

Free Community Newspaper

Pike Pulse

Helping
Build Our
Community

February 3, 2021

#14

Our Pillars of Engagement
with Pike Township



Chief Trag's Front Page Corner COVID Vaccine Information



Fire Chief
Chris Tragesser

As the COVID vaccine starts to be released to the general public, we at Pike Fire wanted to give you information about the vaccine so you can

make a qualified decision on whether this is right for you.

Currently the United States has two different vaccines that are approved by the FDA and are available for administration. Both vaccines (Moderna and Pfizer) require 2 shots either 21 days (Pfizer) or 28 days (Moderna) apart.

The vaccine allows our body to create a replica of one small, harmless piece of the virus called the "spike protein". The spike protein is what allows the virus to attach to our cells. Exposing the body to this inactive spike protein allows our immune system to create and build up our immune defense system. If a vaccinated person is ever exposed to the virus, the body will be able to create an immune response and destroy the virus before it can attach to the person's cells. You can, however, still be a carrier, so

you need to wear a mask until enough of the population has been vaccinated. A double mask or N95 mask worn is about 90% effective at preventing you from getting the virus.

The vaccine rollout started in Indiana right before the holidays. The first round of vaccines were administered to front-line workers such as hospital employees, long-term care facility workers, firefighters, and EMTs. As of January 13th, those over 70 years of age were allowed to start signing up to receive their COVID-19 vaccine.

The vaccine has been offered to those who wish to receive it here at Pike Township Fire Department (PTFD). Most firefighters who have gotten the vaccine have already received their second dose. Our Health and Safety Officer, Sarah Issler, has been tracking all firefighters who received the vaccine and any side effects that they might have experienced. Side effects have

been minimal, such as sore arms at the injection site and some brief flu-like symptoms after the second dose.

If you do receive the COVID-19 vaccine it is still recommended to social



Continued on page 2

Pike Township is Safer

Edited from a Fox59.com article dated 08-18-2020 —

Note from the editor: Why are we printing this August '20 article in February '21? ... It's good law enforcement news, and we are going to share more law enforcement news in the future. Our Northwest Indianapolis Police Department never stops working to protect us, but they always need our help. Look for more articles about how our NW IMPD keeps us safe. Amazing things are happening! And be sure to watch out for your neighbors. Wave when you can. Look on page 5 for more ways to help.

The combination of more IMPD and community group presence on the northwest side of Indianapolis is driving crime out of neighborhoods.

That area is experiencing a 12% decrease in violent crimes, like homicides, robberies and rape, over last year.

"I think it's more important than data or anything else that people who live here, feel safe," IMPD's Northwest District **Commander Lorenzo Lewis** said during an interview. "We've gotten feedback from numerous people in that area that things feel a lot better."

For about two weeks, the City of Peace Coalition, along with other neighborhood organizations, have increased the amount of time and energy they are putting into foot patrols and other crime prevention efforts on the northwest side.

"I don't want to mislead people and think it's just us, cause it's not," **Elder David Coatie, co-founder of Indy TenPoint** and member of the **City of Peace Coalition**, said. "It's everybody."

Using an Indy TenPoint model, some group members are finding success through more engagement with neighbors and more visibility.

"When you have increased patrols by IMPD, when you have increased presence community organizations, when you have increased presence by neighbors who would not typically engage but then get engaged, that's the best equation you can have," Coatie said.

As an IMPD Chaplain and assistant pastor, Coatie's personally went to 400 homicide victims' funerals in a six year period. Preventing crime is a personal mission to him.

"I don't want to see any more African American males go to jail or go to the morgue," Coatie said.

Back on August 7, after the City of Peace Coalition's peace walk wrapped up near 28th Street and Dr. MLK Jr. Street, some sort of large fight broke out in the Family Dollar area. Coatie recalls a man who said he had a license to carry went to get a gun.

