

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

WINTER 2022 - 2023



thomas park
avondale

8TWELVE LENDING LIBRARY ADVANCES RACIAL EQUITY



Stop by the new lending library at the 8twelve Coalition office, 1424 S. Hoyt Ave. The coalition filled the library with books purchased through an Advancing Racial Equity Collection Development Grant from Indiana Humanities with funds from Lilly Endowment, Inc.

8twelve leaders selected books from a list of titles that address racial injustice and systemic racism. Titles — for all ages — include “Bringing Up Race: How to Raise a Kind Child in a Prejudiced World” and “About the American Church’s Complicity in Racism.” Several of the books have multiple copies, in case you want to hold a study with neighbors.

To check out books or for questions, email 8twelvecoalition@gmail.com.

NEIGHBOR SPOTLIGHTS



Meet Jeannetta Presley, 57, who has lived in the Thomas Park/Avondale neighborhood for three years. The native of Anderson, Indiana, said the word “community” means “coming together, working together, and trust.”

“We have a strong sense of community through our Thursday night dinners, which I have helped with since I moved here. You get to meet neighbors and help those in need,” said Presley, who attends Avondale United Methodist.

The community garden is another gathering place she appreciates. “I enjoy coming together to plant each season and tending to this neighborhood effort that feeds us.”

Her greatest hope for the neighborhood is the growth and expansion of the Common Market, a corner store at 900 W. 8th St. “We need more access to healthy food and the basics in this neighborhood. Many of us have to walk rough sidewalks to get to the bus to get to a grocery store,” she said. “I hope the Common Market continues to grow to offer more options so that people don’t have to get out and carry groceries so far to feed their families.”

Presley said she volunteers at Muncie Mission and works with Pastor Neil Kring to engage in outreach to homeless neighbors. She keeps an eye on her neighbors and looks forward to many more years in the Thomas Park/Avondale neighborhood.

WEATHERIZATION TIPS AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE

CHECK OUT THE FIVE TIPS BELOW TO BANISH DRAFTS AND SAFE ENERGY THIS WINTER

1. Lower your thermostat

Keep the thermostat at a lower temperature during the day (between 65-67-degrees), and then turn it down a few degrees before going to bed. If you're in the market for a new thermostat, consider a "smart" variety, which you can program to shift during different times of day and when you are gone.

2. Trade your Heater for a Rice Bag

Heaters absorb lots of energy and can be dangerous. If you are chilly, consider making and using a microwavable rice bag by sewing rice into a square cloth or simply putting rice into a pillowcase you tie off with a rubber band). Place the rice bag under or on top of the covers, and the heat from the rice bag will warm you for up to eight hours.

3. Hunt for Drafts

Inspect your attic access panel, windows, doors, and electrical box for openings that allow cold air into your home. Seal tight cracks with caulk, and use draft stoppers (rubber, foam or cloth) for other nooks and crannies. If you don't want to buy or sew draft stoppers, simply stuff towels or old clothes near drafty spots.

4. Turn off Lights and Appliances

Although it seems obvious, turning off lights or any unused electronics can be easily forgotten. Turn off lights, or TV's whenever you leave the room or even unplug your devices. This is an extra step that can sometimes go a long way. Some devices we have plugged into your homes 24/7 can also use energy when we don't even know it!

5. Turn down your Water Heater

Most manufacturers set the water heater thermostat at 140 degrees, but by turning it down to 120 degrees, you can save energy without noticing the difference.

Indiana's Weatherization Assistance

Program (WAP) provides energy conservation measures to reduce the utility bills of low-income Hoosiers across the state.

Learn more at <https://www.in.gov/ihcda/>.

Hoosiers can also call 2-1-1 (or 866-211-9966) for free and confidential assistance about quality of life programs and services in their region.



8TWELVE COALITION SETTLES INTO NEW OFFICE, HOSTS NATIONAL GATHERING

This year was full of exciting opportunities and changes for the 8twelve Coalition. In the summer, we moved into a new office at 1424 S. Hoyt Ave., right next to the Muncie Habitat for Humanity office.

The 8twelve Coalition also began partnering with Open Door Health Services for fiscal/administrative support. Together, we are excited to grow and evolve our work to elevate the quality of life for neighbors in South Central and Thomas Park/Avondale.

The 8twelve Coalition launched as a program of Muncie Habitat for Humanity several years ago. In 2018, the Coalition was selected to be part of a Neighborhood Revitalization Learning Cohort with Habitat for Humanity International with 9 other communities across the nation. Because of the coalition's innovative and sustainable work, we hosted the other nine community cohorts for a weeklong training in September.



The new office is located near the corner of Hoyt Ave. and 8th St. at 1424 S. Hoyt Ave.



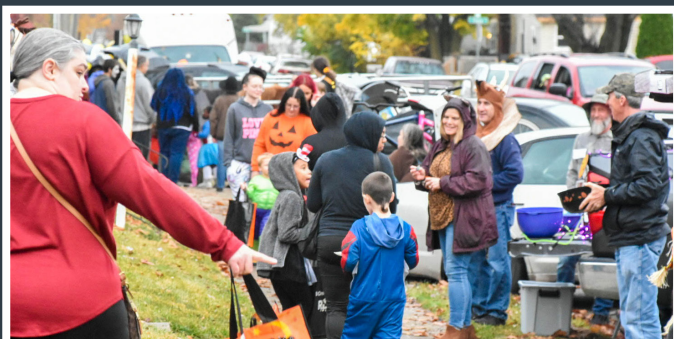
Downtown businesses displayed these signs during the Learning Cohort Gathering in September.



