



Connection

The UCD Newsletter • Summer 2016



UCD Launches Landscaping Social Venture Green City Works

This winter, University City District launched our social enterprise Green City Works, a program designed to offer high quality landscaping services while connecting local community members to good, stable jobs. Launched with critical support from the Job Opportunity Investment Network (JOIN), Green City Works allows UCD to fully integrate our expertise in developing vibrant public spaces with our strength in workforce development, while leveraging our many institutional partnerships. UCD has nearly twenty years of experience collaborating with our partners to create and maintain University City’s public realm. From our public maintenance team to our successful public space projects – including The Porch at 30th Street and

the Market Street Bridge transformation – UCD serves as the main steward of University City’s open space. This breadth of experience provides Green City Works with a strong foundation for leading horticultural installations and landscaping projects throughout the district and across the city.

The foundation of Green City Works’ job creation and training elements rests on our nationally recognized West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, which connects unemployed West Philadelphians seeking opportunity with West Philadelphia employers seeking talent. The Skills Initiative has placed more than 90% of its graduates – who had been (continued on page 6)

Rotating Food Trucks Return to The Porch at 30th Street



This spring, University City District entered into a partnership with the Philly Mobile Food Association to bring rotating food truck service back to The Porch at 30th Street Station. Lunch service resumed in April, and we have experimented with additional offerings such as breakfast, dessert, and retail. The Porch has also welcomed Flyers fans for a playoff rally, a painted donkey as part of the DNC’s Donkeys Around Town campaign, Visit Philly’s XOXO photo spot, and a record number of users enjoying the revamped space. As the summer progresses, stay tuned for news about additional amenities on the way such as drink service, events, and a few exciting surprises.



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

University City is a place where growth, opportunity and community meet. This confluence is the motivating force behind UCD's recent launch of Green City Works, a landscaping business with social impact.

Prompted by our accelerating investments in public space – The Porch, parklets, pedestrian plazas, and the soon-to-be-constructed Trolley Portal transformation – we began to look at ways to take the work of installing and stewarding green space and use it to drive new opportunities for West Philadelphians. This, of course, builds on the efforts of the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative; over five years, we've trained hundreds of neighborhood residents, placing program graduates into a variety of career-transforming jobs – lab technicians at Penn, medical assistants at Drexel, inpatient clerks at CHOP and security officers at Allied Barton.

The success of the Skills Initiative inspired us and our partners to think about transforming lives and careers by transforming green space and civic infrastructure. We launched Green City Works and hired local residents to tend to UCD-managed spaces. But we've grown quickly, thanks to committed partners. Penn and Penn Medicine, USciences and Drexel, and Brandywine, Amtrak, Wistar and the National Board of Medical Examiners have all contracted with Green City Works to install or steward green space. And as we grow,

economic opportunity flourishes, as well. Think of the impact of Green City Works this way: for every \$50,000 of annual landscaping revenue we earn, we can kick-start one career, and change a life in the process.

As this work evolves, we'll look for more places where the commitment of our institutional partners and the devotion to community meet. This summer, for example, we launched a Skills Initiative training cohort in carpentry which will bring the talents of West Philadelphia residents to bear on the home repair challenges encountered by Project Rehab, UCD's successful effort to address deteriorating residential properties in the community.

By focusing on the interplay between the opportunities of growth and the challenges of unemployment and underemployment in our broader neighborhood, we can all give new meaning to the notion of a vital and vibrant University City.

Sincerely,

Matt Bergheiser
Executive Director
University City District

Summer Events Return to University City

Each summer, University City District plans and programs a diverse list of summer offerings for the neighborhood to enjoy, including University City Dining Days, the 40th Street Summer Series, Movies in Clark Park, and the Baltimore Avenue Dollar Stroll.



