



Watershed News

GREENING TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY IN BALTIMORE AND THE BAY

WATERSHED 263

- Booth-Boyd
- Carroll Park
- Carroll-Camden Industrial Area
- Carrollton Ridge
- Franklin Square
- Harlem Park
- Hollins Market
- New Southwest-Mt. Clare
- Penrose-Fayette St. Outreach
- Poppleton
- Sandtown-Winchester
- Union Square
- Washington Village-Pigtown



PARKS & PEOPLE
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EIGHTEEN FAMILIES BECOME NEW HOMEOWNERS IN PIGTOWN

An exciting new partnership with Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake.

Eighteen families in Pigtown have new homes thanks to a program offered by [Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake](#). Parks & People was honored to partner with Habitat Chesapeake and provide the houses with landscaping, trees, green space, pervious parking pavers to filter storm water runoff, and rain barrels to water gardens.

Habitat Chesapeake brings people together to build homes and help stabilize communities in Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Howard Counties. This summer they completed

18 newly constructed rowhomes on the 1200 block of Ward Street in Pigtown. In its first collaboration with a housing organization, Parks & People supported the project by providing funding through a grant from the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund, awarded by the State of Maryland. The grant helped finance Parks & People's work on the project, which included • landscaping in front of the homes • creating tree pits along the street, where new trees were planted • installing pervious pavement for parking behind homes, which will help filter water that runs into the Chesapeake Bay • building rain barrels, which help to control the flow of water into the bay and can reduce residents' costs to water outdoor gardens • removing 1/2 acre of concrete • creating a small green space on the block where residents can gather.

Green spaces have been shown to positively impact a wide range of quality-of-life issues - from health to crime to educational opportunities for children. Green spaces are an investment in a happy, healthy future for the 18 families welcomed home to these houses (approximately 70 people overall), as well as the neighborhood as a whole. In the long-term, the green aspects of the block mean clean, fresh air. They mean lower energy bills. They mean a healthy harbor and Chesapeake Bay. They mean happy, active kids. And, they mean more people outside, talking to their neighbors, and building communities. Parks & People is proud to be a part of Habitat Chesapeake's work improving the quality of life for the citizens of Pigtown.



What is a Watershed?

Drop by drop, rain or snow, water is channeled into soil, groundwater, creeks and streams, making its way to larger rivers, then on to lakes and bays, seas and oceans. A **watershed** is defined as the area of land where all of the water that is under it (groundwater) and all the water that drains from it (surface runoff) goes to the same place. Watersheds come in different forms and sizes and are nested within each other. They can be small, like an area of a field that creates a pond every spring, or huge, like watersheds that drain into great bodies of water, such as the Chesapeake Bay. In a watershed, all living things are inextricably linked by their common watercourse. What happens on the land in Baltimore City affects water quality for all natural communities living downstream, as well as the quality of water in our streams, rivers, the Chesapeake Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean. Watershed 263 is one of 355 man-made storm drain watersheds in Baltimore City. Its 935 acres encompasses some or all of 13 Southwest Baltimore neighborhoods.

GALLERY CHURCH UPRISING IN SOWEBO

‘Intentional Living’ through community service.

[Gallery Church Baltimore](#) is a unified family of neighborhood-based churches working together for the good of Baltimore. They encourage their members to “take ownership of the spiritual condition of their neighborhoods by finding ways not only to love one another but also to tangibly love those who live nearby, through the intentional allocation of their time, talents, and resources.” They call it “Intentional Living,” which translates into community service projects organized by Pastor Joshua Smith in downtown Baltimore, Patterson Park, Eastpoint and SOWEBO.

Billed as City Uprising events, Gallery Church organizes or participates in service projects that focus on Baltimore City schools, HIV testing, health screenings, block parties, parks and green projects, and community-related service projects. In SOWEBO, Gallery Church and their many volunteers have been instrumental in a variety of greening projects.

Leveraging up to 200 volunteers at a time, and working with various neighborhood groups, a landscape architect, and with support from a Parks & People Neighborhood Greening Grant, Gallery Church helped install rain gardens on two vacant lots adopted by the church, and on other community-adopted lots in Franklin Square, Hollins Market and Union Square, addressing storm water runoff in the watershed.

Partnering with the Lots of Art initiative of Union Square, Hollins-Roundhouse, and Franklin Square (see article on page 8), Gallery Church helped convert six vacant lots on S. Carey Street into a neighborhood film park and performance stage. Children now gather there regularly to draw chalk pictures on the sidewalk, play soccer on the lot, and perform on the stage. The children named the space “A Place For Good People.”

