Plaza Midwood does: we show up for one another, find reasons to celebrate, and make this neighborhood feel a little more like home.

See more about Midwood Gives & Gathers on page 6.

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Spirit Deadlines

The Spirit magazine is published by volunteers. To help them meet their deadlines, please send your editorial copy or your ad ***in advance*** of the deadline. Copy received after the deadline date may be held for a future issue.

Copy & Ad Deadlines for 2027:

WINTER '27 issue.....Dec. 5, 2026
SPRING '27 issue.....Mar. 5, 2027
SUMMER '27 issue.....Jun. 5, 2027
FALL '27 issue.....Sep. 5, 2027

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EDITOR'S NOTES

from Terri Arrowood

As I'm editing the content for this issue of *The Spirit*, I'm reflecting on the last 30— yes 30!—years and waxing a bit nostalgic to be honest. Lots of anniversaries in September. Jeff and I moved into our new-to-us dream home on The Plaza. And we held our wedding reception there after a lovely ceremony at St. Mary's Chapel. We had the bar under the portico and even the homeless guys came by to ask for beer. (Lots has changed since then. :) It was a gorgeous crisp fall afternoon and that beautiful old historic house rang out with laughter and love. I even became the (second) Plaza Midwood HDC commissioner that year. And the editor of my favorite magazine—*The Spirit* of Plaza Midwood. This place and this publication are part of my heart and soul—and I know I am a much richer person for all of these experiences. I can't even imagine life anywhere else.

And once again, autumn brings so much to do in our favorite neighborhood: Midwood Mile. Fall Crawl. Frank's Chili Fest. Artists Studio Crawl. Marathon Party. Unloading the pumpkins at The Vine's patch. And the lesser known—the blessing of the animals and children at Holy Trinity October 10. We are all very blessed to be here—and revel in this wonderful place we call home. Here's to another fabulous season of fun and camaraderie.

I need to take care of a little bit of housekeeping. Kristin Butz, our long-time advertising manager, has decided that it's time to let someone else take on this role. Melissa and I will miss her greatly. She and Andrea Wise, who also served as ad manager for a few years, have both done a yeoman's job in this position—and I can't thank them enough.

If you would like to explore working on *The Spirit* in this role, please shoot me an email; see page 3 for the address.

Here's a little info about what's involved. I can send a full "job description" if you're interested. Ad Manager Responsibilities

- Respond to inquiries providing information on available rates, ad sizes and deadlines.
- Reach out to local businesses to build relationships and grow The Spirit's advertiser base.
- Manage current ad base renewals and communication with advertisers about deadlines, ad copy and submissions.

And now, here's my traditional sign-off for our fall magazine…

Once again, it's hard to believe that another year has come and almost gone—and this is the last issue of *The Spirit* for 2026.

I hope you and yours have a wonderful autumn and Thanksgiving… and joyous holiday season—and that you are safe and well for the New Year.

My best,
Terri

PLAZA MIDWOOD 2026 HAPPENINGS

Save the dates for these upcoming PMNA events

Be sure and check out all monthly eNewsletters in addition to 2026 *Spirit* quarterly newsletters, PM's website and all social media for updates and additions to this list. *Dates are subject to change.*

September 26:	Midwood Mile Race
October 10:	PM Artists' Studio Crawl
October 24:	Fall Crawl
October 28:	All Neighbors Quarterly Meeting
November 14:	Marathon Party
November 15:	Midwood Gives & Gathers

You may also be interested in these regularly scheduled **Monthly Activities:**

Third Wednesdays: **Land Use Meeting**

Third Saturdays: **Midwood Mile Spruce Up Saturdays**

Third Saturdays: **Community Garden Workday**

JOIN OR RENEW
YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND
SUPPORT PMNA!
PLAZAMIDWOOD.ORG

Terri and Jeff Arrowood on their wedding day 30 years ago.

MIDWOOD GIVES BACK IS BECOMING MIDWOOD GIVES & GATHERS

Debut November 15 ~ VanLandingham Estate

from Mandy Bean

Midwood Gives Back is evolving into **Midwood Gives & Gathers,** a festive community event that brings neighbors together while continuing Plaza Midwood's tradition of supporting others. Rather than holding separate fundraising activities in September or during Fall Crawl, our giving efforts will become part of this new initiative.

Midwood Gives & Gathers will debut on November 15 at the VanLandingham Estate and will include a holiday toy drive and a 50/50 raffle, with proceeds benefiting **Hearts United for Good** (HUG).

Midwood Gives & Gathers
Sunday, November 15 | 2 – 5 pm
VanLandingham Estate

Let's kick off the holiday season together at Midwood Gives & Gathers, a new PMNA neighborhood tradition centered around **giving back, gathering together, and celebrating what makes Plaza Midwood special**.

Bring the whole family for an afternoon filled with holiday fun, including:

- ***Santa & photos***
- ***Holiday Ball-making workshop***
- ***Kids' crafts***
- ***Music***
- ***Festive drinks & bites***
- ***Running of the Balls***
- ***Best Decorated Street competition***
- ***Toy drive supporting local families***
- ***Make a Holiday Ball***

Keep the spirit of *Running of the Balls* alive by creating your own festive Holiday Ball!

- **$20** — Build-your-own Holiday Ball

Holiday Ball supplies must be ordered in advance. Order your ball supplies through the PMNA website so we can have everything ready for you at the event.

And yes, the **Running of the Balls** will live on! We're creating a festive route through the neighborhood and inviting local run clubs to join in. Whether you're a serious runner or prefer a leisurely holiday stroll, keep an eye out for Holiday Balls throughout Plaza Midwood this season.

