South Side Columbus

‘Third Places’ Activity Book & Guide

KIRWAN INSTITUTE for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
South Side Columbus

‘Third Places’ Activity Book and Guide
In our report, *Social Capital and Neighborhood Revitalization on the South Side*, we detailed the importance of authentic relationship building to ensuring a strong, prosperous South Side for all of its residents, as well as the important role that third places play in building those relationships. Since then, we have engaged with over 400 South Side residents concerning their views on the South Side and we have learned that resources for child development and access to resources for personal and community economic development are important factors for securing an equitable South Side. Fortunately, the same third places that can provide powerful opportunities for the development of bridging social capital can also provide the same opportunities for these other factors.

**A Third Place** is a place where people hang out when they are not at home (their first place) or at work/school (their second place). A Third Place could be a local café, park, or barber shop.

This guide is designed to help South Side community members, community advocates, and those interested in serving the community enliven third places on the South Side by providing resources and ideas that can build on the existing assets of South Side third places. Drawing from extensive research into best practices and our deep engagement with South Side residents, we offer a number of activities, programs, and initiatives that can increase the potential of current community spaces. These suggestions can be instrumental in making these third places even more powerful places for building strong connections, supporting resilient children, and providing access to resources for all South Side residents.
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In our previous report, we outlined the major barriers to building social capital in diverse communities—namely that difficulties related to socioeconomic differences and implicit biases present challenges to the formation of positive social bonds with people who come from different walks of life. We also catalogued a number of factors that make third places an ideal setting for overcoming those barriers. Good third places are places where people from all walks of life can ‘leave their social status’ at the door and feel comfortable sharing their experiences with one another in a positive atmosphere. This allows people to view their different experiences as learning and relationship-building opportunities, rather than barriers to building strong bonds.

This ability to provide a comfortable, positive environment to help mitigate social status encourages co-learning and is very powerful in approaching other community challenges. The South Side, like many communities where a majority of children are children of color, faces challenges to childhood development based on factors such as adequate prenatal and infant care resources, environmental and family stress, and lack of access to skills and development resources. Third places can bolster the efforts of current institutions while providing an atmosphere for children to learn ‘from within their own skin,’ helping them to develop not only as good students, but good community members, workers, and future parents.
In addition, third place characteristics of comfortability and accessibility can make it easier for residents from all walks of life to access resources for personal, economic, and political growth in a manner that is conducive to the rhythms of their lives. In our engagements, we found that many residents had difficulty identifying resources in their community and those that could did not always feel comfortable accessing them. If left unaddressed, these difficulties could quickly lead to increased economic segregation and resident push out, even as more resources are available on the South Side. Third places can play an important role in ensuring that the South Side retains its diverse, working class character by making resources available to all members of the community.

Types of Challenges Faced on the South Side

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Child Development</th>
<th>Connecting Resources</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Income, social positioning, and geography are often barriers to building bridging social capital</td>
<td>Childhood environmental stress, such as poverty, family and community trauma</td>
<td>Lack of employment opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunities to build social empathy and emotional intelligence</td>
<td>Lack of community connection and personal affirmation</td>
<td>Difficulties in accessing economic resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unexamined implicit biases and narratives</td>
<td>Lack of development and growth opportunities, such as mentoring and building trusting relationships</td>
<td>Lack of opportunities to connect and build on resources</td>
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</table>
Between September of 2014 and March of 2015, the Kirwan Institute engaged with over 400 South Side residents in order to understand the places that community members regarded as third places within the community. We spoke with a wide variety of people, including young mothers, high school students, business leaders, seniors, and families from different walks of life in the neighborhood. Kirwan asked community members to identify places where people from different walks of life gathered and where they themselves felt comfortable gathering. The result was a community map containing over 70 unique third places on the South Side (Page 11).

These third places ranged from parks and recreation centers such as Barack Recreational Center/Lincoln Park, to restaurants and shops along Parsons Avenue. Churches and social service providers were also identified, as were health centers such as John R. Maloney Health Center and Nationwide Children’s Hospital. Community members also identified important informal hangouts around the community where people tend to gather informally for community interactions. The ability of these places to draw people from throughout the community together naturally make them vital for marshalling community resources to address challenges on the South Side in myriad ways. This is particularly true of those third places along Parsons Avenue. As the main thoroughfare through the South Side, Parsons Avenue has the potential to act as a bridge between people from different neighborhoods and different walks of life. Since each of these types of third places has unique attributes and benefits, we separated them into different typologies for which we will recommend different strategies for third places later in the document.
Health and Wellness
Nationwide Children’s Hospital
John R. Maloney Health Center
iResolve Fitness
Merion Village Acupuncture
Well Groomed Spa

