From the President & Executive Director

For more than a decade, FutureHeights has worked to “sow the seeds of community” in Cleveland Heights and University Heights. Our reach, while limited to our two communities, has deep roots in this wonderful, unique place that we choose to call home. Perhaps you found FutureHeights through the Heights Observer, perusing our hyperlocal, citizen-driven, print and online newspaper. Perhaps you found FutureHeights through a community garden, or while shopping at a locally owned and operated business. One thing is certain: FutureHeights can always be found where civic engagement blooms and where community grows.

In the past year, FutureHeights has embarked on a strategic planning process that endeavors to achieve a “bigger, better” organization that can plant its roots even deeper and grow its branches farther to reach more, do more, accomplish more. We plan to partner with other local organizations to bring you more programs, more services, more community building. Our board members, staff, members and volunteers live in this community. We want to achieve the bigger, better, not only for FutureHeights, but for Cleveland Heights and University Heights as well.

Already, this year, FutureHeights has actively supported new community gardens, re-launched the Shop Local campaign, hosted panel discussions on community gardening and community organizing, and, of course, continued to publish the Heights Observer monthly in print and weekly as an e-newsletter. In May, FutureHeights’ Annual Meeting hosted Peter Pula of Axiom News, presenting on “the Power of Generative Journalism,” building on the Heights Observer’s goal to strengthen our communities.

This fall, FutureHeights will embark on, what will surely be its busiest season in the past decade. We will host the annual Best of the Heights Awards on September 23, recognizing and celebrating our unique, diverse and indispensable local businesses. Following the Best of Heights, FutureHeights will sponsor the First Annual Heights Music Hop on October 18. In partnership with the Cedar Lee Special Improvement District, Cellar Door Cleveland and Cleveland Beer Week, musicians will perform at venues along Lee Road. The music is free and the exclusive craft beers offered as part of Cleveland Beer Week require a paid passport. This event will celebrate great music, great beer, and celebrate and showcase Cleveland Heights. We close the fall with our Annual Online Auction, opening this year in late November.

Thank you for your support of FutureHeights. We look forward to your continued support to achieve to continue to grow civic engagement and community in Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

Clare Taft
President, Board of Directors

Deanna Bremer Fisher
Executive Director
FutureHeights engages residents by providing information, education and advocacy on issues that are important to ensuring a vibrant and sustainable future for the Heights. Over the last 18 months, we have accomplished much with our two-person staff and many dedicated volunteers:

Providing information

In 2012, FutureHeights published another 12 issues of the Heights Observer print edition and a weekly edition of the e-news. More than 787 people have signed up in the member center as volunteer writers, editors and distributors, and we have published more than 4,152 stories in the five years since the beginning of the project in April 2008. The print edition now averages 24 pages and 86 advertisers each month. We are amazed at how this hyperlocal community news project continues to grow as more and more people become involved to help tell our community’s stories.

On April 18, 2013, we celebrated the fifth anniversary of the Heights Observer with a Birthday Bash at Rockeller’s Restaurant. We inducted four new members to the Innovator’s Circle—all had a hand in helping launch the Observer project in 2008: Gina Cheverine, who led a strategic planning process that resulted in the creation of the Observer; Trevor Gile, who served on the FutureHeights HeightsShops Committee and enlisted Motorcars to become one of our first advertisers; Stephen Titchenal, who encouraged and supported the project from its inception and continues to help us deliver the newspaper to four neighborhoods in northern Cleveland Heights; and Michael Wellman, the chair of the board’s Community News Committee, who wrote the front-page article for the first issue.

Through the years, the Observer has often focused on news that other news sources would find unremarkable—interesting and dedicated people who are doing good things in our neighborhoods, entrepreneurs who are investing in our business districts, students who are achieving in our public schools. While some might find this Pollyanna-ish, Peter Pula, keynote speaker at our 2013 annual meeting, stressed the importance of journalism that builds on a community’s strengths, instead of focusing on its weaknesses. We agree that the stories that appear in the Observer provide a truer picture of what our community is all about and that celebrating our strengths has emboldened us to become an even stronger community. There is power in telling our own story.

There are many important narratives taking place in our community. Through the Observer, Heights residents have greater opportunities to interact with one another and participate in public life. We have provided continuing coverage of our public school district’s facilities planning process and are looking forward to covering this year’s municipal elections. Through a partnership with the League of Women Voters, FutureHeights will publish a Voter’s Guide in the October print issue and host a candidates forum on Oct. 8 at the Cleveland Heights Community Center.

Creating opportunities for education and dialogue

In 2012 and 2013, FutureHeights hosted a number of opportunities to interact with one another and participate in public life. We have provided continuing coverage of our public school district’s facilities planning process and are looking forward to covering this year’s municipal elections. Through a partnership with the League of Women Voters, FutureHeights will publish a Voter’s Guide in the October print issue and host a candidates forum on Oct. 8 at the Cleveland Heights Community Center.

