



WEST CENTRAL COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

Spring 2022



A WELCOME FROM CITY DIRECTOR DORIS WRIGHT

I am thrilled to present you with this issue of West Central Community Magazine as there is much to report back to the residents of our community. The past two years have put forward many challenges for Little Rock, our great state of Arkansas, and our entire country. We've had to alter just about everything during this COVID-19 pandemic – moving much of our lives online to learn, work, and socialize.

WCCC has also had to make many changes, such as closing our center and sports complex, shifting to virtual programs, and delaying many of our exciting plans. But this pandemic has also given us an opportunity to slow down and truly listen to the members of our community and get creative to help meet those challenges.

This issue of the magazine provides information of what we've done in the past two years and celebrates our community and our collaborations in the face of this devastating pandemic. While we still do not have an end date for COVID-19, we continue to look forward, get stronger, and build our confidence back up with parents and residents. Trust me, WCCC is where you want your kids to be, especially as we are able to fully return to our full slate of activities safely. So please stay tuned for more information as it becomes available.

One major thing we have learned is that the only way we will get through this pandemic is together. We must take care of each other and our community. In these uncertain times, WCCC will certainly be ready with even more great programs and opportunities for you and your family.



Yours in Service,

Doris Wright
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NEW ART INSTALLATION CREATES “SYNERGY” AT WCCC

The beautiful art sculpture that adorns the entrance of the West Central Community Center (WCCC), located at 8616 Colonel Glenn Road at John Barrow Road, is named Synergy. Installed in June of 2021, the bright yellow brushed metal piece stands 20 feet high, 12 feet wide, and 10 feet deep. It has two large curved metal ribbons which swoop toward each other before splitting off toward the top.

“This sculpture perfectly illustrates the intersection of arts and culture,” says Ward 6 City Director, Doris Wright. “It sets the tone for what our

residents and visitors will feel once they enter the Center, especially for the first time.”

The sculpture was created by Kathleen Caricof who was named as the recipient of the \$60,000 2020 Sculpture at the River Market Public Monument Commission.

In submitting her proposal, she said, “The West Central Community Center is a place where people come and go on an everyday basis to enjoy everything the center has to offer. The inspiration for this sculpture is to express the motion of the activities which take place in the Center and the connection it makes

among community members. Designed with energy, this tall metal sculpture shows the excitement of the expression of motion. These forms, as simple as they might look, depict the complex movements of athletes and the togetherness of a lively community. Standing tall, and easy to see, this piece is perfectly suited as a landmark for the nearby pickup and drop off spot by the West Central Community Center’s entrance.”

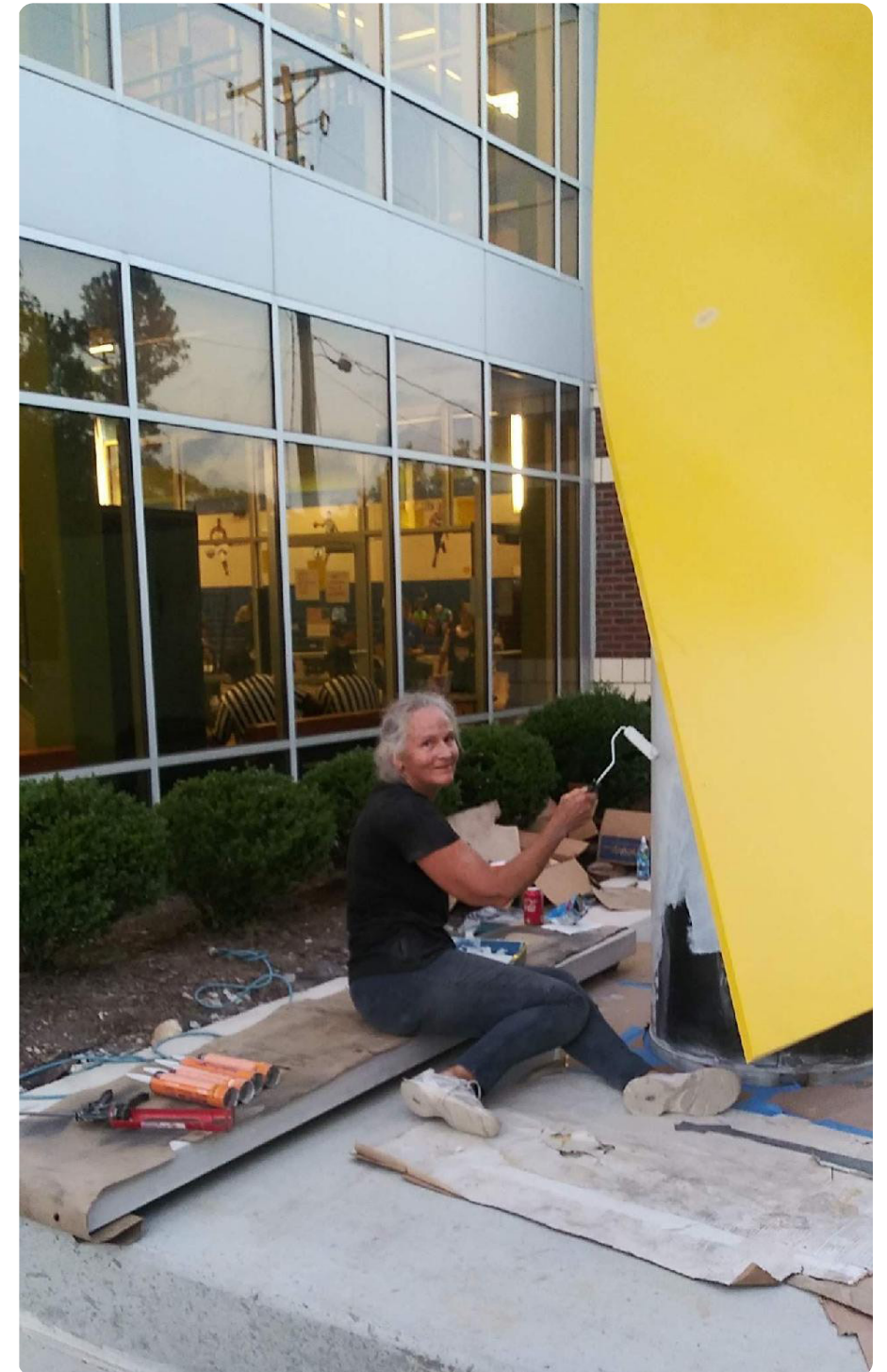
Caricof, a member of the National Sculptors Guild, joins nine other sculptors who have been recognized previously with Sculpture at the River

Market’s Public Art Monument Sculpture commissions:

- Chapel, whose work The Center was installed near the Junction Bridge. (2011)
- Bryan Massey, Sr.’s Nautilus. This was installed to the north of the Marriott Hotel near the younger children’s spray fountain. (2012)
- Ted Schaal’s Open Window, placed near the La Petite Roche plaza and First Security Amphitheatre. (2013)
- Lorri Acott’s Peace, sited at the southeast corner of Main and 2nd Streets (2014)
- Michael Warrick’s Mockingbird Tree, installed at the corner of Chenal Parkway and Chenal Valley Drive (2015)

