

# Connection

## THE UCD NEWSLETTER - FALL 2017



## UCD Celebrates 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at State of University City Event

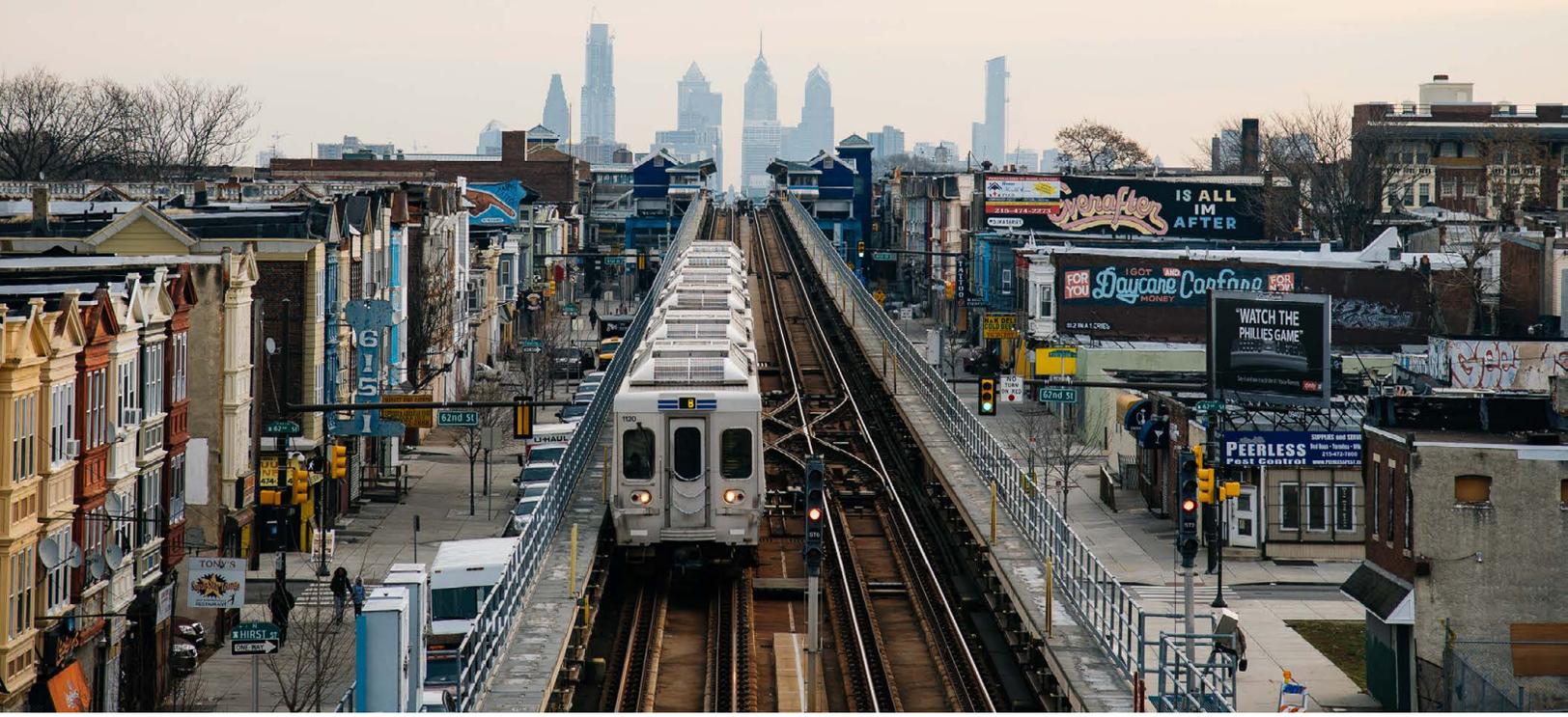
On Wednesday November 9<sup>th</sup>, more than 300 guests attended our annual State of University City event at World Cafe Live. The evening served as an opportunity to celebrate UCD's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, while highlighting the major advancements in the neighborhood. Drexel President John Fry and University of Pennsylvania Executive Vice President Craig Carnaroli, the respective founding and current chairs of the UCD Board of Directors, joined UCD President Matt Bergheiser as speakers during the program. In a short video, UCD honored five original founders who spoke about the early need for the organization, and reflected on how UCD has grown in its 20 year history.