The most recent Gallery Church initiative was the result of a small grant awarded by the SOWEBO Now Project for Pastor Joshua Smith’s Community Workforce Initiative, a program that employs members of the at-risk population (ex-offenders, unemployed youth), to maintain existing community green space for a small stipend. “Just enough to keep the cell phone on and buy bus passes while they’re looking for jobs,” Pastor Smith said. The participants will pick up trash so it doesn’t go in storm drains and will maintain the various adopted lots throughout SOWEBO. “We’re really excited about the community workforce initiative,” Pastor Smith said, “because it serves multiple purposes. It extends a helping hand to those who need it -to empower them, help build a resume- and we actually put dollars in their hand instead of just putting them in a job training program for no pay. Meanwhile, they’re working on greening projects throughout the community that restore the neighborhood and renew hope that things can change for the better.”



Loving Life in Pigtown

by Edith Nelson

A hop, skip and jump away from both sports stadiums, the Horseshoe Casino, the Inner Harbor, Federal Hill, the B&O Railroad Museum, downtown Baltimore and Carroll Park is historic Pigtown. A diverse neighborhood.

We have green spaces, rain barrel-watered vegetable gardens, pocket parks, and our streets are lined with trees and planters.

In Carroll Park is a fitness trail, exercise equipment, a skateboard park, Carroll Mansion, a children’s garden, sports fields, a field house, and apple, plum, cherry and black walnut trees. Some of Maryland’s oldest trees are in Carroll Park.

The Pigtown community partners with the Parks & People Foundation, the Baltimore City Department of Recreation & Parks, Pigtown Main Street, Citizens of Pigtown, Tot Lot advocates, and Friends of Carroll Park organizations to keep trees trimmed and storm drains cleared. I love life in Pigtown.



HUNDREDS OF TREES TO BE PLANTED IN PIGTOWN

A three-year plan of greening and cleaning.

“What’s going on in Pigtown these days? A lot of tree planting,” said Sherry Scible, Treasurer of Citizens of Pigtown and Co-Chair of the Greening Committee. “It’s great news,” she said, “because Pigtown did not have many trees at all.” Thanks to the efforts of Parks & People and Tree Baltimore, with support from Exelon and the Chesapeake Bay Trust, approximately 810 trees will be planted over a 3-year period in Pigtown, Barre Circle and Carroll-Camden Industrial area. Parks & People will be working hard to plant trees throughout Watershed 263 neighborhoods between 2014 and 2016, and the planting began in Pigtown.

Like most large metropolitan areas, large portions of Baltimore are “heat islands,” where air and surface temperatures are higher than surrounding suburban and rural areas. “Pigtown is a heat island,” said Ms. Scible. According to the EPA, “[t]he annual mean air temperature of a city with 1 million people or more can be 1.8–5.4°F warmer than its surroundings. In the evening, the difference can be as high as 22°F.” Heat islands can increase peak energy demand, air conditioning costs, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, noise pollution, heat-related illness and mortality, and depletion of water quality. There are several strategies for dealing with heat island effects, including green roofs, reflective roofs, and increasing the natural tree and vegetation cover.

“People are very excited about this,” said Ms. Scible, “It’s already made a difference.” The three-year tree planting plan began in the spring of this year, when 80 trees were planted in Pigtown. In September, volunteers from the community, Ernst & Young, CSX Corp., and ACTrees worked with Parks & People and Citizens of Pigtown to plant 46 more trees, sweep streets and sidewalks, and clean out storm drains along Washington Boulevard, Pigtown’s main street. Another tree planting is slated for later this fall.

“Planting trees is a process,” Ms. Scible said. “So much work goes into what Parks & People is doing. We could not have done it without them.” There is outreach to the community, coordinating Miss Utility, working with the city with permits, and actually getting the new tree pits cut and old ones cleared out and enlarged, organizing volunteers for planting. Ms. Scible pounded the pavement herself, going door to door handing out flyers to all the residents.

