UCD’s Public Space Portfolio Set to Expand with Forthcoming Trolley Portal Gardens

Whether we are planting 10,000 bulbs at The Porch at 30th Street, working on traffic calming efforts, or providing landscaping services through our Green City Works social venture, our impact can be felt across the neighborhood. We work hard to create dynamic public spaces throughout the district, which is why we’re excited to be putting the final touches on Trolley Portal Gardens, our forthcoming public space, restaurant and largest project to date.

Since our last Connection, local residents will have noticed some big changes at Trolley Portal Gardens. The public space is now open – the fencing is down, the flowers are beginning to blossom and boulders, custom seats, trees, and concrete pavers are all onsite. Donor plaques have been installed, serving as a beautiful testament to the community’s commitment to the Trolley Portal. Lighting and furniture will arrive between May and (continued on page 2)

WPSI Receives Over $5 Million to Support Economic Opportunity for Local Residents

This year, we received major investments from The Lenfest Foundation and the JPMorgan Chase Foundation to help advance job training in University City through our nationally renowned job training program, the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative. These funds will support job creation and advance our efforts to leverage University City intuitions’ purchasing power in order to connect West Philadelphia residents to economic opportunity.

In February, The Lenfest Foundation awarded a $5 million grant to University City District, the University City Science Center, and Drexel University. The three-year grant will support (continued on page 9)
June, transforming 40th and Baltimore into a vibrant public space.

It’s hard to miss the nearly-completed building next to the apron, which is the future home of the site’s restaurant, Trolley Car Station. The team behind the restaurant is staffing up, first with the hiring of Andrew Crowley, who will serve as Trolley Car Station’s General Manager. A West Philadelphia resident, Andrew ran Tria Cafe Washington West and Tria Fitler Square. The team also announced the hiring of Happy Hatab as the new Executive Chef. Hatab is a graduate of Johnson and Wales’ culinary arts program and has been in the industry for almost 20 years, having worked at restaurants including Rae at the Cira Center and White Dog Café. We anticipate a July opening for the restaurant.

Through it all, construction activity has not interrupted trolley service, and we are moving forward in creating a dynamic public space for local residents, employees and commuters.

Trolley Portal Gardens is just the latest public space we’ve created to bolster our neighborhood. Are you looking for more places to enjoy warm weather? We’ve got them! Read on to learn about UCD’s additional public spaces where you can lounge, relax, or enjoy natural beauty during the best months to be outdoors.

**The Porch at 30th Street Station**

Our flagship space The Porch at 30th Street Station comes alive during warmer weather with daily food trucks, pop-up activations, and breakfast and beverages served in the turquoise pop-up in the center of The Porch. Whether you’re looking to relax on our custom seating options, snap a photo with the XOXO statue (in a new location further west on The Porch!), grab lunch with coworkers or friends, or enjoy a musical or dance show as part of our PECO Performances at The Porch series, The Porch is a great place to escape the bustle of the city!

After a soft opening last fall, we’re teaming up with Bridgewater’s Pub and local breweries to bring back The Pub at The Porch! To begin, the hours will be Wednesday through Friday from 4pm to 8pm, and programming will include group happy hours, pop-up live music, and brewery takeovers. Visit universitycity.org/the-porch to see food truck and performance schedules!

**Parklets**

Each year we install Parklets throughout the neighborhood. These temporary seating platforms transform parking spaces into places to sit, relax, eat and enjoy street life. Landscaped with planters and furnished with movable café tables and chairs, Parklets add a distinct vibrancy to the neighborhood.
Four of our Parklets are out in the neighborhood, and two more will be popping up in new locations soon! Visit our Parklets at:

- 4040 Locust Street  
  hosted by Ramen Bar
- 261 S. 44th Street  
  hosted by Honest Tom’s Tacos and Lil’ Pop Shop
- 4239 Baltimore Avenue  
  hosted by Green Line Cafe
- 4903 Catharine Street  
  hosted by Little Baby’s Ice Cream

**Innovative Seating**

In addition to our Parklets, we’ve designed and installed smaller seating options throughout the neighborhood. Our Looped In chairs have found a permanent home at Woodland Green. Our bus seats offer a place for commuters to rest while waiting for public transportation, and are adorned with messages detailing the travel time to central locations in Philadelphia as well as signage identifying the stop’s location. Our tree seats provide resting spaces for pedestrians on the go, giving people a sense of protection from the busy street and hot sun, all without hurting the tree.