The State of University City event serves as the official release of *The State of University City* publication, a report comprised of nearly 80 pages of charts, statistics, photographs and stories demonstrating why University City and its concentration of development activity are setting a national pace for economic opportunity. The report gives an in-depth guide to the developments - academic, commercial, public, residential and more - that are driving the neighborhood's growth. To obtain physical copies of the publication, stop by our office at 3940 Chestnut Street or email us at [ucd@universitycity.org](mailto:ucd@universitycity.org).

## From The Desk of The President

Throughout 2017 – our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary – I've had the opportunity to reflect on the years University City District has spent working in partnership with so many community members and institutions to shape new possibilities for a neighborhood we love. University City District began twenty years ago as an idea that our community could be better, and in that span of time, we have built a powerful vehicle to achieve our shared vision.

At our board table sits a team of collaborators – passionate neighborhood residents, small business owners, and leaders who are building the city's future before our eyes. On our streets, there are scores of safety ambassadors, patrol officers and maintenance workers who are the face of our organization and the heart of what UCD has stood for over these past 20 years. And, as the neighborhood undergoes a *(continued on page 2)*



## From The Desk of The President (continued)

monumental economic expansion, our staff pivots to embrace the new opportunities this affords us, waking up every day thinking about how to make this neighborhood and city a better place.

University City District draws energy from partners, institutions, businesses and organizations across the district, and draws strength from a community of entrepreneurs and activists that is second to none. With two decades of perspective, it can be said that this neighborhood is driven by a powerful idea: that density, diversity, proximity, vibrancy and knowledge combine to shape a neighborhood with magical possibilities for growth, innovation, and, most importantly, for people.

Here at UCD, we believe the purpose of a great place is to create the platform for human potential to thrive. Neighborhoods like ours attract creators and dreamers, thinkers and inventors, designers and doers. Great places inspire people to conceive new dreams, and give those people every opportunity to achieve them. That is the real power of a place like University City and I think it is the highest calling of our collective work.

That's why we support local businesses owners looking to grow and expand here in our community, creating vibrant corridors and healthy economies.

That's why we provide assistance to residents seeking to rehab homes where there are currently distressed or vacant properties. That's why we created the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, which allows talented West Philadelphia residents to connect to life-changing opportunities at world-renowned institutions like CHOP and Drexel and Penn. That's why we started our landscaping venture Green City Works, so that local residents could contribute to the greening and transformation of our campuses, our streets and our parks.

This is what UCD is all about, and it's certainly what University City is about. Together, we are in the business of changing places and changing lives, and we look forward to working with our committed neighbors to continue to shape this very special community.

Sincerely,

Matt Bergheiser  
President,  
University City District

# Celebrating UCD's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

University City District launched in 1997, as dedicated residents, institutions and businesses came together to create an organization that would make a difference in their community. The original focus of UCD was on providing Clean and Safe services, but over our 20 year history we have expanded our operations to include placemaking, job training, event programming, business and homeowner assistance, transportation planning, and much more. Throughout 2017, we celebrated 20 years of neighborhood impact in ways both big and small.

## 20 Years, 20 Stories

In our *20 Years, 20 Stories* series, we used a combination of profiles, videos, photos, and recollections to knit together a tapestry of stories that make University City such a wonderful place to live and do business. We featured stories of favorite restaurants, key cultural institutions, major neighborhood figures, and significant milestones in UCD's 20 years of operation. To read the series, visit [www.universitycity.org/20thanniversary](http://www.universitycity.org/20thanniversary).