Restaurant and Entertainment
Plank’s Cafe & Pizzeria
Community Grounds Coffee Shop
Tatoheads
Tee Jaye’s
Tim Horton’s
The Kitchen
Harvest Pizza
Katzingers
Max & Erma’s
Mohawk Restaurant
Schmidt’s Deli
Rooster’s
Red Brick Inn
Brown Bag Deli
H. Johnson’s BBQ
Donato’s
German Village Coffee Shop
Thurman Cafe
Bake Me Happy
Dan’s Drive In

Child Welfare and Education
Boys & Girls Club
Siebert School
South High School
Southwood School
Parsons Branch Public Library

Parks and Recreation Centers
Schiller Park
Roosevelt Park
Ganther’s Place Park for All People
Karns Park
Kossuth Community Garden
Park (Thurman/Champion)
Fairwood Park
Moeller Park
Walker Brick Pocket Park
Southeast Lions Park
Lincoln Park
Barack Park & Recreation Center
Southeast Lions Park

Faith and Worship
Holy Rosary St. John
Livingston Ave. United Methodist Church
St. Mary’s Church
Corpus Christi Church
Apostolic Christian Church
Gates-Fourth United Methodist Church
St. Leo Church
Clair United Methodist Church
St. Ladislas Church
Unity Church
Washington Avenue United Methodist Church

Social Services
Church for All People
Church for All People Free Store
Bikes for All People
Stowe Mission
Reeb Community Center
Food Pantry
AA Meeting Hall
Hazel’s House of Hope

Shops and Market Centers
Kroger’s
Ace Hardware
TY Furniture
Salvation Army
Merion Village
Merion Village Farmer’s Market

Informal Spaces
Fishing Spots
Hely Ave. Elementary School Project
Third Places on Parsons Avenue: From Barrier to Bridge

As was mentioned previously, Parsons Avenue plays a vital role for many South Side residents as a primary thoroughfare through the community and a commercial and social center for the South Side. South Side residents do their shopping at Kroger or pick up prescriptions at CVS. The newly rebuilt library sits along Parsons Avenue as do longtime businesses such as Planks and H. Johnson’s BBQ. Church For All People offers many services along Parsons and both health centers are located along this street. For these reasons, Parsons Avenue naturally attracts community members from all walks of life and making Parsons Avenue a comfortable place for community members to get to know one another and work together is vital for building bridging capital among neighbors and creating the type of resiliency that can help the South Side thrive. In this way, third places on Parsons Avenue have the opportunity to play a unique role in bringing people together. By using their unique position within the community, these places can make Parsons Avenue a welcoming and attractive venue for community relationship building by creating a ‘community lounge’ type atmosphere through subtle changes in space and programming.

Community lounges are those places in communities where community members from all walks of life can come together informally. A special subset of third places, lounges are specifically designated for unprogrammed comings and goings from all community members. These spaces can take many forms, from reading rooms in libraries, park benches and game tables in parks, or even small reading nooks in grocery stores or cafés. These community lounges act as nodes for easy interactions between community members and the fluidity of bridging social capital in diverse communities.
We asked South Side residents to share where they go to experience community, where neighbors from different walks of life gather, and where they feel a sense of welcoming. There is no shortage of places in the South Side!

Color Key:
- **Health and Wellness**
- **Restaurant and Entertainment**
- **Child Welfare and Education**
- **Parks and Recreation Centers**
- **Faith and Worship**
- **Social Services**
- **Shops and Market Centers**
- **Informal Spaces**
The best community lounges have a certain group of characteristics that enable them to encourage these informal interactions:

Relaxed accessibility - Community lounges should be available to all members of the community members, regardless of any prerequisite. For instance, cafés and pubs can be considered community lounges unless they restrict access to paying customers. Community lounges are also open for a large portion of the day and into the evening. Outdoor spaces such as parks and community gardens can include special lighting and space-planning to ensure safety for such spaces at all times of the day. Finally, community lounges should be easily accessible by all transportation means and persons of all abilities.

Comfort - Lounges should include plenty of comfortable furniture and cozy lighting conducive to comfort and conversation. A wide variety of sitting areas, such as couches, benches, and portable seating options can ensure that all community members, regardless of ability can enjoy the community spaces.

Informal activities - Community lounges should include items that invite people to engage in a variety of voluntary activities. Items such as books, board games, toys, or multimedia options give people a reason to come into the lounges and interact with others.
Activities & Programs
Throughout the South Side, the third places identified by community members are already bringing community members together and hosting powerful and important community events of all kinds. However, third places have much more to offer the South Side as many community needs still go unfulfilled. The following activities and programs are designed to be a guide to answering those challenges for the many third places within the community.

The following pages contain suggestions for each type of third place on the South Side. Each typology includes various suggestions, complete with descriptions and indications for the type of challenges that they address. Those activities and programs that address diversity challenges include a green dot — D, those that address childhood development include a blue dot — C, and those that focus on helping residents access resources include a red dot — R. Furthermore, suggestions are separated into General Activities, designed to bring people together generally and can be implemented quickly, and Advanced Activities that may take further action or partnerships to enact, but are designed to specifically address South Side challenges with South Side assets.

