

# WEST END LIVING

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

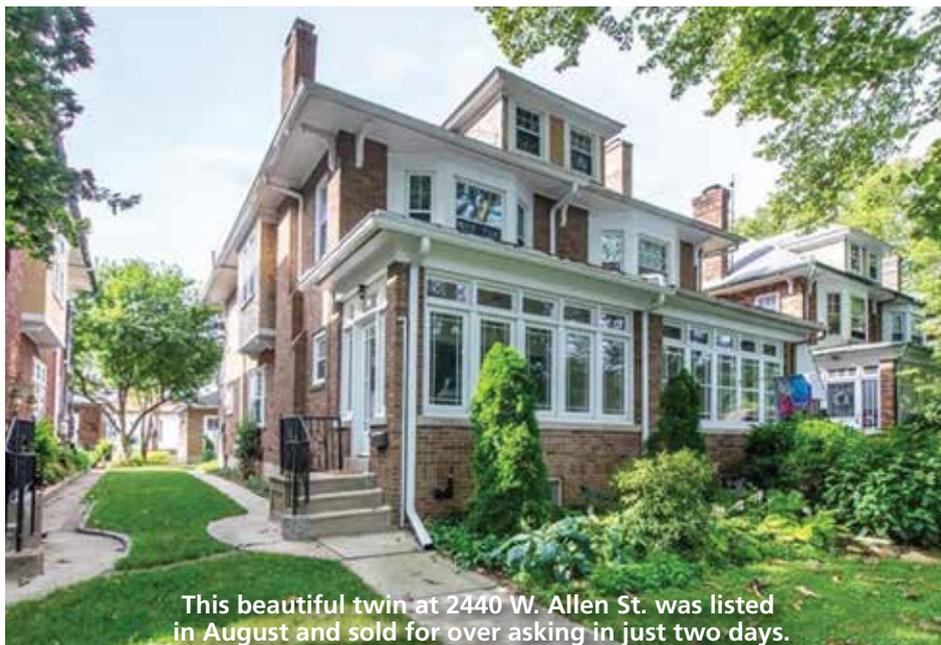
## 18104 Recognized as One of Hottest ZIP Codes in US

And, the city of Allentown was the focus of a flattering feature in *The New York Times* that included several West End institutions.

By Meghan Kita

**The West End** is having a moment — again. It feels like only months ago (because it was!) that we reported real estate website Zillow ranking Allentown as the sixth hottest housing market in the United States. In August, Realtor.com released its hottest ZIP codes list, and 18104 — which includes the West End as well as a few suburban townships — ranked

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GREATER LEHIGH VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS



This beautiful twin at 2440 W. Allen St. was listed in August and sold for over asking in just two days.



PHOTO BY BILL BASTA

10th in the northeast and 16th in the nation.

“It definitely was not surprising at all,” said Amanda Belletieri,

owner of One Valley Realty (2030 W. Tilghman St., Suite 203). “We get calls all the time, instead of telling us an area, they’ll just tell us, ‘We’re looking for the 18104 ZIP code.’”

Realtor.com assembled its list based on market demand (measured by unique viewers per property on its website) and market pace (measured by the number of days a listing remains active on its website). Belletieri, who grew up in the West End, sees this reflected in her work: Homeowners in the West End tend to love the neighborhood and want to stay, which means that vacancies are rare. When a



West End home comes on the market, it quickly generates lots of interest from the swarm of buyers interested in the neighborhood’s walkability, charm, and convenience.

Also in August, *The New York Times* highlighted the city of Allentown in its “Living In” column. The story, “Allentown, Pa., a Former Industrial Town Reborn,” mentioned 18104 staples including the Civic Theatre, Cedar Beach Park, the Allentown Farmers Market, and Muhlenberg College. These are certainly a draw for clients, Belletieri said, but not the only ones.

“I had a woman just the other day call me specifically talking about our trees,” she said. “She specifically wants to live in the West End on one of its giant-maple-tree-lined streets.” ■



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# What You Should Know About Removing Your Snow

By Fred Jerant

**When you're a child**, a good snowfall sets up a wonderland of fun – closed schools, sledding, fort building, snowball fights...

On the other hand, adults have to face a less-exciting reality: getting the white stuff off their sidewalks and driveways. Whether you are a DIY shoveler, a snowblower pilot, or rely on the energy and strength of enterprising youngsters, city residents face certain rules and regulations about the job,

Allentown's director of public works Mark Shahda said the amount of snow received, whether one inch or 10, doesn't matter: property owners must remove snow or ice within 10 hours after the snowfall stops.

That means down to bare concrete, and not simply a "good enough" foot-wide lane. "According to city regulations, the pathway needs to be at least three-feet wide," Shahda said.

And although ice can present a different type of challenge, it must be removed as well. Sprinkling sand, kitty litter or other materials won't cut it, so, "We encourage people to use salt when necessary," he said, in order to reach the bare-concrete goal.

The best place to pile the snow is in front yards or similar grassy patches on the property. Residents can also place it along the paved strip from the curb to the general right-of-way area.