**Market Street Bridge**

If you find yourself needing to cross the Schuylkill River, we recommend choosing the Market Street Bridge. The project includes 120 lightweight planters with lush greenery and bleacher seating to sit and catch views of the Schuylkill River. The installation softens noise from the vehicular traffic and strengthens the connection between University City and Center City. Experience it for yourself the next time you're in the area!

**Pedestrian Plazas**

UCD works closely with the City and community residents to enhance the safety of the streets for the benefit of pedestrians, bikers, transit riders, and drivers. We have developed pedestrian plazas that use greening and design principles to make intersections into safer, greener and more beautiful open spaces. Check them out at 42nd Street and Woodland Ave, 48th Street and Baltimore Ave, and as an extension of Cedar Park at 49th and Catharine Streets.
University City Dining Days

University City Dining Days returns to the neighborhood this year from Thursday, July 12th through Sunday, July 22nd. Dining Days is our “3 Courses, 3 Prices” promotion at many of University City’s most popular dining destinations. This year we’re looking forward to welcoming new options like Taiwanese street food spot Danlu, the upscale casual restaurant Bernie’s Restaurant & Bar, and the sleek new Walnut Street Café in the lobby of the new FMC Tower. Details on the 35+ participating restaurants will be available soon on ucdiningdays.com.

Baltimore Avenue Dollar Stroll

The Baltimore Avenue Dollar Stroll, presented in association with the Baltimore Avenue Business Association (BABA), will return on June 7th and September 13th from 5:30 to 8:30pm. During this unique event, University City’s Baltimore Avenue between 43rd and 52nd Streets showcases its charm and businesses with $1 bargains from neighborhood favorites. Grab everything from bites from signature restaurants to pet supplies to theater tickets and much more.

40th Street Summer Series

The 40th Street Summer Series, co-produced by University City District, Penn, and The Rotunda, returns to rock the green area behind the Walnut Street Library at 40th Street with free monthly concerts
and performances. This year’s programming offers a wide array of musical stylings and performers and will run from May through September, with performances on five Saturdays throughout the summer. Confirmed headliners include Thee Phantom and Illharmonic Orchestra, New Sound Brass, and Las Cafeteras. Activities, giveaways, and opening acts begin at 6PM.

**Movies in Clark Park**

UCD, in partnership with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and Friends of Clark Park, will once again present Movies in Clark Park, four weeks of free outdoor movies. Each screening will be preceded by fun activities and offerings from local organizations and businesses. The schedule this year will be *Back to the Future*, *Coco*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, and *Black Panther*, and will run every Friday from August 10th through August 31st.

**PECO Performances at The Porch**

PECO Performances at The Porch are returning for a second year! Beginning in late May, a wide array of performers will sing, dance, drum, act, and entertain each week at free lunchtime shows. We are thankful for PECO’s continued support to enable this series.

**For full details, check tinyurl.com/SummerInUC**

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**University City MIX Offers Networking in Hot Local Restaurants**

Our networking event University City MIX brings together professionals from health care, real estate, technology, education and other sectors to mingle over drinks and bites from top University City restaurants. We’ve held University City MIX every other month at locations including Distrito, Clarkville, and Landmark, while showcasing new restaurants like Dim Sum House, Danlu, and Co-Op. The next two editions of MIX, made possible in part thanks to Univest and The Results Company, will be at the brand new Parlor Bar at White Dog Café on May 31st and at City Tap House on July 19th. For more details and dates, visit [www.universitycity.org/mix](http://www.universitycity.org/mix)!
UCD and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) have recently formed a partnership brought about by our organizations’ shared focus on improving the community through greening. The two organizations found an opportunity for cross-pollination involving UCD’s landscaping venture, Green City Works (GCW).

PHS had been searching for revenue streams in addition to the Philadelphia Flower Show and other programs, GCW wanted to work with a local grower to have more control over the plants, and thus a partnership was formed. “We buy a lot of plants,” explains GCW’s general manager Brian English. “We buy them from places 120 miles away. Why not buy them locally from a like-minded organization?”