"I said, 'Well that doesn't give you that right to have that gun here in a charged scenario where, out of fear, you could shoot somebody,'" Coatie explained. "It just got very testy from there."

Fortunately, the man decided to put his gun away and Coatie

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Free Community Newspaper

PikePulse

Our mission is to help build a stronger sense of community by keeping our fingers on the pulse of Pike Township and publishing positive, upbeat, and relevant news.

Pike Pulse is the only free newspaper in Pike Township that is delivered by the US Postal Service twice a month to every residential and business address.

Pike Pulse Pillars of Engagement



I. Cultural Pillar — where we are from

- Stories about Pike residents
- Stories celebrating our diverse cultures
- Stories highlighting opportunities

II. Social Pillar — how we connect

- Spotlight groups and organizations
- Communicate celebrations for Veterans
- Information about our religious diversity
- Neighborhood Associations news
- Health updates
- Art exhibits and performances
- Youth and adult athletic updates
- Academic celebrations

III. Economic Pillar — how we make a living

- Commercial development
- Business-to-Business communications
- Business-to-Consumer communications
- Pike job openings
- Legislative and township development
- Community development
- Pike Business Park news

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COVID Vaccine continued from page 1

distance and wear masks until herd immunity is acquired. While the vaccine is 95% effective, it is still unsure if the vaccine will just reduce COVID symptoms if acquired or protect you from getting it at all.

Common COVID-19 Vaccine questions:

1. Can I get COVID from the vaccine?

No, mRNA vaccines do not use the live virus that causes COVID-19

2. When is the vaccine available for my age group? How do I get it?

Visit ourshot.in.gov (or call 211) to find out when the vaccine is available for your age group. You can find out where to go and what to do at the same time.

3. If I already have had COVID-19 should I still get the vaccine?

Antibodies from COVID can last anywhere in the body for 3 to 8 months. It is still a good idea to get the vaccine even if you have gotten COVID.

We know there is a lot of confusing information out there about the COVID-19 vaccine. We hope this information helps inform your decision on the vaccine. As much as we want this pandemic to be over, it's important to remember to still social distance, wear a mask, and make smart choices. ▲

Information gathered from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website and Indiana State Department of Health.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>

<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/vaccine/index.htm>



Pike Township Trustee's Office Annette M. Johnson Trustee



Office Hours
8:30-4:30
Monday – Friday
5665 Lafayette Road Suite C
Indianapolis IN. 46254
317-291-5801
Due to COVID-19
Call Office for Appointment

Pike is Safer continued from page 1

said he was grateful the situation de-escalated.

“Ironically as the scene kind of broke down, I went back and talked to him in private, and he said, ‘Man I’m so glad you were here,’” Coatie recalled.

Conversations and decisions like that will drive the homicide rate down. Coatie and Lewis are sure of that.

“None of us are against guns; the problem is having guns in the wrong hands.

That's the main thing,” Lewis said.

The increased patrols in “hot spot” areas identified by IMPD officers are part of the plan the City of Peace Coalition presented to Mayor Joe Hogsett’s administration earlier this summer.

“We’re not there to shut the whole block down or anything like that, but we’re there to be visible and to make people feel safe,” Lewis said. ▲

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Pike Township and Haiti

Note from Brocky Brown, Editor of Pike Pulse: I recently interviewed Northwest Haiti Christian Mission's Executive Director, Sam Guilliams, to find out more about the work this mission, headquartered at 7301 North Georgetown Rd., Ste. 190, does in Haiti. Sam and his wife have dedicated their lives to this effort. The mission's success is inspiring. Sam wrote the following article.



Sam Guilliams
Executive Director

Did you know that Haitian Kreyol is one of the many languages you hear spoken inside grocery stores, at restaurants and in schools throughout Pike Township? Are

you aware that Pike Township has a direct connection to the Northwest Zone of Haiti? For over 40 years, Northwest Haiti Christian Mission (NWHCM) has worked to alleviate physical and spiritual poverty in Haiti's poorest zone, and NWHCM is proud to call Pike Township the home of its US Headquarters.