"But don't pitch snow or ice into the street," Shahda cautions, "especially after the plows have come through. Our snow removal crews have a tremendous job – tending to 421 miles of streets and alleys within the city – and once the plows have come through, there won't be time to make another pass. The shoveled snow can melt and turn to ice, creating even more hazards."

Likewise, it's best to wait until roads have been plowed before clearing driveways and walkways.

What happens if someone disregards the removal requirements? Generally, the city follows up on resident complaints about that. An inspector will evaluate the property and, if necessary, the city will send the property owner a reminder letter. If the situation isn't resolved in a reasonable length of time, the city could hire a contractor to do the job and present the property owner

with the invoice for that work.

Finally, it's common to see huge trucks transporting cargoes of removed snow. But where do they go with it? "We have a couple of dumping sites," Shahda said, "primarily the city-owned parking lot adjacent to the wastewater treatment plant. If that site becomes full, we'll use parking lots in city parks."

Allentonians "of a certain age" might recall seeing snow-laden dump trucks, parked on bridges,

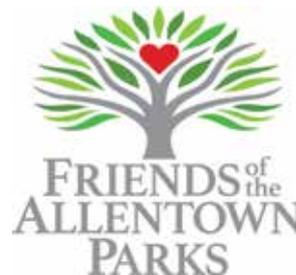
spilling their contents into the river below.

"We don't do that anymore," Shahda said. "There's trash and other stuff mixed in with the collected snow, and environmental regulations prohibit putting such material into rivers and lakes."

For more information about the city's snow removal operations, visit <https://www.allentownpa.gov/en-us/Government/Departments/Public-Works/Streets/Snow-Operations>. ■

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•••

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## Excellence in the Classroom

**Trexler Middle School**  
**Alysha Antigua** is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student at Trexler Middle School who has demonstrated excellence in the classroom, and is a positive mentor for her classmates and future Bulldogs. Alysha is an honor student who is consistently meets all expectations from her coaches, teachers, and administration. She is a member of our cheerleading squad, as well as our championship competition cheer team who performs regularly throughout the area. Alysha is a member



PHOTO COURTESY OF TREXLER MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Alysha Antigua**

of the district Superintendent Advisory Committee, student advisory, and Bulldog Mentors. She consistently displays all the positive expectations of a true learner and trusted leader. Trexler Middle School is proud to have Alysha represent our school community, and trusts that she will continue to be successful with all of her future opportunities.

### William Allen High School Student Highlights

Four William Allen High School students were officially accepted into this national program during an event hosted by the Da Vinci Science Center in partnership with several Intermediate Units across Pennsylvania. Chief Science Officers are students in grades 6-12 who are elected by their peers to serve as liaisons for STEM and innovation in their schools and communities. This year, these students will host an "Inspire STEM Day" at WAHS this spring for other students from other schools! Congratulations to Kai

Galvez, Logan Lake, Noah Langkamer-Smith, and Ryan Lopez!

On a recent visit to the Walbert Testing Facility, students from Allen, Dieruff, and Bridgeview Academy received a tour of the state-of-the-art testing lineman training center and heard from energy professionals about career opportunities with PPL Corporation. PPL representatives, including President Christine Martin, shared information about job requirements and the hiring process, as well as various pathways in technology, trades, and engineering. ■



Congratulations to the newest Chief Science Officers



PHOTO COURTESY OF WILLIAM ALLEN HIGH SCHOOL

Our students are powering their own future, thanks to PPL!

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### SPEAKERS *(All held in Moyer Hall, Miller Forum)*

- Nov. 6 Living Writers Series: Author Roger Reeves
- Nov. 9 Damon T. Berry, Ph.D. "Transdisciplinary Approaches to Deradicalization"
- Nov. 20 Living Writers Series: Playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins

### CONCERTS

- Nov. 14 Golden Apples, Starcleaner Reunion, and Catatonic Suns, Seegers Union, Event Space
- Dec. 6-7 Candlelight Carols Services, Egner Memorial Chapel

### THEATRE & DANCE

- Oct. 30-Nov. 2 "The Play That Goes Wrong," Baker Theatre
- Nov. 20-22 "Reset: New Dances," Baker Theatre



For details or to discover more events scan the code or visit [muhlenberg.edu/calendar](https://muhlenberg.edu/calendar)

# Transforming Your Home on a Budget

## Easy and Affordable Updates

**Fall into winter** may be a great time to give your home's interior a fresh look without breaking your budget. Here are budget-friendly home improvement projects that can transform your space and boost your home's value:

### 1. A Fresh Coat of Paint

Paint your interior with light, neutral colors to create a sense of spaciousness, or go bold with a vibrant accent wall. Use low-VOC paint for better indoor air quality.

### 2. Update Hardware

Swap out old, tarnished, or mismatched doorknobs, cabinet pulls, and light switch plates for modern, stylish options. This small change can instantly elevate the look of your kitchen, bathroom, or any room in your home. Consider matching finishes for a cohesive look.

