



Mayor Ravenstahl's Monthly Community Newsletter

November
2012

MAYOR RAVENSTAHL'S MONTHLY COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Dear Neighbors,

Colder weather is coming, but there's still time to prepare your family and home for the winter months. By weatherizing your home, you can protect it – both inside and out – from nature's elements, like rain and rodents, and save money by reducing energy use and allowing your home to run more efficiently. We realize that winter can be difficult for many residents, and I encourage you to learn about the City's helpful resources and programs.

The average house has cracks and gaps, allowing cold air to sneak in through these spaces. Closing these gaps will help keep your home at a comfortable temperature while preventing things like water seepage and insect and rodent problems. Simple solutions for weatherizing your home include adding insulation around air ducts, caulking around windows and adding weather stripping around doorways. A few simple tweaks can help prevent problems and protect your family. For more information, visit pittsburghpa.gov/green.

The City provides many resources to help residents save money and protect their home. The Pittsburgh Green House is a training and education facility that provides information about do-it-yourself projects, energy and water saving, and retrofit financing. The Sustainable Home Improvement Partnership offers weatherization assistance as well as health and safety upgrades, handicap accessibility upgrades, and plumbing, electrical and utility improvements to those who qualify. Everyone should be warm this winter. If you need assistance with repairs or utility costs, please contact my servePGH office at 412-255-4765 or servepgh@pittsburghpa.gov, or visit pittsburghpa.gov/servepgh.

Snow Angels is a program that helps minimize the hardships of snow removal by pairing volunteers with elderly or disabled to assist with snow removal. Volunteers are provided a shovel, deicing salt and a safety vest, and recipients are matched by location. Pittsburgh is a city well known for its neighbors helping neighbors. To request a Snow Angel in your neighborhood or to become a Snow Angel, visit pittsburghpa.gov/servepgh/snowangels.

As the City of Pittsburgh prepares for winter, I encourage all residents to prepare as well. Remember that weatherization provides a long-lasting solution to reducing energy bills, and that the City and our dedicated residents are ready to help neighbors in need. Together, we can ensure that this winter is a pleasant and enjoyable season for all.

Sincerely,

Luke Ravenstahl
Mayor, City of Pittsburgh

Thank You, Pittsburgh Veterans!

Many brave men and women in our country have risked their lives to keep American's and our nation safe. While we keep past and current service members in our hearts and minds all year long, it is especially important to recognize their selfless dedication as Veterans Day approaches.

Last year, Mayor Luke Ravenstahl announced a new program, the Sustainable Home Improvement Partnership (SHIP), as part of his servePGH initiative. SHIP repairs and weatherizes the homes of veterans, seniors and disabled residents in collaboration with local nonprofits and volunteers. As we prepare to celebrate Veterans Day this November 12th, the Mayor is proud to announce that by the end of this year – and with the help of over 700 volunteers – more than 70 of our City's most vulnerable residents' homes will be repaired, including the homes of 20 veterans.

Additionally, the Fall 2012 Love Your Block season has provided grants to several veteran organizations throughout the City. Mayor Ravenstahl's Love Your Block program provides



community organizations with \$1,000 grants to transform blocks in their own neighborhoods. This season, grants were awarded to various veterans groups in Sheraden, Mount Washington, the West End and Greenfield. Projects included planting a red, white and blue community garden, and beautifying a veteran's memorial. Furthermore, grantee organizations are required to recruit veteran volunteers and to host their project in a neighborhood with a high percentage of veteran residents.

Finally, this November, Mayor Ravenstahl's servePGH initiative will coordinate a thank you card project for our local veterans. Thank you cards will be written and delivered to the approximately 500 veterans

currently staying at Pittsburgh's three Veterans Affairs hospitals. The majority of cards will be written by City employees – including the Mayor – and local AmeriCorps members. It's important that we all recognize the courageous and selfless efforts of our country's service men and women, both past and present. Be sure to thank a veteran or current service member in your life this Veterans Day.



Volunteers clean up Mt. Washington VFW memorial.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW AS AN APPLICANT FOR ASSISTANCE?

What you should not do:

Do not expect that your volunteer will provide services other than snow removal.

Do not expect that your volunteer will remove snow other than on the public sidewalks and on a path up to your front door (if specifically requested).

Do not expect that your volunteer will remove snow if it is expected to melt within 24 hours.

Do not offer payment for snow removal. Inviting a volunteer into your home is **NOT** endorsed by the City.