## Partnerships with Local Civic Associations

UCD is of and for the community. To celebrate our commitment to the neighborhood, we built a collaboration with each civic association on our board to develop projects that are meaningful to each community. We are working with the leadership of Walnut Hill Community Association, Spruce Hill Community Association, Garden Court Community Association, Powelton Village Civic Association and Cedar Park Neighbors to scope out initiatives that would benefit their specific neighborhood. From placemaking initiatives to membership engagement strategies, UCD is providing a mixture of financial and technical assistance to the associations. We will share further details and begin to implement the plans in 2018.

## Community Events

In 2017 we pulled off our most robust event season to date. Despite a few rainouts, we presented two Baltimore Avenue Dollar Strolls, ten evenings of University City Dining Days, four editions of the 40<sup>th</sup> Street Summer Series, four Movies in Clark Park, dozens of PECO Performances at The Porch, Employee Appreciation days at The Porch, collaborations with groups like BalletX and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and provided giveaways and prizes throughout the year. We look forward to bringing our signature UCD events back next summer. Stay tuned for details!



# News from the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative



For the past six years, a unique constellation of employer partners, funders and dedicated UCD staff have joined together to connect hundreds of talented neighborhood residents to work. Along the way, the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative (WPSI) has helped world-class institutions find the talent they need, supported local jobseekers as they transform their lives, and developed a cutting-edge approach to workforce development. We recently released our *2017 WPSI Impact Report*, an overview of the year, and we are proud to share that 93% of our graduates connected to employment in the past year and our employer partners have paid over \$15 million in wages since the program launched. The Skills Initiative had a banner year, including these recent highlights:

- UCD offered its first cohort in the building trades, helping a local homeowner rebuild her dilapidated porch while providing valuable carpentry skills in local residents.
- In its second full year of operation, Green City Works - UCD's landscaping social venture - flourished, adding new clients, new staff, and topping \$1 million in revenue.
- At our 2017 WPSI Graduation, employer partners, alumni, UCD staff and participants' families gathered to celebrate graduates' accomplishments.
- In June, UCD leadership presented at the opening plenary for the National Fund for Workforce Solutions' 2017 Leadership Convening here in Philadelphia.

Read the complete report at [www.universitycity.org/publications](http://www.universitycity.org/publications)



## Green City Works Scales Up and Branches Out

Green City Works (GCW), UCD's landscaping social venture, provides high quality landscaping services while connecting local community members to good, stable jobs. In our second full year of operation, GCW flourished with 25 clients, 14 full-time staff and nearly \$1 million in revenue.

In 2017, GCW completed a number of notable projects, including a complete overhaul of University of the Sciences' D'Angelo Mall, maintenance and planting for Brandywine Realty Trust at the IRS building and the Cira Center, and the maintenance of UCD's public spaces throughout the district. The revenue stream allowed us to hire new permanent crew members from a West Philadelphia Skills Initiative cohort, promote existing staff to the position of crew leader, and add Chris O'Keeffe, production supervisor, to the staff.

The Green City Works model has proven successful. The blend of soft skills obtained through the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, the ongoing training and mentorship, and our commitment to good wages and benefits has allowed us to build a motivated, talented, and successful team. We have many exciting projects on the way in 2018 and look forward to sharing more success stories.

## NEW BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



New retail spaces, restaurants, and hotels are popping up throughout the neighborhood, as more businesses invest in University City. Here's a snapshot of new businesses that have recently opened in our area:

### Restaurants

**Alsaeeda Restaurant** • 136 S. 45<sup>th</sup> Street  
Neighborhood sit-down Middle Eastern cuisine

**Atiya Ola Spirit First Foods** • 310 South 48<sup>th</sup> Street  
New temporary home for vegetarian/vegan café inside the Dorrance Center's Common Table

**ChengDu Famous Food** • 3635 Lancaster Avenue  
Authentic, affordable Szechuan style food from China's Chengdu region

**Daleng** • 4641 Walnut Street  
Southeast Asian cuisine including banh mi, smoothies, and American and Chinese influences

**Hatch and Coop** • 125 South 40<sup>th</sup> Street  
A chicken joint featuring sandwiches and salads

**Jezabel's Studio** • 208 S. 45<sup>th</sup> Street  
Combination cooking demonstration studio, home store, and cafe with Argentine empanadas