### 3. Upgrade Lighting

Good lighting can transform a room's mood and functionality. Add new fixtures with a dimmer. Choose energy-efficient LED bulbs to save on electricity costs.

### 4. Refinish Your Floors

Instead of replacing worn-out floors, consider refinishing them. This can give hardwood floors a fresh, new look and eliminate scratches and stains. It's a more affordable alternative to replacing the entire floor.

### 5. Add a Backsplash

Add a new backsplash to protect your walls from splatters and spills. Peel-and-stick tiles are a budget-friendly option that you can install yourself without any messy grout or special tools.

### 6. Install a New Shower Head

A low-flow shower head can help you save water and conserve



PHOTO COURTESY OF QNB BANK



energy while also providing a more luxurious shower experience with features like multiple spray settings or rainfall options.

### 7. Update Cabinet Doors

If your cabinets are in good condition but look outdated, consider simply replacing the doors. This is a more affordable alternative to a full kitchen remodel and can dramatically change the look of your kitchen. You can also try repainting or refacing your existing doors for a fresh look.

### 8. Install a Ceiling Fan

Ceiling fans can create a cooling breeze in summer and even help distribute heat more evenly in winter.

### 9. Hang New Curtains or Blinds

Window treatments can significantly impact a room's look and feel, offering privacy, light control, and insulation.

Swap out old, faded, or ill-fitting curtains or blinds for new ones that complement your décor and enhance your space's functionality.

### 10. Add Smart Home Technology

Smart thermostats, light bulbs, and security systems can enhance your home's functionality, comfort, and security. Many affordable options are available, and you can often install them yourself without the need for an electrician.

With a bit of creativity and elbow grease, you can give your home a fresh new look and feel without straining your budget. These budget-friendly home improvement projects are a great starting point for refreshing your space and increasing its overall appeal.

If you need help with financial planning for home upgrades, reach out at 215-538-LOAN (5626) – QNB Bank is here to help! ■

An advertisement for Lotus Wellness Studio. The background is dark blue with golden bokeh lights. In the center is a golden lotus flower logo. Below the logo, the word "LOTUS" is written in large, golden, serif capital letters, and "WELLNESS STUDIO" is written in smaller, golden, sans-serif capital letters below it. At the bottom left, the address "626 N. 19<sup>th</sup> St, Allentown" and phone number "484-860-8885" are listed in golden text. On the right side, the text "Schedule any service and receive a FREE Red Light Session with this ad" is written in golden text. Below this text is a large QR code with a golden border.

# Local Flavor-Makers Share Their Favorite Holiday Recipes



By Paul Kita

**Every family** has that one go-to meal or side dish that they have to have during the holiday season. We asked around at some of our neighborhood restaurants for which recipes are most coveted at holiday celebration tables. Try these out this year (so you can make them again next year, and the next year, and the next...)

## Muffin Tin Sweet Potato Pancakes

By Lyell Scherline of Jay's Local

### Ingredients:

Nonstick cooking spray  
 ¼ cup vegetable oil  
 12 ounces sweet potatoes (2 to 3)  
 1 large onion  
 ¼ cup all-purpose flour  
 1 ½ tsp kosher salt  
 1 ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper  
 1 large egg, lightly beaten  
 Sour cream, cooked apples, caramelized onions and/or chopped chives, for serving

### Instructions:

1. Arrange an oven rack in the top position and preheat the oven to 425°F. Generously spray a 12-cup muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray. Add 1 tsp oil to each muffin cup. Put the muffin tin on a rimmed baking sheet; set aside.

2. Peel the potatoes; then shred them in a food processor or on a box grater. Shred the onion. Scrape the potatoes and onion into a medium bowl. Add the flour, salt, pepper and egg, and mix to combine. Scoop ¼ cup of the potato mixture into each muffin cup, lightly pressing it into the bottom with your fingers; press a divot into the top of each.

3. Bake until deep golden brown and the oil is sizzling around them, 40 to 50 minutes. Carefully remove from the oven. Working quickly so the pancakes don't stick, run the blade of a small spatula under each latke to loosen from the tin, and then pop them out onto a cooling rack. Top with sour cream, apple

sauce, caramelized onion or a sprinkle of chopped chives. Makes 6 servings, as a side.

## Leek & Wild Mushroom Stuffing with Brioche Bread

By Tim Howells of Trè's Kitchen at West End Taproom

### Ingredients:

1 lb brioche bread, cut into 1-inch cubes (about 8 cups)  
 ¼ cup butter or olive oil  
 2 med. leeks, white and light green parts only, thinly sliced  
 1 lb wild mushrooms (cremini, oyster, shiitake, chanterelle), sliced  
 2 garlic cloves, minced  
 1 tsp fresh thyme (or ½ tsp dried)  
 1 tsp fresh sage, finely chopped (or ½ tsp dried)  
 ½ cup dry white wine (optional, can use veg. stock)  
 2 cups vegetable stock (more as needed)  
 Salt and black pepper, to taste  
 ½ cup fresh parsley, chopped

### Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. On a large baking sheet, spread the brioche cubes until lightly golden and dry, 12 to 15 minutes. (Or cut a day ahead and leave out on sheet tray dry.)

