



A NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHSIDE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND

# Business Spotlight Awards

The Northside Fund continues its annual tradition of honoring local businesses that have made an outstanding contribution to the community. This year's winners were honored at the Northside Fund's annual event on September 29th.

## Dynamic Growth Fidelity Flight Simulation

Fidelity Flight Simulation has been in the Spring Garden area of the North Side since 2000, just before the company was capitalized and began marketing its simulators to the flight training industry.



Fidelity leases space from Ken Kasunick at Kasunick Welding & Fabricating, which has served as an important incubator for the company in its early growth years. His commitment to their success has been fundamental in their achievement. The Eurocopter EC135 helicopter flight simulation device Fidelity is manufacturing for STAT MedEvac at the Allegheny County Airport in West Mifflin will be the first full motion, civil Eurocopter simulator on this continent. The company also recently secured two major foreign projects: a P-3 Orion simulator for the Royal New Zealand Air Force and a Bell 222 sim for Air Al-

pha in Denmark. The P-3 project is the company's first in the defense market, while the Bell 222 will be used by Air Alpha to train pilots for the emerging medical evacuation industry in Europe. Just this month, Fidelity announced the sale of a Cessna Citation II turbine jet simulator that will open a wide range of commercial flight training applications. Fidelity Flight Simulation is proud of its presence on the North Side and looks forward to serving the community for many years.

## Lifetime Achievement Gus Kalaris, Gus and Yiayia's

Gus Kalaris has been selling "icy balls" on the North Side since 1951 or as it reads on the side of his bright orange cart - "On the North Side since your dad was a lad."



Open 12 hours a day, seven days a week from April 1 to November 1, weather permitting; Gus goes through 7,500 pounds of ice each day selling what he calls "All American Ice Balls" made from ice blocks imported from Ohio and syrup from recipes perfected by his father in the late 1930s. They are a West Park institution, always surrounded by children of all ages. Gus and

Yiayia's has served almost four generations of Pittsburghers and truly is the kind of hometown tradition that makes Pittsburgh such a special place.

## Northside Impact Ed Graf

East Ohio Street, once a booming business district, was facing a downhill slide that seemed unstoppable. Junkies and prostitutes loitered outside of nuisance bars and check cashing stores. Not content to just talk about how to reverse the decline, Ed Graf decided to do something to bring about real change. On October 22nd 2004, Priory Fine Pastries opened at 528 East Ohio Street, in what had been a vacant Rent-a-Center.



The high-end store serves La Prima coffee, Breadworks bread, and a gorgeous array of gourmet desserts. The Graf's have spent more than half a million dollars to renovate the façade of the historic four-story brick building, purchase equipment, and create three upscale lofts apartments above the shop. Graf's commitment is greatly appreciated by other East Ohio business owners, who see the bakery as an anchor for future commercial investment.

## Board Members

Stephanie Cipriani  
*National City Community Development Association*

M. Michelle Sponholz  
*Giant Eagle, Inc.*

Darlene Shelton-Lamot  
*State Farm Insurance Agency*

Brenda Frazier  
*Allegheny County Council*

Pete Bellisario  
*Brighton Height Citizens Federation*

Stanley Lowe  
*Manchester Citizens Corporation*

Mike Coleman  
*Northside Leadership Conference*

Deborah McClain  
*Northside Leadership Conference*

Greg Haus  
*F. L. Haus Company*

Cathleen Cawood Bubash  
*District Justice*

Luke Ravenstahl  
*Pittsburgh City Council*

Craig Laurenson  
*Northside Leadership Conference*

## Loan Review Committee

Robert Rubinstein  
*Urban Redevelopment Authority*

Mark Schneider  
*Rubinfoff Company*

Mike Mooney  
*Fidelity Bank*

Ricardo Savido  
*Mellon Bank Community Development Corporation*

Linda Leonhardt  
*First National Bank*

Daniel Hooper  
*National City Bank*

Ross Langford  
*Citizens Bank*

Deborah McClain  
*Northside Leadership Conference*

Ray Meyer  
*Northside Leadership Conference*

## CLIENT PROFILE

# Balestreire Produce

Sitting in one of Panera Bread Company's many local restaurants enjoying a fresh, gourmet salad, it seems hard to believe that these exotic greens came from Spring Garden Avenue. But for the last 100 years, Balestreire Produce, a small family-owned wholesaler, has been providing some of the best restaurants and shops of Pittsburgh with fruits and vegetables.