**Mi Lah** • 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station  
Vegan Vietnamese food including banh mi sandwiches, dumplings, and buns

**Poké-Man** • 3737 Chestnut Street  
Fast casual location for the popular Hawaiian raw fish salad

**Saxbys Coffee** • 3201 Chestnut Street  
New outpost of the Philadelphia-headquartered coffee franchise

**Traditional Szechuan Restaurant** • 4002 Spruce Street  
Chinese restaurant specializing in Szechuan cuisine

**Walnut Street Café** • 2970 Walnut Street  
Upscale fine dining from Michelin Star-winning restaurant group located in the base of the FMC Tower

### New Businesses

**Common Beat Music** • 4916 Baltimore Avenue  
All-purpose music shop offering instrument and gear repair and sales plus records

**Norma Jean's Closet** • 4206 Baltimore Avenue  
Consignment clothing from the owner of Zed's Gifts

**Raxx Vintage West** • 3661 Walnut Street  
Comfortable, vintage clothing store

Want more information about businesses in the neighborhood? Visit our website to read our guide to spending 36 Hours in University City!

# Local Organizations Celebrate Major Milestones

University City District is not the only organization with a major anniversary this year! Check out other neighborhood institutions' milestones.

## 10 Years for Dock Street Brewery in West Philadelphia

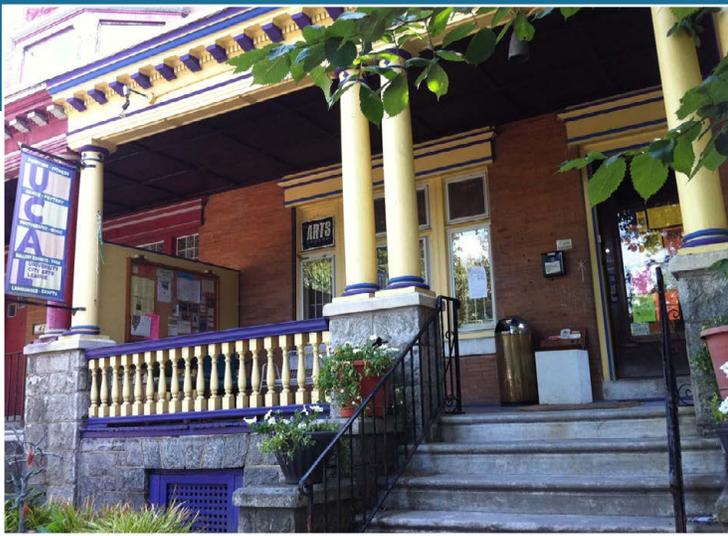
In August of this year, Dock Street marked their tenth year of operations at their West Philadelphia restaurant and brewery. The anniversary celebration featured local rapper Chill Moody, a special release of their West Philly-inspired West of Center Ale, and free Dock Street tattoos inked onto 27 superfans. Party guests were also able to tour the newly opened Dock Street Cannery + Lounge, an expansion that has brought jobs to the neighborhood while offering residents a new, hip spot to enjoy Dock Street beer, unique cocktails and small bites. UCD assisted Dock Street in accessing grant funding for the canning equipment, and also helped them obtain a zoning change to make their status permanent, meaning Dock Street is here to stay.



## 30 Years of the University City Review

In 2018 the *University City Review* will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The venerable paper, founded and operated by Bob and Claudia Christian, publishes 15,000 copies each week and distributes to homes and neighborhood drop-offs like supermarkets or our UCD office. Bob oversees the editing and contributes articles, while Claudia handles sales and relationships with community groups. A typical issue focuses on community stories within their coverage area, featuring progress on local parks, upcoming community events, restaurant openings. The paper also serves as an outlet for community opinions, with op-eds and articles written by neighbors, and on a few occasions has broken major neighborhood stories.