2. In a large skillet, heat the oil/butter over medium. Add the leeks and cook until softened, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook until browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in the garlic, thyme, and sage, and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Deglaze with wine (if using), reduce, and season with salt and pepper.

4. In a large bowl, toss the bread cubes with the leek-mushroom mix and the parsley. Slowly add the stock until bread is moistened but not soggy. Transfer to greased 9x13-inch dish. Cover with foil; bake at 350°F for 20 min. Uncover and bake until golden and set, 15 to 20 minutes. Makes 4 to 6 servings ■

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## Muhlenberg College Launches Online MBA

**A new** Master of Business Administration (MBA) program is launching at Muhlenberg, developed by the college's nationally ranked Department of Accounting, Business, Economics, and Finance. Applications are now open, with the first cohort beginning classes in fall 2026.

The Muhlenberg MBA is a fully online program that can be completed in as little as 24 months. Although it is designed for working professionals and emerging leaders, it features a weekly live (synchronous) class each week, so that students benefit from real-time interaction with expert faculty and peers in small, supportive classes — ensuring personalized attention and mentorship.

The curriculum equips MBA candidates with leadership skills to think strategically, creatively, and ethically. Elective pathways enable students to tailor the degree to their field. Additionally,

a 4+1 pathway is being designed to create a streamlined route for Muhlenberg undergraduates to earn both a bachelor's degree and an MBA in five years.

Muhlenberg's 93% graduation rate — far higher than the national average — reflects its supportive environment and commitment to student success. And before it's time to graduate, the college's Career Center is ready to help Muhlenberg's graduate students strengthen their networks, prepare for advancement, or transition to new fields.

After graduation, data shows that Muhlenberg degrees yield exceptional results. A recent Georgetown study found that the return on investment of a Muhlenberg degree outpaces 80% of degrees earned at other colleges across the country.

To learn more and sign up for program updates, visit [mba.connect.muhlenberg.edu](http://mba.connect.muhlenberg.edu). ■

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PHOTO BY KRISTI MORRIS/LITTLEWING STUDIO

## Meet the Tilghman St. Skeleton Crew

The 12-foot skeleton in a yard near the intersection with 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and his smaller buddies on the porch bring year-round joy to passersby.



PHOTO BY BILL BASTA

Nikki and Alex Gipe with their decor

By Meghan Kita

**As Nikki and Alex Gipe** were putting up the first batch of their Halloween inflatables in September, they had to work around Skully, the 12-foot skeleton who has stood year-round in their yard on Tilghman Street near 23<sup>rd</sup> since 2020. Nikki turned to Alex and asked, “Remember when I got this and you were so mad?”

“They’re not cheap,” Nikki said later, “but it made me happy. Then, the argument was whether to keep it up year-round.”

Nikki won that argument, as anyone who drives through the West End regularly knows. Skully gets dressed up for every holiday and also in support of the Phillies, Eagles and Steelers. A skeleton in the yard is on brand for Nikki, who was driving around with a smaller skeleton in the passenger seat of her car for years before the huge skeletons became available. A few of those car skeletons have since moved to the Gipes’ porch, where they sit year-round and get dressed up as well.

Skully and his crew are just the start: The family would like to thank their neighbors on both sides for lending their yards to the

Gipes’ overflowing collection of Halloween inflatables. They have a similar number of Christmas inflatables, but that holiday is more of Alex’s thing, Nikki says.

Their festive displays have drawn plenty of attention from neighbors and passersby. Nikki has kept a letter from a man named James since he dropped it on their porch with a bag of candy last Christmas. In it, he details the tough times he had in 2024 and how Skully and company helped him through: “I just sincerely wanted to say thanks, because I don’t think I could have made it the way I did if I didn’t have those skeletons and that momentary escape,” James wrote.

“I haven’t met the [writer], and I hope that one day, maybe they’ll knock on the door,” Nikki said.

Skully himself has been through a lot — damage from wind storms and the resulting welding and zip-tying to bring him back to life — but “he’s on his last legs,” Nikki said, no pun intended. But James and other Skully fans can rest assured: She’ll be replacing him with a newer model who will also remain on the lawn year-round.

“It’s always Halloween in my world,” she said. ■

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# One Wonderful West End Block Party Thanks to Your Support!

By Meghan Kita

More than 2,000 people and more than 40 vendors came to the West End for this year's inaugural West End Block Party on Saturday, September 27. This event replaced the former West End World of Food Festival, which was rebranded and relaunched as a block party to better reflect the range of experiences attendees could expect. Partygoers enjoyed favorite foods, a range of beers and wines, vendors from the neighborhood (including Cut the Scrap, Civic Theatre, Boutique 2 Go, Todd's Island Seafood and Timothy Zaveri Fine Jewelry) and music from the Mike Lorenz Trio, Higbee, the Ultra Kings and GirlCrüe.