We'll also be bringing a little friendly competition to the neighborhood with our **Best Decorated Street** contest. Gather your neighbors, deck out your street, and show us what Plaza Midwood holiday spirit looks like!

Give a Little Holiday Cheer

At the heart of Midwood Gives & Gathers is a toy drive supporting local families. Bring a new, unwrapped toy and help make the holidays a little brighter for a neighbor in need.

Bring the kids. Bring a neighbor. Bring a toy.

Come make a Holiday Ball, take a photo with Santa, enjoy some holiday treats, cheer on the runners, and spend a little time together as a neighborhood.

We can't wait to celebrate with you!

Scout
Sponsored by Scout Motors

CHILI ~ MUSIC ~ BEER

SIXTH ANNUAL FRANK'S CHILI FEST ~ OCTOBER 17

Another October event in Plaza Midwood has grown into an autumn tradition for the neighborhood. Frank's Chili Fest, a tasting and cookoff, brings together local chefs, vendors, and neighbors in a community street festival that serves up a day of fun, food, beer, competition—and a lot of good.

Frank McLean Forever is a non-profit organization spreading awareness, advancing research, supporting families, and celebrating lives of those lost to SUDC. Visit frankmcleanforever.org for more information.

25 BOOTHS ~ 3 BANDS ~ 3 BREWERIES

When: Saturday, October 17, rain or shine. 12 noon – 4 pm. Chili Cookoff winners announced at 4:30 pm.

Where: at the corner of Commonwealth & Thomas Avenues

What: A $20 donation gets you a wristband for all the chili you can taste from noon until 4 pm. No wristbands needed for kids under 5. Wristbands can be purchased online (frankmcleanforever.org) or at the fest.

HEARTS UNITED FOR GOOD

A Little Help Goes a Remarkably Long Way

by Mandy Bean

When PM leaders began planning Midwood Gives & Gathers, we wanted the proceeds from our 50/50 raffle to support an organization making a meaningful difference right here in Charlotte. After visiting Hearts United for Good, better known as HUGCLT, I knew we had found exactly that.

HUGCLT (located at the corner of Hawthorne and Central) is led by Executive Director Bethany McDonald and Associate Executive Director Steve Tilley. Their dedication is evident not only in the remarkable amount of assistance HUGCLT provides, but also in the personal connections they form with the people they serve. And, of course, Murphy—the friendly four-legged member of the HUGCLT family—adds a little extra warmth to the operation.

HUGCLT Associate Executive Director Steven "Steve" Tilley, Executive Director Bethany McDonald, and Murphy at the organization's Charlotte warehouse.

I was amazed by both the magnitude of HUGCLT's work and the kindness at the heart of everything Bethany, Steve, and their volunteers do. This is not simply an organization that distributes supplies. They take the time to see, listen to, and care for each person who comes through their doors.

HUGCLT provides free groceries, diapers, hygiene products, school supplies, clothing, and essential items for people experiencing homelessness. Recognizing that pets are family too, the organization also distributes pet food and provides animal-welfare assistance. Its reach extends from individual families seeking help to local schools and community organizations.

The impact is staggering. In just the first six months of 2026, HUGCLT distributed more than 730,000 pounds of food and essential items, packed nearly 50,000 grocery bags, and provided the equivalent of more than 608,000 meals. Through strong partnerships and careful use of its resources, HUGCLT can turn every donated dollar into approximately 58 pounds of groceries.

Yet the numbers tell only part of the story. What stayed with me most was the organization's willingness to accept almost anything useful and find a way to place it into the hands of someone who needs it. HUGCLT accomplishes this as an almost entirely volunteer-run organization without federal funding. Seeing the warehouse filled with food, diapers, pet supplies, and other necessities—and learning how quickly those items move back into the community—was both humbling and inspiring.

HUGCLT represents the very best of community: neighbors noticing a need, responding with kindness, and using whatever resources they have to make life a little easier for someone else. And honestly, while I was there to receive a tour, I also received three of the best hugs I've had in a while—and got to give Murphy some extra snuggly scritches. The name Hearts United for Good truly fits.

We are proud that HUGCLT will receive the charitable portion of the 50/50 raffle at Midwood Gives & Gathers on Sunday, November 15 at the VanLandingham Estate. Half of the proceeds will go to the winning ticket holder, while the other half will help HUGCLT continue providing food, essential supplies, and compassionate support throughout our community.

Midwood Gives & Gathers is the new Midwood Gives Back, bringing our neighborhood together in a new way to give back, gather with friends and neighbors, and support our community.

To learn more about HUGCLT, visit hugclt.org.

PM'S QUARTERLY SCAVENGER HUNTS

by Erin Steele

Our Summer Scavenger Hunt Challenge has come to a close—and this time, we have no winner to announce.

If you're still hoping to complete the challenge when the weather cools off, you can find all the details at plazamidwood.org/explorepm.

And Good News! The regular scavenger hunt returns the week of October 26. Follow us on social for the next hunt, and be sure to join us at the All Neighbors Quarterly Meeting on October 28 to receive an extra clue.

Artists Studio Crawl, *continued from cover*

3. KELLY CARLSON-REDDIG,
Jewelry Artist
1927 Club Road

Work will be displayed in the back-yard courtyard. Visitors enter via the driveway to the back of the house. Demos 12-12:30 pm & 3-3:30 pm,10 people max per demo.

4. SUSAN BENEDICT,
Painter & Collage Artist
2512 Belvedere Avenue

Work will be displayed in back yard and in the alley between Club Road and Truman. Look for yellow arrows to enter alley.