## 50 Years of the University City Arts League

The University City Arts League was founded in the 1960s when a group of local artists and art enthusiasts came together to unite disparate arts groups from across the neighborhood into a single entity. Over the years the organization expanded from a collection of people operating out of whatever house could host events into a much-loved gallery, after-school and summer art program for kids, and space for anyone interested in learning or sharpening skills in fields like pottery, photography or drawing. Throughout 2017, the Arts League popped up at various community events – including UCD's 40<sup>th</sup> Street Summer Series, Clark Park Movies, and Baltimore Avenue Dollar Stroll – to encourage neighbors to make art displayed on clotheslines at their December Open Hearts event. The clothesline art show harkens back to the Arts League's simple beginnings with art displayed in Clark Park, while showcasing the creative heart of the community.

## Trolley Portal Gardens Nearing Completion

Our work to transform the 40<sup>th</sup> Street Trolley Portal into a vibrant park has accelerated over the past six months and is on schedule to be completed early in 2018. By January, local contractor Domus will have finished work on the public space portion of Trolley Portal Gardens, including the hardscaping and landscaping elements, the planting of new trees, and the installation of custom pavers made possible by donations from community members and businesses. Domus' work has progressed without interrupting SEPTA trolley service, all while keeping safe access options open to pedestrians.

The construction of the forthcoming Trolley Car Station diner is also on schedule. The building, developed by Ken Weinstein and Bob Kaufman of Philly Office Retail, is anticipated to be completed in time for a late spring opening. The 200-seat Trolley Car Station will function similarly to Weinstein's Trolley Car Diner in Mt. Airy and Trolley Car Café in

East Falls. The new establishment is intended to be an eastern anchor on the fast-growing Baltimore Avenue business corridor, where tens of thousands of neighbors, commuters, university students, and employees at the nearby VA Medical Center and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia converge. The Trolley Car crew treated neighbors to previews of the offerings with free giveaways of water ice in the summer and coffee and donuts in the fall.

Trolley Portal Gardens was made possible through support from the William Penn Foundation, the Drumcliff Foundation, the PECO Green Region Open Space Program, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the City of Philadelphia, and neighborhood residents and businesses. We are excited that this new neighborhood asset is nearing its completion and look forward to sharing additional updates with the community as we get close to the finish line.



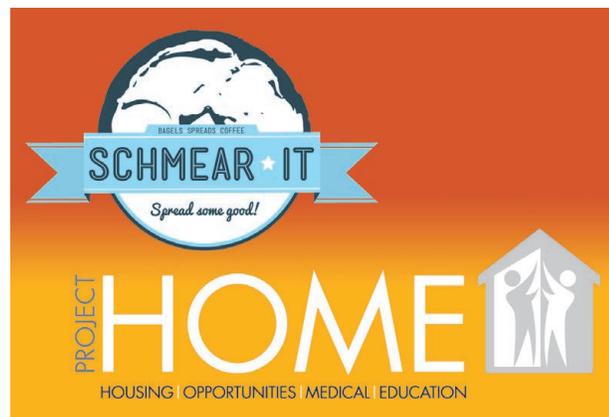
## What's New at The Porch at 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station

2017 was one of the busiest years yet for The Porch at 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station, UCD's flagship public space. In addition to appealing to the tens of thousands of visitors who sit on our custom swings, relax in our many seating areas, enjoy our lush landscaping, or eat lunch from the daily mix of food trucks, we worked to bring unique programming and new offerings to the space.

Thanks to generous support from PECO, we presented weekly music, art, and theater performances free of charge to the public from May through September. Highlights included concerts by the West Philadelphia Orchestra, New Sound Brass and East Wind Korean Percussion, dance performances by Hip Hop Fundamentals and Gwendolyn Bye's Dancefusion, a preview of Shakespeare in Clark Park's rendition of *Coriolanus*, and many more.

In September we debuted the Pub at The Porch, an outdoor bar operated by Bridgewater's Pub. Located in a structure custom-designed by SHIFTSPACE, the Pub served drinks and snacks for post-work crowds during September and October, and will return when the weather warms up next year.

