

WNIA NEWSLETTER

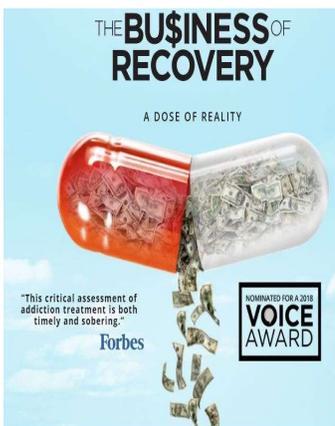
WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Can Westfield Take on Hampden's Miracle on 34th Street Event?

This year's Westfield Wonderland Decoration Contest drew more neighbors than ever to light up their houses. It was nice to see joyful lights during such dark times. Neighbors turned on their lights on Dec. 19th and judges (led by Jen Cullen) ranked the festive displays. **First place** went to Mr & Mrs Wilson of 2915 Christopher Ave. In the category of **Merry & Bright**, Jamie Tuminello of 3009 Christopher Ave. took away the award, and **Most Artistic** went to Helena Pawlick at 3024 Pinewood Ave. Special thanks to our sponsors Hamilton Business Association, Emma's Tea Spot, Char'd City, and Silver Queen Cafe. Their gift certificate donations were very appreciated during a year that has been so tough on small businesses. Thanks to all who participated!



This year's Westfield Wonderland Decoration Contest drew more neighbors than ever to light up their houses. It was nice to see joyful lights, during such dark times. Thanks for lighting up our neighborhood!



Little Oversight for Treatment Centers

As Baltimore City moves towards decriminalizing non-violent drug offenses, substance abuse treatment centers will play an important role. However, there's a problem: there is a lot of money in the treatment industry, but **still very little oversight**. *Pages 2-4*



Calming Speeding Cars in Westfield

Neighbors have been battling issues related to speeding for a long time. To calm traffic on your block, would you like to have the city set up speed humps? Our special report describes the the action steps you will need to take to **Make the Case for Traffic Calming**. *Page 7.*

You are reading the Westfield Neighborhood Improvement Association's quarterly newsletter. Each issue features articles on new developments, community member and business profiles, neighborhood resources, and even children's artworks (page 5). Would you like to contribute to the next issue? Please send your articles to wniabaltimoremd@gmail.com

TREATMENT CLINIC OVERSIGHT

How will the proposed substance abuse treatment clinic impact our neighborhood

WNIA Neighborhood President, Angela Jancius, shares notes from a recent field trip to Fayette House operated by CMDS Residential LLC. The center would be located at 6040 Harford Road. A zoom BMZA hearing is scheduled for April 6, 2021. Please follow WNIA's facebook page for updates!

Rochelle LaChance organized a tour yesterday of Fayette House. Five of us went. We spent two hours talking with Bilal Ali and Kevin Pfeffer. I wanted to share some reflections. The quotes here are paraphrased, from the notes I took. Everyone is using the term "evidence based therapy" for substance abuse treatment centers. There are efforts to establish a respectable accreditation system. But, as an outsider looking in, the whole process seems far from being scientific or standardized. The accreditation and licensing process places an emphasis on structural things, such as whether bedrooms have natural light and whether patients have lock boxes. But it's very lax on important things like staff-patient ratios, the actual treatment programs being used, and the issue of community need, impact, and the overall importance of planning. As we were waiting for Bilal Ali to arrive, Rochelle questioned Kevin Pfeffer about Bilal Ali's credentials. The director was listed on their website as "Dr. Bilal Ali." But he didn't have a doctorate or a medical degree, did he? Pfeffer admitted that he didn't, but "expertise can be measured in different ways." CMDS seemed to embrace this philosophy of questioning what 'expertise' really means.

Their own website even admitted that Ali had an "honorary doctorate" from Global Ove Dai Seminary and University, or Gods U, for short. Gods U is for-profit university that specializes in interfaith e-learning.

When a patient enters Fayette House, they're probably not going to look that up. They're going to assume he has a medical degree, and that he therefore knows what he's talking about. On queue, the facility's director enters the building and announces to us, "Hello, I'm Dr. Ali."

We asked questions about the treatment program. When Rochelle asked, "what is your therapy program?" Ali answered, "I don't understand what you mean," and seemed defensive. We discussed that they would have patient therapy groups of 15-20 people, led by addiction counselors or otherwise counselors in training. 'Won't you need trained medical staff to be able to run treatment programs you're planning, such cognitive behavioral therapy?' Rochelle asked. "You don't need to be trained if you're properly supervised," Bilal replied.