5. GREG MARSHALL,
Metalworks Artist
2224 Club Road

Large work will be displayed in the yard and small work on the front porch.

6. NAN BYARS, *Painter*
1909 Winter Street

Studio is in her home. Enter through the front door, go up the stairs to the right. Paintings are displayed on the way to the studio.

7. LAURA GARDNER,
Letterpress Operator & Designer
1708 Tippah Avenue

Take the driveway to the Letterpress Studio in backyard, up a small hill. 15-min demos ongoing 11 am–4 pm, 6 people max per demo.

8. CAELAN GUNN, *Blacksmithing*
1815 The Plaza

Blacksmith forging technique will be displayed in workshop at the end of the driveway. Demos 1–1:30 pm & 4–4:30 pm, 10 people max per demo.

9. BEN ABRAHAM,
Mixed Media Artist
1613 Belvedere Avenue

Work will be displayed in the back yard. Enter from the gate on the right side of the home.

10. OLIVER LEWIS,
The Robot Artist - Light Manipulation
1003 Louise Avenue

Follow signs to the rear parking lot to enter workshop from the back. Interactive work will be on display. Artist will host ongoing Q&A with new work under construction.

Studio Crawl Map courtesy Louise Hindal Acer

SCAN FOR A DIGITAL MAP

Celebrating 20 Years ~ Saturday, October 24 in Midwood Park

from Rusty Gibb and Kevin Eckenrode

One of Plaza Midwood's favorite traditions returns this fall. Our tradition is just a bit different since our usual festival date of the last Saturday in October falls on Halloween this year. So… we'll gather in Midwood Park the *next* to the last Saturday in October. Neighbors of all ages enjoy a full day of costumes, music, food, and community. Kids, parents, and even pups parade through the streets before heading into Midwood Park for an afternoon packed with live bands, great eats, drinks, games, and local vendors. This year marks the **20th Annual Fall Crawl**—free and open to all neighbors and friends.

TITLE Sponsor: THE JEFF KING TEAM

Platinum Sponsor: ***Bobby Sisk*** *with Nestlewood Realty*

Gold Sponsors: • *Ascent Real Estate Partners* • *Katie Blessing Center* • *The Fitness Studio*

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

11 am – *Costume Parade*: Meet in Midwood Park and march down to The Vine for Trunk or Treat. Not parading? Line the route and cheer on the monsters, mermaids, superheroes, and four-legged friends.

11:30 am – *Trunk or Treat at The Vine:* A safe and fun Plaza Midwood tradition, hosted by The Vine members.

11:30 am - 6 pm in MIDWOOD PARK

- **Eats:** Food trucks and vendors including Detour Coffee, Tacos Don Coyotl, Smooth Monkey, Tiki Tropical and more
- **Drinks:** Birdsong Brewing on tap and wine from The Bohemian
- **Local Artists & Merchants:** Browse unique finds from neighborhood artists, boutiques, and vendors.
- **Kids Zone:** Bounce houses and a face painting station!

Community Garden and NEST:

- **Everyone's Favorite: Pumpkin Painting from 1 to 3 pm** (or until supplies run out)
- Pollinator Garden presentation
- Fun nature game about insects at the NEST info table near the tennis court
- Solar energy demonstration
- Recycling containers are provided throughout the park, courtesy of NEST. No trash or food, please.

Live Music: Grab a blanket or chair and enjoy an afternoon of live performances at the Midwood Park amphitheater:

- **11:45 am - 1:15 pm: *Orange Street Bank*** (Eclectic Rock, '60s classics, alternative hits)
- **1:45 - 3:45 pm: *Crystal Fountains*** (Bluegrass)
- **3:45 - 6:00 pm: *Dynamite Brothers*** (High energy Rock & Roll)

Get Involved! Fall Crawl thrives because of neighbors who pitch in. Volunteers are welcome, but spots are limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. All volunteers will receive a free T-shirt as a thank-you! For details on volunteering, sponsorships, or vendor opportunities, visit plazamidwood.org or contact PMNA at info@plazamidwood.org.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

by Negar Iskra

What a wonderful way to kick off a new school year!

PMNA was thrilled to spread some back-to-school love to the amazing educators at Shamrock Gardens and Villa Heights Elementary Schools, Eastway Middle School and Garinger High School. Throughout the week, we delivered breakfast, lunch and grab-and-go treats as a small way to say thank you to the teachers and staff who work so hard for our neighborhood kids.

We kicked things off Monday the week before school actually started with a delicious breakfast for the teachers at Shamrock Gardens and lunch for the team at Villa Heights. A very special shout-out to Mamán Plaza Midwood for partnering with us to provide the wonderful breakfast spread for Shamrock Gardens!

On Wednesday, we brought breakfast to the hardworking staff at Garinger High, followed by grab-and-go snacks for the teachers at Eastway Middle on Thursday.

While students may have officially started school a week later, our teachers and school staff were already hard at work—setting up classrooms, completing trainings, planning lessons, organizing materials and preparing to welcome a new group of students.

We want to give a **HUGE thank you** to all of our incredible educators for everything they do, both behind the scenes and throughout the school year. Their dedication, creativity and care make such a difference in the lives of our children.

We feel incredibly lucky to have such dedicated teachers and wonderful schools right here in our community. It was a joy to start the school year by showing a little appreciation to the people who give so much to our neighborhood every day.

Here's to a fantastic school year at Shamrock Gardens, Villa Heights, Eastway Middle and Garinger High! We can't wait to continue showing our schools lots of love and support throughout the year!

Image courtesy of C Design. Rendering Not Final.