Green City Works had already used PHS’s Meadowbrook Farm in Abington Township as a popular field trip destination where crew members could learn about the growing process behind each year’s plantings. The farm, designed and created by J. Liddon Pennock, is situated on 25 acres of second-growth woods, display gardens, a specialty shop, and the PHS Growing Center, greenhouses used to maintain the difficult schedule of readying flowers each year for the Philadelphia Flower Show. They also have the capability to grow plants for outside clients.

“A typical grower grows thousands of plants, and then you buy based on what they have,” Brian explains. Large scale growers tend to focus on what’s popular and what they know will sell. By working with a smaller partner like Meadowbrook Farm, GCW has been able to schedule a season’s worth of plants to be grown from seed, while cutting down on competition over plants with other landscape companies and reducing the need to fulfill an expensive minimum order. Plus, buying the plants from PHS allows UCD to support their broad range of initiatives aimed at beautifying the region.

This spring has offered us an exciting chance to deepen this relationship, as GCW recently signed on to maintain PHS’s Pop Up Gardens at 15th and South Streets and 36th and Filbert Streets. These gorgeously landscaped and creatively built spaces have moved through different spaces across Philadelphia, serving as popular meeting spots for people seeking outdoor drinks and food. Proceeds benefit PHS’s City Harvest program, which brings together a network of community gardeners who raise fresh, healthy food for more than 1,200 families in need. We’re hoping this new seed of a partnership between the two organizations will blossom for years to come.

Unlike the majority of landscaping companies, we commit to keeping our Green City Works landscaping crew employed during the winter months. This off season, in addition to staying busy through a white winter by offering snow removal services for our clients, the team spent time sharpening the skills they first learned in their West Philadelphia Skills Initiative cohort. Our eight week professional development course, EXCEL, was led by Skills Initiative graduate and Program Manager Joyce Bacon and focused on both soft and technical skills. After sessions in plant identification, mindfulness, teamwork and more, the team is already putting the lessons they learned into action with the arrival of spring and their busiest season to date. Look for our crews maintaining spaces like the CHOP Roberts Center, uSciences, and Brandywine projects throughout the district, in addition to our own public spaces.
Who doesn’t love a $1 slice of pizza? That was Mason Wartman’s thought when he opened the original location of Rosa’s Fresh Pizza in Center City. When he added a pay-it-forward method of purchasing slices for people in need, the social mission generated enough buzz to land Mason a guest spot on the *Ellen DeGeneres Show* in 2015.

Two years later Mason was ready to expand, and UCD’s Ryan Spak stepped in to help bring Rosa’s to 40th Street between Market and Ludlow, a University City block where retail has struggled. Mason was drawn to the location due to the heavy foot traffic from the nearby Market Frankford 40th Street stop, and the mix of students, long-time residents and employees in the area.

UCD’s Small Business Services program helped Mason obtain a $50,000 forgivable loan to purchase equipment and materials, including Rosa’s pizza oven. This loan, coupled with additional funds UCD helped facilitate through the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation and a grant from the Merchant’s Fund, allowed Rosa’s to open in February. All told, UCD helped Mason raise over $120,000.

The $1 slices have proven to be a hit. We hope Rosa’s success will help revitalize the block and extend the vibrancy of the 40th Street corridor from Market Street all the way down to the Trolley Portal at Baltimore Avenue. You can help make this possible by stopping in, grabbing a slice, and purchasing an additional slice for someone in need.

The retail, hospitality and commercial landscape of University City is changing all the time, as more businesses seek to join our vibrant community. Here’s a snapshot of new businesses that have recently opened in our area:

**Now Open**

**Bernie’s Restaurant & Bar** • 3432 Sansom Street
Global comfort fare pairs with craft beer & wines at this comfy haunt

**Danlu** • 3601 Market Street
Dishes inspired by Taiwanese street food in a slick, upscale setting

**Franklin’s Table** • 3401 Walnut Street
Penn’s new gourmet food hall featuring local standouts like Pitruco Pizza, Goldie, Little Baby’s & more

**Just Salad** • 3728 Spruce Street
Customized salads, wraps & smoothies

**M.A.T.T. Gourmet Sliders** • 3601 Market Street
Sandwiches including small burgers, grilled cheese & local favorites made from scratch

**Pub at The Porch** • Porch at 30th Street Station
Outdoor beer garden operated by Bridgewater’s Pub serving beer & wine in a relaxed setting