Community leaders can see the community beginning to step up and take care of the tree pits, which both improves the look of the neighborhood and gets neighbors to participate in its stewardship. They hope that the young people will get involved and help take care of the trees too. “We have community gardens,” Ms. Scible said, “and the kids helped plant them. Now they come by occasionally and can see how the plants are growing. They helped create the garden and they see it blooming.” The nonprofit business revitalization program Pigtown Main Street held a “Bloom the Boulevard” event in the spring as well, pruning and mulching the trees and cleaning up trash. “They’re part of it too,” Ms. Scible said. “It all works together.” There is no doubt that the result will be a cleaner, greener, healthier and happier Pigtown.

To learn proper maintenance and care for new trees, [email John Tracy](#) at Parks & People or call John at 410-448-5663 ext. 122.



Tree Plantings Coming Up

Saturday, October 11, 2014

What CARE planting with JHU
 When 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM
 Where CARE – 500 N Madeira St.

Saturday, October 18, 2014

What CARE planting
 When 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
 Where CARE – 200 N. Duncan St.

Friday, October 24, 2014

What SRUS planting (40-60 trees)
 When 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (tentative)
 Where Maisel St.

Saturday, November 1, 2014

What SRUS planting (40-60 trees)
 When 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (tentative)
 Where Middle Branch Park

Saturday, November 15, 2014

What Tree planting in Harlem Park
 When 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (tentative)
 Where Harlem Park

Saturday, November 22, 2014

What TreeUp! tailgate planting
 When 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (tentative)
 Where Ridgley's Delight

Saturday, December 6, 2014

What Tree planting: Sandtown-Winchester
 When 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (tentative)
 Where Sandtown-Winchester

To volunteer or for additional information, [email Kelly MacBride-Gill](#) at Parks & People or call Kelly at 410-468-5663 ext. 111.

POWER IN DIRT IS THE PLACE TO GET STARTED TRANSFORMING VACANT LOTS

A Baltimore City initiative to revitalize vacant lots transitions to Parks & People.

If city residents want to make their neighborhood a cleaner and greener place to live, work and play. Power in Dirt is the place to get started.

Launched in August 2011, Power in Dirt is a Mayoral initiative operated by Parks & People and the Baltimore City Dept. of Housing & Community Development that empowers communities to adopt city-owned vacant lots and turn them into community-managed open green spaces. Power in Dirt makes information about vacant lots available to the public, provides a streamlined process to gain legal right-of-entry onto vacant lots through adoption, includes a flexible and friendly adoption agreement to address all the different ways community open space can be used, and facilitates resident access to water for their lots.

“To turn a vacant lot into a garden or open green space, most community groups don’t know what to do first,” said Ashe Smith, Parks & People’s Community Greening Coordinator. “The first thing is to determine how they can access the land.”



CUPs Coffeehouse Lot
31 S. Arlington Ave.

cupscoffeehouse.org

Power in Dirt can help communities adopt city-owned vacant lots and can also help communities gain access to privately-owned vacant lots. Other support and access to resources is also provided by Parks & People, such as technical assistance through free or low-cost trainings, (including community organizing, project development, and general landscape design), troubleshooting advice on site-specific issues, skill-building workshops on rain garden maintenance, raised bed construction, etc.

Financial and in-kind resources are available for community-led clean and green projects through [Parks & People’s community grants programs](#), such as Neighborhood Greening Grants and the Garden Irrigation Fund. The [Community Greening Resource Network \(CGRN\)](#) is a program that assists individuals, community gardens, schools and green spaces throughout Baltimore City for a nominal membership fee of \$20 per year. CGRN distributes plant materials and garden supplies to members, hosts several workshops and plant giveaway days each year, and lends out gardening tools from its five tool libraries. Parks & People can also refer and connect groups to other resources and provide information about government or partner organization services that can reduce project costs.

Parks & People has helped support Power in Dirt from the beginning by funding vacant lot transformations with its neighborhood greening grants, and more. Now, three years and more than 1,000 adopted vacant lots later, the city is transitioning the community outreach and technical assistant aspects of the Power in Dirt program to Parks & People.