ARTS+ COMMUNITY CAMPUS ENTERS CONSTRUCTION PHASE

by Stephanie McKinley

Less than two and a half years ago, Arts+ was selected to re-develop the Plaza Presbyterian Church site by the Presbytery of Charlotte. In that time, as we entered a capital campaign, we simultaneously opened the Arts+ Community Campus for programming including private music lessons, group classes, free festivals, and summer camps.

Now, thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, we have reached over 90% of our $17.5M campaign goal. Construction has begun on the campus to convert the sanctuary into a 250-seat performance space for the Charlotte community, build a gallery that connects the campus's buildings and makes them accessible, and upfit existing infrastructure. During construction, Arts+ will continue to deliver programming at the Arts+ Uptown Studios, at community partners in the Plaza Midwood neighborhood, and at additional locations throughout the Charlotte area.

At its core, the Arts+ Community Campus project is about creating opportunities: ensuring that young people across Charlotte have access to outstanding arts education, creative exploration, mentorship, and community regardless of background or financial circumstance.

To learn more, visit artsplus.org/campus.

PMNA SUPPORTS OUR SCHOOLS

CHEER THE CHARLOTTE MARATHON RUNNERS DOWN THE PLAZA

from Evan Mitchell

Whether you're lacing up your sneakers or looking for a high-energy morning with neighbors, join the Plaza Midwood Neighborhood Association for our annual Midwood Marathon Cheer Station!

- **When:** ***Saturday, November 14th.*** First runners expected are to arrive between 9 and 9:15 am.
- **Where:** The Plaza (Between Chestnut Avenue and Kensington Drive)
- **What to Expect:** Live music from PM's favorite house band, the Loose Lugnuts, complimentary refreshments, and plenty of neighborhood spirit!

Families are welcome and highly encouraged to join the fun. If you're running the race or want to register, visit the **Charlotte Marathon Event Page** for details.

A huge thank you to our incredible neighborhood sponsors for making this event possible:

Canine PawRTNERS Dog Training, Birdsong Brewing, Stirling Group, and Midwood Smokehouse!

LIBRARY HAPPENINGS

From Kathie McKinney

FOR FAMILIES

Storytime: Every Tuesday and Wednesday at 10:30 am

Lego Club: Wednesdays from 3 - 5 pm

STEM Club: Every third Wednesday from 4:30 - 5 pm

Drop-In Arts and Crafts — *Fall Fun:*
October 14, 12 – 5 pm & October 30, 10 am - 4 pm

FOR ADULTS

SMART Recovery Family and Friends: Mondays at 6 pm

Drop-In Job Help: Tuesdays from 2 - 4 pm

Drop-In Tech Help: Thursdays from 2 - 4 pm

Mindful Journaling: First Wednesday of every month at 6 pm, first Thursday at 11 am

Main Pages Book Club: Second Wednesday at 5:30 pm

Writing Critique Group: Second Saturdays at 11 am

Visit cmlibrary.org/programs-and-events to register and learn more!

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WE RAN, WE CHEERED, WE CELEBRATED

by Louise Hindal Acer

On **Saturday, September 26,** Plaza Midwood laced up for *The Midwood Mile*, our fourth annual race down The Plaza. Three heats took their turn on the course, drawing everyone from first-time runners to seasoned racers. New cheer stations at Mezzo Market and Holy Trinity Church brought even more energy and community spirit to the afternoon. There were race t-shirts, kids' medals, awards for top finishers and a few lucky randomly drawn winners, and a great post-race celebration at Resident Culture Brewery.

Whether you ran, volunteered, cheered from the sidewalk, or just stopped by to soak up the energy, thank you for making this year's Midwood Mile one to remember.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2026 EVENT SPONSORS:

- **TITLE Sponsor:**
  Bobby Sisk *of Nestlewood Realty*
- **Platinum Sponsors:**
  The Village on Commonwealth
  Resident Culture
  Mezzo Market
  The Fitness Studio
- **Gold Sponsors:** Tip Top Daily Market • Midwood Eye • Barnhardt Manufacturing Company • Robertson & Associates • Harper & Skyler's Toys and Sweets • Crown Town Landscapes • Holy Trinity Lutheran Church • South Block • Toy Mania • Fortune Johnson
- **Silver Sponsor:** 704 Miles

Full race results and photos will be published in the Winter *Spirit* and posted at plazamidwood.org.

Plaza Midwood Community Garden Update

HEALTHY SOILS, HEALTHY GARDENS

by Christine Sheil

One of my favorite examples of cycles in nature is how trees lose their leaves to protect themselves from freezing temperatures, and in the process they return nutrients to the soil and their roots to reuse next year—providing their roots a nice thick layer of mulch (a blanket!) to keep warm(ish) over the winter months. And we can do the same for our gardens: put them to sleep with a meal of compost and a blanket of mulch to winter with. So, as the leaves fall and the temperatures finally cool, now is a good time to care for your garden soil with compost and mulch!

If you haven't already been composting, it's the relatively simple art of controlled decomposing. Collect kitchen scraps (coffee grounds, fruit peels, veggie ends, egg shells) and combine these with about twice as much dried grass clippings, dried leaves, or shredded paper in a container that makes it easy for you to mix the materials as they heat up and decompose. Fall is an ideal time to apply compost; the nutrients will absorb into the soil over winter. Apply finished compost to garden and vegetable beds, around trees and shrubs, and even to top-dress your lawn. And if you don't have a backyard compost, you can usually get some from a garden center.