Bryan Ayars (Open Door Health Services), Jena Ashby (8twelve Coalition), and Lindsey Arthur (Muncie Habitat for Humanity) signed an agreement for the 8twelve Coalition's new partnership with Open Door Health Services.

10TH STREET TRUNK OR TREAT

Bringing more than 500 people together on Halloween, Trunk or Treat along 10th street (between the Ross Center and Avondale Church) has become a favorite neighborhood event!



OPEN DOOR ‘CONNECTIONS’ INITIATIVE TO OFFER NEIGHBOR-TO-NEIGHBOR SUPPORT

Muncie resident Alicia Wilson once felt isolated and unsure of where to go for resources to support her health and wellbeing. She was hesitant to go to anywhere because she was unsure of things like cost, what to say, or who to trust.

This is why Wilson chooses to serve as a part of the Open Door Connections team. Open Door is a nonprofit, Federally Qualified Health Center that provides comprehensive primary care, behavioral health, dental care, specialty services, and social support. In Summer 2022, the health system launched the Open Door Connections initiative to further address social factors that impact a person's health.

Connections places outreach workers, known as neighborhood ambassadors, directly in Muncie neighborhoods to build relationships with people who live, work, and play in those spaces. The ambassadors are stationed in partner sites and help residents connect with social support services, schedule medical appointments, enroll in health coverage, and more.

“I want to be that warm connection for people,” said Wilson, a neighborhood ambassador. “I want to help them find their own voice to ask for help, because I remember what that was like when I didn’t. Everyone deserves trusting relationships.”

Due to being bilingual, Joseph Castillo, another neighborhood ambassador, has a unique ability to relate to individuals who speak Spanish. Castillo can give people who often struggle with language barriers the gift of communication. He not only meets them where they're at physically, but in conversation.

Wilson recalls when a non-English speaker talked with Castillo: “If you could just see the expression on their face. They're like, ‘Oh! You can speak my language,’” Wilson said. “You see the relief lift off their shoulders because they know Joe can relate to them and talk to them.”

Neighborhood ambassadors are currently embedded in four different Muncie neighborhoods across multiple partner sites. Times and locations can be found online at **opendoorhs.org/connections**. Wilson said that during these times they connect people to resources for safe housing, employment opportunities, food pantry distributions and more.



Learn more about Open Door Connections at opendoorhs.org/connections.

BUSINESS LEADERS CONNECT AT MONTHLY BREAKFAST



Quarterly in 2022 at 7:00 a.m., small business owners on the southside of Muncie gathered at Rosebud Coffee House to learn from and connect with each other and guest speakers.

Jena Ashby, Director of the 8twelve Coalition, said the organization invited the group together to encourage networking and learning about topics that add value to businesses. Some of those topics included: finding employees, retaining employees, marketing, story-telling, and services offered through Eastern Indiana Works.

“We are happy to treat these hard-working community leaders to breakfast and coffee,” she said. “We have such rich conversations about what is happening in the community, and it’s a time for us to share information and resources with business leaders.”

Mary Beth Lambert, owner of Your Personal Gardner, said she can’t attend all the meetings, but when she does, she always walks away with rewarding information that fuels her.

“We had a fantastic discussion about the importance of storytelling and being intentional with our interactions,” she said. “I have also learned about Eastern Indiana Works WorkOne internship program, which helped me hire and train new crew members without having to pay them for the training period. It made a major difference in my ability to add employees to my business, and I learned about it and other resources and support at these breakfasts.”

Any business owner is welcome to attend these meetings, which last about one hour. Check out the 8twelve Coalition Facebook page for reminders about these and other events.

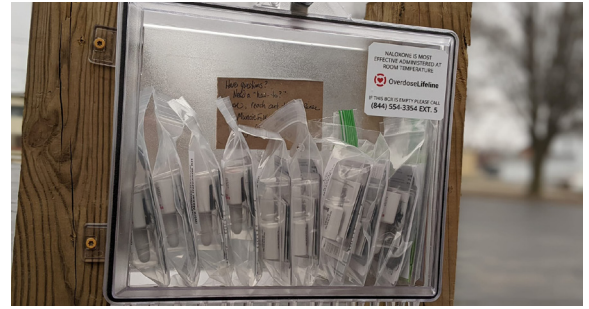


FREE NARCAN, SYRINGE DROP OFFS IN MUNCIE

A grassroots Harm Reduction Street Outreach Team offers free, 24/7 access to NARCAN, a prescription nasal spray used to treat a known or suspected opioid overdose emergency with signs of breathing problems and severe sleepiness or not being able to respond. The drug is available at the following sites throughout Muncie:

- Avondale United Methodist Church, 1314 W. 10th St.
- Friends Memorial Church Parking Lot, 418 W. Adams St.
This site also features a safe syringe disposal bin.
- Robert Hunt Building, 115 S. Pershing Dr.
- IU-Health Ball Memorial Hospital, 2401 W. University Ave.
This vending machine is located inside, to the left of the Emergency Department doors
- Near the YWCA, 310 E. Charles St.
- Old West End Community Box, 310 S. Proud Street
This box also offers food, hygiene products and other goods/supplies.

The Muncie Folk Collective is a non-profit that focuses on harm reduction and mental health in the community. The nonprofit's Facebook page offers information about trainings and resources related to harm reduction and addiction recovery.



To get involved or request more information from the Harm Reduction Street Outreach Team, contact Neighborhood Pastor Neil Kring or Sara Renee, a certified community health worker, at munciefolk@gmail.com or **765-215-2230**.

Thomas Park/Avondale Neighborhood Gathering  8twelvecoalition@gmail.com 

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