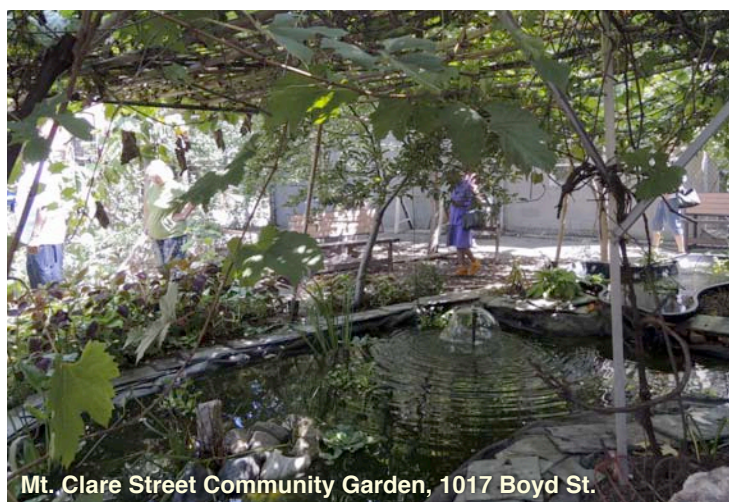


Pigtown Food for Thought, corner of Carroll and Ostend Sts.

www.facebook.com/PigtownFoodForThought

As part of the new arrangement, Parks & People is performing all of the site assistance on the city-owned vacant lots, and assessments, visiting each site to determine how the community groups or individuals are maintaining the spaces under their adoption agreements. “It is no small undertaking with about 1,000 adopted lots citywide, but it gives us the opportunity to work with community groups that are struggling,” said Mr. Smith. “People are very ambitious with their Adopt-a-Lots and sometimes life gets in the way. If community participation and maintenance of the space begins to fade, community groups have one year to bring their lot back up to a maintained status, and it gives us that year to work with them, see what they want to do, and after that year, we do the site assessments again.”

“People often look at the vacant lots in their neighborhood as one big project,” Mr. Smith said, “But if you’re trying your first community greening project, it’s easier to start small. Remember, urban gardeners: weeds grow faster in the city due to increased CO2 levels. So start small and grow strategically for best results.”



Mt. Clare Street Community Garden, 1017 Boyd St.

mtclarestreetcommunitygarden.wordpress.com

MOWERS MISTAKE GARDEN FOR WEEDS

Community rallies to save the garden.

Two years ago, one of the vacant city-owned lots adopted in Watershed 263 became the Poppleton Children's Garden. Located at 14-22 N. Schroeder Street in Poppleton, the garden was established under the city's Adopt-a-Lot program by a couple of enthusiastic young people from the JHU School of Public Health (see the article on p.3, [Watershed News 2013 Issue No. 3](#)), who encouraged at least 15 neighborhood kids and their parents to participate in clearing, fertilizing and planting a 16' x 24' vegetable bed. However, they started the garden before the city instituted its program providing community gardens access to water, so the gardeners had to carry in buckets of water from home. With such a significant limitation, they decided to adopt only a portion of the lot, the most they could maintain. Then one day last year, someone arranged for the non-adopted area to be mowed. The mowers didn't realize part of the lot was a garden, so they mowed everything. Every plant was mowed to the ground.

The story has a happy ending, though. In support of the Poppleton children who had worked so hard on the garden, friends and neighbors from the entire Baltimore greening community came together, held a small fundraiser for the garden, and replanted all the fall crops with plants they had left over from their own gardens. To ensure that it didn't happen again, the city changed the adoption agreement to require signage on city-owned adopted lots. And Parks & People held a Power in Dirt sign-making event to help communities get the signs made. This year, Parks & People obtained grant funding from MECU and the Baltimore Office of Promotion of the Arts to purchase equipment and materials for sturdier and longer-lasting garden signs. At least 50 gardens signs were constructed in a Power in Dirt event co-hosted by the Druid Heights Community Development Corporation in August.

Some of the many benefits of transforming vacant lots.

Environmental Benefits

- **Cleaner water:** Green spaces filter rain water, reducing storm water runoff, making the Baltimore Harbor cleaner.
- **Cleaner air:** Trees and plants process CO2 and produce oxygen, helping residents to breathe easier.
- **Habitat for wildlife:** Pollinators and wildlife find cover and places to rest in urban green spaces.

Social Benefits

- **Local solutions to community issues:** Green spaces designed by and for a community can transform nuisance properties into solutions to neighborhood issues.
- **Community connections:** Green spaces are gathering places and spaces where neighbors can work together to improve shared spaces, encouraging mutual ownership and community investment.
- **Educational opportunities:** Knowledge and skills are shared through hands-on greening activities.
- **Sense of safety and lower crime:** Residents feel safer in greener communities and are more likely to spend time outside. Well-tended spaces attract attention, which can help reduce crime.