After applying compost, a nice thick layer of mulch will keep the soil moist and warm, helping the soil life thrive during our mild winters. Wood chips, bark, and pine straw make good mulches, and break down slowly. But if you've got a tree or two in your yard, or a neighbor with a tree, use the leaves to mulch. You'll save money and time. Rake up your leaves and instead of bagging them up for the City to take away, distribute them over your garden beds. They will break down fully when the weather warms in the spring, further nourishing the soil and providing a welcome home for both new and established plants.

Join us in the community garden in Midwood Park on the third Saturday of each month between 9:00 and noon. The more volunteers we have, the earlier we get done. Children and youth are welcome!

Happy Gardening!

BULL FROGS AND ARCHED DOORWAYS

~ Part Four ~

by Charles M. Paty Jr.

In December 1941, I was carrying the *Charlotte News* (afternoon paper) on Tippah, Firth Ct, Kenwood, Ashland, Winter, Chatham, Belvedere and three or four houses on The Plaza. The route consisted of 86 subscribers and on 6 December, I had delivered the Saturday heavy edition. The Saturday paper was large because they did not produce a Sunday paper and all of the advertising and funnies, etc. were included in the Saturday edition. In those days, we delivered from our bikes, carrying the papers in large cotton bags slung over our shoulders or on the handle bars. By the time I finished my route, my tail was dragging.

On this Sunday, Dad mentioned that he would like to take us to lunch at Honey's Restaurant on the corner of Morehead and South Tryon. He often ate lunch there and we would go there for some of our evening meals. Mr. Honey was a neighbor who lived at 2026 Belvedere.

Following lunch, we came home and I flopped down in the living room to listen to some music on the radio. Mother and Dad went back to their bedroom to take a nap. We had not been home long when the broadcast was interrupted by a bulletin: AN AIR ATTACK HAD TAKEN PLACE AT PEARL HARBOR. I thought, where in the world is Pearl Harbor? These sorts of news items were coming over the airways frequently because the War was raging in other parts of the world, but we were not involved. As the minutes went by, more bulletins came in and we learned that Pearl Harbor was a US Naval Base and had been attacked by Japanese aircraft. We were at war.

I ran back to the bedroom and woke Mother and Dad. They were as shocked as I was. Shortly, Dad said "Let's drive downtown and buy an EXTRA." We jumped into our new 1941 Hudson and headed for the Square. Dad and I were stunned and we talked about the implications. I started talking about joining up. He drove around several blocks trying to find a newsboy selling extras. In the course of doing that, he, a careful driver, ran a red light and was given a ticket.

On the way home, we talked more about my going into service. Upon arriving home, I turned up the heat of the conversation about enlisting. As I was only 17 at the time, Mother was furious and said, "No way." The news continued to come in and it was more bad news. Our conversations continued on into the late hours. At some point, I gained permission to "try" to enlist in the Navy. Mother said they would not take me. Dad was also skeptical.

The next morning on his way to work, Dad dropped me at the US Navy recruiting office downtown. It was 7:00 am and I thought that I would be the only one there at that hour. Well, not so. There must have been 100 men in the line, waiting. I managed to wiggle my way into being accepted and I left home 11 December 1941. In exactly 30 days, I was on board the USS NORTH CAROLINA and headed for three years and ten months of action in the Pacific. I had one leave home during my service.

Monday afternoon, following my enlistment, I called the *Charlotte News* and informed them that I would not be carrying the paper that afternoon or anytime soon. I never heard who they found to carry the route or if it was carried that day. I still have my subscribers list for my route dated 11-29-41.

It is amazing how one's life can change so dramatically in an instant. At that time, I was in the 11th grade at Central High School and was struggling to get my head straight for college, but had no idea what I wanted to do. I had never formally dated a girl. I guess this was pretty mild stuff by today's standards.

Over the following months and years, others who lived within a few blocks of my home (1927 Kenwood) had also joined one of the services:

Dick Boward – 1923 Kenwood, US Navy
Henry Creighton – 1808 Tippah, US Navy
Neil Forney – 1801 Tippah, US Navy
Bobby Graham – 1808 Belvedere, US Army Air Corp
Gordon Hollar – 2021 Kenwood, US Navy
Ruth Kilgo – 1717 Belvedere, US Navy (Waves)
Stiles Markey – 2100 Midwood, US Navy
Clifford McRorie – 1805 Kenwood, US Navy
Johnny Osborne – 1809 Kensington, US Army, Killed in Action at Battle of the Bulge
Ted and Bill Sellers – (brothers) 2121 Winter, US Navy
Gene Yandle – 1937 Tippah, service unknown
Donald Young – 2021 Ashland, service unknown

My father became a block Civil Defense Warden. He was to assist in case of an emergency caused by an air raid.

Our world had turned upside down, never to be the same again.

Editor's Note: *In the summer of 1997, longtime resident Charles (Chuck) Paty began to submit "Bull Frogs & Arched Doorways" to* The Spirit. *In all, about fifteen columns were published—each detailing a different memory of Paty's growing up and living in Plaza Midwood, from his early childhood in the 1920s through his adulthood.*

It's been over 20 years since The Spirit *has run this series. With so many new neighbors, I am pleased to print these remembrances again. I have taken great care not to heavily edit Mr. Paty's words and style; they are very much a part of the charm of these stories. I hope you enjoy learning some new-to-you history of PM, or for those of you who have read them before, please enjoy again.*

Your Access To Everything That Makes Plaza Midwood Home

LOOKING FOR THE INSIDE SCOOP ON PLAZA MIDWOOD?

