



# Archives

SEPTEMBER  
2023

WILKINSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
VOLUME 29, ISSUE 8



The restored 1916 Wilkinsburg Train Station will be the setting for “**Dream City Magic Gala**”, a fundraising benefit to support the WDCDC. (Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation). A very special evening of magic, music and more is planned for **Saturday, September 23, 2023 from 7-10 PM.**

Tickets cost \$125. each, to support the vast array of programs and projects of the WDCDC. See the next page in this *Archives* for WDCDC’s successful programs that helped 3800 Wilkinsburg people.

Order your tickets now, with this link:

<https://www.showclix.com/tickets/wcdc-gala>



## Jon Tai - Mindbending illusions and entertainment!

Jon is a celebrated magician and storyteller, whose mission is to foster connections between people through shared moments of astonishment. He performs magic across the country and around the world, in person and virtually, and has called the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's Liberty Magic Theater his home base since its grand opening in early 2019. He is best known for having co-created and starred in “Missed Connections” Off-Broadway at 59E59 Theaters in New York City, following its premiere at Chicago’s MacArthur Award-winning A Red Orchid Theatre. Jon will be entertaining and amazing the gala-goers!



**About INEZ...** INEZ is a proud Homewood resident, Pittsburgh native, and self-proclaimed FireShorty, INEZ is a multi-faceted artistic Renaissance Woman. INEZ, a Cum Laude, Berklee College of Music alumna, is a musical polymath for singing, music production, arranging, songwriting, drumming, and audio mixing, mastering and engineering. INEZ was named “Pittsburgh Music Artist of the Year” for 2020 by WYEP 91.3FM, and selected as a SCALE Fellow. INEZ was Highmark First Night 2023 headlining performer. INEZ will wow listeners with her music at the Gala!

**Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation** was organized and incorporated as a non-profit in 2008. The Board of Directors had a plan to make a difference in Wilkinsburg. A mission statement was developed and it stated “to promote the revitalization of Wilkinsburg through business & residential development; organizational & individual civic leadership; and ethnic & cultural diversity”.

Since opening their first office in 2010, much has been accomplished. Most people are well aware that the old Wilkinsburg Train Station, 901 Hay Street, 15221, has been beautifully restored due to the efforts of the WCDC. The Station is a large, iconic building with a tremendous presence in the business district. Other buildings have been restored, but lives have also been restored through WCDC’s initiatives. Here’s a rundown of some of the amazing progress that has happened in Wilkinsburg due to the diligent efforts of the WCDC. 74 business district properties have new owners, 31 property owners have renovated their building façades, 25 vacant storefronts have been filled, 370 residents have received small business training and 70 new businesses have opened in Wilkinsburg

The CORE FOUR Business Planning Workshops have resulted in 134 accomplished graduates, with 93% have been BIPOC and nearly 70% have been Black women.

Working with housing partners, 100 units of affordable housing have been created, 12 new housing units have been constructed, 53 blighted properties have been cleared in Wilkinsburg. Additionally, 52 vacant properties have new owners, and 29 homeowners received critical home repairs.

The WCDC has generated over 265 positive press articles about Wilkinsburg and hosted thousands of residents and visitors at street festivals, Vacant house tours, home and Garden tours, and other community events. The WCDC has helped over 2850 youth achieve their educational and civic goals by providing grants and marketing assistance to support local summer and after-school programs.

Successful programs such as these need funds to implement them. Your ticket purchase for the “Dream City Magic Gala” will help insure that these plans can be implemented.

Here is the link to purchase your ticket: <https://www.showclix.com/tickets/wcdc-gala>.

	Item	Cost
1	Roof Repair for a Wilkinsburg Neighbor	\$7,500
2	Facade Grant Match for a Small Business Owner	\$5,000
3	Closing Costs for a New Homeowner	\$2,500
4	Local Artist’s Show at Lohr Gallery	\$1,000
5	Month of Rent Assistance for a Small Business Owner	\$750
6	Planning Session for a Small Business Owner	\$500
7	Estate Planning Session/Creating a Will for a Neighbor	\$250
8	Educational Materials for a Business Class Student	\$100
9	Gloves, Garbage Bags & Other Litter Clean-Up Tools	\$50
10	Plants to Beautify the Business District	\$25

**You can help fund the mission!**

Individual gift donations help to pay for these programs.

Gala ticket purchases help pay for these programs.

Helping our neighbors through monetary gifts to the WCDC helps Wilkinsburg as a whole.