If you were to walk through the mission gates on any given day, you would pass hundreds of kids eating a **nutritious lunch** in between classes at **school**. Peak around the next corner, and you might catch a glimpse of pregnant mothers sitting in the **birthing center**, waiting for their newborns to arrive. Walk a little further, and you'll see dozens of people waiting to visit the **doctor** and for their turn to receive **medicines from the pharmacy**.

By now, one of the kids living in the **children's home** will surely have grabbed your hand and asked your name. As you glance over toward a place called, the Miriam Center, you will find the smiling faces of a cherished **special-needs community**. Come on the right day, and you'll witness dozens of other special-needs kids receiving regular outpatient **physical therapy**. Walk a little

further, and you'll be greeted by a festive group of folks, living out their golden years, at the **elderly care** facility.

This initial stroll through Northwest Haiti Christian Mission's gates is just the beginning of your visit. There are many churches scattered around the Northwest countryside that are the centers of **vibrant Christian Haitian worshipping communities** that NWHCM works with and supports.

All of this is made possible because of **generous people** here in the US, sponsoring programs, building facilities, and serving on **mission trips** every year. Here are some amazing statistics that show how far a little financial help can go:

- **\$1,000** pays for **11 babies** to be born in a clean place.
- **\$400** pays for a child with **special needs** to receive care for a month.
- **\$150** pays for **10 patients** to see a doctor and receive medicine.
- **\$50** pays for a child to go to **school and eat** for a month.

Go to www.nwhcm.org, or on **Facebook @NWHCM** to learn more about Northwest Haiti Christian Mission.

We serve the poorest zone of the poorest country on our half of the planet. Find out how you can help alleviate the pain of physical and spiritual poverty. We welcome you to sign up for an opportunity to travel to Haiti and join the work personally.

It will change your life. ▲

Shouldn't every kid in the neighborhood have clean water? This is Cassandra. She may not live next door, but she is your neighbor. Northwest Haiti Christian Mission calls Pike Township home and has served our neighbors in Haiti for over 40 years. We're raising \$20,000 to make sure Haitian kids, like Cassandra, have clean water this Christmas. Can you help? Visit nwhcm.org/water Or send a donation to NWHCM 7301 N Georgetown Rd (Ste 190) Indianapolis IN 46268



This \$20,000 solar powered, self-contained microbiological water purification system, called the SunSpring Hybrid, can produce up to 20,000 liters per day for 10 years. It treats well water, surface water, and GWUDI (ground water under the direct influence of surface water). It reduces debilitating water-borne diseases in most fresh water. It is made by a company in Colorado.

Sam Gulliams, Exec. Dir. of NWHCM, shared they already have four units up and running in Haiti. They need one more to provide clean water for their new birthing center.

Sam also shared they have supporters nationwide, but wanted to see if Pike Township residents would help with this specific request. ▲



What do bees do in the winter?

by Christy Krieg,
Pike Pulse nature reporter



Christy Krieg

In pure pandemic form, I started a new hobby in 2020: **keeping honeybees**. I purchased used Langstroth hive equipment from a fellow Pike Township resident and picked up my “nucleus” in June. A nucleus, or “nuc,” consists of a queen bee, some worker bees and brood, and five frames with a bit of honey. Now, in pure new beekeeper form, I experience anxiety about the colony’s winter survival.

To learn more about beekeeping, I attended classes, joined Facebook groups, read books, watched YouTube videos and even had a visit from the Indiana State Apiarist! To help them survive, I fed the bees concentrated sugar water and checked on them every two weeks. Despite this preparation, my new hive has only a 50% chance of survival this first winter, with threats from diseases, freezing, starvation, and excess condensation in the hive.

Honeybees do not hibernate! All year ‘round, the

female worker bees tend to the queen and support her brood in their capped, orderly, hexagonal cells. The “brood” consists of eggs that become larvae, which develop into bees.