Tom Balestreire cannot hide the emotion and pride in his face when he gives a tour of their Spring Avenue facility. In his office surrounded by photographs of family members, and plaques testifying to

the Balestreire's commitment to the community, he shares part of his family history. His grandfather, Gitano, operated a produce pushcart in a small village near Palermo, Sicily before making his way to the United States some time in the early 1900's. His continued his produce sales in the Strip District, and over

the years graduated from pushcart to horse-drawn carriage and finally in 1937, to Balestreire Produce's first truck. Nowadays, if you pass by their warehouse around 3:30 am you'd see eight large trucks heading out to deliver to some of Pittsburgh's best-known places, including: Legends, Jerry's 1888, TGI Fridays, Allegheny Sandwich Shoppe, Allegheny General Hospital, local Country Clubs and Mom and Pop stores throughout the region, even into West Virginia.

Until they built their main warehouse in 1964, they had one cooler to hold all of the apples, eggs, blueberries, asparagus, argula and the dozens of other types of produce they offer. Now the large wooden doors that identify the original cooler shares space with five more modern coolers, all of which are filled floor to ceiling with garden-fresh fruits and vegetables. Still a family company after all these years, Balestreire Produce is now run by Pete and Tom Balestreire, cousins Tom and Frank Balestrieri, and their Uncle John. However, their sense of family moves well beyond blood relatives. The family works in a myriad of ways to help the community: all but two of their employees are North Side residents, they support local little leagues and churches, work with local shops and restaurants, and, with help from the Northside Fund, they will continue to make their Northside neighbors feel like part of the Balestreire family.

## Northside Fund Celebrates with Giant Eagle

On June 6th, the Northside Fund hosted a reception to celebrate the selection of Board member Shelly Sponholz as one of Pennsylvania's Top 50 business women.



The event, held at Redfin Blues on Washington's Landing, drew a diverse crowd of Northside residents and Giant Eagle representatives together, including: Giant

Eagle, Inc President and CEO David Shapira; Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy; Juan Garret of the Riverside Center for Innovation; Cathy Bubash, District Magistrate; Pete and Joan Bellisario of Brighton Heights; Stanley Lowe, Vice President, Community Revitalization, National Trust for Historic Preservation; Linda Leonhardt of First National Bank; and many others.

"Shelly gives so much back to the community," said Northside Fund Executive Director Linda LeFever. "We felt it was important to celebrate the recognition that she has received for her commitment."

## [www.northsidebiz.com](http://www.northsidebiz.com)

The Northside Supplier Network can now be accessed at its new domain name [www.northsidebiz.com](http://www.northsidebiz.com).

Still a work in progress, the Northside Supplier Network (NSN) is working to improve business-to-business connections on the Northside by offering a comprehensive directory, company bios, and member privileges. Over the next few months, Northside Fund Staff Sarah Mansmann and Shannon Murphy; Robin Miller, Executive Director of the Northside Chamber of Commerce and Craig Laurenson of the Northside Leadership Conference will be visiting local businesses to share with them all of the services available to allow their companies to grow and prosper. Some of these services include: low interest loans for start-ups and existing Northside businesses, relocation and site location for companies, information on available funding, like the MainStreets and Technology Zone programs, and marketing support and assistance.

For more information regarding available services and NSN membership please call the Northside Fund at 412-322-0290.

## MEET THE LOAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

# Robert Rubinstein

When you first meet Robert Rubinstein, it is not immediately apparent that you are speaking with a musician who has been playing for the past 20 years with the internationally-renowned reggae band Ras Prophet.

Robert did not expect to spend 17 years working for Pittsburgh's Urban Redevelopment Authority. After studying Engineering at the University of Michigan, Robert returned to Pittsburgh to attend Tepper Business School at CMU. When he graduated in 1989, there were few opportunities available, so he started out as a Loan Officer at the URA. Now the URA's Director of Business Development, he has served on the Loan Review Committee of the Northside Fund since its creation in the year 2000.