**ReAnimator Coffee** • 4701 Pine Street
Specialty coffee roaster focusing on seasonal single origin coffees

**Red Lotus Spa & Nails** • 4610 Cedar Avenue
Salon specializing in manicures, pedicures & eyebrow shaping

**Rosa’s Fresh Pizza** • 16 South 40th Street
Unique $1-a-slice pizzeria known for its “pay it forward” program that feeds the homeless

**Tipsy Bistro** • 3131 Walnut Street
Comfortable sports bar with creative brunch, lunch & dinner options

**Yiro Yiro** • 127 South 40th Street
Fast casual Greek focused on meat roasted on vertical rotisseries and served on a plate or a pita, plus grilled skewers, salads & sides

**Opening Soon**

**&Pizza** • 3925 Walnut Street
Creative pies & craft beverages focused on local produce & no artificial flavors

**Arayyan Supermarket** • 121 South 43rd Street
Combination grocery store & restaurant featuring shawarma & other Middle Eastern treats

**Louie-Louie** • 3611 Walnut Street
Classic cafe & bistro fare found from France, Spain, Italy & North America by the owners of White Dog Cafe

**Steve’s Prince of Steaks** • 3900 Sansom Street
A new 2,400 square feet version of the popular cheesesteak joint

**Trolley Car Station** • 40th and Baltimore Avenue
The newest location in the Trolley Car family offers surprisingly cool comfort food, ice cream, outdoor dining & beer to go

Want more information about businesses in the neighborhood? Visit our website to read our guide to spending 36 Hours in University City!
A First for the Skills Initiative as Husband and Wife Each Successfully Connect to Careers

Since its start in 2011, the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative has served over 800 local residents. Despite that number, we recently celebrated a first for the Skills Initiative when married couple Kellie and Ahmadu Dupree-Ekpaji became the first husband and wife team to go through the Skills Initiative and successfully connect to employment.

Before the Skills Initiative, Kellie and Ahmadu each had significant work experience - she as a preschool teacher and he in the security field - but like so many of our participants, both found themselves out of work and unable to jumpstart their careers. While job searching Ahmadu saw a posting for two upcoming training programs with the University of Pennsylvania and Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. He remembered hearing about WPSI through a friend who participated in a CHOP cohort, and after realizing he couldn’t join a partnership with Allied Universal due to a scheduling conflict, he applied and was accepted into a cohort for lab helpers with the University of Pennsylvania. After Ahmadu was accepted, he learned that WPSI had begun recruiting for positions with CHOP, and realized it would be a perfect fit for Kellie. She applied and was also accepted.

“Having this feeling that we can do anything we put our minds to definitely changed things for us - if we allow ourselves to spread our wings and soar, there’s no telling how far we can go.”

“I was nervous at first,” Kellie says about starting the program. “I hadn’t worked in a while and I wasn’t sure if I wanted to keep working with children.” Our partnerships with CHOP offer training for positions as patient sitters, an entry level role that does not require a nursing degree. The position allows employees to earn a job in a competitive field at a top institution without needing an advanced degree. Once Kellie started with the Skills Initiative, she said the experience “lit another spark for me. It opened up
a unique partnership that harnesses University City's explosive economic growth to train and place unemployed West Philadelphia residents in family-sustaining jobs today, while equipping the community's workforce with the skills and certifications needed to connect to the jobs of the future. The three partners plan to connect nearly 600 previously unemployed residents to careers over three years, resulting in over $16 million in wages generated in the community. In addition, over 200 adults and high school students in West Philadelphia will attain credentials, certifications and career exposure, setting them on meaningful pathways to employment.

In April, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation announced a $225,000 grant to the Skills Initiative at a presentation featuring program graduates and leaders from the City and University City institutions. JPMorgan Chase Foundation has invested $350 million to support skill building around the globe through New Skills at Work, its initiative to create more opportunities for workers to obtain well-paying, middle-skill jobs. The firm is supporting efforts which, like the Skills Initiative, focus on developing talent and best-in-class training that create pathways to increased economic opportunity.

We are incredibly grateful to The Lenfest Foundation and JPMorgan Chase Foundation for supporting the incredible talent in West Philadelphia. Partners like these two organizations help make our crucial work possible.
Sarah Steltz Joins UCD as Vice President of Workforce Solutions

We are thrilled to share that Sarah Steltz has joined UCD as our new Vice President for Workforce Solutions. In her new role, Sarah will oversee University City District’s nationally renowned job training program, the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, and lead UCD’s efforts to connect talented local residents to University City’s explosive economic growth.