An important winter challenge is maintaining hive cluster temperature close to 95 °F. The brood will fail to thrive if the temperature in their cells drops below 90 °F. The worker bees generate heat by shivering their bodies, using stored honey as fuel. Each hive requires approximately 80lb of honey to get through a standard Midwestern winter.

While honeybees are important pollinators of food crops, they were actually imported from Europe to Eastern North America in the early 1600s. Prior to that, at least 4,000 species of native bees lived on this continent. They are very different from honeybees.

The life cycle of native bees is different. Most of them die in early winter. Depending on the species, hibernating queens and some larvae survive year-to-

year below ground or in nest cavi-

ties. Unlike honeybees, native bees don’t have food stores to defend, and are not aggressive. 70% of native bee species nest underground, while the other 30% are cavity dwellers. Notably, native bees are up to three times more efficient at pollination.

Unlike keeping a honeybee hive, supporting native bees is easy, inexpensive, and stress free! To create a bee-friendly habitat in Pike Township, do this:

First, create nesting sites:

- Establish a permanent brush pile
- Leave tree trunks and stumps to decay naturally
- Instead of buying mulch, let leaf litter rest on perennial beds through winter
- Create bare sunny spots where bees can burrow into the ground



Courtesy of Xerces Society

Second, plant for pollinators!

Native bees are attracted to the blossom shapes, colors, pollen and nectar of native plants, which are easy to grow and maintain.

Consider planting these native flowers: coneflower, penstemon, goldenrod, milkweed, ninebark and many more.



Lisa Krieg

Also, install plants and shrubs with hollow stems for nesting and rearing of young, including hydrangea, joe pye weed, elderberry and raspberries. Native grasses are great, too!

Third, avoid pesticides and herbicides.

Pesticides are indiscriminate, killing both pests and beneficial insects. Herbicides kill some of the plants described above that benefit insects. They can also harm humans and pets.

Where do you get native plants?

Native plants are increasingly available at retail nurseries and seasonal sales sponsored by native plant societies, soil and water conservation districts, and master gardener groups. Find brick and mortar retailers through the Grow Indiana Natives program: GrowIndianaNatives.org.

For more information on creating habitat and choosing pollinator friendly plants, visit xerces.org and indiananativeplants.org

Spring will soon arrive, and I’ll learn whether my honeybee hive survived winter. But my consolation is that I KNOW the native bees will be back this year. ▲



Christy is moving the new nucleus frames to their new deep hive box

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Here's how you can help keep Pike Township safe.

See something - Say something

Call 911 to report something urgent:

An accident, a fire, an injury, a crime in progress, erratic (possibly drunk) driving, an illness needing immediate attention.

Call 317-327-3811 to report something suspicious:

1. Describe who or what you saw.
2. When you saw it.
3. Where it occurred.
4. Why you believe it's suspicious.

These non-urgent calls are about a crime not in progress, vandalism, theft or larceny, found property, threatening calls, runaways, missing persons, or other crime prevention information.



Glenn McDonald

Editor's note: We welcome another writer to *Pike Pulse*. Glenn McDonald is an ordained Presbyterian minister who has 42 years of congregational and workplace leadership experience. He is the author of ten books on discipleship and spiritual formation. He and Mary Sue have 4 children and 7 grandchildren. They enjoy living on a small farm with rescue horses in Pike Township.

What do you make your music with?

Yitzhak Perlman has enjoyed a lifelong love affair with the violin.

The native Israeli was first drawn to its sound at age three, when he was captivated by a classical music performance on the radio. Denied admission to a musical conservatory because he was too small to hold a real instrument, he nonetheless taught himself to play the violin by using a toy fiddle.

When he was four, he was stricken with polio. Today, at age 75, he still maneuvers by means of braces, crutches, and a motorized scooter.