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- **DEVELOPMENT NEWS:** *STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE ON LOCAL ZONING, CONSTRUCTION, & NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGES.*
- **LOCAL EVENTS & REAL ESTATE:** *SNEAK PEEKS AT HIDDEN GEMS & THE LOCAL MARKET LANDSCAPE.*

SCAN TO FOLLOW **@LIVINGINPLAZAMIDWOOD** ON INSTAGRAM FOR YOUR DOSE OF LOCAL FLAVOR:

FAITH COMMUNITY CALENDAR

We are blessed here in Plaza Midwood to have several faith communities nearby.* The Spirit *is pleased to share calendar and event information for our neighborhood churches.

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH ~ 1900 The Plaza

Loving Not Judging ~ All Are Welcome

- **Sunday Worship Services:** 11 am, every week.
- **Blessing of the Animals and Children:** Saturday, October 10. 10 am till Noon in front of the Church. All animals and children are welcome. Please leash or crate your animals.
- **Holiday Worship** – Four Sundays of Advent with special candle lighting.
  - **First Sunday of Advent ~ HOPE:** November 29.
  - **Second Sunday of Advent ~ FAITH.** December 6.
  - **Third Sunday of Advent ~ JOY.** December 13
  - **Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ PEACE.** December 20.
  - **Christmas Eve Service:** Thursday, December 24. Special music begins at 5:30 pm. Worship begins at 6 pm.

For more information on any Holy Trinity event or program or other ministry opportunities, visit the website at www.htlccharlotte.org or call the church at 704.377.5439.

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Tell them how awesome you are!

Contact spirit@plazamidwood.org for more information.

plazamidwood.org

MIDWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH ~ 2029 Mecklenburg Avenue

- **Sunday Worship Services:** 11 am, every week.
- **Trunk or Treat:** Wednesday, October 28
- **Holiday Worship Services and Events:** Please check the church website or Facebook page for more information about holiday events.
- **Parents Day Out Preschool:** Midwood Baptist offers this ministry to provide a safe, nurturing place for preschoolers to grow spiritually, physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially—focusing on developmental and age-appropriate activities, while providing a spiritual foundation.

  Registration forms are available on the church website under the Children's tab. For any other information, email midwoodpreschool@gmail.com. References available on request.

For more information on any Midwood Baptist event or program, visit the church website at www.midwoodbaptist.org or call 704.376.8944.

THE VINE, A United Methodist Faith Community ~ 2101 Belvedere Avenue

Weekly Calendar:

- **Sunday Worship Services:** 11 am, every week.
- **Community Bible Study:** Tuesdays – 6 pm.
- **Pumpkin Delivery to the Patch:** October 1. 4 pm. Help unload pumpkins and set up the patch! Many hands make light work and fun together kicking off this fall tradition.
- **Trunk-or-Treat with PMNA Fall Crawl:** October 24. Every Fall Crawl needs a Trunk-or-Treat! Parade through the parking lot and receive candy treats!
- **Children's Sabbath:** November 1.
- **An Evening With St. Nicholas:** December 13.
- **Christmas Eve Worship Service:** December 24, 5 pm. Celebrate with carols, candlelight, and communion. All are welcome at this joyful Christmas Eve service.

The Vine is committed to being an affirming and reconciling congregation open to everyone. For more information on The Vine, visit the website at TheVineCharlotte.com or call the church at 704.334.7348, ext. 202. Reach Rev. Caroline Camp at pastor@thevinecharlotte.com.

YARD OF THE MONTH

July-September, 2026

By Udo Robitsch

July | 1621 Matheson Avenue

Kristiana Perini

Since moving to the neighborhood in 2022, Kristiana has grown her garden and reduced her lawn each season with a simple philosophy: "If it survives, it stays." Her intentional chaos gardening approach is a reminder that gardens can be created anywhere—and that anyone can garden.

As a chef, Kristiana (owner of Sorellina Pasta Co.) understands the important role pollinators play in our everyday lives, helping create more than a third of the food we enjoy today. She has worked to create a welcoming haven for hummingbirds, bees, butterflies, and other local wildlife right in her own yard.

Her favorite moments are spent on the front porch with her dog Bucatini and fiancé Jake, coffee in hand, surrounded by the sights and sounds of a garden buzzing with life.

August | 3135 E Ford Road

Jon and Marlene Warren

When Jon and Marlene moved to the area almost seven years ago, they purchased their lot from a local builder and the original house had to be demolished because it was condemned. They built their dream home on the large corner lot of E Ford and Beckwith Place, not fully realizing how much work it would take to maintain it! Marlene has made the corner one of the favorites in the neighborhood, and she works hard at weeding, planting, and watering. Come check it out and say hello to Marlene; she will probably be out there doing her thing!

EST. 2007
NECTAR
BOUTIQUE FLORIST | WEDDINGS & EVENTS

September | 1921 Mecklenburg Avenue

John and Deborah Davis

John and Deborah moved from Santa Cruz on July Fourth in 2022. Before they built, they looked at many neighborhoods in Charlotte. They came from a hip community in California, so Plaza Midwood was a perfect choice for them. They are delighted with the warm welcome they've received here.

They started construction in February 2023; their architect did a fantastic job bringing the outdoors in, creating more opportunities to enjoy the greenspace from the inside. The home won a prestigious architectural award.

Over two months in the summer of 2024, they worked with a landscape architect to create the lush lawn and plantings that created an environment that no one would believe had been a building site just a few years earlier.

Nominate a Neighbor!

Is there a PM neighbor's yard you really admire? Show them some appreciation by nominating them for **Yard of the Month**! Or, you can nominate yourself! Visit plazamidwood.org/yotm/ to submit your nomination. Yard of the Month is sponsored by **Nectar Floral Designs,** located at 910 Pecan Avenue.