"Reimagining the event from the World of Food Festival to the West End Block Party was all about focusing on community and creating a welcoming space for

neighbors to connect, and it was a huge success," said Liz Martin, managing director of the West End Alliance. "The energy was incredible, people loved the new vibe, and the custom stickers were a big hit. Even better, so many residents asked how they could get involved next year. It really felt like the neighborhood came together."

Proceeds from the West End Block Party are invested right back into the neighborhood, funding projects such as the holiday tree lighting, the sidewalk planters and the street banners.

Next year's event will also be held in September. If you're interested in getting involved in the event or volunteering for the West End Alliance in any capacity, contact manager@westendallentown.com. ■



WEST END ALLENTOWN, PA  
BLOCK PARTY



PHOTOS BY BILL BASTA



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## GROWING TOGETHER AWARDS LUNCHEON



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Friends of Allentown Parks is into its 18th year. We are celebrating with an award ceremony and luncheon to honor those who make a real contribution to keeping our parks beautiful.

We are hosting this luncheon to celebrate and honor the dedicated individuals and groups who make Allentown's parks vibrant, beautiful, and welcoming spaces for our entire community.

Throughout the year, countless volunteers, donors, community partners, and park advocates have given their time, talent, and resources to enhance our green spaces. They've planted gardens, organized cleanups, led educational programs, maintained trails, and championed initiatives that ensure our parks remain accessible and treasured by all.

This gathering is our opportunity to express gratitude, recognize exceptional contributions, and strengthen the bonds within our parks community. Together, we've transformed green spaces into gathering places—areas where families create memories, neighbors connect, and nature thrives in the heart of our city.

As we share a meal and celebrate these achievements, we also look forward to the future, inspired by the collective dedication that continues to make Allentown's parks a source of pride and joy for generations to come.

	<i>Honorees:</i>	
<p><i>Friends of the Parks Award</i> Barbara Bigelow Allentown Rotary Member and Philanthropist</p>		<p><i>Parks Stewardship Award</i> <b>CLEAN TEAM</b> WORKFORCE, LLC The Clean Team Workforce, a program of the Allentown Rescue Mission since 2008</p>

Purchase your  tickets online now.

## St. Luke's Identified as Exemplar in Safety

by Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

**St. Luke's** is running with the big dogs. And when it comes to patient safety and health care excellence, St. Luke's University Health Network isn't just keeping up—it's leading the pack.

The federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality has recognized St. Luke's alongside national heavyweights Houston Methodist and the Mayo Clinic as the nation's three high performing health systems for safety and quality—further affirmation of St. Luke's status as a top leader among the largest and best-known health care providers in the country.

St. Luke's selection—like that of Houston Methodist and the Mayo Clinic—was based on publicly available Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) safety outcome measures and Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and System survey data. The three high performing health systems were identified from a review of 4,791 U.S. hospitals and 135 healthcare systems containing at least six hospitals.

St. Luke's was found to be one of three health care systems in the country with more than one hospital demonstrating safety and patient experience performance better than 75 percent above the national average.

"Here's the simple take-away: If you want to receive the safest care when you go to the hospital, come to St. Luke's," St. Luke's Chief Quality Officer Donna Sabol said.

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) was created when Congress passed, and President Clinton signed, the Healthcare Research and Quality Act of 1999. To better understand what differentiates St. Luke's, the Mayo Clinic and Houston Methodist from other health systems, AHRQ and its contractors (Ripple Effect and the American Institutes for Research) conducted onsite best practices review visits to two hospitals in each system, observing a clinically

PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. LUKE'S



complex patient mix from urban, suburban, and rural areas.

The insights gleaned from these visits formed the foundation for The Best Practices to Strengthen Safety Culture, Leadership, and Governance report, whose findings were shared publicly for the first time in September. The goal is to shape a national "change package" of best practices in safety culture, leadership and governance that other health systems can follow.

AHRQ's selection of St. Luke's as one of its three exemplary high performing systems nationwide builds upon the Network's record as one of the safest health systems in the country. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded 10 St. Luke's hospitals five stars, the highest possible rating. All 11 eligible hospitals also earned A grades from the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade, the only rating focused solely on preventing errors, injuries, and infections.

"St. Luke's achieves superior quality and safety results because of the commitment to excellence of our outstanding medical staff and employees," Sabol said. "Straight A's and five stars—St. Luke's is one of the few large health systems in the nation ever to receive across-the-board high marks from both CMS and Leapfrog."