Prior to joining UCD, Sarah spent ten years working at Drexel University, most recently as Director of Workforce and Economic Inclusion on Drexel’s University and Community Partnerships (UCP) team. She brings rich experience in organizational dynamics, talent management, program development, training, and adult education. Sarah started as a consultant in Drexel’s Human Resources Department, and created Drexel’s first workforce development role, focusing on the recruitment, training, hiring, and retention of West Philadelphia residents. Upon joining UCP in 2014, Sarah’s portfolio expanded beyond workforce to include construction inclusion and supplier diversity. Sarah served on the launch team for the Dornsife Center for Neighborhood Partnerships, Drexel’s urban extension center, and she oversaw all adult education, technology, and workforce programming offered in the 3 computer labs on-site. Sarah worked in the corporate sector prior to joining Drexel in 2008.

While working with Drexel, Sarah was a key collaborator with the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, facilitating partnerships that led to the creation of a Medical Assistant pipeline program that the Skills Initiative ran for the Drexel University College of Medicine, as well as a training program for positions with the Chesterbrook Academy Preschool located on Drexel’s campus.

UCD Adds Data Scientist Tyler Tran

We are pleased to report that Tyler Tran has joined UCD as our Data Scientist. In this position, Tyler is responsible for research and analysis across a wide range of areas impacting everyone who lives, works, or spends time in University City. Prior to UCD, Tyler’s work took him to Greenland, France, Washington State, Alaska, and finally to Philadelphia, where he worked as a research associate at Temple University’s Integrative Ecology Lab. Broadly speaking, Tyler is interested in landscape and global change ecology, and evolving urban landscapes, both in terms of land use in urban areas and changing human demographics of cities. He enjoys using spatial analysis and quantitative analysis to support research on these topics. Outside of research, he enjoys reading, playing volleyball, kayaking, dancing, and hiking, and is also interested in increasing LGBTQ representation in STEM fields.
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: ________________

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

Please charge my credit card  circle one  AmEx  MasterCard  Visa  

Account Number ____________________________________________

Expiration Date (MM/YY) ____________ Security Code ____________

We cannot process your donation without the security code!

I would like this gift to recur  circle one  Monthly  Quarterly

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Cut along the dotted line and mail this form to: University City District, 3940 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

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To make a secure, online donation to UCD, please visit: www.universitycity.org/donate

UCD Safety Ambassador
Teaching Chess at Walnut Street West Library

This January, the Walnut Street West Library at 40th and Walnut put out a call for volunteers to coach their chess club, and UCD was quick to answer. It turns out that in addition to being our Community Service Ambassador - representing UCD at our events, handing out safety material in the streets, and working at UCD’s front desk - Tuhran Freeman is also a formidable chess player. For the past few months he’s spent time teaching children ages 6 to 13 the ins and outs of bishops, rooks, and pawns. It’s this type of beyond the call of duty service that makes Freeman such a valuable part of the UCD team. Look for him throughout the summer at our events!
Summer in University City

**Dining Days**

**University City Dining Days**

**JULY 12TH TO 22ND**

3 Courses for 3 Prices

$15 • $25 • $35

**UCDININGDAYS.COM**

**Free Family Friendly Concerts**

**At the Green Space at 40th & Walnut St.**

6/23 • Thee Phantom & the Illharmonic with Tyva Kyzy

7/14 • Las Cafeteras with Phila Women’s Slavic Ensemble

8/8 • TBD

9/15 • New Sound Brass with Joy Ike

**Movies in Clark Park**

**Free Movies in Clark Park**

6/23 • Thee Phantom & the Illharmonic with Tyva Kyzy

7/14 • Las Cafeteras with Phila Women’s Slavic Ensemble

8/8 • TBD

9/15 • New Sound Brass with Joy Ike

**Weekly Lunchtime Performances at The Porch at 30th Street Station from late May to September!**

More info at theporchat30th.com

**Dollar Deals, Music & Street Performers**

**Free Family Friendly Concerts**

AT THE GREEN SPACE AT 40TH & WALNUT ST.

**Dollar Stroll Baltimore Ave**

**43rd to 52nd Streets**

**40th Street Summer Series**

**Baltimore Ave, Music Dollar Stroll & Street Performers**

**Thursday, June 7 & Thursday, September 13**

**43rd to 52nd Streets**