ECO NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP ~ NEST

by Chris Lakin and June Blotnick

Let's keep Styrofoam out of the landfill!

You may be surprised to know that rigid Styrofoam can be recycled here in Mecklenburg County. However, it should NOT be placed in your CURBSIDE recycling or trash bins! Instead, it needs to be taken out to one of the county recycling centers. Even though that can be inconvenient, in Plaza Midwood, we fortunately have other options:

1) Take it to the Innovation Barn, 932 Seigle Avenue in the Belmont neighborhood and place it in the black Foam-a-Saurus dumpster; or

2) Send an email to Plaza Midwood's very own "Styrofoam Fairy," Pam Murray (at pamlikestobike@gmail.com), with your address and a photo of the rigid foam, and she will ride her bike to you, pick it up and take it to the Innovation Barn. Pam also cruises our streets on her bike,"rescuing" rigid Styrofoam from curbside bins. Contact her if you'd like to ride along with her sometime and be a helper fairy! She has loaner bikes available.

Pam's bike ready to feed all she's collected to "Foam-a-saurus Rex."

Plaza Midwood Composts!

Our food waste collection/composting program is now in its second year and rolling along, with nearly 200 households participating and over 20 tons of food diverted from the landfill, doing our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Please join this free program! (Note: You will need to supply your own collection bucket.)

We've closed down the Giddy Goat Coffee collection site and opened a new one at The Vine United Methodist Church. The bins are in front of the church in a temporary place until our new bin enclosure arrives. We will send out more details later to all participants.

NOTE: The Vine is now also our new, more convenient, meeting place. We are so grateful to have The Vine and Pastor Caroline Camp as new NEST partners!

NEST Energy Group:

Our newest team has been meeting for several months now, formulating plans to educate the neighborhood about energy efficiency, solar energy and electrification. Look for group members at Fall Crawl to see a fun solar demonstration project as it generates energy.

Upcoming NEST Meeting:

Wednesday, November 11, 7 pm at The Vine. Special virtual guest speaker Karen Florini is a presenter for C-Change Conversations, a nonprofit which helps people understand why they should care about climate change. Karen previously worked at Climate Central, was Deputy Special Envoy for Climate Change at the State Department, and spent more than two decades working on environmental health and on climate change. Please join us for this special event!

Fall Crawl: Join us for special presentations in the Community Garden on Saturday, October 24.

For questions about NEST, to be added to our email list, or to sign up for the food waste program, please contact Chris Lakin at clakin01@gmail.com.

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FACEBOOK:
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/
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NEW MECKLENBURG COUNTY RECYCLING GUIDELINES

Editor's Note: *The news about these new guidelines came out after NEST produced their article for this fall issue. Thank you, Lisa Swayne Proud – for doing a little research on the Meck County website and simplifying the jargon for us. If you want more information, visit wipeoutwaste.mecknc.gov/.*

The new guidelines provide a significant expansion of what you can now put in your Mecklenburg curbside recycling bin.

What You Can Now Recycle

Think of the common things you used to wonder, "Is this trash?"

- **Coffee cups** — paper and plastic cups. Empty them first.
- **Fast-food/drink cups** — plastic cups are now accepted.
- **Yogurt, sour cream, cottage cheese-type tubs** — these polypropylene containers are now accepted.
- **Clear plastic produce containers** — strawberry/blueberry/grape containers, for example.
- **Clear bakery containers** — cookie, croissant, muffin containers, etc.
- **Clear prepared-food containers** — salad containers and similar PET plastic packaging.
- **Takeout containers** — **but only when they're made from one of the accepted plastics/materials**.

The County's current official list now broadly says **"plastic bottles, jugs, containers, and cups,"** rather than limiting you mainly to bottles and jugs. *(Wipe Out Waste)*

The Important Catch

Not every takeout container is recyclable. Foam/Styrofoam containers are still a NO, as are plastic bags, film and wrap. Paper plates and napkins are also still trash. (Wipe Out Waste)