In 1995, Perlman took the stage at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City. An article by Jack Reimer in the *Houston Chronicle* described that evening's events:

Perlman moved at his customary slow pace across the stage, took his seat alongside the orchestra, undid the clasps on his legs, placed the violin under his chin, and nodded to the conductor. The concert began.

Unfortunately, one of the four strings on Perlman's violin broke, snapping with a noise that sounded "like gunfire across the room." Standard operating procedure when a star violinist loses 25% of his instrument is to stop the show and procure a different violin.

Perlman, however, chose to continue playing. Is it possible to play a symphonic work with just



three strings? Perlman essentially modulated and re-composed the piece in his head.

At the end there was thunderous applause.

According to accounts, Perlman smiled and said to the audience, rather pensively: "You know, sometimes it is the artist's task to find out how much music you can still make with what you have left.

You can prepare all your life to make music on a violin that has four strings, but sometimes we end up with a three-stringed instrument. Or crippled legs. Or an empty bank account. Or someone who breaks our heart. Or unanswered prayers.

That's when our call is not to stop making music, but as Jack Reimer highlights with what Perlman did, it's to make music with what we have.

And if we ever feel making music ourselves is no longer possible? We can open ourselves fully to the music God has placed in us. ▲

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"Serving the Westside Community since 1997"

Tutus by TT

by Arnita Williams - Staff Reporter



Arnita Williams

Minority businesses continue to weather the storm of the coronavirus. Tutus by TT is no different. Tanesha Triplett, a black-owned small business in Pike Township, has been able to endure the wrath of the virus and is determined to keep her business operating, despite the challenges presented by COVID-19.

Tutus by TT is an interesting and unique business. "I've always been kind of an artsy-craftsy type of person, but I wanted to get into doing something to make little

girls feel special. And what's better than on your birthday to stand out with the best tutu or a different outfit, and feel beautiful in front of everyone?"

One day Tanesha made a

tutu for her cousin just for fun. Her cousin's smile inspired her, and she wanted to see that smile on every little girl. At that moment, she decided "Yeah, I gotta keep doing this."

Tanesha started her business in June, 2017, and posted a picture online of her first tutu. It began with co-workers, friends and family. By December, she added t-shirts and matching custom shoes to make a complete outfit.

Tanesha designs her tutus in a variety of colors, and stitches them by hand. Sometimes she uses her sewing machine to craft her creations.

When TT added t-shirts to her collection, she began offering

custom design services. Her customers would bring her a mock-up of their image, and TT would print the design on the t-shirt. Although her workshop is in her home, she plans to have a storefront in 2022.

Tanesha's customers range from newborns to 60-year olds (so far). She also sells purses and sunglasses for little girls, sunglasses for adults, along with lip gloss. She's transitioning into making kids' clothing.

Tanesha has been able to manage her business around COVID,

but she pointed out, "When the COVID first started, things slowed down. After two months, business picked back up and returned to normal. People still have birthdays and want to celebrate. So, it

hasn't been too terrible."

During the coronavirus, TT has been shipping most of her orders. But often, "I meet people at an open location, so they'll feel safe, generally at the Walgreens at 86th and Michigan Road, or Walmart, within Pike Township. If they prefer shipping, and if I have enough time in advance, I'll ship it."

It's interesting how TT chose her business name. "My first product, of course, was a tutu. My nieces, nephews, and goddaughter called me "TT." Then, my husband's last name is Triplett, and my name is "Tanesha," so it worked out as TT."

Tanesha plans to further expand

her product line as well as do community outreach with her business. This month, she plans to rollout "Tutu Amazing Girl of the Month." It will highlight girls who have done something outstanding within their community, at school, or anything she's done to inspire others.

TT also has the goal to work with the community as she aspires to have various types of programs to involve young girls. However, she's trying to figure out the best way to do that in the current COVID context. ▲

Website: www.tutusbytt.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/tutuandthingsbytt

Instagram: www.instagram.com/tutuandthingsbytt



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Thank you for your loyalty. We appreciate you.