As the first investor in the Northside Fund, Rubinstein saw that the URA had "a natural partnership with the Fund," since they both work to improve the growth potential of small businesses. At times,

however, that can seem like Herculean task. "It's a competitive environment," he says. "It's difficult for businesses to think strategically when their day-to-day operations are so time consuming." Robert works hard to ensure that small business owners are aware of the "plethora of resources out there to assist them."

Rubinstein's enthusiasm has led to an impressive list of completed projects during his tenure. The ventures he is most proud of include: the revitalization of Butler Street and East Liberty, Armstrong Cork in the Strip, the AUBA Triangle Shops in the Hill, and the early stage technology companies "I had the pleasure of playing a part in their growth, like McKesson Automated Health Care and Cellomics...and of course, helping the Northside Fund become established." Still, he is occasionally frustrated by the lack of attention given to the progress that has been made. "The URA has done tremendous things to improve the quality of life in



the region," Rubinstein says. "Unfortunately, the tendency sometimes is to focus on the 5% that wasn't successful instead of the 99.5% that was!"

Optimistically, Rubinstein looks to the future and he sees his work with the Loan Review Committee as an important endeavor. One outcome he'd like to see is the Northside Fund used as "a model that other regions of the City watch and emulate."

And the music? Well, he still plays with Ras Prophet and all Northside Fund friends had an opportunity to see this unique side of Robert when he and his band mates played at the Annual Event on September 29th.

## Remembering *Northside Chronicle* Manager Barbara Weber

*Northside Chronicle* Advertising Manager, Barbara L. Weber, passed away on Sunday, June 5, 2005 after a short illness.

Barbara joined *The Northside Chronicle* eleven years ago and was instrumental in increasing the advertising revenue of the newspaper. Over the years in addition to her advertising duties, she became more involved in the day-to-day operation of the newspaper. Many times

Ms. Weber was the first to recognize trends in neighborhood development and assisted in preparing stories that allowed the newspaper to report news and events important to Northsiders.

In addition, Ms. Weber was an active member of the North Side Lion's Club and served as vice-president and secretary of the Club. She also produced the Club's monthly newsletter.

Barbara Weber's warmth and laughter will be greatly missed. Memorial contributions in honor of Ms. Weber can be made to the North Side Lions Club, c/o Linda Leonhardt, First National Bank, 5004 McKnight Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237.

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The Northside Community Development Fund is supported by:

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

Pennsylvania Community Development Bank

Department of Health and Human Services

Department of the Treasury, Community Development Financial Institution Fund

Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh

Small Business Administration

Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development

# Celebration in the Park

On July 23rd, Celebration in the Park 2005 drew a crowd of families, young people, and even "Aging Divas" to Allegheny Commons for a day of music, food, and activities, including: a petting zoo, art exhibits, and a selection of books for kids and adults from Reading is Fundamental. We congratulate the Northside Chamber of Commerce and the Riverside Center for Innovation on their success!



*Aging Northside Divas: Linda LeFever, Stephanie Cipriani, Cathy Bubash, and Mary Wohleber*

# Special Thanks

The Northside Fund would like to thank James Christner for his kind and generous donation to the Northside Fund. His support is greatly appreciated!



**Northside**  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT FUND

922 Middle Street • Pittsburgh, PA 15212

# Looking for New Office Space?

The Northern Light Tower, located at the corner of Allegheny and Western Avenue is looking for tenants. Small to medium sized firms requiring 2,500 to 10,000 sq. ft. of space should contact Jim Genstein of NS Property at 412-279-7965 ext. 1.

# Don't Miss Historic Deutschtown House Tour

Historic Deutschtown House Tour

Sunday October 2, 2005

Featuring eight houses, tours of East Park & The Priory.

Tours depart between 11am & 3pm from the Grand Hall on Lockhart (last house closes at 4:30pm).

Proceeds will benefit the East Allegheny Community Council's ongoing efforts to preserve and improve the Deutschtown National Historic District.

To order tickets visit [www.deutschtown.org](http://www.deutschtown.org) or call (412) 321-1204.

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