- Clay Enoch’s United, installed at Central High School (2016)
- Stephen Shachtman’s Arkansas ‘A’, sits at the entrance to the Southwest Community Center (2017)
- Carol Gold’s Infinite Dance, in Riverfront Park where the Broadway

- Bridge pedestrian ramp meets the Arkansas River Trail (2018)
- Theresa Dyer’s Little Rock, recently installed on the grounds of Little Rock City Hall at Markham and Broadway Streets (2019)



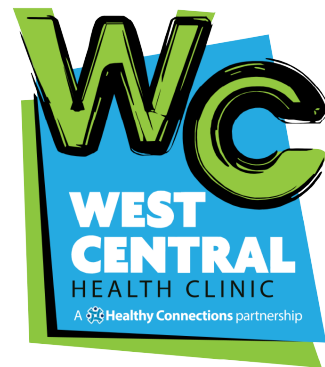
A HEALTHY PARTNERSHIP



WEST CENTRAL HEALTH CLINIC PROVIDES PRIMARY CARE SERVICES AND MORE

An exciting partnership between the City of Little Rock and Healthy Connections Community Health Network brings healthcare and behavioral health services to the John Barrow Community. The West Central Health Clinic (WCHC) is located in the parking lot of the West Central Community Center and Sports Complex at 4511 John Barrow Rd. Appointments are being accepted by calling 888-710-8220 or by visiting www.wchealthclinic.com.

"We are excited to begin this partnership with the City of Little Rock to bring our quality health care services to this

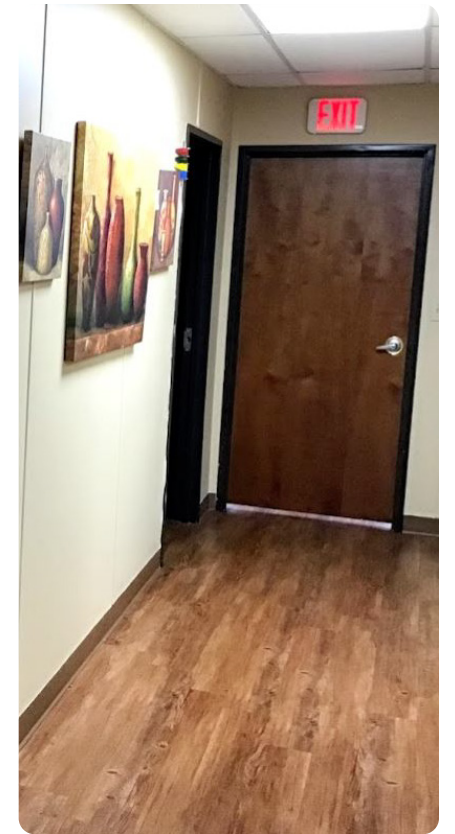


community," said Healthy Connections, Inc., CEO Tony Calandro. "We are proud to provide primary care services to patients in all stages of life, including newborns, children, adolescents, adults, and seniors."

West Central Health Clinic will provide primary care/family medicine services to patients

of all ages through an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN). This may include preventative medicine, care for common illnesses, care for chronic conditions, healthcare screenings, physicals, immunizations, and more. Additionally, WCHC will offer mental-health therapy and medication management through Evolve Behavioral Health. These providers will include both a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner (APRN PMHNP).

West Central Health Clinic features three state-of-the-art exam rooms to care for our patients and will be open



The West Central Health Clinic, located on the parking lot of the community center and sports complex, features a waiting room, three state-of-the-art exam rooms, and more. Call 888-710-8220 for appointments. Visit www.wchealthclinic.com for more information.

Monday through Friday. West Central Health Clinic is part of the Healthy Connections Community Health Network. As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), the clinic will accept most health insurances, including Medicaid, ARKids 1st, and Medicare. The clinic also has a sliding-fee scale for patients without insurance. Qualified families will be charged according to their total family income and the total number of persons living in the household. This sliding-fee scale allows many to receive treatment who might not

have otherwise been able to afford it.

Healthy Connections is a Mena-based nonprofit organization serving the needs of children and adults throughout West Central Arkansas. Since its founding in 1998 as a home-visiting program, Healthy Connections has been able to provide much-needed health, dental, and social services to families of every lifestyle.

West Central Health Clinic is the second Little Rock location for Healthy Connections. The

Little Rock Midtown clinic, located at 1100 N. University Ave., Suite 200, offers services including primary care, behavioral health, women's health, Medication-Assisted Treatment for opioid addiction, HIV/AIDS treatment and care, and hormone replacement therapy, rheumatology, and more. Depending on the location, Healthy Connections also offers dental, podiatry, cardiology, and pediatrics services. These locations include Bryant, Hot Springs, Malvern, Arkadelphia, Hot Springs Village, Russellville, Mount Ida, Mena, and De Queen.