Additionally, this year St. Luke's was again named to Premier's 2025 PINC AI 100 Top Hospitals list published by Fortune magazine. It was the 11th time in a row and the 13th time overall that St. Luke's hospitals have been recognized among the 100 Top Hospitals in the United States. St. Luke's is the only health network in the greater Lehigh Valley region to ever earn this distinction. ■

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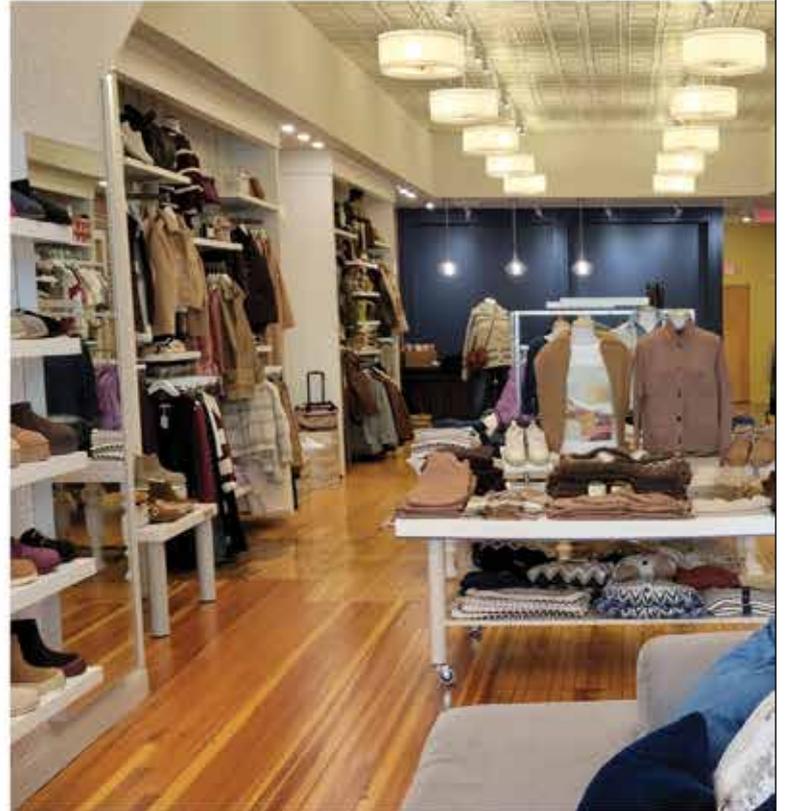
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# Muhlenberg College Earns Recognition for Excellence

Rankings organizations highlighted the institution's performing arts programs, food, value, and more.

By Meghan Kita

**This fall, Muhlenberg College** was honored by a number of college rankings organizations across a wide range of categories.

The latest *U.S. News & World Report* rankings have Muhlenberg as the 70th best liberal arts college in the nation (ninth in Pennsylvania) and the 49th best value liberal arts college in the nation (also ninth in Pennsylvania). *U.S. News* also ranks Muhlenberg's undergraduate teaching program

PHOTOS BY KRISTI MORRIS/LITTLEWING STUDIO



59th among liberal arts colleges nationally (and eighth in Pennsylvania).

*The Princeton Review* rankings this year include Muhlenberg on the Best 391 Colleges, Best Mid-Atlantic Colleges and Best Value Colleges lists. Muhlenberg also made the Best College Theater (#6), Best Campus Food (#19) and Top 50 Green Colleges (#32) national lists.

*Niche* ranked Muhlenberg in the top 10% nationally for its food (#14 out of 1,367) and its performing arts programs (#44 of 521). *Niche* also named Muhlenberg to

several Best in Pennsylvania lists, including Best College Food (#1), Best Colleges for Performing Arts (#3), Best Small Colleges (#7), Best Colleges for Communications (#7), Best College Campuses (#8) and Best Liberal Arts Colleges (#8).

*Washington Monthly* recognized Muhlenberg as a top liberal arts college (#46 out of 1,421) based on the college's contribution to the public good in four categories: access, affordability, outcomes and promoting public service. The college performed especially well in *Washington Monthly's* outcomes category, demonstrating Muhlenberg's exceptionally high return on investment. Muhlenberg was also recognized as a Best Bang for the Buck college, a ranking that grades colleges on how well they help nonwealthy students attain marketable degrees at affordable prices.

Muhlenberg was also named to the *Forbes* list of America's Top Colleges. The annual list showcases 500 colleges that "produce successful, high-earning and influential graduates from all economic backgrounds, with less student debt." ■



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# Keeping Our Sidewalks Safe and Attractive

By Fred Jerant

**One of the nice benefits** of living in the West End Theatre District is its walkability. Pharmacies, restaurants, a state store, Muhlenberg College, and an array of funky little shops and all just a short stroll away.

But with that walkability comes a responsibility — fixing cracked or otherwise hazardous sidewalks, regardless of whether they're the result of tree roots, water seepage or other causes.

According to a city ordinance, Allentown maintains paved areas while property owners are required to care for and repair curbs and sidewalks.

"Safety is our number-one consideration," said Kyle Sergent, a public works project manager in the bureau of engineering,

"but beautification and avoiding drainage toward houses are other factors."

Conditions that may call for repair include sidewalk panels that exhibit more than 1-1/2" of lift, and walkways that have more than 2% cross slope (perpendicular to the roadway) which can lead to water pooling, decreased longevity and a potentially dangerous path for wheelchairs. Loose stones or broken panels can also require repairs.

In the past, city paving crews notified non-compliant properties along their work routes, but Allentown now relies on direct complaints from neighbors.