University City Dining Days

University City Dining Days is the “3 courses, 3 prices” promotion offered at many of University City’s most popular dining destinations. University City is home to some of the most innovative and diverse dining options in the region. From exceptional craft beer bars to celebrity chef restaurants to cozy BYOBs, University City’s international dining scene features dishes from India, Ethiopia, China, Vietnam, and beyond. In 2016, 34 restaurants participated in the promotion from July 14-24th.

The 40th Street Summer Series

The 40th Street Summer Series—co-produced by University City District, Penn, and The Rotunda—enlivens the green space behind the Walnut Street Library at 40th Street with free monthly concerts. The series kicked off on June 18th with a performance by Marc Ribot and The Young Philadelphians, and will continue with performances on July 23rd, August 20th, and September 17th.



Movies in Clark Park

In partnership with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and Friends of Clark Park, UCD will present Movies in Clark Park, three weeks of free outdoor movies to enliven summer nights in West Philadelphia. Beautiful Clark Park (43rd and Chester Ave) transforms into an outdoor amphitheater, showcasing a great lineup of films projected on a giant screen for the entire family to enjoy. The Clark Park Movie Series will run on Friday nights from August 26th through September 9th, with screenings beginning at dusk. Audience members are invited to bring chairs or blankets for the films, and can enjoy food and dessert offerings from a rotating list of vendors.



The Baltimore Avenue Dollar Stroll

The Baltimore Avenue Dollar Stroll, presented in association with the Baltimore Avenue Business Association (BABA), will return for one night on Thursday, September 8th from 5:30 to 8:30PM. This event is a unique opportunity for University City’s Baltimore Avenue to showcase its charms, with businesses from 43rd to 52nd Street offering \$1 bargains, ranging from bites from signature restaurants to pet supplies to theater tickets.

HERBAN QUALITY EATS IS A TRUE UNIVERSITY CITY ENTERPRISE



The market for healthy fast casual food continues to grow in University City. In the past few years, the neighborhood has added Sweetgreen, HipCityVeg, Beefsteak, Hai Street Kitchen, and honeygrow, with more on the way. A new entry is Herban Quality Eats, an establishment aiming to provide fresh, fast, and healthy options to Penn and Drexel students as well as the large and growing base of office, lab, and hospital workers.

Two health-conscious Penn grads, Amir Fardshisheh and Kalefe Wright, found themselves craving warm, hearty meals that went beyond salads and vegetarian offerings when they conceived of Herban Quality Eats. "The premise for Herban was simple," says Fardshisheh. "We wanted to be able to eat healthy food that's nutrient-rich and thoughtfully raised and prepared." Inspired by today's food trends - focused on delicious vegetables, lean proteins, and unrefined carbs - the duo sought to offer home-style platters of similar make-up: affordable, simple dishes made with fresh, clean ingredients.

When choosing to open in University City, Fardshisheh said, "There's something really exciting about this neighborhood. We all went to school here and we realized University City was this hidden gem." The Herban team was attracted by the proximity to Penn and Drexel, and saw the success of other similar concepts geared toward health-conscious customers. The team brought on local chef Chris Paul, a Drexel alum who has worked for Stephen Starr's Parc and Jose Garces' Chifa. Paul helped the duo bring their idea to life and created a menu that offers diners an opportunity to build a custom platter.

While the new space was under construction, they decided to first test their concept as a delivery service. They again drew on University City resources and secured kitchen space at The Enterprise Center's Dorrance H. Hamilton Center for Culinary Enterprises (CCE). This local resource supports both established and start-up food businesses and food processors in need of commercial kitchen space and technical assistance. Working out of the CCE kitchens, Herban offered delivery of fresh food within a half hour and built a customer base by attending group meetings of various student groups. They closed that operation in the summer of 2015 to prepare for the launch of their physical location, which celebrated its grand opening last December.

Herban Quality Eats' mission is to make nutritious taste delicious in a place where passion, motivation and education cross paths. The team is out to make wholesome eating fun and approachable, while also building relationships in the community. Visit their restaurant at 3601 Market Street.