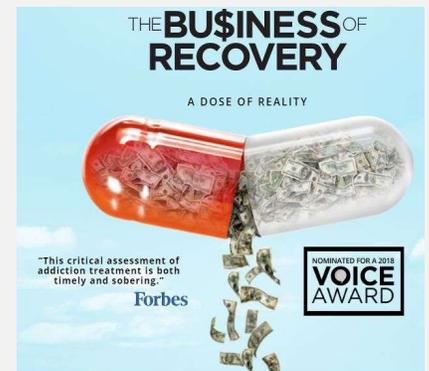
"Rochelle questioned Pfeffer about Bilal Ali's credentials. The director was listed on their website as "Dr. Bilal Ali." But he doesn't have a doctorate or a medical degree."



Are Substance Abuse Treatment Centers Well Regulated?

As Baltimore City moves towards decriminalizing nonviolent drug offenses, substance abuse treatment centers will play an important role in the transition. However, there's a problem: there is a lot of money in the treatment industry, but still very little oversight. Treatment centers need to function in alignment with community needs—not as an unscrupulous and unregulated for-profit industry. Hearing that CMDS Residential LLC wishes to open a large, for-profit residential treatment center in Westfield, less than 500 feet from Hamilton school, makes us want to learn more. To start, we recommend watching this film, *The Business of Recovery*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXUDNM0elwM&feature=youtu.be>



Overall, their answers about the therapy program were often contradictory. I thought back to a discussion I'd had with a man who ran a residential facility that had 48 beds (in contrast to 104) and four times the number of staff as Fayette House was planning to hire. This man was 11 years sober and he was opposed to cash cow facilities. He warned me that the accreditation and licensing process wasn't what it should be. He said that so much of it revolved around paperwork, and you just have to know how to fill things out on paper the way they were supposed to sound.

DRUG CLINIC OVERSIGHT (Cont.)

WNIA Neighborhood President, Angela Jancius, shares notes from a recent field trip to Fayette House operated by CMDS Residential LLC

Often no one did a good job of double checking. No one usually measures the square footage of a room to make sure it's large enough for a certain number of beds. And if you want to criticize a facility it's almost impossible, because they're not going to just let you in with a measuring tape.

Fayette House's client pool will come from all around Baltimore City and the surrounding counties. It would rely heavily on court-ordered referrals. They'd also like to dedicate many of their beds to treating homeless people with addiction. I reflected that there was value in setting up a facility like that ... except that this one is so incredibly large, and it lacked adequate staffing in every capacity. They wouldn't have the social workers necessary to help patients find places to live after they're done the program. Existing residential treatment centers in Baltimore City with much better staffing also have this problem -- they aren't able to find housing for homeless patients once they leave. So CMDS' van services will bring homeless and court ordered patients to this treatment center ... which is next to the school and on a block with two bars. And when patients leave the program (when they just quit, or when their Medicaid benefits run out), many will have nowhere to go.

Throughout the tour, members of our group brought up the issue of security. Bilal said they weren't going to discriminate against anyone, so they would accept patients with violent felony records, for ex. "What if they'd been convicted of manslaughter?" Rochelle asked. "We aren't going to discriminate," Bilal repeated.

But he said he'd decided not to accept anyone with a history of sexual abuse offenses. "That would be illegal," I said. "What do you mean?" he asked. "Well, a person who is on the sexual offender registry wouldn't be allowed to reside so close to a school," I said. "Have you looked at the sexual offender registry in your neighborhood lately?" Bilal asked. "There are people on the sexual offenders list living everywhere." Bilal said he didn't know what we were all so worried about. "Will you be hiring security staff, for the community's safety and for patients?" someone asked. No, they wouldn't hire any security guards ("our patients aren't prisoners"). Rochelle was worried about this. Having 35 years of experience as a licensed social worker in residential substance abuse clinics, she knew how intense the process was for people going through recovery. Even in a facility like hers, which had far fewer patients, she knew that fights broke out all the time.



"How are you going to deal with the drug dealing that's going to take place behind the building," another member of NHRCA's board asked. Kevin highlighted that the building would have 45 security cameras. And patients would use key cards when they came and went from the building, so you'd know who was off the premises. "You mean, you'll know when someone's having a drink at Shamrock Inn?" Rochelle asked. "What's Shamrock Inn?" asked Bilal. "It's the bar next door," said Kevin. "I know, that's an unfortunate location for a bar."