From December 4<sup>th</sup> through December 22<sup>nd</sup>, we are operating a holiday pop-up. Beloved Porch food truck SchmeaR It is running a temporary bagel shop in the mornings, while in the afternoons and early evening, Project HOME is selling holiday items made by their residents. All proceeds from Project HOME's sales and 5% of SchmeaR It's profits support Project HOME's mission of empowering adults, children, and families to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty.



# UCD Staff Updates

## UCD Bolsters Capabilities with Four New Staff Members



### **Rachel Feigenbutz, Urban Design Associate**

In her role as Urban Design Associate, Rachel Feigenbutz applies a vast knowledge of agriculture, stormwater, and ecological restoration design to experience in site analysis, plant identification, and instruction to assist with UCD public space and landscaping projects. Rachel holds a five year Bachelors of Landscape Architecture degree from Philadelphia University, as well as a Permaculture Design Certificate from the Eastern Pennsylvania Permaculture Guild.



### **Caitlin Garozzo, Program Manager, WPSI**

Cait Garozzo has been a part of Philadelphia workforce development for the past eight years. She started as a case manager for the EARN program, then wrote and implemented case management training programs, and eventually served as the program director of an area non-profit focused on providing professional support. Her experience and passion is in designing holistic and responsive programs aimed at preparing people for the modern workforce. Cait holds a Bachelor's degree from The College of New Jersey and recently completed the Executive Program for Social Impact Strategy at Penn.



### **Chris O'Keeffe, Production Supervisor, Green City Works**

Chris O'Keeffe has worked in the landscaping industry for over 11 years and has a strong passion for urban landscapes and beautification. Chris started landscaping young with Mack Landscape Management, a design build firm specializing in high end residential installation, maintenance and storm water management. Chris worked his way up from crew member to operations manager in his time at his old firm. At Green City Works, Chris takes pride in sharing his knowledge with the crew and training them to become seasoned professional landscapers.



### **Morgan Rogers Burns, Development Associate**

Morgan Rogers Burns joins UCD as Development Associate after living in the neighborhood for nearly two decades. Morgan will provide valuable assistance to our development activities, while helping fulfill UCD's mission across all departments. Morgan graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 2009 with a B.A. in Liberal Arts and double minors in English and Jazz Studies.

## Wishing a Fond Farewell to Seth Budick



After nine years, thousands of calculations, hundreds of tons of organic compost, and an uncalculatable amount of contribution to this organization and community, Seth Budick is moving on from University City District to join the Pew Charitable Trust as an Officer at the Philadelphia Research Initiative. During his time at UCD, Seth was integral to so much of our work: his complex data analyses were the backbone of our programs and publications; he conceived of and ran the Dirt Factory composting site; and he provided information that informed SEPTA route planning, institutional traffic monitoring, our plans for The Porch at 30<sup>th</sup> Street and much more. Pew - and all of Philadelphia - will benefit from Seth's new position and we wish him the best. The Dirt Factory will continue under new leadership from Rachel Feigenbutz.

# Committed Community Advocates Invest in Neighborhood Transformation

If something seems different about the 3900 block of Baltimore Avenue (other than the Trolley Portal Gardens construction), you are not mistaken: healthy new trees have replaced 11 diseased maples. While our landscaping venture Green City Works is responsible for installing and maintaining the trees, the project was made possible by two stalwart neighborhood champions.



Since moving to Spruce Hill in 1970, the now-retired historians Barry Grossbach and Mike Hardy have thrown themselves headlong into the community. The neighborhood was drastically different 47 years ago: crime was up, the streets were dirty and homes were falling into disrepair. With a shared passion for the urban ideals of density, culture and diversity, Barry and Mike immediately asked what they could do to invest in their community. As the self-proclaimed ‘new kids on the block,’ they joined other committed neighbors who were taking action; in Barry's very first year on the board of the Spruce Hill Community Association (SHCA), he planned their beloved Mayfair at Clark Park. They joined or started organizations that could stem the tide of disinvestment, created a special service district that served as a pre-cursor to UCD, and took it upon themselves to take out trash for absentee landlords or purchase properties adjacent to their home in order to stabilize the block.