CITY OF LITTLE ROCK DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



**First Time Home Buyers!
Up To \$5,000 In Assistance!**



**2021 INCOME LIMITS
EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, 2021 UNTIL SUPERSEDED**

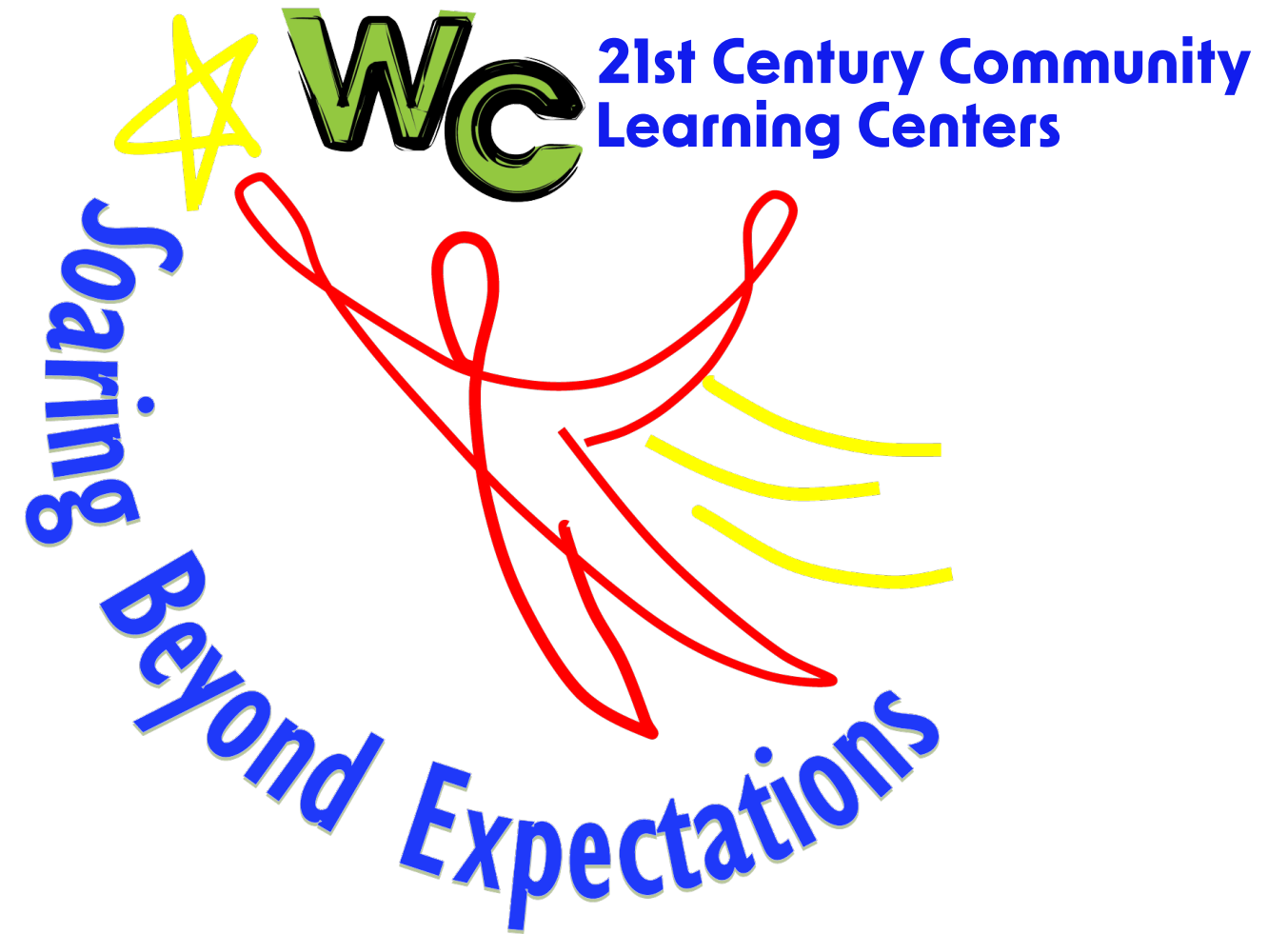
Household	80% Low
1	\$ 40,050.00
2	\$ 45,800.00
3	\$ 51,500.00
4	\$ 57,200.00
5	\$ 61,800.00
6	\$ 66,400.00
7	\$ 70,950.00
8	\$ 75,550.00

WHAT IS THE DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

- The City of Little Rock has allocated funds to assist low and moderate-income first time homebuyers to purchase for owner occupancy residential properties within the city limits of Little Rock.
- The total of the down payment assistance from the City of Little Rock to the first-time buyer may not exceed six (6) percent of the purchase price, not to exceed \$5,000.00.
- Buyer must document that annual household income ($\leq 80\%$ area median income), adjusted for family size, does not exceed the maximums. (See low-income limits).
- Buyer must be a first-time homebuyer (not have owned any residential property within last three (3) years).
- Buyer must agree to own / occupy the property for a minimum of five (5) years (Affordability Period).
- Buyer must complete a homebuyer counseling course, acceptable to the City of Little Rock.
- The loan is forgiven in equal monthly installments over a 60-month period.
- Assistance shall be requested by applicant through a mortgage lender.
- Buyer must be approved for a 1st mortgage through a bank or mortgage company. The lender must have a physical presence (i.e., location) in Arkansas.
- All repairs must be completed on the unit prior to approval of the assistance.

HOMEBUYERS ONCE APPROVED PLEASE HAVE YOUR LENDER CALL:

City of Little Rock Department of Housing & Neighborhood Programs
Community Development Division
501-371-6825
www.littlerock.gov



The West Central 21st Century Learning Center (21st CCLC) supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during afterschool hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of

participating students. For more information on how to enroll your child in the program, stop by the Community Center or contact Debra Banks by phone at (501) 371-4583 or by email at: dbanks@littlerock.gov.



21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER TACKLES ILLITERACY HEAD-ON

In 2019, 28 percent of Arkansas eighth graders were reading below basic reading levels – lower than the national average for students. WCCC's 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) is tackling those numbers head on, raising student literacy rates, providing enrichment services, and supporting schools and families along the way.

The 21st CCLC is a free after-school program for 100 area elementary and middle school students (K-8) recruited to help improve their reading and writing abilities. The program is designed to serve students in high-poverty neighborhoods attending a low-performing school. The WCCC program was created in 2016, when City Director Doris Wright applied for a grant from the Department of Education, committing to engage students academically, socially/emotionally, and through creative arts while improving family engagement. The Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative is a 5-year, \$650,000 grant that can be renewed up to two times. It is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to supporting local after-school, before-school, and summer learning programs. The program serves nearly 2 million youth through grants awarded by state education agencies.

Debra Banks is the Program Director of the 21st CCLC and is always looking for ways to make WCCC more accessible to the community. According to Banks, a child that comes from a multigenerational impoverished family background who lives in an impoverished

neighborhood has a 30 percent less chance to compete academically with their middle class friends. "Without the ability to read and without a strong vocabulary, it's difficult to conceive things that you can't see or touch. Conceptualization is an important skill," said Banks.

Students attend the program from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. M-F and spend 30 minutes on homework, 90 minutes for an intensive literacy boot camp, and then enjoy physical fitness in WCCC's 25,000 sq. feet facility, followed by fun with food and gardening. Students learn about food groups, the origins of food, how to build



container gardens, attend cooking lessons by area chefs, and receive supplies needed to garden at home.

"We're here to enrich students' lives," said Banks. "That means, in addition to strengthening academic skills, we are exposing them to opportunities that they may not otherwise have access to, such as art museums, ballet, opera, astronomy, gardening, science, and mentorships from a variety of sources. We know that means investing in great teachers and paying them a living wage." One-third of the program's budget goes to hiring literacy experts for 7:1 student-teacher ratio. "Every day we're motivated to get into WCCC and make sure we are providing programming that will

move the needle with young people," said Banks.

The 21st CCLC is also building engagement with parents and families, which is a requirement of the program. "We are trying to help parents understand the importance of encouraging their children and their academic endeavors," said Banks. The program provides healthcare and transportation so parents can attend classes on nutrition basics and food preparation. WCCC is looking at ways to provide additional supports such as prenatal services, financial literacy classes, and child development courses. "We're looking to provide the skills that aren't just given to us when we are born in order to promote healthy, engaged families in the West Central community," added Banks.

West Central resident Helen Hampton was proud of the changes she saw in her son DeShunn, who attended the program as an eighth grader at Henderson Middle School. She is glad that she was able to get him into the program. Because of the one-on-one help during his time in the program, DeShunn is more enthused about reading and is a little more confident. "He believes he can do it if he takes his time and gives himself a chance," said Hampton. "His grades really improved and he's working hard. I just hope the program continues for kids like DeShunn who need that extra help."

Banks knows the value and importance of programs like 21st CCLC and is seeing its impact on its students. "We don't want to improve the odds, we want to CHANGE the odds," she said. "We're in it to win it!"





Bradley Mann with the Warren Arkansas Fight Club, fought in the 110-pound weight class. Bradley did not win his match, but his attitude stayed positive which is a testament to the discipline the sport instills in youth participants.



YOUTH BOXING AT WCCC PRODUCES 3 D'S

Thanks to a partnership with Diamond Rock Promotions, the West Central Sports Complex and Community Center is the place to be for great boxing action!

Boxing is a unique sport that empowers participants. The coaching staff proudly teaches the values of respect, camaraderie, tenacity, sportsmanship, honor, and especially "the three Ds": Discipline, Dedication, and Desire. "When

our youth feel physically strong, it can help positively affect other aspects of their lives as well," said City Director Doris Wright.

In 2021, the Arkansas Golden Gloves returned to Little Rock for the first time in 45 years. The State Boxing Commission liked the WCCC facilities and the turnout from the fans of the sport so much that West Central has been asked to host the event again in 2022!



JOIN OUR SPORTS OFFICIAL PROGRAM!



Athletes aren't the only all-stars. Those who help to uphold the rules of the game are just as important as those who must play by them. Established in March 2013, the Youth Sports Officials Program is designed to allow Little Rock citizens, 18 years of age and older, the opportunity to become paid officials of youth sports.

These individuals play a critical role to the success of the West Central Sports Complex (WCSC) because, as participation in WCSC programs has grown each year, so too has the need for qualified officials. Our Youth Sports Officials lead players by example, applying their ability and a sense of fairness to split-second decisions, conflict resolution, and high-pressure scenarios, and manage to have fun too!

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE JOB?

The Arkansas Athletics Association (AAA) suggests considering these factors before becoming an official:

- Sports officials are placed in highly charged situations. They need to keep their cool, even if others around them lose perspective and control.
- It takes a time commitment to become a top official. There is more involved than reading a rule book. Top officials attend meetings, stay updated on changes in the sport, and attend clinics to improve.
- Through it all, officials are able to have fun doing their job.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Any player or coach who has put time and effort into a sport appreciates the same type of effort from the officials who oversee the games.

- WCSC officials are expected to maintain strong character and unquestionable integrity.
- In working with young people, officials are expected to contribute to the development and educational experience of the competitors.

PAID TO HAVE FUN

Officials will work as independent contractors. Pay varies based on the sport and the level of expertise, but it typically is on a per-game basis in the ballpark of \$12.50 to \$25.00 a game. Pay also can go up for post-season games, opportunities that typically are awarded to top officials.

GETTING STARTED

If you think you have what it takes to be a Sports Official, the next step is to apply. Applicants who meet the qualifications will attend classes offered by the WCSC. Once they complete the class they must become AAA certified. New officials will have a trial period to see how they react under pressure. They will start out in the lower age leagues and as they gain experience, they will work their way up to the older leagues.

Opportunities are available in baseball, football, basketball, and more. Not every official has played the sport they work, but they do put in the effort to understand the rules and how to apply them within the game. If you think you have what it takes, you're invited to apply by stopping by the WCSC front desk.

WEST CENTRAL PRIDE & PROGRESS

Come see what we have to offer and what's to come! Now entering its 17th season, the West Central Sports Complex is a place where all West Central Little Rock residents can enjoy sports and other recreational activities.

The addition of the West Central Community Center further enhances the opportunities for youth, young adults, and seniors. The park also includes KWCP Radio (West Central Pride). A variety of offerings are already available:



AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

21st Century Community Learning Center After School Programs for grades 6-9

SUMMER PROGRAMS

21st Century Community Learning Center STEAM Program for grades 6-9

UNIQUE PROGRAMS

Play Hard! Sports Radio (features local high schools and a player-of-the-week during basketball, baseball, and football seasons)

Radio Internships

Stay tuned for more exciting programs in the near future!

West Central Community Center

8616 Colonel Glenn Road

Little Rock, AR 72204

501-379-1890



Envision the future

It's a known fact: Children and youth thrive in caring environments. That's why many of the City of Little Rock's Department of Community Programs Providers operate afterschool Monday through Friday and during out-of-school periods nearly every day of the year. These programs offer positive educational, cultural, and mentoring activities to prepare our children and youth for their future so they can make positive contributions to their families, neighborhoods, city, and society.

For more information about the Department of Community Programs, visit www.littlerock.gov and look for the Community Programs page.

What our Department logo represents:

We help people grow by being connected to one another. The left side is rooted in Little Rock, but expands on the other side to reach out to others as we all grow together.



READING IS "FUN" DAMENTAL AT WCCC LITTLE FREE LIBRARY



"Studies prove that the more books are found in or near the home, the more likely a child will learn and love to read," says Ward 6 City Director, Doris Wright.

The Little Free Library nonprofit organization was founded in 2009 and is based in Hudson, WI. The organization strives to be a catalyst for building community where the opportunity to discover a personally relevant book to read is not limited by time, space, or privilege. The libraries are established through a global network of volunteer-led book exchanges already found in all corners of the globe from Australia to Ghana to India to Germany and America. Their vision is a Little Free Library in every community and a book for every reader.

West Central residents of all ages are definitely enjoying the Little Free Library located outside the front entrance of the West Central Community Center. United Way installed the project at WCCC in the summer 2019 with the City of Little Rock's Parks and Recreation department donating the matching benches soon thereafter.

There are more than 100,000 registered free library sites intentionally located within neighborhoods, usually in the form of a public bookcase or box. Books are exchanged through the box, where books can either be picked up and/or dropped off. The books are available for FREE for use by anyone, at any time, providing 24/7 book access.





R & B LEGEND RALPH TRESVANT VISITS WEST CENTRAL, AWARDED KEY TO THE CITY

West Central fans were treated to a visit from R&B legend Ralph Tresvant in October 2019 when the New Edition and "Sensitivity" star flew into Arkansas for a concert at the Arkansas State Fair. He was invited to WCCC by Dir. Doris Wright, who had established a relationship with Tresvant and his producer, Jason Anderson, for more than a year.

"I invited Ralph to come take a tour of the West Central Sports Complex and Community Center and to view the master plans for our next phase," said Wright. Tresvant, Anderson, and a security guard joined Wright, Larry Gilmore, WCCC employees, and fans for a Meet and Greet in the WCCC Banquet Room. Food and beverages were donated by Trio's Restaurant in Little Rock.

During the Meet and Greet, Tresvant viewed a welcome video from Mayor Frank Scott Jr., followed by a presentation of a very special gift. "It was an absolute honor to bestow Ralph with a key to the city!" said Dir. Wright. "The key means he is welcomed in the city of Little Rock at any time."

After the brunch, Wright and others led Tresvant and his team on a tour of the entire WCCC facility, including the WCSC ball park and basketball court where Tresvant and his team shot some hoops. "He was so impressed with the operations of the Center as well as with KWCP, our community radio station, where his music is heard," said Wright.

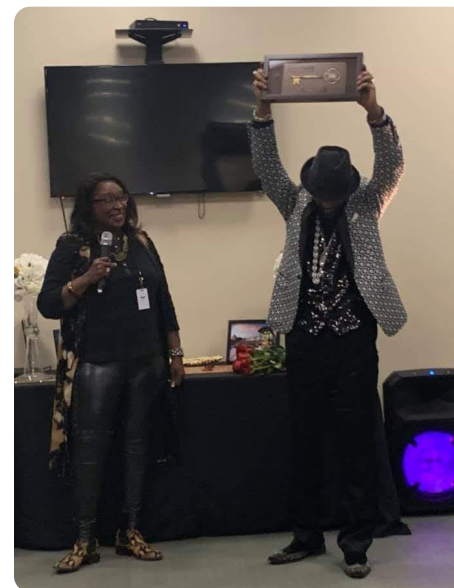
That afternoon, Tresvant performed at the state fair and then returned to WCCC for an evening Meet and Greet and photo shoot for more than 75 fans. "It was a magical event," said Gilmore. "People came from Florida, Texas, and Tennessee for the opportunity to actually speak with Ralph and take photos with him. He spoke with everyone and was really grounded."

Adults at the evening Meet and Greet were "amazed at how approachable Ralph was and were thrilled to get photos with him and get autographs," said Wright. "We're really looking forward to working with him again and creating more opportunities for our kids."

Tresvant was so inspired by the visit that he committed to come back for WCCC's music festival and host a workshop for aspiring music artists to explain how the industry operates as soon as the Center returns to full operation. He also plans to act as a special guest judge for the festival's talent contest. Winners get to serve as an opening act for the music Festival.



Tresvant was born in Boston, MA and grew up listening to music with his younger siblings. While in junior high school, he developed



New Edition with friends Bobby Brown, Ricky Bell, and Michael Bivins. Ronnie DeVoe was added later. Tresvant went out on his own and released his self-titled

debut album in 1990. His smash hit, "Sensitivity," was number one on the R&B charts and #4 on the Pop charts for 20 weeks. He continues to work with members of New Edition and on solo projects.

Tresvant released a new single in July 2020 with Johnny Gill titled "All Mine." He continues to work on the rest of the album, "Living in a Dream," which has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I am so proud to show off our exciting facility and programs to one of my absolute favorite singers, songwriters, and actors, Ralph Tresvant," said Wright. "He understands the value of community, supports the arts, and is a great example of what can happen when we work hard and stay positive."



KWCP: A COMMUNITY JEWEL

Ward 6 City Director, Doris Wright, was tired of hearing negative news coverage about the John Barrow Community in local mainstream media. She knew that the only way to counteract the harmful narratives about her beloved neighborhood was to provide consistent, positive messages to West Central Little Rock residents about their growing community. So, when Dir. Wright and members of the John Barrow Neighborhood Association launched the \$6.4 million West Central Community Center (WCCC), she worked to include a new community-based radio station to lift up the area's diverse voices.

It wasn't easy. Dir. Wright collaborated with local community organizations, schools, institutions of higher education, and neighborhood volunteers to help shape KWCP (which stands for "West Central Pride") with a goal to create concrete learning opportunities, engage residents, and build a more positive West Central identity. West Central Community Radio/KWCP-LP 98.9 FM officially went on the air in November 2016, serving an area of approximately 26,000 listeners.

"We wanted a place to share the varied voices and talents of our neighborhood on the air to inform people of what's going on in their own backyards," said Program Director Jamal Quarles. Quarles says that in addition to airing Hip Hop/Old School R&B, the station broadcasts community programs, local sports events, airs public service announcements from the city and state, and creates content built specifically for West Central Little Rock



and surrounding areas. "We're not your typical community radio station. It's all about West Central pride," concluded Quarles.

Hands-on learning has always been a primary focus of KWCP, which works with educators from local elementary, middle, and high schools to build new, transferable skills for students with internships and by providing content for school curricula. By working with students interested in media and social media, "KWCP is a training ground and an outlet to be able to get a fresh understanding of how this changing, exciting industry works," said Operations Manager James Smith, who joined the station in 2018 after nearly 50 years as a broadcaster.

Smith explains that there are very few public, low-power FM stations like KWCP. "Arkansas has public radio stations that are locally focused, but that's rare here in Little Rock. Normally, people would have to go to a commercial station to get basic local information, but KWCP has a narrow-edged scope on Little Rock, and our engagement with the community tells us that our effort is appreciated and valued," Smith said. "We are seeing the station grow by way of community conversations. People are paying attention to us."

As WCCC was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, KWCP continued to be a resource for the Little Rock community, airing local updates and content from the Center for Disease Control and city and state governments in order to keep its listeners informed and healthy. "COVID hit communities of color especially hard, but this has proven to be

one of KWCPs most shining moments," said Smith. "People depend on stations like ours that touch all demographic groups to provide the community with up-to-date info on a continuous basis, and we're doing that."

Station staff continue to add programming and develop its social media and online streaming capabilities. Plans are also being made to develop a YouTube channel to post live community interviews. Dir. Wright hopes to develop a youth radio show project in the near future and is currently building station partnerships with local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). "I would like for HBCUs to use the station as an internship site and recruitment tool for communications students," she said.

"I have been thoroughly impressed by the vision that Dir. Wright and city staff have developed in getting KWCP off the ground," said Smith, who has worked with radio and entertainment legends Tom Joyner and Barry Gordy. "There are always new areas and challenges where a media outlet can play a role. As the community grows, this radio station is growing right along with it," he added.

Smith says his goal is to continue to have WCCC and KWCP be a beacon of light for the West Central community. "This station is a model for other communities in the state and nation to grow community

involvement," said Smith. "We want to have a competitive station that services the area, but also be an entity that we can all be proud of. I feel we've achieved that. KWCP is a jewel in the community and will be around for a long time."



HBCU COLLEGE TOUR HELPS PUT LITTLE ROCK STUDENTS ON PATH TO HIGHER EDUCATION

WCCC kicked off March 2022 as an official stop on the "HBCU College Tour," which brought recruiters from 29 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) from around the country to meet with area high school juniors and seniors. Students swarmed tables draped in college colors to gather information, ask questions, and apply to their dream schools, with many receiving scholarships and acceptances right on the spot.

This massive college fair is part of multistate tour with stops in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas. "There's nothing else like this in the South where students can have access to this many HBCUs," said organizer Corey Allen, who lives in Memphis, TN. "Students in Little Rock said they'd never dreamed they would meet recruiters from out-of-state institutions like Shaw University, Florida A&M, Delaware State, or Morgan



State Universities. They've only seen recruiters from Arkansas colleges and HBCUs. This fair exposes them to opportunities both inside and outside of Arkansas and helps students get on the path to higher education," said Allen.

Allen founded the HBCU Awareness Foundation six years ago and now provides two six-day tours per year through Memphis, TN, North Mississippi, and Arkansas. Each spring and fall his goal is to expose students

to a variety of educational options at HBCUs, help them get admitted, and connect them with scholarships. "First generation college students can get lost in the shuffle, so I help them through the process where I can," said Allen. The Foundation, which also holds 10 college tours per year, has placed more than 2600 students into HBCUs. Allen believes he's directly helped 600 students attend HBCUs and graduate.

Allen is a graduate of Grambling State University in Louisiana, where his mother, father, and sister also received degrees. Allen has a full-time job in market development, but devotes any spare time to raising awareness of the benefits of HBCUs. In addition to the tours, Allen manages the Foundation's Facebook page, where followers can receive HBCU news updates.

On his tours, he usually has several students ask why they should attend an HBCU. "That one is easy," Allen said. "Go because you are around people who look like you and want you to be successful. There's a real sense of family and community there." Allen says students benefit from the diversity. "Once you go through an HBCU, you've gained a wealth of knowledge which you can put back into your community."





SPRING COLLEGE FAIR

HBCU College Fair With A Different Approach

2022

CONFIRMED SCHOOLS

- Alabama A& M University
- Alcorn State University
- Claflin University
- Delaware State University
- Dillard University
- Edward Waters University
- Fisk University
- Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University
- Grambling State University
- Harris Stowe State University
- Huston-Tillotson university
- Jarvis Christian College
- Lane College
- LeMoyne-Owen College
- Lincoln University
- Mississippi Valley State University
- Philander Smith College
- Rust College
- Shaw University
- South Carolina State University
- Southern University and A&M College
- Stillman College
- Talladega College
- Tennessee State University
- Tougaloo College
- Tuskegee University
- University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
- Voorhess College
- Wilberforce University
- Wiley College

For the Love of
HBCUs

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
info@hbcuawarenessfoundation.org



*I am not what happened to me.
I am who I choose to become.*

Carl Jung



Starting over can be difficult or scary. That's why the City of Little Rock's Department of Community Programs offers assistance to those returning to society from incarceration. If you – or someone you know – needs help, contact us.

Department of Community Programs

ReEntry Services

3012 MLK Drive
Little Rock AR 72206
(501) 372-2874

Dwight Pridgeon, Coordinator
dpridgeon@littlerock.gov



Become A Worksite Partner For The City of Little Rock SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

There is a growing need for young employees with the critical skills and positive workforce habits necessary to be productive partners for economic growth. One way the City of Little Rock works to fulfill that need is through the Summer Youth Employment Opportunity (SYEO).

While the Department of Community Programs provides Little Rock youth with the opportunity to develop work skills, our overall success depends upon committed work sites and supervisors across Little Rock who are willing to share their time and expertise to train the next generation of employees.

You provide on-the-job training; the City of Little Rock pays the salary and worker's comp insurance.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

- Interns are your local Little Rock community members aged 16-21 (high school/college students) *(Youth may apply for summer jobs on the City employment website starting February 1 of each year)*
- Job Placement is six weeks in the summer, usually from the middle of June to the end of July
- Interns work 32 hour weeks, from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday-Thursday (off on Fridays) *(Note: 4-hour part-time opportunities may be available for mornings or afternoons)*
- All types of jobs may qualify *(exceptions include HazMat or any that involve children under the age of 5)*
- Interns complete 20 hours of work readiness training prior to job placement at your worksite
- Interns skills and interests are matched as closely as possible with your job requirements
- The City provides a Mentor for each intern to heighten the level of employment success

Join us and help train our youth for a brighter future as we work together to build a skilled workforce for Central Arkansas.



For more information, contact Community Programs at (501) 399-3420 or ProgramReferral@littlerock.gov



COMCAST CARES 2022



The City of Little Rock was proud to host Comcast NBC Universal employees during Comcast Cares Day, where volunteers worked on projects around the West Central Community Center (WCCC).

Comcast Cares is more than just a day – it's a culmination of Comcast NBC Universal's commitment to volunteerism that began when the company was founded more than 50 years ago.

From using technology to create positive change, such as wiring community centers and libraries and teaching digital literacy skills, to mentoring youth, to beautifying parks, Comcast NBC Universal employees volunteer on this day, and throughout the year, to make a lasting impact.

"Our mission to improve the communities in which we live and work is on display each year at Comcast Cares Day," said Doug Guthrie, Regional Senior Vice President at Comcast. "We are proud to partner with these organizations in Arkansas to make a true difference in the community."

The Comcast Foundation also provides grants to local community partner organizations across the country on behalf of everyone who volunteers on Comcast Cares Day. The grants help Comcast's community partners continue their mission of serving the community throughout the year.

The Comcast Foundation has awarded more than \$22,000,000 in grants to local nonprofit organizations that have served as partners on Comcast Cares Day. For more information on Comcast NBC Universal volunteer and community investment initiatives, visit www.comcast.com/community.



YOUTH ART CONTEST GUIDELINES

Qualifications: Any student that is currently enrolled in high school between grades 9 and 12 can enter the contest. Submit a letter of intent before the deadline.

TYPE OF ART

- Two-dimensional art creation of water color, acrylic, oil, charcoal, etc.
- Digital computer art and photography are also welcome.
- Dimensions of the art should be no more than 20" x 24" and no less than 8.5" x 11"
- The art submitted must be mounted on a mat of paper material but cannot be hard-framed
- The official submission form needs to be filled and sent in along with the art to the community center by the deadline.
- Only one entry per artist.

JUDGING

The winning artworks will be selected by 3 to 5 judges consisting of Arkansas Arts Center staff, college professors of the UALR Art Department, and well-known artists. The criteria of judging includes creativity, color, the techniques applied, and how related the content is to the themes of the contest.



AWARDS

The following are the awards for the chosen winners of the competition: a first, second, and third place award, and several City Director's awards. In addition, the winning artworks will be displayed in West Central Community Center.

- First Place will receive \$300, a certificate, and a trophy.
- Second Place will receive \$200, a certificate, and a trophy.
- Third Place will receive \$100, a certificate, and a trophy.
- City Director's Award winners will each receive a certificate.



Art in the Park

Student artists are invited to compete in Art in the Park at the West Central Community Center.

Three Divisions:
Elementary School
Middle School
High School



- *Students may pick up submission forms at West Central Community Center 4521 John Barrow Road*
- *All Art must be submitted by April 29 to be considered.*
- *Judging takes place May 2-4*
- *Art Walk of all entries May 5 from 4:30-8:30pm in the Gymnasium*
- *Winners announced at the reception for Youth Art Week, May 7 at 10 a.m. (must be present to win)*
- *For more information, contact Debra Banks 501-371-4583 or dbanks@littlerock.gov*

METRO CONNECT SERVICE SOLVES FIRST MILE, LAST MILE TRANSIT CONNECTION PROBLEM FOR NEIGHBORHOOD, OFFERS 20 MINUTE-OR-LESS TRIPS

More than 10,000 passenger trips were taken on the METRO Connect John Barrow Road Zone microtransit service in 2021. The service, which debuted in August 2019, is a point-to-point on-demand, ride-hailing, ride-sharing service that connects residents and guests to all points within the John Barrow Road Zone boundaries, using smaller, accessible vehicles. The service replaced the former Route 9 John Barrow Road/West Central bus route, which was the lowest ridership non-express fixed bus route in the Rock Region METRO transit system, with a frequency of 65 minutes.

Now, total wait and travel time for neighborhood residents using the METRO Connect John Barrow Road Zone service is typically under 20 minutes, getting them to top stops such as the Shackleford Crossing Walmart, the Shopper Value Foods and The Cottages multi-family housing. The zone is bordered by perennial top-ridership routes – Route 3 Baptist Medical Center, which offers transfers behind the Midtown Target and downtown, and Route 14 Rosedale, which also offers transfers downtown. Riders can take a trip to a shared transit stop for the microtransit service and one or both of these routes (they meet at the Walmart) to make transfers. This ability solves the “first mile, last mile” problem in the transit industry, which occurs when residents are located too far away from a transit stop to access it easily using walkways. This can be an issue in the low-density John Barrow Road/

West Central neighborhood, where housing stretches across larger parcels of land and separates places from each other.

“We are pleased to offer this service – the first of its kind in Arkansas – to the John Barrow Road/West Central neighborhood to offer more transit access to residents. The METRO Connect service is very popular with riders,” said Becca Green, agency spokeswoman. “It has dramatically improved the transit commute time for residents moving within the zone and is just as affordable as the former bus route was, with safe, accessible, point-to-point service.”

Riders can book trips in the zone by downloading the free Transloc Microtransit App from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store. The app offers riders the ability to book pre-scheduled trips on a daily basis – say, for example, to leave a house within the zone at the same time every weekday to ride to a transfer point for a morning work commute – and can use the app to receive push notifications alerting them as to how far away their driver is, in minutes, similar to transit network company apps like Uber and Lyft. Riders who do not have smartphones can dial a special METRO Connect dispatch number to book a ride.

Fares are the same as the METRO fixed route fares: \$1.35 for a one-way trip or \$36 for a 31-Day pass. Operating hours are Monday-Friday, 6 a.m.-8:30 p.m. METRO is operating reduced

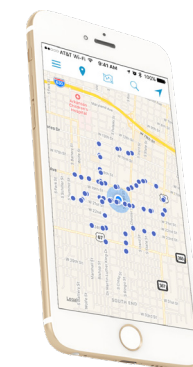


service levels on Saturdays as it recruits, hires, and trains more drivers while exiting the pandemic. The service operates on Saturdays, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Other places located within the zone are the CARTI Cancer Center, Parkview High School, the McMath Public Library and Camp Aldersgate. Riders using the METRO Connect John Barrow Road Zone can also travel to “points of interest” associated with the zone. Those include nearby places that are technically outside of the zone boundaries but determined to be close enough and popular enough to allow limited-distance trips outside the zone to reach them, without negatively affecting overall wait and travel times for the larger group of riders who could be taking trips at any time during operating hours. “Points of interest” for the METRO Connect John Barrow Road Zone currently include Christopher Homes, DaVita Dialysis, Midtown Dialysis, J.A. Fair K-8 Preparatory Academy and Landers Toyota. The “points of interest” can change at any time, and

riders can always find the latest list – along with a zone map, operating hours and connecting routes – at rrmetro.org under the Services/METRO Connect sub-pages, selecting the METRO Connect John Barrow Road Zone.

As METRO Connect John Barrow Road starts its fourth year of operation later this summer, ridership on this popular, convenient service is expected to increase as the pandemic subsides.



METROtrack provides real-time arrival information for the Rock Region METRO public transit system buses and streetcars. Use the app to mark favorite stops and routes, set reminders, get alerts, plan your trip and access general information.



THE LIBRARY, REWRITTEN.

Over the years, the West Central community has been proud to host Be Mighty Little Rock. Be Mighty Little Rock is a citywide campaign to connect kids, teens, and families to free meals, cooking and nutrition education, food security resources, and opportunities to eat, play, and learn. Nutrition is important and afterschool and summer meals help kids stay active, healthy, and safe when

school is out. Free USDA meals for kids & teens are available afterschool, on the weekends, and throughout the summer at fun, safe places such as churches, community centers, and libraries. Visit our website (bemightylittlerock.org) for a full list of meal sites, cooking and nutrition education opportunities, and food security resources. You can also support Be Mighty by volunteering at a meal site!



FREE USDA MEALS FOR KIDS & TEENS 18 AND YOUNGER

Meals served Monday-Friday from 4:00-5:30 p.m. and Saturday from 11:00-12:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

www.bemightylittlerock.org

Children's Library & Learning Center, 4800 W. 10th Street, Little Rock

Dee Brown Library, 6325 Baseline Road, Little Rock
Monday-Friday 2:45-4:30p.m., Saturday 11:00-12:30p.m.

Fletcher Library, 823 N. Buchanan Street, Little Rock
Monday-Saturday 4:00-5:30p.m.

Main Library, 100 S. Rock Street, Little Rock

Maumelle Library, 10 Lake Pointe Drive, Maumelle

McMath Library, 2100 John Barrow Road, Little Rock
Monday-Friday 4:00-5:30p.m., Saturday 12:00-1:00p.m.

Nixon Library, 703 W. Main Street, Jacksonville

Rooker Library, 11 Otter Creek Court, Little Rock
Monday-Friday 4:00-5:30p.m., Saturday 11:30-12:30p.m.

Sanders Library, 10200 Johnson Drive, Sherwood

Terry Library, 2015 Napa Valley Drive, Little Rock

Williams Library, 1800 Chester Street, Little Rock
Monday-Friday 3:30-4:30p.m., Saturday 11:00-12:30p.m.

Do you need food resources?

- Find free afterschool and weekend meals for kids and teens:
BeMightyLittleRock.org/meals
- Find out if you're eligible for SNAP, formerly known as food stamps:
1-833-762-7275 or
bit.ly/3sWZ7eo
- Find your closest food pantry: Text 'FINDFOOD' (one word) to 844-381-3663
- Find out if you and your family are eligible for ARKids First & Medicaid:
501-682-8292 or
access.arkansas.gov/

STAY UP TO DATE!

Want to know what's happening in the City of Little Rock?
Be sure to follow us!

Look for news, updates, and announcements on www.littlerock.gov. Find the latest under News or look for upcoming events on the Calendar. You can also use the City's website to look up information on City services, find various departments and how to contact them, reach out to your representative on the Board of Directors, or request a meeting with the Mayor.



KNOW YOUR BOARD

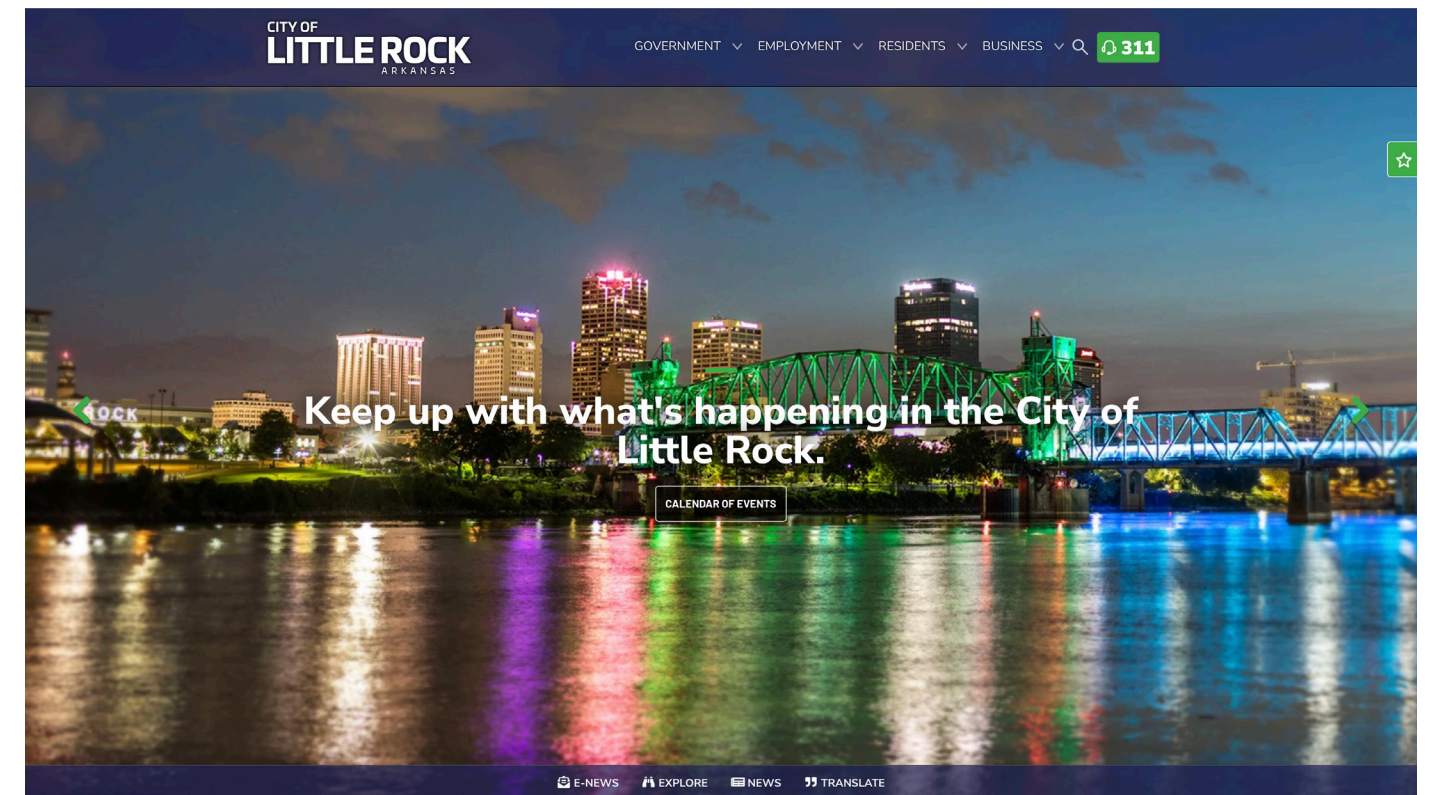
Finding news and information from the Board of Directors

The Little Rock Board of Directors meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month for regular meetings. The Tuesday before each regular meeting, usually the second and fourth, the Board will meet to set the agenda for its upcoming meeting. Check the online calendar for the full schedule. Regular meetings are at 6 p.m., agenda meetings are at 4 p.m. Both are held at the Centre at University Park.

Watch meetings live on Facebook or YouTube @citylittlerock, or tune on LRTV Government Access Channel 11.

To find out more information about the Board of Directors, including the agenda and minutes for each meeting, or to identify or contact your Board member, visit:
<https://www.littlerock.gov/city-administration/board-of-directors/>

- Virgil Miller Jr. Ward 1
- Ken Richardson Ward 2
- Kathy Webb Ward 3
- Capi Peck Ward 4
- Vice Mayor Lance Hines Ward 5
- Doris Wright Ward 6
- B.J. (Brenda) Wyrick Ward 7
- Dr. Dean Kumpuris Position 8
- Antwan Phillips Position 9
- Joan Adcock Position 10



Find us on social media!

@citylittlerock



**\$1.35
PER TRIP!**
Download the
App and Book
Your Ride Today!



METRO connect

AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE DOOR-TO-DOOR TRANSIT SERVICE

WHAT IS THE METRO CONNECT JOHN BARROW ROAD ZONE?

METRO Connect is an on-demand, ride-hailing, ride-sharing service that connects residents and guests to points within the John Barrow Road Zone and shared transit stops with METRO bus routes so riders can make transfers.

WHERE AND WHEN DOES SERVICE WITHIN THE METRO CONNECT JOHN BARROW ROAD ZONE OPERATE?

As part of METRO's COVID-19 service response, the John Barrow Road Zone is operating Monday-Friday, 6 a.m.-8:30 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The zone's borders are roughly Colonel Glenn Road, I-430, Kanis Road and Dorchester Drive/the west side boundary of Boyle Park.

COST

\$1.35 Adult One-Way Cash Fare

Standard METRO fares apply. Cash, passes and Token Transit passes are accepted.

HOW DOES METRO CONNECT SERVICE WORK?

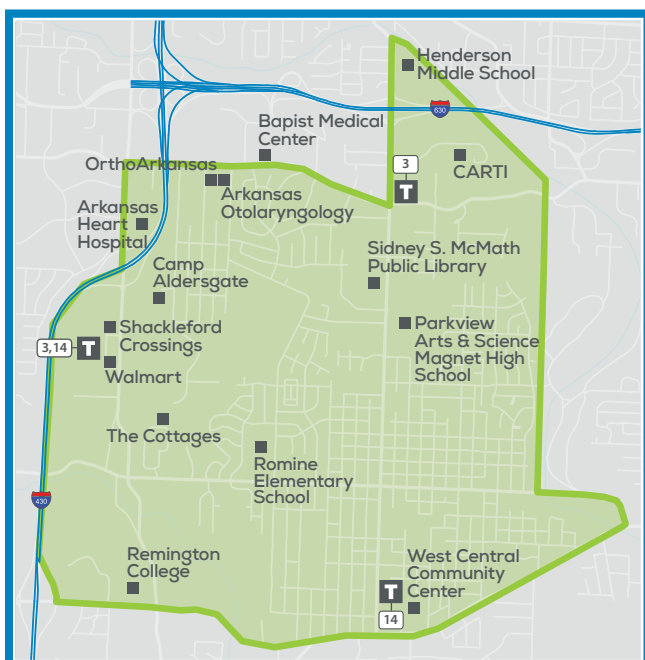
Book a ride using the free Transloc Microtransit App and ride to any other point within the zone.



Transfer points to METRO Routes 3 Baptist Medical Center and 14 Rosedale are included in the zone, as well as trips to and from these points outside of the zone: Christopher Homes (9216 Lanehart Rd.), Davita Dialysis (6 Freeway Dr.), JA Fair K-8 Preparatory Academy (13420 David O. Dodd Rd.), Landers Toyota (10825 Colonel Glenn Rd.), Midtown Dialysis (2 Lile Ct.) and Shopper Value Foods (6800 Colonel Glenn Rd.). Please note that points of interest outside the zone are subject to change at any time in the future; find current points of interest for this zone at rrmetro.org under the Services/METRO Connect page.

WHY MICROTRANSIT?

For certain service areas, microtransit, or on-demand service, as it's sometimes called, does a better job of meeting transit demand than a full-size bus operating on a fixed route. Microtransit allows METRO to provide on-demand transit rides using smaller vehicles within a set zone, during regular operating hours, via its METRO Connect microtransit service.



Rock Region
METRO

501.375.6717 | rrmetro.org
@rrmetro | frrmetro