I think about the early 20th c sociologist, Ferdinand Toennies, who discussed the dichotomous relationship between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* - "community" and "society." The community is our neighborhood. The society is the metropolitan area of Baltimore City. Baltimore needs to solve a housing crisis and an opioid addiction crisis. But treatment programs won't work well if they're set up like warehouses. And our neighborhood stands to take a hit. As we were wrapping up our tour, Bilal reminded us that there was a real need for a facility like this. Proximity to the school came up again.

"You know, twenty percent of parents at the school could probably benefit from this program," Bilal said. Yes, twenty percent of our overall population is struggling pretty hard, I thought. But would they go here for help? "One problem we have is that Fayette House is owned by CMDS, and CMDS runs Turning Point," Rochelle said. "I assure you, I have nothing to do with how Turning Point is run," assured Kevin. "CMDS just handles administration. Things like billing, accounting and human resources." Officially, Turning Point is a registered nonprofit. CMDS Management LLC manages Turning Point, and Kevin Pfeffer owns CMDS. Human resources and accounting work aren't just minor obligations. They keep CMDS' admin salaries high ... by maximizing patient intake while keeping the number of counselors to a minimum. And isn't that how patients don't get better?

"Bilal said they weren't going to discriminate against anyone, so they would accept patients with violent felony records"

PATIENTS OVER PROFITS

WNIA and NHRCA neighborhood presidents conduct an interview with Myra Diaz, Director of Clinical Services, Mr. Foster the Executive Director of the Tuerk House.



Rochelle LaChance: I had a wonderful zoom meeting last week with Myra Diaz, Director of Clinical Services, Mr. Foster the Executive Director of the Tuerk House. The Tuerk House is a very established residential treatment center for Substance Abuse Disorders in Baltimore that has a long standing excellent reputation.

Angela Jancius and myself reached out to find out what makes their program successful. In speaking with Mr. Foster it was a sigh of relief to learn that putting the patient first, hiring quality experienced staff and not being a for-profit agency was quite evident in the commitment of these two individuals as they oversee the services and treatment at the Tuerk House. It was refreshing to hear that the care offered is "patient centered" and the staff is adequate to treat the number of residents at any time.

They do not cut corners to save money, their staff are licensed at the highest level. this is not what we heard about the proposed Fayette House, when we met with Bilal Ali and Kevin Pffeffer. Bilal Ali said that as they hire staff for the Fayette House, that the new staff would receive training.

Mr. Foster said that a new facility cannot adequately provide on site training until it is established itself.

There is no structure currently, as at this time all new staff is being hired. Until they build a solid program which takes many years, they are not in a position to "train as you go". I thought this was an excellent point, and this has been my fear, since after meeting with Bilal Ali. I do not think that he could build a quality Substance Abuse Residential Program. Aside from his numerous short term jobs, the loss of his Clinical license for two years (this is public knowledge) and his inability to articulate a treatment modality that will make patients want to be a the proposed Fayette House.

Rochelle LaChance:
"I still fear the CMDS Fayette House will be 'patient centered' over 'profit centered.'"

I still fear the CMDS Fayette House will be "patient centered" over "profit centered."

The Tuerk House has welcomed us to visit when it is safe. I was so impressed with the program they offer. In the past when I worked as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW-C) and sent patients there, I had confidence that the patient was getting a good opportunity. Tuerk House has step- down programs once a patient leaves the residential facility, and they have a good relationship with the community and certainly this is due to their longevity and careful security within their facility.

There are only 2 beds in each room, and at CMDS Fayette House, there are 6 to 8 patients in a room with bunk beds. Patients are often ill from withdrawing from substances, and climbing into a top bed does not seem like the ideal. Tuerk House also have a smoke free environment which prevents patients from hanging outside the building. CMDS Fayette House has not adopted this smoke free environment philosophy, which is unfortunate.

Watch Interview on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?fbclid=IwAR0wSF3epxKl4Gx_YhmyXM_XOMye_VLhaRremy7y9J300RoYh49D_1szw1_g&v=nQdyatLTKpI&feature=youtu.be



WESTFIELD ART SPACE

On this page, we invite Westfield children and other neighborhood residents to submit their poems or any other art works (via email to sturm@sturmstories.com). Enjoy!

I Remember

I remember the smell of a new car—it's old now.

I remember the happiness of hanging out with friends—now I can't.