“We believe in making a difference in the public sphere,” explains Barry, and they have certainly done just that. Indeed, their focus on greening has been vital to making University City a cleaner, safer and more beautiful place. Mike - who was honored

by the Arbor Day Foundation - helped to create UC Green, a network of volunteers who green West and Southwest Philadelphia, and Baltimore Avenue in Bloom, which planted the original trees on the 3900 block of Baltimore to beautify a desolate stretch of concrete. As President of SHCA, Barry started a block improvement grant program, providing \$500 for beautification projects for those blocks willing to match the investment with money or labor.

In the past year alone, Mike and Barry have doubled down on their commitment to their community and UCD: they supported a Green City Works project to beautify the district by cleaning and mulching tree pits, and they established a UCD fund dedicated to neighborhood improvement projects. When Mike and Barry learned that the trees they helped plant in the mid-90s succumbed to disease, they immediately set about to fix the situation and supported the replanting project, which will make Trolley Portal Gardens even more vibrant. All the while, they are active in other neighborhood activities. Mike co-founded the Friends of Clark Park and served on the board of the UC Historical Society, while Barry chairs the SHCA Zoning Committee and serves on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of UCD, of which he is a founding member.

“If you want to do something to improve the urban landscape,” says Barry, “then you do it.” Here at UCD, we are tremendously grateful to Barry and Mike, for their longtime commitment to our neighborhood and organization.



# Did you know?

University City District is a 501c3 organization and our work is made possible through charitable gifts like yours. Thank you for your support!

## DONATION FORM

Circle one: **\$250** **\$100** **\$50** **other:** \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of UCD's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, I am enclosing an additional \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support UCD's special neighborhood improvement fund.

I have enclosed my check for \_\_\_\_\_ payable to University City District.

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**To make a secure, online donation to UCD, please visit:**  
**[www.universitycity.org/donate](http://www.universitycity.org/donate)**

## University City District Launches Just Spaces Initiative to Examine Justice in Public Spaces

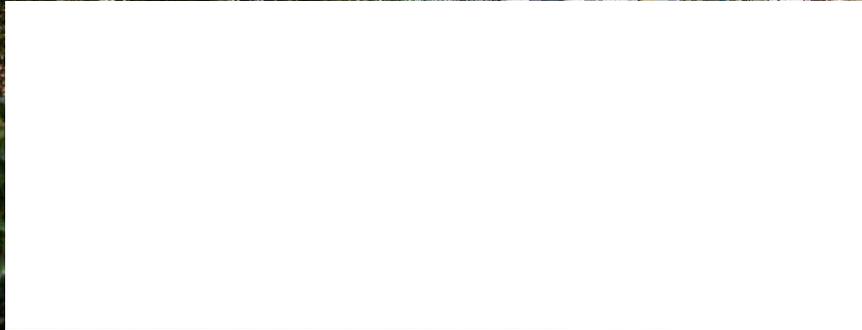
This fall, UCD launched Just Spaces, an initiative designed to ensure that public spaces in University City are deeply inclusive and just. With support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, we will develop a tool to audit and improve public spaces in the district and throughout Philadelphia.

Through this audit, we will assess our own network of public space projects, examining how experiences may vary across lines of race, class, gender, age, sexual preference, ethnicity

and ability differences. The work will focus on three axes of justice - distributional, procedural, and interactional - as conceptualized by City University of New York Graduate Center Professor Setha Low.

To accomplish this vision, UCD has established a Just Spaces Advisory Board, a diverse array of experts representing disciplines ranging from design and architecture to public education, public safety and public art. At the first meeting of the Advisory Board on October 17<sup>th</sup>, the group discussed the goals of the audit and the tenets of Just Spaces with Professor Low. The group will meet two more times to offer varying perspectives and help us refine our framework and audit tool. We envision the final product being used to inform changes at our public spaces, and as a resource to space planners and managers in Philadelphia and beyond.

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# Celebrating 20 Years of University City District