"If we get a report, we'll inspect the property and issue a letter instructing the owner to replace the damaged sidewalks. We

expect the owners to contact us within 60-90 days to show they're making progress toward fixing the situation. If we've heard nothing during that time period, we issue a 'final notice' by certified mail, giving the property owner 30 days to contact the city or hire a contractor," Sergent said.

And if that step fails, the city can take matters into its own hands. "In the past, we'd get a bid from a contractor to repair a cluster of sites, usually about \$200,000 worth of work. After repairs were completed, we'd pay the contractor, and then bill each property owner for the exact square footage of pavement that had been fixed," he said.

PHOTOS BY BILL BASTA



Sergent added that Allentown hopes to take a new approach in 2026. "If there's no response after the final notice, we'll send an on-call contractor to fix the individual problem, and then bill the owner."

He added that this can be far more expensive for the property owner, because the city is obligated to pay prevailing-wage rates.

For more information on this topic, contact the engineering department at 610-437-7596; or visit <https://ecode360.com/36441854> and select Article III. ■



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## Remembering WAHS' "Little Palestra"

By Fred Jerant

**The ancient Greek word "palaestra"** refers to a rectangular enclosure situated next to a gymnasium that was used for various competitive sports.

Its Americanized form, "palestra," is also the name of the home gym for the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Quakers basketball, volleyball and wrestling teams. Nicknamed "the Cathedral of College Basketball," its impact on that sport is immeasurable.

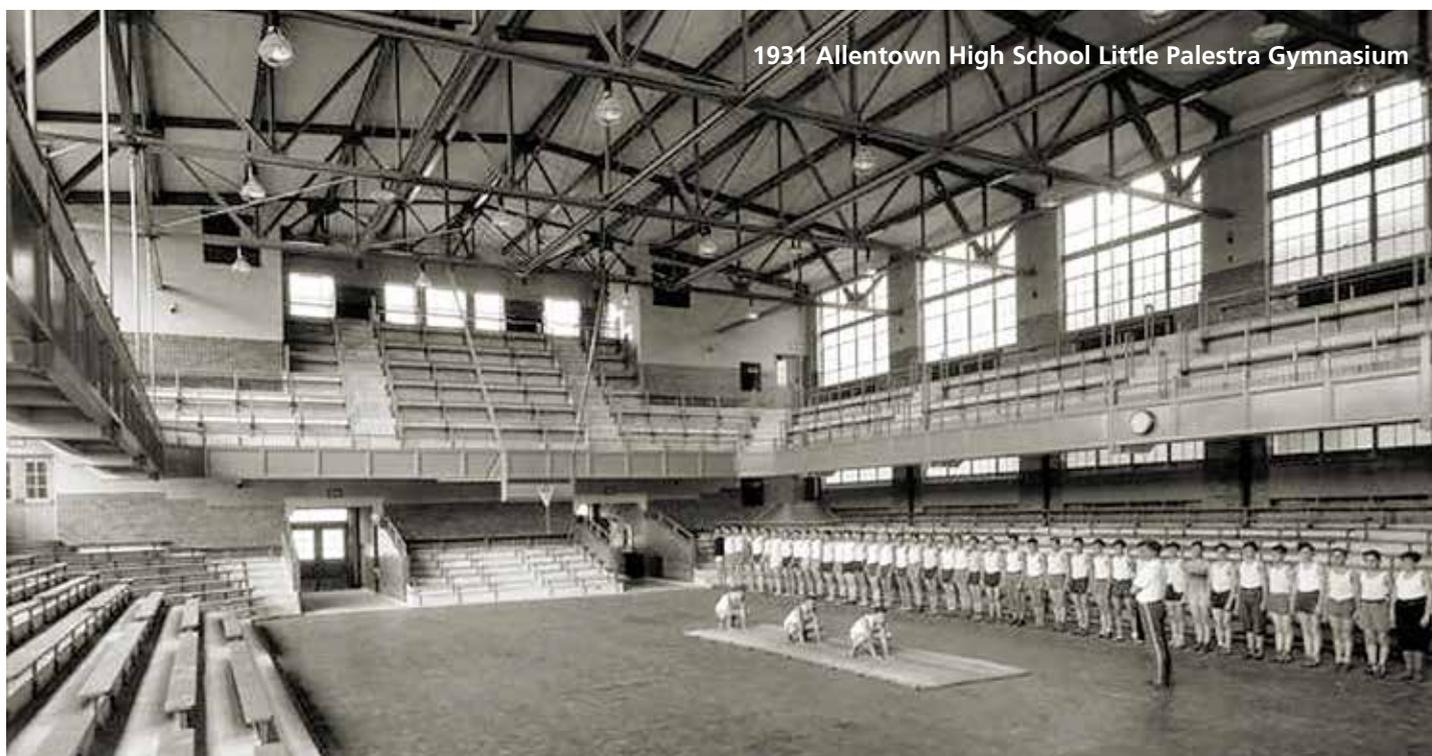
And from 1931 until 1973, the Little Palestra served as the home of the Allen Canaries, and the site of 17 East Penn League champions, nine District 11 titlists and all five of the school's state championship squads.