I remember enjoying sledding—but it's fall now.

I remember winning a game—only to realize there will always be another

I remember that I love to remember—but I always forget.

Ruby S. (12)



Watercolor painting by Geneveve, 14



Watercolor painting by Julianne, 12



Knitting by Geneveve, 14



Drawing by Sophie, 10

RUBY

Ruby, 12, lives on Christopher Ave.

GENEVEVE

Geneveve, 14, lives on Glenmore Ave.

JULIANNE

Julianne, 11, lives on Glenmore Ave.

SOPHIE

Sophie, 10, lives on Eunice Ave.

WESTFIELD FOOD PICK-UP SITES

We recently compiled a list of all food pickup site locations that are in direct proximity to Westfield. We will try to continuously update the list on our website.

City Neighbors Hamilton, 5609 Sefton Avenue 21214

* Produce Boxes, Tues. 10 am-while supplies last

Friendship Outreach Center, 7200 Harford Rd 21214

* Grocery Boxes, Tues & Wed 10-1, Thurs 10:30 - 12:30

Fullerton Elementary School, 4400 Fullerton Ave 21236

* Grocery Boxes, Saturday 11 am - gone

Hamilton Elementary / Middle School, 6101 Old Harford Road 21214

* Monthly Food Distribution, second Thursday of the month, 2 pm

HARBEL Community Organization, 5807 Harford Rd. 21214

* Food Distribution, Wednesday & Friday 3 pm - gone

Hillendale PAL Recreation Ctr, 1111 Halstead Rd 21234

* Grocery Boxes, Saturday 11 am - gone

Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church, 4605 Belair Rd. 21206

* Grocery Boxes, Wednesday 12 noon - gone

Koinonia Baptist Church, 5738 Belair Rd 21206

* Grocery Boxes, Tuesday 9:30 - gone

Loch Raven UMC Food Pantry, 6622 Loch Raven Blvd 21239

* Food Pantry, 1st & 3rd Tuesday of month, 9 am - 1 pm

Mergenthaler Vocational Tech, 3500 Hillen Rd. 21218

* Produce Boxes, Thursday 10am - gone

Mt. Pleasant Development Corporation, 6000 Radecke Ave 21206

* Grocery Boxes, Tuesday 10 am - gone

Parkville Middle School, 8711 Avondale Rd. 21234

* Grab N Go, Saturday 11 am - gone

Perry Hall Elementary School, 9021 Belair Rd 21236

* Grocery Boxes, Saturday 11 am - gone



Community Resources

Call 311 or use the 311 app for rodent problems, storm drains, flooding, housing violations, abandoned vehicles, traffic signals & signs, park maintenance, bulk trash collection, street cleaning, graffiti removal and sanitation enforcement.

Community affairs.....410-396-5819
Homeless shelters.....410-361-4677
Lead paint abatement....410-396-5716
Illegal drug activity.....410-666-DRUG
Potholes443-324-6926
Energy assistance410-396-5555
Recycling schedule410-396-5916

City Government Contacts

3rd District Councilman Ryan Dorsey
ryan.dorsey@baltimorecity.gov
410-396-4812

NE Police Major
Natalie Preston
Natalie.Preston@baltimorepolice.org
410-396-6499

Visit Mgaleg.Maryland.gov for contact information of district legislators.

WESTFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (WNIA)

5807 Harford Rd., Baltimore, MD 21214 |
EMAIL: wniabaltimoremd@gmail.com | WEB: westfieldbaltimore.org

Renew Your WNIA Membership (easiest online). Please pay your \$10 dues at our next meeting.

Attn. WNIA, 5807 Harford Rd, Baltimore, MD 21214. Online: westfieldbaltimore.org

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____
Volunteer: _____ (describe your interest)

CALMING SPEEDING CARS

Do you wish to have the city install speed humps on your block? Here are the steps you will need to take to calm traffic on your residential street.

Step 1: Study the Map

Take a look at the city's roadmap classification of our neighborhood, and zone in to your block. All white streets are, in principal, eligible for road calming measures. Streets with color labels tend to be bigger streets of greater value in terms of traffic flow, and the city is less likely to approve traffic calming measures along those roads. If your street does not have any purple (Local and Urban Roadways), orange (Collector Roadways) or yellow color code (Minor Arterial and Principal Roadways), your application will take this first hurdle. The good news is that all residential roads in Westfield – south of Northern Parkway, north of Glenmore Ave., east of Old Harford Rd, and west of Eastern Parkway – are eligible, *in theory*.

