

Southland Hills launches quarterly food drive

On August 16, the Towson Times reported that the cupboard was bare at the Assistance Center of Towson Churches, which has been feeding needy county families for more than two decades. The center reached out to its 48 member churches, asking for help so it could continue to serve the 300 or so people who come in for lunch five days a week. Things got so bad that the center had to put up a sign saying they couldn't feed people some days; the director told the paper that, in her 10 years there, the need had never been greater.

Neighborhood residents read the article and thought Southland Hills could help. Ann Rudolph coordinated an email that was sent out an email two weeks ago offering to deliver the food to the center if people wanted to drop canned goods and/or money to her home or to Cathy Berger's home on Dixie Drive. In a week's time, Ann & Cathy collected dozens of bags of food – enough to fill the back of an SUV. They delivered the bags to a very grateful staff at the end of August, before school started. Ann and Cathy also report that other neighborhoods had stepped up, too, because the shelves were full again.

Towson businesses have started their own drive, too, but staff fears the shelves will be bare again as the article recedes from memory. As a result, the neighborhood would like to have quarterly food drives to help the center. Details of where and when to drop off food will be coming over email or through this newsletter. We thank everyone for their donations, and look forward to continued food drives in the future. If you missed the drive, there will be another one held on Halloween. More details to come.

New School Opens

West Towson Elementary School opened last week to great fanfare. The new facility, which is on Charles Street across from the county's Board of Education, is a beautiful facility. It has expansive art rooms, science rooms, music rooms and a wonderful, bright lobby. It is also the county's first truly green school, built with recycled materials in a way that reduces stormwater runoff and other environmental pollutants. The school's policies are in keeping with the environmental mission: Principal Sue Hershfeld has been encouraging all students to ride the bus, cutting down on emissions from vehicles. Also, Westie, the school mascot, is encouraging children to be "green" from a young age.

The school wouldn't have happened without the hard work and urging of many Southland Hills residents as well as many of our West Towson neighbors, notably Cathi Forbes of Towson Families United. They worked tirelessly to make sure we would have a school of our own, instead of trailers attached to an existing facility.

And speaking of neighbors, our own Cathy Berger is president of West Towson Elementary's Parent-Teacher Association. With her at the helm, we are sure to have a pro-active PTA. And Cathy says that the PTA is open to everyone in the community, not just parents.



TOWSON
SWIM CLUB

Towson Swim Club Coming Soon – Dates to Watch...

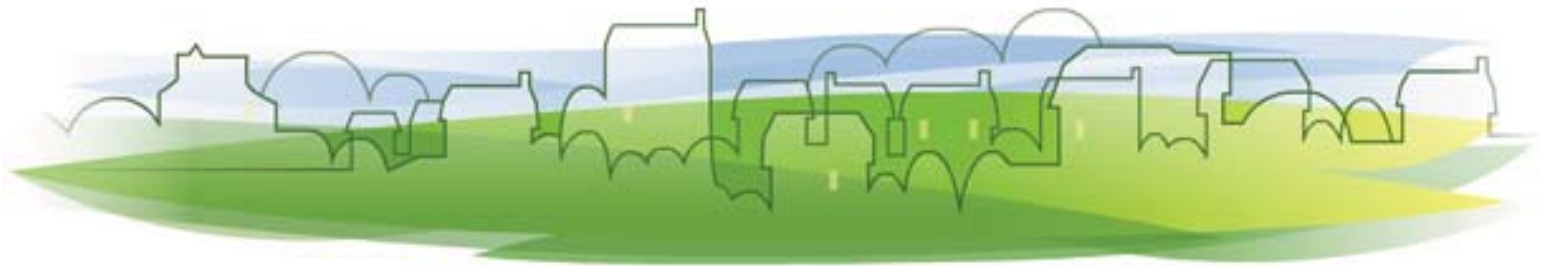
The Towson Swim Club is ready to move out of the planning stages and into the building stages.

This development is an exciting one, and it would not have happened without the support of so many neighborhood families. One third of Southland Hills families have signed up for a membership – and that includes not just families with young children but also empty-nesters who don't necessarily expect to use the facility, but put down their money as a show of support to build a neighborhood asset and gathering place.

Many residents' questions about the pool were answered on Sunday (9/12) night at an informational meeting hosted by the Towson Swim Club: how it will look, what days and hours it will be open, where the parking will be. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the folks who are running the pool operations. You can email them at info@towsonswimclub.com. In the past, although people have addressed questions to the Southland Hills board it is important to note that, while the board supports the pool, board members do not have all the answers and want to provide another option to be well informed.

As a reminder, the next Design Review Panel meeting is on Sept. 15, at 6 p.m. in the Jefferson Building, Room 104, 105. W. Chesapeake Ave. This meeting will be before the county's Design Review Panel. The panel's job is to approve the plan, or request modifications.

You are encouraged to attend. The DRP meeting is your opportunity to let the county know how you feel about the pool plan. It is the second DRP meeting; the pool committee has already incorporated many neighbors' concerns into the plan following the last meeting in July. **PLEASE CONSIDER ATTENDING TO LET THE COUNTY KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE PLANS FOR THE POOL AT THE OLD JAIL SITE.**



One Fun thing to do... actually, a few

It's true that school has started, but it's still warm enough outside to pretend it's still summer. And many of our favorite festival sites are doing just that as they continue their concert series and other outdoor activities into the fall.

Towson's famous Feet on the Street block party, which runs from 6:00 -9:30 on Friday evenings, will go until Sept. 24. Meanwhile, a little further down York Road, you can catch the Sounds of Summer at Belvedere Square for another couple of weeks on warm Friday evenings. Beach music band Sons of Pirates performs Sept. 10; Celtic rockers the Donegal Xpress take the stage Sept. 17.

Towson's farmers market is now on Thursdays from 10:45 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. That will continue almost until Thanksgiving – the week of Nov. 20.



Neighborhood census – you count!

The Southland Hills Improvement Association is considering undertaking a census. The board would like to know a little bit more about the neighbors. They would like to make sure they have accurate contact information for everyone so that all residents are invited to community events, kept abreast of safety issues and feel like they're part of what's going on here. Also, it would be helpful to know if there are elderly neighbors who need assistance from time to time and don't have family nearby to check on them. It would also help the board get information more quickly if someone new moves in so a board member can welcome them. Check this space for more information on the "wheres" and "whens" of the Southland Hills census.



Southland Hills Seeks Garden Committee

Do you have a green thumb? If so, please consider joining the neighborhood's garden committee. The board has been without a real garden committee since Nicole Nesbitt resigned as the head of it to become board president. The committee will be responsible for coordinating plantings in the public area as well as possibly creating additional community gardens.

One resident is interested in getting some land donated so the neighborhood could have a community garden like the one across from Towson Presbyterian Church. Other options might be available, too, but the board needs a committee to discuss those things.

If you're interested, contact AMY WELLING at welling76@msn.com.

Speaking of the Towson Presbyterian Church...

Our good neighbor, the Towson Presbyterian Church would like to remind all residents to please be sure to pick up after your dog if you are walking on the paths around the building. Also, please do not dump any lawn waste or debris in the area between the property and Highland Avenue. Recently the Church has been trying to deal with both of these issues and appreciates all your support!