What you should do:

Do call 311 if you did not receive assistance with your snow removal within 24 hours after a snowstorm ends for storms that are not expected to melt in 24 hours.

Do call 311 if you no longer need volunteer snow removal assistance (i.e., if you are moving).

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW AS A VOLUNTEER "SNOW ANGEL"?

Things you should not do:

Do not shovel if it is a light snow and is expected to melt on its own within 24 hours.

Do not accept any payment or tips for your services.

Do not give your home phone number to your recipient.

Entering a recipient's home is **NOT** endorsed by the City.

Note: You are **NOT** obligated to shovel the driveway

Things you should do:

Do remove snow from the sidewalk of your recipient's house. Clear a path to the front door if specifically requested (this will be noted on your assignment letter). You are not obligated to shovel the driveway.

Do shovel the snow within 24 hours after a snowstorm ends. City code gives citizens 24 hours from the point at which the snow stops falling to clear their sidewalks.

Do call 311 if you are no longer able to participate in this program.



City of Snow Angels

As the weather begins to change and Fall rolls into Winter, the City's workers and residents are preparing for the season of snowfall. While wintertime in Pittsburgh includes the joys of Light-Up Night, ice skating, and various celebrations and events, many residents fear the inevitable snow, sleet and slippery conditions.

Last winter, Mayor Ravenstahl recognized the need for a snow removal assistance initiative to help our City's elderly and disabled residents. City code requires snow and ice to be removed from all walkways within 24 hours after the snow stops falling. This can be nearly impossible for our City's residents with physical limitations.

In Winter 2011, Mayor Ravenstahl launched the Snow Angels program, a servePGH initiative, which matches able-bodied volunteers with elderly and physically disabled residents in their own neighborhoods. Once matched, Snow Angel volunteers

have 24 hours after the snow stops falling to remove snow and slush from their designated resident's walkways.

Mayor Ravenstahl's call for Snow Angels and recipients was met with overwhelming enthusiasm. During the initial launch, 187 seniors and disabled residents in need were matched with 81 individual and group volunteers throughout the City. Many volunteers took on multiple houses to ensure that needy residents received help. In just one winter season, Snow Angels volunteers removed over 27,000 square feet of snow!

The time has come, again, to grab your shovels, pull on your boots and lend a helping hand.

To sign up to volunteer as a Snow Angel, to receive Snow Angels services, or to learn more about the program, visit

Weatherization

Why is it important?

Weatherization is the practice of protecting a structure, both interior and exterior, from nature's elements to help reduce energy use while helping it run more efficiently. Weatherization provides a long-lasting solution to reducing energy bills by helping individuals become more self-sufficient.

Tips:

The average house has cracks and gaps that, when added together, are equivalent to a 14-square-inch hole – that's large enough to fit your hand through. Cold air in the winter and warm air in the summer seeps through these cracks, causing them to expand. By weatherizing, you can close these gaps and keep your home at a comfortable temperature all year round, while preventing things like water seepage, and insect and rodent problems. A few simple tweaks – such as adding insulation to your home or around air ducts, caulking around windows, or placing weather stripping around doors – can help prevent problems and protect your family. The City provides many resources to help residents save money and protect their home. A professional energy audit can help identify more significant problems.

Interested in learning more about the City's sustainability efforts, green initiatives and steps to reduce our carbon footprint? Sign up to receive the monthly Green Scene newsletter at pittsburghpa.gov/green/newsletter.htm.

Get more information about how to weatherize your home:

Mayor's Office of Sustainability and Energy Efficiency:
pittsburghpa.gov/green

The Pittsburgh Green House at:
pittsburghgreenhouse.org

Learn more about weatherization jobs:

CCAC Green Institute - Weatherization Training: ccac.edu

Pittsburgh Green House:
pittsburghgreenhouse.org

The EECO Center (Environment and Energy Community Outreach Center):
pghcsi.org

Everyone should be warm this winter, if you need assistance with repairs or utility costs; you're encouraged to look into the following programs:

Mayor's servePGH: Sustainable Home Improvement Partnership:
pittsburghpa.gov/ship

Habitat for Humanity Pittsburgh's Weatherization or REHAB Program:
pittsburghhabitat.org

Conservation Consultants Inc. (CCI Center):
ccicenter.org

Pittsburgh Community Services Inc.:
pghcsi.org

For more information and to stay updated about the City of Pittsburgh, visit and follow:



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