Pike Township Real Estate 2020 — The Year in Review

by Tim Lord, Realtor

In my 18 years of selling real estate, this will be one of the most memorable and unique years ever.

In the early hours of December 1st, 2019, Susan Blair, President of Pike Township Residents Association sent me a text message. I did not look at it until later in the morning. She had driven by my brokerage office building and said there had been a fire. I felt helpless. I was in Connecticut visiting my sister for Thanksgiving and had not planned to be back in Indy for a couple more days. I texted Dan Baldini, the owner of the building and my landlord for my office suite. He verified the fire but said it was on the second floor and not near my suite. I am on the first floor on the other side of the building. I was somewhat relieved. What I did not count on was the smoke damage.

All 22 tenants had to vacate the building for a year while it was going through a complete rehab. Jonathan Kempler, Fire Marshall of the Pike Township Fire Department, said they had put a lot of water on the roof of the building. Most likely they had put so much water on the roof that there was a possibility there could be mold damage in the future. I had to make quick business decisions as to how I was going to run my business for 2020. I had been in this location, and office suite for 3 years. It was the perfect location and the office suite had suited me well. I wanted to go back after the year.

I decided to save what I could in the office and put it in a storage locker down the street. I decided to work out of my house for the year. Erika Wright, my associate, and I packed up what we could save. The restoration com-

pany ended up throwing all my office furniture away. It included a conference table, computers, TV's, 18 chairs, etc. My insurance covered my loss.

Actually, it turned out to be perfect timing. By March 2020, COVID19 restrictions had closed a lot of businesses. Fortunately, Realtors were considered an essential business. I figured it would be a slow year. I was wrong.

COVID19 was a game changer for Realtor marketing. Listing agents were doing live open houses on Zoom and Facebook. Virtual tours were now the in thing. Indiana Association of Realtors had new COVID19 disclosure forms that buyers, sellers and Realtors had to sign and fill out. I read where a listing agent had a drone virtual tour because the seller did not want anyone in the house for fear of COVID19.

The number of houses for sale in Pike Township bottomed out at about 40. That is a far cry from 1000 Pike Township houses on the market 10 years ago. About 59% of the houses sold in Pike Township in 2020 were sold at or above list price. The main reason was because there were very few houses for sale and plenty of buyers. Buyers were fighting over the good houses and bidding up the prices in order to succeed in getting the house. To top it off, interest rates were going below 3%, the lowest I have seen since I have been selling real estate.

Personally, I had three sales that were very unusual;

- I sold an inexpensive condo for \$5,000 over list price in 10 days.
- I sold 4 condos in one sale. It was a private sale where I joined the buyer and seller.
- I sold a nice 2 story, 3 bedroom and 2.5 bath house in Crooked Creek in 8 days with 23 showings and 5 offers.

My guess is that 2021 will be like 2020. There still will be a shortage of houses on the market. There will be plenty of buyers keeping prices high. It still will be a sellers market. Interest rates

will probably rise a little but still be a good deal.

On December 1, 2020, my building reopened, and I moved into my new suite. It took me about the whole month to get back to normal, but now I am there. Many changes have taken place in the building. It is more high tech than you would expect. I am still getting used to the lights turning off automatically when a room is not in use. A lot of the improvements have to do with new building and fire codes.

I am looking forward to what 2021 brings. ▲



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Sold in 10 days
for \$5,000 over
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The Newsletter for Pike Metropolitan School District



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MSD of Pike Township...a **P**assion to understand the world and the **P**ower to change it!