New Business Spotlight

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

Beefsteak

Jose Andres' veggie-driven fast casual
3417 Spruce Street

Dottie's Donuts

Gourmet vegan donuts
4529 Springfield Avenue

The Hacktory

Shared art/technology space
3645 Lancaster Avenue

Hand & Stone

Massage and facial spa
3210 Chestnut Street

Herban Quality Eats

Homestyle-healthy quick-serve
3601 Market Street

Lulu Café

Bubble tea and Asian snacks
4508 Walnut Street

Mubarak Shawarma

Ethiopian and Mediterranean grill
225 S. 45th Street

Shanghai Station

Chinese restaurant and bar
4002 Spruce Street

Winterfell

Taiwanese shaved ice
32 S. 40th Street

Youma Restaurant

Authentic African and Halal food
4519 Baltimore Avenue

News from the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative

University City District's West Philadelphia Skills Initiative (WPSI) - our innovative job training program - enjoyed a busy start to 2016 with new training programs, new headquarters, new funding, and a visit from Janet Yellen.

Cutting Ribbon on New Training Center

On Thursday, May 19, we welcomed local community leaders, members of UCD's Board of Directors, funders, and West Philadelphia Skills Initiative (WPSI) participants and graduates to celebrate the opening of the new WPSI training center at First District Plaza (3801 Market Street). The new center will allow the Skills Initiative to expand its capacity to fulfill its mission of connecting unemployed West Philadelphians to job opportunities that build career paths and change lives. Multiple cohorts can now run concurrently, allowing us to develop additional partnerships with local institutions.



Fed Chair Janet Yellen Visits Skills Initiative

On Monday, June 6, the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative was honored to host a visit from Janet Yellen, Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and Patrick Harker, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. Chair Yellen was in Philadelphia to deliver a speech to the World Affairs Council, and made room in her schedule to visit the Skills Initiative training center to learn about our program and speak with current and past participants during a roundtable discussion.

Chair Yellen spoke of the Federal Reserve's focus on jobs and its goal of creating an economy where all people are able to find employment. She then listened as WPSI participants described their backgrounds, their struggle to find jobs, and how participating in the Skills Initiative program provided the skills and confidence to obtain employment. Our participants and staff were honored by the opportunity to share details of our program during this momentous visit.

Support for WPSI

The Job Opportunity Investment Network (JOIN) selected University City District to receive a \$300,000, two-year implementation grant through its Win-Win Challenge. The funds support the launch and development of Green City Works, UCD's new landscaping social enterprise. The Win-Win Challenge was created to spark innovative job training practices by providing local nonprofits with start-up capital and support to develop creative new workforce partnerships in our region.



UCD is deeply grateful to have received renewed support for WPSI from Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Bank of America, and Wells Fargo in the second half of FY2015. We were honored to welcome Citizens Bank CEO Bruce Van Saun as he visited our new offices to personally present a check for continued support to the Skills Initiative. Finally, we are appreciative to have been awarded a new grant from the Lenfest Foundation, which will enable WPSI to significantly increase our impact on our community. We thank all of our partners and funders, for helping to ensure our ability to forever change the lives of West Philadelphia residents.

BECOME A PART OF THE 40TH STREET TROLLEY PORTAL

Over the past several years, we have worked closely with local residents, SEPTA, and the City of Philadelphia to develop a plan to transform the 40th Street Trolley Portal from a blighted concrete slab into a vibrant community park and transit hub that is safe, sustainable, and social.

Thanks to support from public and private sources including the William Penn Foundation, the City of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, PECO Green Region, and community members like you, we have raised more than \$1.75M to create the new Trolley Portal—a remarkable testament to the power of our community.



We are nearing our groundbreaking in the coming months, but there is still time to support this remarkable project! With a donation of \$250, UCD will thank you by etching an 8" x 8" asphalt paver with a dedication message of your choosing. Perhaps you would like to honor a friend or family member, or join together with neighbors to make a gift on behalf of your block.