When it opened, the gym was impressive. An article by Emil Dieter in a contemporaneous WAHS publication described it this way:

■ When Mr. Harry Ochs took the Reading School Board through the new Gymnasium Building, your reporter had the pleasure of going along and learning some of the minute details. Starting on the outside one notices the many windows of opaque glass to prevent glare on the floor during the day. Were you to ask why the building was built without a skylight, you would be told that with all four outside walls open, the construction company figured that sufficient light would come in. Only where two or less sides are open to window space is a skylight used.

■ Going in the center door one faces the three ticket offices. Turning to right or left one enters the gym proper by an adequate passageway. Once on the floor, you will see one of the most complex high school gymnasiums in the East, with a seating capacity of twenty-one hundred. From every seat the rim of the basket can be seen, a feature few gymnasiums boast.

■ Scrutinizing the floor proper one is told that it is a floating



floor which is made up of blocks of pine wood about 2" x 4" x 4". Each block is fastened to a long flat piece by a dovetail joint. These long pieces are (laid) on rough flooring and clamped down. In the entire floor there is not one nail. At the edges are angle irons to cover up the space that must be left for expansion, for the floor has a total expansion of (three) inches each way.

The ventilating system is most adequate, with facilities for keeping the air cool and fresh, an advantage considering all the hot air there usually is at a game.

So when you come to see a game at the new Allentown High School Gymnasium you are assured a good seat, plenty of air and the best that an excellent team can do on an unsurpassable floor.

A possibly apocryphal story holds that J. Birney Crum – the Canaries' head coach of football, basketball and baseball between 1925-1951 – pushed unsuccessfully for a new gym...at least until a school board member couldn't get through the doors of the existing gym for an important game. As if by magic (the story goes), the school board got on board with Crum practically the next day.

Construction of the new facility cost about \$375,000 (nearly \$8

million in today's money); it was located on the site occupied by Allen's library and science center.

The new gym had its share of oddities:

■ The court itself measured a mere 78' x 44' (today's regulations call for 84' by 50'

■ According to a February 12, 2013 *Morning Call* article, "... instead of meeting at a right angle, each corner [of the court] was angled about three feet in, creating niches in the court. No one seems to know why. The scorer's table, instead of being located at midcourt, was under the Linden Street basket, with a "box" at the other end where the school's pep band sat. The teams sat on opposite sides of the court in the front row of the bleachers; to check in, players had to go down the sideline to get to the scorer's table."

■ Speaking of sidelines, the gym was so narrow – once described as "a telephone booth with baskets on each end" – that players on the bench were technically in-bounds; their feet protruded over the court line.

From 1958 - 1973, the Little Palestra enjoyed a run as home of professional wrestling in Allentown. Fans could cheer on Ed "Strangler" Lewis, Gorgeous George, Bruno Sammartino, André

the Giant, Pedro Moreales, Chief Jay Strongbow, Gorilla Monsoon and The Fabulous Moolah and other ring legends.

In its glory days, the Little Palestra was hailed as the largest gym in Pennsylvania (other than Philadelphia).

But time marches on, and the gym's status was gradually eclipsed by more modern facilities at Allentown Central and Louis E. Dieruff high schools.

A particularly low point came in 1967 when East Penn League officials designated the Little Palestra as unsafe. The Canaries moved their games to Muhlenberg College's Memorial Hall – but only for a year.

And although the gym was scheduled to close at the end of the '72-'73 season, construction of the new SEWARDS gym hit some snags, and the team squeezed one more season out the gym before it was shuttered for good.

That same *Morning Call* article quoted now-former Allen coach Doug Snyder. "I was impressed with [Pottsville's] Martz Hall the first time I saw it, and the new phys ed center was nice. But I think to a man, we would've stayed in the Little Palestra," Snyder said. "We would've stayed there forever. It seemed like the perfect place to be." ■

# Property Tax & Rent Rebate **Deadline: 12/31/25**

**The deadline** for the PA's 2024 Property Tax & Rent Rebate Program is December 31, 2025. This program changed last year to make more seniors and people with disabilities eligible and make rebates larger.

Rebates are filed based on income earned and property taxes & rent paid in 2024.

Applicants must be 65 or older, widow/widower age 50 or older, or a person with permanent disability as determined by the Social Security Administration as of 12/31/24. There is an income limit of \$46,520 or less and calculated using income from 2024. Only HALF of Social

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Extended until **December 31, 2025**

Security count toward the income limit. Interest, dividends, capital

gains, wages and all other income is counted dollar-for-dollar. See the chart for rebates available by income.

Rebates can be filed online at MyPath. Pa.Gov. My office also helps prepare and file these rebates and would be happy to do so for you. Give my office a call (610-821-5577) to request copies of paper forms and instruction booklets or set up an appointment to get your rebate filed. But don't wait until the last minute!

Filing for the 2025 rebates will begin in February 2026. My office expects to get forms in early February. ■



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