Excellence at Eagle Creek Elementary

"With the pandemic comes many challenges and many changes. The one thing that has remained consistent throughout this year is the dedication and compassion of our Eagle Creek teachers. Our teachers have faced obstacles and learned new tools for instruction and continued to remain strong and available for our students, families, and colleagues. They have worn many hats and worn them well. They say to surround yourself with good people; the Community (myself included) is blessed to be surrounded by these heroes!" — Principal Pam Guevara



"This year has been filled with challenges as we have tried to navigate learning in a pandemic. While this season has been difficult, our families have been amazing. Every day parents work tirelessly to ensure that their student is attending class and completing the tasks assigned by their teachers. Not only are they making sure students are present, they often find themselves taking on the role of a teacher as they try to assist their student in understanding academic content. Everyone works together. At times mothers and fathers are helping, then siblings, aunts, uncles, and even grandparents. They are all committed to helping students achieve in school while also trying to navigate their own lives. We are grateful for their help and appreciate all their hard work. As we continue on this journey, I look forward to continuing to work with our families. This year has proven the African proverb, 'It takes a village to raise a child.'" — Assistant Principal Ayanna Wilson-Coles



"During this year of constant change and uncertainty, the children here at Eagle Creek have been a daily inspiration to me. Change is not easy. Yet, I have watched our students adjust so quickly to this new way of life and schooling with smiles on their faces. This year, I have witnessed students become more responsible than ever before! Students now have their own "offices" and schedules, where they independently keep track of schedules and an assignment checklist — often along with assisting siblings and completing household chores. When faced with technology issues, students are so patient and often step up with solutions and ideas! My students have helped me see the positives of this last year. They have shifted my feelings from anxiety to amazement. Together we have overcome many obstacles and learned in ways we may never have thought possible. Look out future... Eagle Creek kids are ready for you!" — Teacher Lindley Owensby

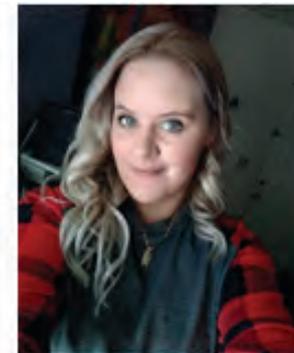
District Interpreters

We are beyond fortunate to have amazing interpreters in Pike dedicated to facilitating communication between our Spanish-speaking families and our schools.

Ms. Gonzalez, Ms. Guazzone, and Mr. Ramos regularly answer every-day questions, relay important information, assist with enrollments, registrations, and conferences, and translate newsletter documents and other vital communications.



Rosanna Gonzalez
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317-216-5209



Antonia Guazzone
PFG: 317-347-8534
LMS: 317-216-5055
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Samuel Ramos
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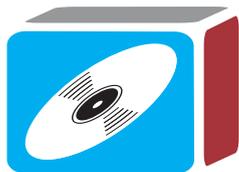
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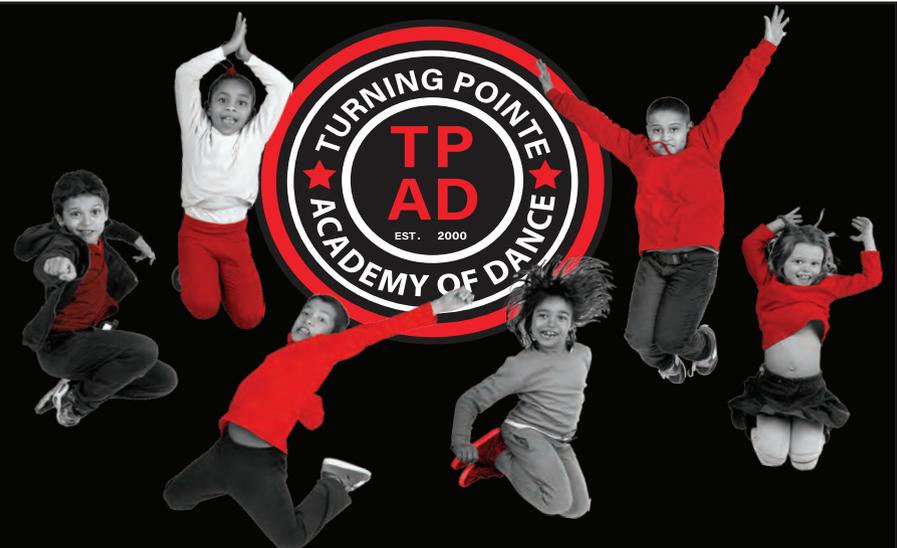