Economic Benefits

- **Business benefits:** Greener neighborhoods encourage shoppers to spend more time and money in local businesses and can increase property values.
- **Lower cooling and heating bills:** Trees contribute to heat island reduction, which makes properties near trees cooler in summer and warmer in winter.
- **Improved property values:** Homes located next to a well-tended community managed open space can increase in value up to nine percent when sold.



SOUTHWEST BALTIMORE CHARTER SCHOOL UNDERTAKES 3 PHASE GREENING PROJECT

What once was nothing but asphalt will soon be an amazing green space.

[Southwest Baltimore Charter School \(SBCS\)](#) was built in 1967. “It was, and still is, encased in asphalt,” said Marilyn Powel, the school’s Director of Development & Special Projects. The school is located right next door to Carroll Park, and they have made good use of the natural resource over the years, but SBCS is an expeditionary learning charter school - a non-traditional approach of academically rigorous experiences that are marked by purposeful learning, challenge, collaboration, and perseverance - the teachers and students use the outdoors in a big way as part of their curriculum. To provide the outdoor experience so vital to the program and to address storm water runoff into the watershed as well, the school started looking into asphalt removal.

A grant from the Neighborhood Design Center kickstarted the project, providing the talents of Stephanie Tuite, a green landscape designer and civil engineer with Fisher, Collins & Carter, Inc., who donated her time to create a comprehensive landscape design for the school grounds. With a landscape design in hand, SBCS was able to move the project forward. Parks & People has been the Project Management team. Funding is through the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund Capital Improvement Grant of the MD Department of Natural Resources.

The work will be done in three phases: Phase 1 involved the street frontage along Herkimer Street, with new or expanded tree pits, new trees, and landscaping in the opened tree pits. That work has been done. Watering and maintenance is taken care of by Parks & People with the help of the students.

Phase 2 involves the removal of 4,000 sq.ft. of asphalt and the installation of an outdoor study area, a rain garden to filter storm water, and other work in the southwest corner adjacent to the park and around the modular classroom. The contractor for that work has been selected, and the work is being scheduled at this time.



An interesting note: The current plan for the outdoor study area is to utilize boulders from the 26th Street road collapse last spring. “They are big enough to crush a pickup truck,” said Bill Pickens, one of Parks & People’s Green Infrastructure Project Managers. “It will involve major equipment to move them.”

Phase 3 will involve the continued removal of the asphalt, redesign of the Carey St. entrance, installation of a rain garden for storm water filtering on the parking area, and other improvements adjacent to Carey Street. This phase of the project has not yet been finalized. It is tentatively planned for the summer of 2015.

“Everybody involved wants to get the work done as soon as possible,” said Mr. Pickens, “but the key is to get it done properly and safely. We have to work around the school faithfully. And we have to worry about coming up against winter weather. There are a lot of things to balance in this project. But primary is the safety of the students and the safety of workers.”

“Parks & People has already done a lot of tree removal and garbage removal,” Ms. Powel said, “they organized streetscape improvements and planted 15 red maples.” Over the course of the project, Parks & People will be planting 150 more trees in the community. “We will have beautiful green spaces and fantastic adventures for children and adults. SBCS has crews - it’s a lot like homeroom, except in expeditionary learning they’re called crews - and they get together every day and talk about what’s going on in their lives. Our crews will get a lot of use out of the outside classroom areas. The back courtyard will become a space for athletic activities, we’ll have a vegetable garden and a container garden, with flowers and other kinds of living plants. We have all sorts of wonderful plans. We’re ready to go.”

BACK TO SCHOOL AT FRANKLIN SQUARE ELEMENTARY-MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Green Team hits the ground running with a renewed commitment to going green.

Cheryl Owens came to teach at Franklin Square Elementary-Middle School in April 2014 and immediately joined the school's Green Team. "I've been doing a lot of research and going to different professional development programs to get more acquainted with what greening actually is, because it's definitely more than recycling," Ms. Owens said.

"More teachers are getting involved every year," said Robert Marable, Community School Coordinator for Franklin Square since 2012, who acts as a liaison between the school, students, parents, other community members, and various community and greening resource organizations. "This year, Ms. Owens is going to be the coordinator for the Green Team." Among other things, the team picks up trash and recycles every day. "We all share a vision for the future for a greener community," Mr. Marable said.