This is an unparalleled opportunity to demonstrate your love for our neighborhood as we build this new community asset together. To donate, please visit: universitycity.org/40th-street-trolley-portal-campaign or contact our Director of Development Sarah Davis at 215.243.0555 x 226 or sarah@universitycity.org. Thank you in advance for your support.

Green City Works (continued from cover)

unemployed an average of 53 weeks when they entered our program – in life-changing jobs at our anchor institution partners. Over five years, we have facilitated the payment of more than \$7 million in wages to formerly unemployed West Philadelphians.

Green City Works was created to build on this work by employing those who have been shut out of the job market. The program builds career pathways into the landscaping field, offering customized professional development training, on-the-job work experience, and industry-sought certifications.



Social ventures like Green City Works are cropping up across the country in a variety of sectors. Seen as an opportunity to train and employ unemployed or underemployed individuals, these innovative businesses are developing a track record of job creation and economic impact. Like many ventures, we are focused on providing training and on-the-job experience to those with the highest barriers to employment, including the formerly incarcerated. But Green City Works also offers permanent employment opportunities: at the end of the training program, Green City Works helps graduates find employment in the sector, or hires them as permanent employees.

In just a few months, Green City Works has already taken on over 250,000 square feet of green space throughout the district and is on a rapid growth trajectory, propelled by the expanding footprint of our anchor partners and UCD's own growing role in greening and beautifying the district. As we grow, revenues are plowed back into the business, affording UCD the opportunity to train and hire more individuals. A vital component of Green City Works' mission is to serve as a 'high road employer,' and we have committed to offering employees good wages and benefits, full time positions and advancement opportunities in an industry where financial and professional growth are rare.

Green City Works has already secured contracts working with Amtrak, USciences, Drexel, The Science Center, uPenn, Wexford, Brandywine Realty Trust, International House, the Philadelphia Water Department, Penn Presbyterian Hospital, the National Board of Medical Examiners, and U3. To learn more about the program, visit www.greencityworks.org.

Help us keep working for you. Support UCD.