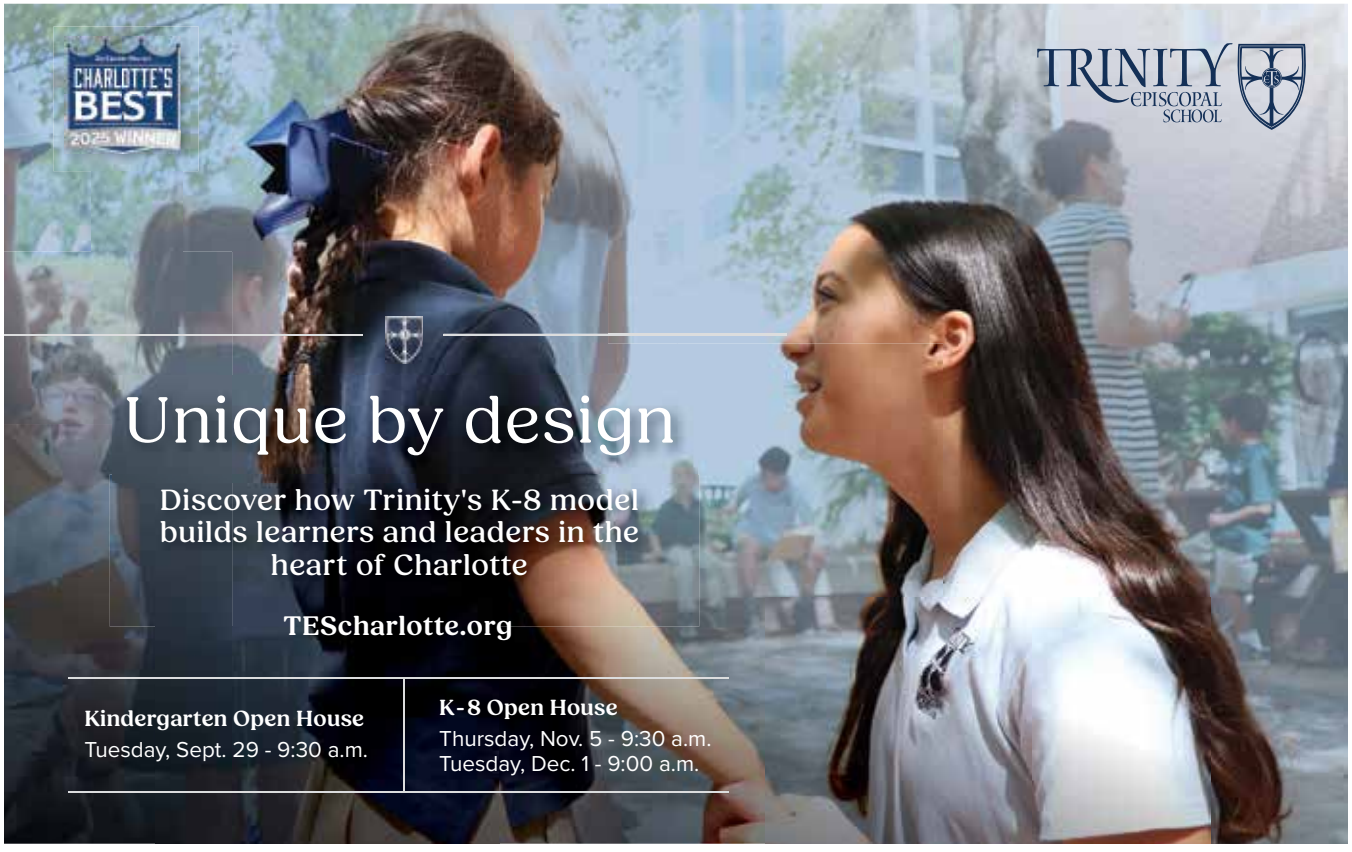
And Mecklenburg Solid Waste specifically says **don't rely on the little recycling number stamped on the bottom**. They don't use the #1–#7 numbering system to determine what belongs in the curbside bin. Instead, go by the type of item. *(Wipe Out Waste)*

So to simplify the new rules:

YES: bottles, jugs, tubs, cups and rigid plastic food containers.

NO: plastic bags/film, Styrofoam, utensils, straws and other random plastic objects.

And everything should be **empty and loose in the bin — never bag your recyclables.** *(Wipe Out Waste)*



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THE PLANT SHARE CABINET

by Kelsey Mard

Candace Stamper of Sacred Circle CLT has been doing my hair for almost ten years. The past several years she has held space for me to share about my journey of trying to get pregnant. Through the surgeries, the medications, the dwindling hope, she listens to it all without an ounce of judgment.

In the spring of this year, I sat quietly in her chair after sharing that we had just experienced another loss. She combed out my curls as tears ran down my face, and we sat in silence. After a few minutes, she asked if she could share something that was currently bringing her a lot of joy.

She told me about a Pokémon card trading cabinet she and her husband had installed in their front yard for their son. She explained their process of building and painting the cabinet, going out as a family to check on what cards had been added, and choosing which of theirs to share. A post she made had even gone viral on "Sidewalk Joy"—a social media account dedicated to this sort of thing. I started thinking about what kind of cabinet I might have—what would bring me joy to both share and receive with our neighbors.

It didn't take me long to land on plants! I got to work clipping our house plants to propagate in water and ordering materials for the cabinet. I started walking home with our Topo Chico bottles from Mezzo Market, and saving jelly jars to use them to grow new plants so people could take a plant with roots in water, and plant it in soil when it's ready. I've loved seeing neighbors stop at the cabinet, and walk away with a new plant. Many have contributed from their own gardens and house plants, too.

Infertility takes a lot from people, but the challenge to be in community and around friends and families with children, while navigating the grief, is one of the hardest to cope with. The Plant Share cabinet for us has been a fun project, but also a way to be in community, participating, while continuing to grieve. Thanks for loving it the way that we do!

Images courtesy Kelsey Mard.

Editor's Note: *When our PMNA president Lindsay McCleary was recently doing some research about "all the Little Boxes" around the neighborhood, she discovered this beautiful story. We hope to bring you more stories and inspiration about how more of these neighborhood treasures came to be. Thank you, Kelsey, for sharing with us.*

Plaza Midwood has always been defined by its creative pulse and its "support local" grit. The 2026 version of Midwood Market is designed to celebrate that spirit—brick and mortar businesses collaborating with complementing vendors, inviting them into their spaces—providing unique shopping opportunities.

December 6 –
Last Midwood Market date for the year!

PMNA QUARTERLY MEETING

Wednesday, October 28
at The VanLandingham Estate

- **6:30 - 7 pm: Pre-meeting Mixer**
- **7 - 8 pm: Meeting**

Join us to learn about what's happening in our fabulous Plaza Midwood and connect with PMNA board members, neighbors and leaders in our community.

Updates and Presentations

- We'll hear key details about the upcoming Fall Crawl, Midwood Gives and Gathers and other fourth quarter events.
- Regular updates: CMPD, City Council, County Commission, Merchants Association and Land Use Committee.

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VISIT WWW.PLAZAMIDWOOD.ORG FOR MORE NEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT PLAZA MIDWOOD.

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