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Brickyard Ceramics and Crafts

by Arnita Williams -
Staff Reporter



Arnita Williams

Pike Township has inherited a business known internationally which adds to our proud heritage and history. It has been part of the "Pike family" for almost two decades.

Brickyard Ceramics and Crafts is part of the American Art Clay Company (AMACO®). They reached their 100th anniversary in 2019, while Brickyard Ceramics and Crafts had their 40th anniversary in 2020, both without celebration due to COVID.

What began as a family-owned company, headquartered in Indianapolis in 1919, AMACO® manufactures pottery wheels, equipment, clay and glazes, tools, and equipment (kilns, extruders, and slab rollers). They also manufacture and sell Brent® products, the brand name of the designer and builder of pottery wheels, a company, and product the company purchased from the Robert Brent Corporation in 1977.

Robert Brent was an entrepreneur and ceramic artist. He left a legacy of having the best pottery wheel in the industry. It is the "gold" standard for pottery wheels, which AMACO® manufactures today.

Brickyard Ceramics and Crafts (BCC) services schools, pottery businesses, and ceramic artists with what they need regarding equipment repair or installation. They also perform small international and domestic shipping, but AMACO® does the

bulk of it. It is located at 6060 Guion Road. AMACO®, the factory is also at this location.

Before the coronavirus, the ceramics facility offered training classes and workshops for teachers. They went to schools and taught classes or the school district would come to the facility.

LaRena "Chee Chee" Moore is the general manager of Brickyard Ceramics and Crafts and has been with the company 31 years. The company had been located across from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for 75 years, hence its name. She says, "Since moving to Guion Road in 2004, we've grown." The organization has a total of 170 employees. Seven employees work at Brickyard Ceramics and Crafts.

Chee Chee stated, "We help teachers further their education in working with clay because some of them don't get to work with clay when they're getting their degrees. They're more into 2D instead of 3D art." If they plan to teach art at elementary school level, "... they must be well-rounded. So, if they have not taken ceramics, or not had much ceramic art instruction, we assist them with getting that experience."

If you're someone who would like to explore and experiment with

clay and ceramics, there are books and tutorials on ceramic-making techniques, DVDs, guides, pictorials, videos, diagrams, and a one-stop-shop to purchase tools, kits, charts, equipment, and supplies on their website. You can also pick-up tips on bead-making.

Brickyard Ceramics and Crafts also offers specialty workshops, classes, kiln and raku firings, and a beautiful gallery of art that revolves four times a year. Feature artists are in the gallery during the year, which Chee Chee operates, and is generally open to the public, but has paused since the pandemic.



I asked Chee Chee if she has an artistic background? She said, "I took accounting and cabinetmaking in high school. Accounting was stressful. But I've always liked art." Chee Chee's uncle advised her to take an art class in between her business classes, which he said would relax her. She said, "I liked ceramics more than drawing, macramé, or painting, which I do. I've also taught ceramic classes, painting, hand-building, and carving in clay."

Since COVID, the ceramics outlet only offers curbside service. The company will continue social distancing. By going virtual people can continue to see the artists on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. ▲

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Drive down 56th Street and look at all the tubes. They're not going to stop anything from coming over there and hitting [a walker or rider]. Plus, with no solid barrier, the causeway trail [collects] glass, gravel, and everything. So, when you're riding a bike, you can get a flat tire. Cars drive by at 50-55 miles an hour. It's the most dangerous thing there is. It's sad because they did such a beautiful job on the rest of the trail, and then they just didn't finish it there.

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