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

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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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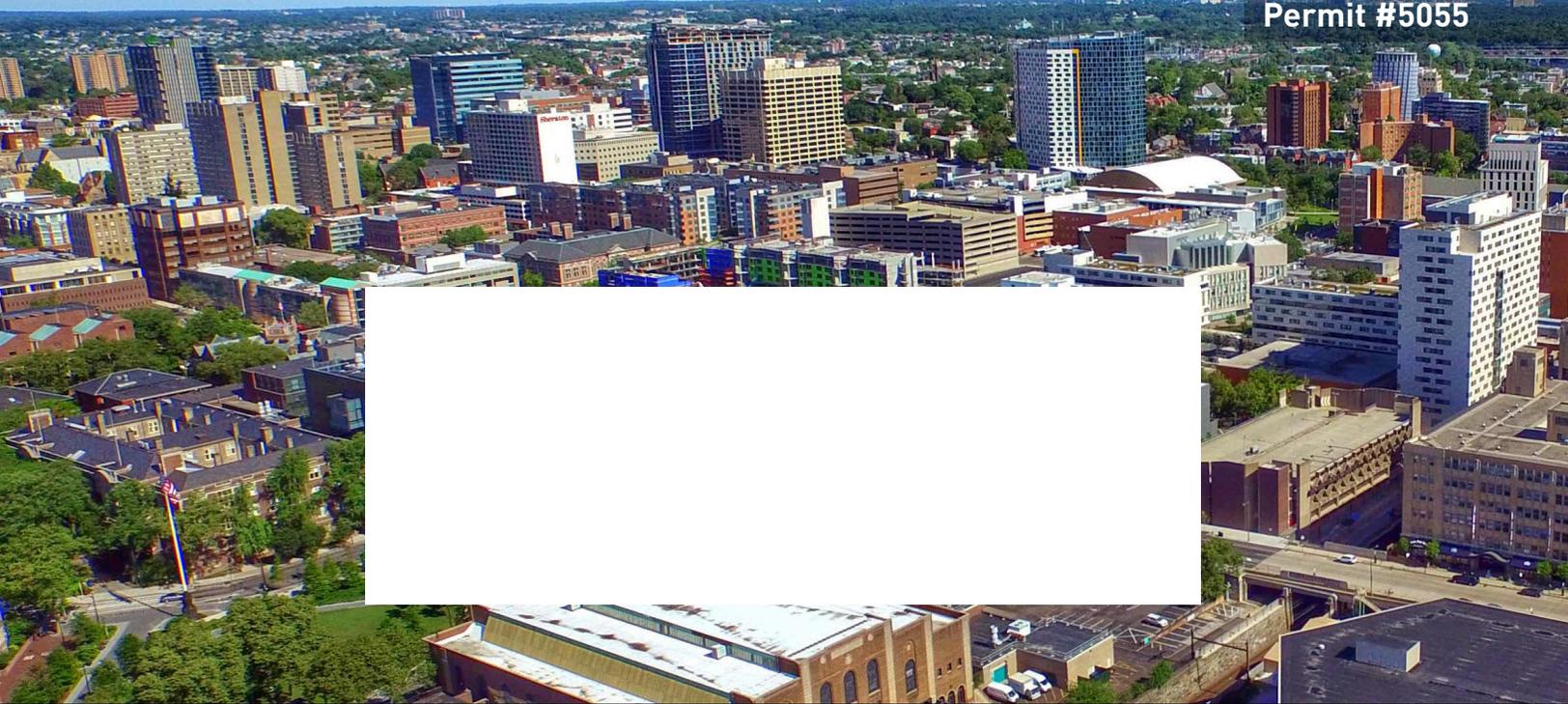
UCD STAFF UPDATES

Andrew Stober has joined UCD as the organization's new Vice President for Planning and Economic Development after working for the City of Philadelphia for over six years. With the City, Andrew served as the Chief of Staff for the Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities (MOTU), where he had lead responsibility for launching Philadelphia's Indego bike share program and for raising millions of dollars in competitive public and private grant programs aimed at improving transit infrastructure. While working with MOTU, Andrew was a key collaborator with UCD's work on a City level, facilitating partnerships that helped bring The Porch at 30th Street Station, the 40th Street Trolley Portal, and UCD's Parklet program to fruition. At UCD, Andrew oversees a portfolio that includes public space development and management, commercial corridor development, and pedestrian and transportation improvements for University City.



Brian English has joined UCD as the General Manager of Green City Works. Brian brings over 20 years of landscape experience to the position, with experience ranging from managing start-up and established design-build landscape firms to serving as Director of Property Management for a land trust. At the land trust, Brian was responsible for enacting environmentally focused initiatives on sites owned by the land trust, in addition to assisting regional land owners with productive and sustainable land management strategies. Brian has long been active in the promotion of native horticulture and urban greening and sees Philadelphia as the ideal place to express these interests. Brian will oversee a full-time staff of landscapers and also help in the development of trainees coming through the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative training program.

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Free Family Friendly Concerts

7/23 • DENDÊ & BAND

8/20 • THE LIBERIAN WOMEN'S CHORUS FOR CHANGE

9/17 • RENNIE HARRIS RHAW

at 40th Street Field
The green space at
40th & Walnut Street

MOVIES IN CLARK PARK

FREE MOVIES IN CLARK PARK

MOVIES BEGIN AT DUSK

8/26 • Finding Nemo

9/2 • Creed

9/9 • Star Wars: The Force Awakens



Baltimore Avenue

DOLLAR STROLL

Thursday, September 8 • 43rd to 52nd Streets • Food, Music & Street Performers