In partnership with Preservation Pittsburgh, Center for Civic Arts is presenting the 2023 Music in Sacred Spaces Tour. Come explore, celebrate and promote the City of Churches in historic Wilkinsburg, September 9, 2023 from 10AM – 5PM, with the closing ceremony from 5:30 – 8PM, Mulberry Presbyterian Church, 710 Mulberry Street 15221. The Tour will feature transcendent experiences found through soaring architectural spaces, stained glass, organ music and the improvisational dance by Shana Simmons Dancers who accompany the church musicians in a mix of historic and contemporary performances. Photographers are welcome and are encouraged to upload their favorite photographs of the Tour to be considered for a \$100 best photograph prize. Upload up to three photos & contact: [sacredspacetour@gmail.com](mailto:sacredspacetour@gmail.com) (one \$100 prize)

Music in Sacred Spaces tour schedule, **Saturday, September 9:** (Free and open to the public)

### WEST Tour

- 10 – 10:45 AM St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Corner of Franklin and Pitt St.  
Pachelbel's Canon in D, Holy, Holy, Holy and Amazing Grace
- 11:10 – 11:50 AM Ethnan Temple 7th Day Adventist Wood and North Ave.  
My Worship
- Noon – 12:45 PM Mulberry Community Church 601 Wallace Ave  
Celebrate the King

### CENTRAL Tour

- 1PM – 1:45 PM St. Mary Magdalene Parish (St James Church) Franklin and Mulberry St.  
Organ recital by Michael Kearney\*\* No Dance
- 1:55 – 2:40 PM South Avenue United Methodist 733 South Ave  
Be Not Afraid Dean Patterson, tenor.  
Give Me a Clean Heart Deborah Webb, soprano.  
Christians, We Have Met to Worship Patricia Deleonibus, flute.

### EAST Tour

- 3 – 3:45 PM Covenant Fellowship Presbyterian Church 1300 E. Swissvale Ave.  
Selections from the Book of Psalms for Worship \*\*No Dance

- 3:55 – 4:40 PM St. Mark AME 1409 Montier St.  
Give me Jesus sung by Jessye Norman

Story Quilt Exhibit: This Pittsburgh Center for Arts and Media Artist Residency Project with St. Mark AME Church in Wilkinsburg, led by Fiber Art Storyteller/Teaching Artist Tina Williams Brewer. Created by St. Mark Quilters. Supported by the Arts in Education Partnership of the PA Council on the Arts a state agency, funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania & The Opportunity Fund

### Closing

5PM – 8PM **Center for Civic Arts** (vacant Second Presbyterian Church) 710 Mulberry St.  
eschaton: a public exhibit, installation, dance, music, refreshments  
Project support provided by UPMC & THE OPPORTUNITY FUND

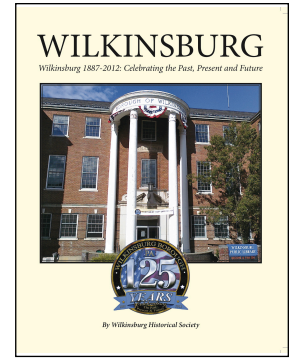
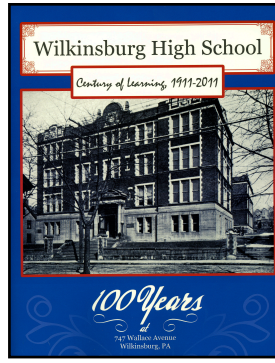
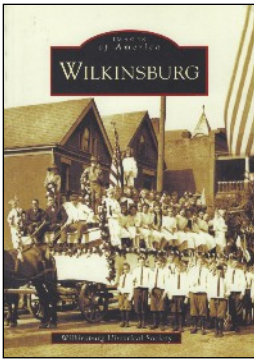
**Historic Western PA School for the Deaf (WPSD) to present Community Block Party on Saturday, September 23, 2023 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM**



**Western PA School for the Deaf** is situated at the border of Wilkinsburg and Edgewood, on land that was once owned by James Kelly. When the school was first organized in 1868 it was Kelly who deeded ten acres of land for the purpose of supporting the creation of a permanent school dedicated to the education of deaf children. The land had been valued at \$60,000 in 1870. The actual construction was thwarted by legal concerns with the Pennsylvania Railroad. The original gift parcel was then sold to the Railroad with the proceeds used to purchase the present site for the school. The school was built in 1883 and could accommodate nearly 300 students. In December 1899 a fire broke out in the boy's wing and the school burned down. Plans for a new school were implemented and philanthropic citizens and organizations raised the money to build the school again. The cornerstone was laid in May 14, 1903. This antique postcard image shows the school as it looked in 1911. Many upgrades and additional buildings are now part of the campus, and over the years the size of the campus has doubled with the acquisition of ten additional acres.



WPSD has a tradition of giving back to the community and the annual Community Block Party is a great example. Saturday, September 23, 2023 will be the 18th annual Block Party, where WPSD hosts an afternoon of fun for everyone. With music, petting zoo, games, food, and fun activities, a good time is guaranteed for all who come. Local businesses and non-profits also participate to promote what they do and distribute information. The Community Block Party is held on the campus of WPSD at 300 E. Swissvale Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15218. The informational tables, games and displays are also along Swissvale Avenue, Walnut Street and next to the Trinity Lutheran Church for the Deaf. This event is FREE and open to the public!



These are the three books that the **Wilkinsburg Historical Society** wrote and published during the past twelve years. They help to promote and preserve the history of Wilkinsburg and raise funds for the various projects of the Society. All three books are still available to purchase from the Society. Another way to support the activities of the Historical Society.