Some of the suggestions will be similar to activities that are already occurring in the community. Other suggestions may build on existing efforts in third places, and still others may be brand new. In addition, there are some activities that may require new partnerships or resources or that may need to be amended to be more relevant to community members. Many of the activities address more than one challenge in the community and many work in conjunction with one another. With those considerations in mind, we have created this document to be used as a guide for future actions as well as a catalog of individual ideas. Let this guide act as an inspiration for new ideas as well as a roadmap to current programs and activities that can empower third places within the community and create a stronger South Side community.
Health and Wellness

From doctor’s visits to exercise and wellness activities, health-related businesses and institutions are an important part of the lives of all South Siders. Therefore, these places make natural third places within the community. At the hospital or the pharmacy, people are more likely to meet community members with whom they might seldom interact. Furthermore, health-related places often offer services directed at promoting community health, such as free exercise classes or immunization campaigns. By working to connect these efforts with community-centered, culturally-informed spaces and programs, these health-related spaces can have a more direct and profound impact on community health, and create spaces for community members help themselves achieve good physical, mental, and emotional health.

**Identified Third Places**
*Places on Parsons Listed in Yellow*

- i-Resolve Fitness
- Merion Village Acupuncture
- Well Groomed Spa
- John R. Maloney Health Center
- Nationwide Children’s Hospital
Health and Wellness
Third Places

- iResolve Fitness
- Nationwide Children’s Hospital
- Merion Village
  - Acupuncture
- Well Groomed Spa
- John R. Maloney Health Center
General Activities

for Health and Wellness

Health-Related Education
Health & Wellness establishments can host free health-related classes to promote a healthier community and attract residents from the neighborhood.

Health Screenings
Sometimes free healthcare screenings are the only preventive healthcare option for individuals. Health & Wellness businesses can host free screenings to assure all members of the community have the opportunity to take care of their health.

Support Groups
Health & Wellness businesses can host free support groups for community members. Support groups are opportunities for a diverse group of people to share and work together in conquering similar struggles. Organizations can also host support and discussion groups to talk about specific health topics.

Day Trips and Travel Opportunities
Health & Wellness organizations can host health-education trips and travel opportunities for the community, for example: take community members to a local farm to learn about healthy food and give participants a chance to interact with animals.

Healthy Community Activities and Events
Businesses can start up free community activities to promote wellness, such as running and biking clubs.

Health Coaching
Free health coaching can be provided to educate the community on how to take care of their health and offer support.

Community Resource Referrals
Connecting neighborhood residents to outside community resources can also be very beneficial to the community.

Challenges Addressed:
D = Diversity  C = Childhood Development  R = Connecting Resources
See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
Community Helpers Program

The Community Helpers Project is an alternative approach to expanding mental health resources on the South Side of Columbus. Through a system of community-based training, local helpers’ are able to enhance using three training packages—basic helping skills, life development skills, and crisis resolution skills. This program is designed to build upon the natural relationship-building and community connections capacity that exists on the South Side and equip those who are in a position to offer mental health support to community members with a wider variety of skills to help them help others.

Intergenerational Childcare Networks

Childcare is an important issue for South Side parents looking to balance work, home, and community life. While formal resources for childcare may be scarce, informal childcare resources are much more abundant. The South Side has a wealth of community members—from seniors to young adults—who have experience and passion in childcare, but lack either formal space or resources to be available to all people. Partnering with social service and health and wellness third places, as well as local institutions, community members who are interested in providing childcare can be provided with resources, training, and support needed to provide childcare for community members. Childcare providers can either be paid by a stipend, partially supported by local institutions or community members could set up a resource exchange list to decide just compensation for themselves.

New Mother Education

Modeled after the Moms2B program, this mothering education program would build parenting skills through a multi-disciplinary team approach that includes topics from nutrition and infant care, to coping skills and resource attainment. Healthcare professionals including doctors, nurses, social workers, local service providers, and personal and professional mentors will help young mothers on the South Side continue to build better lives for themselves and their families.

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- **C** = Childhood Development
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See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
Restaurants, bars, coffeehouses, and food trucks are sometimes described as a community’s ‘living room.’ Places like Plank’s Restaurant and Johnsons’ BBQ are often where community members experience their community and meet friends and new neighbors. These places are where community members witness different types of artistry, celebrate good news, and sometimes try new things. For these reasons, food establishments are often the first places mentioned as third places by community members. It’s where people go when they aren’t at home at work or at school. Utilized effectively, these third places can provide community members with accessible places to learn from one another and support local commerce at the same time. In this way, the community’s personal and economic capacities are strengthened.

**Identified Third Places**
*(Places on Parsons Listed in Yellow)*

- