

# Connects

A Newsletter for our Neighbors in **AVONDALE**

This is Cincinnati Children's quarterly newsletter to highlight our partnerships, upcoming events, opportunities and ways to get involved.

Issue 14, February 2021



Left: "Fountain of Life" mural that will be housed at Cincinnati Children's new Critical Care Building. Right: Youth apprentices who worked on the mural. Three are from Avondale.



Toni Green, COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial participant, pictured here with her mother Loretta.

## Our Critical Care Building and the Community Connection

After two years of construction, the Critical Care Building is on schedule to be completed later this year. When you step inside the front doors of the new building, what you will notice first is a massive, colorful work of art. It's a mural called "The Fountain of Life" that brings with it a strong connection to the community.

The mural itself is a nod to Cincinnati's well-known gathering spot, Fountain Square and "The Lady" streaming her blessing of water to all who visit.

As important as what the mural represents is the group that helped bring it to life. Cincinnati Children's in partnership with Kolar Design and ArtWorks, selected students from Avondale and Walnut Hills High School to help paint the mural. They also had the opportunity to work alongside a professional artist.

The group has spent nearly 3 months collaborating to make the mural something special. What they have received in return, the students say, are lessons they will carry into the future.

In a recent survey they wrote: "I have grown personally from all the great people who were part of this project. They taught me how my art can change the world." "I will utilize the communications and team work skills I developed on this project for my career aspirations."

The mural is a masterpiece designed, created and given from the heart. "We desired a tangible way to celebrate our connection to the community as soon as you walk through the doors of the Critical Care Building. Our "Fountain of Life" mural helps to reflect our respect and love for the community, and brings it all together in a truly magnificent way," says Michael Browning VP of Planning & Construction, Cincinnati Children's.

You will be able to see the finished piece when the building opens in early November.

For the latest updates on Cincinnati Children's Critical Care Building, go to: [www.cincinnatichildrens.org/critical-care-building](http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/critical-care-building)  
Questions? Call 513-636-9327

## COVID-19 Vaccine Trial: Why I Did It

Toni Green didn't hesitate to sign up when she heard there would be clinical trials of the COVID-19 vaccine at Cincinnati Children's. As a research coordinator at the hospital, it was certainly convenient, but there were other more personal reasons Toni decided she wanted to be a part of the study: family, friends and science.

"I was very aware of the need for minorities to participate in the clinical trials. How else would researchers know if the vaccine works on our population?" Another reason, Toni lives with her Mom, Loretta who is 72.

"It's important for me to do everything I can to keep her safe. Not only that, the virus is taking away too many people. We have to find a way for this to stop."

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention racial and ethnic minority groups are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 due to health disparities.

"Everybody wants someone else to go first, and nobody wants to be the first to go. I didn't mind being one of the first." Outside of a sore arm, Toni has had no other symptoms from the vaccine.

"My friends text me every day to see how I'm feeling. I look at it this way, if I have a good experience, and I am, they will be more likely to get vaccine when it's their turn."

Toni understands vaccine hesitancy and would like to see more done to educate the community about the safety of the vaccine. As much as she can, Toni talks about her own experience with the vaccine, which she received in January.

Toni adds, "There's also a spiritual component for me. I feel like God is using me to help others."



## Ages & Stages Virtual Parent Workshop—February 13

The February Ages & Stages parent workshop will provide valuable information on the COVID-19 vaccination and what to know before you make a telehealth call.

- Free and open to all families.
- Bring your questions about the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Renowned COVID-19 vaccine expert, Dr. Robert French will be on hand to answer your questions.

Register at:

[www.communityrelationsconnect.org/february-ages-stages](http://www.communityrelationsconnect.org/february-ages-stages)



## Come Paint and Create

You can be a part of a special community art experience connected to the "Fountain of Life" mural. Cincinnati Children's in partnership with Kolar Design and ArtWorks are planning a safe way for Avondale residents to help add color and texture to the mural. Stay tuned for more details.



# Congratulations to Career Insights Graduates Newly Hired at Cincinnati Children's



L to R: Corneia Henderson, Breonya Hunter, Sabrina Price, Nicole Spencer, Juawana Thompson, Lizzie Wilson

Determined and dedicated are a few of the words used to describe the recent graduates of Cincinnati Children's Career Insights program. The six-week course teaches job readiness with a focus on healthcare careers. When participants graduate from the program, they are ready to work knowing the expectations and how to meet them.

In its three year history, this is the first time Career Insights partnered with Queens Village. The support group for women of color is supported by Cradle Cincinnati, which is dedicated to reducing infant mortality.

Josselyn Okorodudu, community engagement strategist for Queens Village, says "The partnership experience was amazing. It turned out better than we could have imagined."

Even more than getting participants ready for positions in healthcare, Josselyn says, "You could see it. Week by week these women were making a conscious decision to change their lives, despite the pandemic and despite the juggling act of getting dinner on the table, child care, transportation and on and on. For them to have been so focused speaks to their character and determination."

This is the 5th class of Career Insights participants. Class sessions are held twice a year.

"We're so fortunate to have teamed up with Cincinnati Children's community relations and the Urban League to make this an awesome experience for the graduates, most of whom have jobs but more importantly, a new lease on life. They are my heroes."

Queens Village provides a safe space for Black mothers to support and be supported by their peers.  
For more information, visit [www.blackwomenforthewin.com](http://www.blackwomenforthewin.com) or call 513-567-0558.

For more information on Career Insights, email [communityrelations@cchmc.org](mailto:communityrelations@cchmc.org) or call 513-636-9327.

## A Newsletter for our Neighbors in AVONDALE

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Are there stories you would like to see in this newsletter? Please let us know! Call 513-636-9327 or email [communityrelations@cchmc.org](mailto:communityrelations@cchmc.org)

We want your ideas!



Kathy added, "We're meeting people where they are to provide sustainable life skills. We keep it simple and meaningful so that when they graduate and participate in the last load ceremony they feel empowered and ready to manage life's challenges in new and different ways."

Loads of Love is supported by a grant from Cincinnati Children's Avondale Partnership Committee. For more information, email [communityrelations@cchmc.org](mailto:communityrelations@cchmc.org) or call 513-636-9327.

Free laundry service for six weeks would grab anyone's attention but it's what happens in between the suds cycle that's making a difference in people's lives.

Loads of Love provides the coins and participants get a wealth of information that they can use immediately in their daily lives. A variety of speakers share tips on managing stress, job readiness, time and money management, even how to make meals on a budget. Each session is one hour, about the time it takes for the wash and dry cycle.

The sessions begin in mid-February at the Avondale Super Laundry on Reading Road.

Kathy Wade, CEO of Learning Through Art is leading the project. "What we want is for the light bulb to turn on and become brighter. Our goal is to help change the trajectory of the participants' lives. The hope is that what they learn will have a ripple effect so it's not just the individual but their family that is positively affected."

Participants describe Loads of Love as a program that helped build confidence, improved their mood and connected them to helpful resources to improve their lives.

## Loads of Love Offers Free Laundry and Lessons