Advocating for issues important to Heights residents

The CH-UH Board of Education’s investment in school facilities represents one of the largest investments in our community in 40 years. After the BOE decided against placing a bond issue to fund facilities Plan C on the November 2012 ballot, FutureHeights joined Reaching Heights in requesting that the board create a Lay Facilities Committee (LFC) to develop a new facilities plan that could gain voter approval. Our executive director, Deanna Bremer Fisher, served on the LFC and co-chaired its buildings subcommittee. She reported on the committee meetings and facilities process extensively in the Heights Observer. The LFC delivered its final report to the BOE on May 7 and the board subsequently voted to place a bond issue to fund the LFC’s plan on the November 2013 ballot.

In addition, FutureHeights provides fiscal agency service for several grassroots organizations, such as the Sustainable Heights Network, the Montford Community Garden Association and the Heights Community Garden Network, enabling them to seek funding and present programs that enhance our community.

Supporting our local economy

The locally owned, independent businesses that comprise our 14 business districts are strong contributors to our local economy and the unique character of our community. Through “shop local” programs, such as the FutureHeights Restaurant Tour, Holiday Shopping Guide, Online Auction, and Best of the Heights, we encourage residents to patronize these businesses and help keep our community vibrant. A Storefront Vacancy Study, completed in May, provided a snapshot of the health of each district, enabling us to provide information to city officials and residents with the goal of finding new businesses to fill our empty storefronts.

Promoting our community

We believe that the Heights is a community rich in assets and we never tire of promoting it as a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family. Last year, through a grant from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture, and working with the Center for Public History and Digital Humanities at Cleveland State University, the Cleveland Heights Historical Society, and the Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission, we created tours of four Cleveland Heights neighborhoods using the Cleveland Historical mobile phone app. The tours are a new tool for residents and visitors to explore our neighborhoods and learn, through historic photos, audio and video clips, about our rich history.

Last July, we were pleased to be selected as the beneficiary of Thunder Run, a 5k run-walk that takes place in Forest Hill Park. Every year this event benefits a local organization and calls attention to the park, a hidden gem and a real community asset.

This year, we are planning our first-ever Heights Music Hop, a celebration of local music that we hope will become an annual event. On Oct. 18, several venues along Lee Road will feature free, live music by regional acts.

Planning for the future

As we look towards the future, FutureHeights is working to find ways to become more efficient, more effective and more visible in what we do. To that end, we are talking with other Heights-based nonprofits to find ways to strategically collaborate in our programs and administration. Please know that we will continue to invest your donation dollars wisely and do all we can to ensure that the Heights remains a wonderful place to live.

Thank you for your support!
Meet the 2013 FutureHeights Board of Directors

Clare Taff
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Associate at Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff • Resident of Cleveland Heights for 15 years • Loves the character of Cleveland Heights’s neighborhoods and home

Richard Stewart
Vice President
Owner of Digizoom Media • Raised in the Heights and attended Fairfax, Roxboro and Heights High • Loves his friendly neighbors on East Fairfax Road

Mike Kinsella
Vice President
Director of alumni relations for the Cleveland Institute of Art • Resident of Cleveland Heights for 15 years • Drawn to area by its active and engaged citizenry

Lloyd Bell
Treasurer
Has two children thriving in the CH-UH school system • Director of the corporate finance group of Meaden & Moore, Ltd. • Cleveland Heights resident for 19 years

Rebecca Stolzman
Secretary
Resident of University Heights for 15 years • Director of grants management for Cuyahoga Community College • Loves the easy access to everything in the Heights

Kevin Smith
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Our thanks to former board members Gina Cheverine, Kristen Hopkins, Bryan Lorentz, Judi Miles and Lisa Smith for their dedicated service to the mission of FutureHeights.
Join Us

Your tax-deductible membership contribution goes directly to supporting the community-based programs and projects of FutureHeights that help strengthen our wonderful neighborhoods. Join online today at our secure website, www.futureheights.org, or by calling 216-320-1423.

Our Mission

FutureHeights promotes a vibrant and sustainable future for Cleveland Heights and University Heights through innovative ideas and civic engagement.

FutureHeights values:

• Active and informed citizen participation in community decision making
• Innovative ideas in addressing the challenges of inner-ring suburbs
• Open and effective communication and partnerships among nonprofits, schools, local business, city government and citizens
• A thriving local business community
• Historic neighborhoods and commercial districts
• High quality and sustainability in design and architecture
• A regional approach to innovation, planning, and development

2012 Financial Statement

Unaudited condensed statement of activities

Revenue and Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Memberships</td>
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<td>Annual fund</td>
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<td>Interest Income</td>
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<td>Other Fundraisers</td>
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<td>Online Auction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertising Revenue</td>
<td>99,160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>3,910</td>
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Total Revenue and Support 212,036

Expenses

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<tbody>
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<td>Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>General and Administration</td>
<td>45,247</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>6,745</td>
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Total Expenses 196,811

Change in Net Assets

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<td>Net Assets at Beginning of Year</td>
<td>69,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets at End of Year</td>
<td>$84,329</td>
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The FutureHeights financial year begins January 1 and ends December 31.

FutureHeights is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Contributions to FutureHeights are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. FutureHeights participates in GuideStar, the online standard for nonprofit accountability. Please visit GuideStar.org to view the organization’s Annual Form 990 and other organizational information.
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