Student members of the Green Team have been meeting regularly since school started. Or as Ms. Owens calls them, her "scholars," who range from 3rd grade to 8th grade. "I don't do anything without it being student-led and student-driven," said Ms. Owens, "because we're trying to build stewardship among our scholars." One of the projects the scholars want to undertake is to make signs to be posted throughout the community declaring it a Trash Free Zone. "Our children are greening ambassadors to the community, taking home and sharing what they've learned about trash, recycling, composting, and healthy living, because once you build the stewardship, it's there," Ms. Owens said.

Parks & People, having worked in Watershed 263 for many years, has a long history of supporting Franklin Square Elementary-Middle School. "We've removed concrete and asphalt and planted grass," noted Mr. Marable, "We've repurposed the back of the school, creating a green space. We established an outdoor reading circle. We also have one area devoted to a habitat garden, which is the habitat in its actual state. We have a composting area, a community garden." The list of projects goes on.

"This year, we are looking to build some birdhouses with our kindergarten class that will be placed in a nearby community park. We will do cleaning projects in and around the school, storm drain identification. We want people to understand that the trash they toss into a storm drain goes directly into the Middle Branch Harbor and out to the Bay. We want our scholars to continue to learn about our green environment," Ms. Owens said. "We're going to basically attack the environmental literacy mandate from the State of Maryland so we are able to make far-reaching changes, not only to our school, but throughout our whole community."

The Green Team is also working hard to grow food in their Community Garden. The neighborhood is currently a food desert (where healthy food options are not readily available) and a food swamp (with too many unhealthy food options). Food harvested in the Community Garden is shared with neighborhood families. As more community members get involved, the greater the harvest, and more community members will be able to eat fresh fruits and vegetables.

"In the Community Garden, we talk about growing food, how to cook what we grow, health benefits to fresh food," said Mr. Marable, "to change attitudes about healthy living."

"The Green Team aims to change the culture and the mindset of our scholars, their peers, their parents and the community," Ms. Owen agreed, "to be more positive and caring about their environment."



'LOTS OF ART' UNITING FORCES IN SOWEBO

by Biff Browning, Vice President of the Union Square Community Association

The neighborhoods of SOWEBO sit in the center of Watershed 263, a 930-acre storm drain area in west and southwest Baltimore City, where creeks and streams unite to form the much larger Gwynns Falls that develops and powers the middle branch of the Patapsco River. Together these individual sources unite to form something more powerful than the sum of their parts. In this spirit, the Lots of Art initiative was formed. Started in 2012, it is a multi-part public art/performance spaces initiative that sprang forth from a similar convergence of efforts in the Union Square, Hollins-Roundhouse, and Franklin Square communities. Working in partnership with the Neighborhood Design Center (NDC), Bon Secours Community Works Clean & Green Program, the Watershed 263 Project, and Parks & People, the project began with initial funding from Parks & People and the Weed & Seed Program at Bon Secours.

The goal of the Lots of Art Initiative is to transform vacant and blighted lots into positive spaces, to inspire neighborhood residents and visitors with creative design and use in these formerly negative spaces, to expose neighborhood residents and visitors to local and regional artists, to engage neighborhood residents and visitors through interactive artistic sessions during seasonal performance events, and to unite our communities around shared innovative spaces and common experiences.

Currently, there are seven different projects encompassing 76 lots in Baltimore City, and Lots of Art is about to undertake its largest project yet in both size and scope on Mount St. between Baltimore and Fayette Streets. The multi-phase design includes plans for a regional library, the "Charm City Circus," a market square, a community orchard, a chess park, and an open space multi-use field. The library will include space for a senior center, workforce development programs, and after-school programs "The Charm City Circus" is a collaboration between community organizations and a group of local aerialists, stilt walkers, clowns, and circus school instructors organized by local artist Kristen Fabor, who is leading this effort. The orchard will be comprised of fruit and nut trees whose bounty will be used as a basis for a neighborhood worker-owned cooperative which will produce jams, jellies, nut butters, and other products to be sold on the market square or at nearby farmers' markets. The chess park and open space multi-use field will serve as public spaces for residents to exercise their bodies and minds. The plan has been adopted by the Southwest Partnership as part of its master plan for the area and implementation efforts are underway by Bon Secours Community Works in coordination with Baltimore City.

The future holds additional projects to include a butterfly sculpture garden, a musical performance space, and a neighborhood picnic and cookout area. Like the tiny stream that merges with other water sources to create the Patapsco River, Lots of Art hopes its community projects will combine with the efforts of other communities in Baltimore and throughout the region uniting into a much more powerful movement for change.