On the far left is ***“Images of America - Wilkinsburg”***, a 128 page soft-bound book printed by the Arcadia Publishing Company. It includes over 220 black and white photos depicting the history of our town from the early land patents in the late 1700s up to the 75th celebration of Wilkinsburg in 1962. The book is available from the Wilkinsburg Historical Society for \$20.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

The middle book above is ***“Wilkinsburg High School - Century of Learning 1911-2011”***. This book chronicles the history of the local high school from its early start in the late 1880s, the creation of the magnificent structure in 1910, and each decade since with highlights of the events that were important in the lives of the students and the Wilkinsburg community. For over 100 years the Wilkinsburg High School served the Borough of Wilkinsburg students and this book has several hundred photos showing much of this important history. This *Century of Learning* book is available from the Wilkinsburg Historical Society for \$15.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

The book on the far right is ***“Wilkinsburg - 1887-2012, Celebrating the Past, Present and Future”***. This book was produced by the Historical Society in 2012 to recognize the 125th anniversary of Wilkinsburg’s incorporation as a Borough. This soft-bound book has 196 pages and includes chapters on the history of Wilkinsburg, the celebrations from the past, information about Wilkinsburg’s government, and all the events that occurred during the 125th celebration. There are several chapters about the clubs and organizations in Wilkinsburg as well as the churches and worship centers in the Borough. The “future of Wilkinsburg” section recognizes advertisers and sponsors who helped to fund the creation and printing of the book. This book, originally \$15.00, is now available for \$10.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

<p>Make check or money order payable to: <b>Wilkinsburg Historical Society</b>          Orders can be mailed to: Wilkinsburg Historical Society, P.O.Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235</p>			
Images of America - Wilkinsburg	(\$20.00 + \$3.00) = \$23.00	Quantity _____	Total _____
Century of Learning 1911-2011	(\$15.00 + \$3.00) = \$18.00	Quantity _____	Total _____
Wilkinsburg 1887-2012	(\$10.00 + \$3.00) = \$13.00	Quantity _____	Total _____
Name _____		Address _____	
City _____	State _____	Zip _____	



Don't miss out on **The Wilkinsburg Sun**, a free monthly community newsletter published by the volunteer Wilkinsburg Community Newsletter Board, with the support of the Wilkinsburg Borough, the Wilkinsburg School District, the Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce and the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation.

The Sun accepts submitted articles provided they are related to Wilkinsburg and are civic-minded.

<https://wilkinsburgsun.wordpress.com>

Sign up to receive The Sun by email at:

<http://eepurl.com/v0iBP> and friend The Sun on Facebook.

**UpstreamPgh Celebrates the Completion of Latest Queen Project with a Party**

UpstreamPgh members and guests gathered for a celebration of the completion of the latest Queen Project with a party at the Wilkinsburg Community Center on September 12th. The celebration was held at the Wilkinsburg Community Center, 1700 Wilkinsburg Blvd., Wilkinsburg, PA 15152. The celebration was held at the Wilkinsburg Community Center, 1700 Wilkinsburg Blvd., Wilkinsburg, PA 15152. The celebration was held at the Wilkinsburg Community Center, 1700 Wilkinsburg Blvd., Wilkinsburg, PA 15152.

**Sacred Spaces Tour Returns Sept. 9**

The Sacred Spaces Tour returns on September 9th, 2015. The tour will feature a variety of historic sites in Wilkinsburg, including the Wilkinsburg Community Center, the Wilkinsburg School District, and the Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce. The tour will be led by a knowledgeable guide and will provide a unique opportunity to learn about the rich history of Wilkinsburg.

**Wilkinsburg Health and Wellness Fair, page 3**

Wilkinsburg Historical Society has a website, to share more information about the history of Wilkinsburg. [wilkinsburghistory.wordpress.com](http://wilkinsburghistory.wordpress.com)

Mailing address: **Wilkinsburg Historical Society, P.O. Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235**

The "Archives" Historical Society newsletter is published monthly, March through November.

We do not usually publish the Archives during the three Winter months of December, January and February.

Wilkinsburg Historical Society yearly dues for the Wilkinsburg Historical Society are:  
**\$20.00 INDIVIDUAL Member, \$35.00 FAMILY Membership**  
**\$10.00 STUDENT or ASSOCIATE Members** Please keep your membership dues up to date.

Contributions are needed for "Lights for Lincoln", to get improved lighting for the Lincoln Plaza area. Abraham Lincoln stands in the dark after sun-down. Your donation can help us illuminate this outstanding area overlooking the Lincoln Highway.

**Wilkinsburg Historical Society - Membership application**  
**Help promote the valuable history of Wilkinsburg.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

( ) \$20 Individual membership  
 ( ) \$35 Family membership  
 ( ) \$10 Student or associate membership  
 ( ) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Additional donation

Please make check payable to: **Wilkinsburg Historical Society**  
**PO Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235**

Anytime is a good time to pay your dues for the Wilkinsburg Historical Society. We have many preservation projects going on, and providing displays for Wilkinsburg events. Many thanks to those of you who have already sent in your membership dues. Please use the address on the form, our PO box.