<https://baltimore.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=1758bc7d89c34f3bb46fb3c43e6a8d8c>

Step 2: Get Buy-In From Neighbors

Circulate a petition among neighbors on your block that underscores the need for traffic calming. According to the *City of Baltimore's Traffic Calming Policies and Guidelines*, the petition will need to be signed by at least 35% of the street's residents who support your request. The petition must have the names and addresses for all residents who sign. Thinking ahead, you may wish to gather even more signatures, because in order to get the final approval for *implementation* of any traffic calming measure you will need to have the support of at least 70% of the residents within the study area.

Step 3: Complete the Form

Complete the *Request for Traffic Calming Study* form letter, in which you are asked to share a basic description of the problem, the name of your street, as well your contact info. Under Section A of the form, be sure to include the times of day that the safety issue occurs. This form also asks to attach "Evidence of Support", which refers to the petition process (described under Step #1). Finally, the form also asks if your Community Association supports your request for road calming. Please contact WNIA to get our support, sharing the completed documents with us. After that, you can circle "yes" for WNIA to concur on the request form.

Form: We have posted the form to our WNIA website, at <https://www.westfieldbaltimore.org/info-news>

Step 4: Submit Application & Petition

Submit the *Request for Traffic Calming Study* Form and *Petition* to the Baltimore City's Department of Transportation. Traffic Engineering Division, City of Baltimore

Department of Transportation

417 E. Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

Phone: (410) 396-6802

Email: s.sharkey@baltimorecity.gov; laetitia.griffin@baltimorecity.gov

Step 5: City Review and Implementation

Baltimore City's Department of Transportation notes that it will currently take 130 days to address applications for traffic calming (which does not include the installation of the speed humps). If you have any questions about the process, you may also wish to call the Baltimore City of Transportation at (410) 396-6905, or speak to our local Councilman, Ryan Dorsey, at (410) 396-4812.



WNIA Community News

Are you a Westfield resident who is excited about special events, community activism, engaging fellow residents, local businesses and helping with this newsletter? The WNIA board has come up with a concrete list of activities & work projects for 2021, and is actively looking to recruit helpers on and off the WNIA board. Please drop us a note!

Traffic Calming / Building and Zoning Officer

Concerned about traffic? It would be great to have one neighborhood member who could take over correspondence with city officials and updates to the WNIA relating to all Traffic Calming applications as well as residential concerns relating to building permit issues. This person would be responsible for correspondence and updating the WNIA Board and the association on relevant issues.



Neighborhood Cleanup

Are you interested in hosting one of WNIA's four community dumpster days, or would you like to be involved in a Westfield neighborhood community cleanup? Contact Tina Dorn and have your name added to the list!

tb5563@yahoo.com

Community Garden

Contact Charlotte Snyder to volunteer in the upkeep of Westfield's Community Garden! precious.charlotte@gmail.com

Fun Projects and Volunteer Positions

WNIA is always looking to recruit more volunteers to help with special projects:

Citizens On Patrol Program (WNIA Board Contact: Julia Dumps, jujubeespmud@gmail.com), **Ice Cream Social @ Burdick Park** (Jen Cullen, jencullen1@aol.com), **Christopher Woods Greening** (sharonbaker001@hotmail.com). If you'd like to help with our **Newsletter**, contact Dan at sturmstories@gmail.com.



Westfield Neighborhood Improvement Association (WNIA)

Our association is run by an all-volunteer group of people living in our neighborhood. Members of the Board of Directors help neighbors connect with our city government, community groups, and other partners; keep in touch with neighboring communities; and serve as points of contact when the city has questions for Westfield at large. The Board is elected at our annual meeting in January. WNIA board members:

Angela Jancius, President

wniapresident@gmail.com

Caren Shelley, Vice President

cshelley@friendsbalt.org

Sharon Baker, Secretary

sharonbaker001@hotmail.com

Kathleen Moyers, Treasurer

kathyscoal@verizon.net

Members At Large

Surya Allamraju,

spallam@hotmail.com

Jen Cullen, jencullen1@aol.com

Tina Dorn, tb5563@yahoo.com

Daid Dixon, daveav@hotmail.com

Julia Dumps,

jujubeespmud@gmail.com

Daniel Sturm,

sturmstories@gmail.com

CONTACT

www.westfieldbaltimore.org

wniabaltimoremd@gmail.com

WESTFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (WNIA)

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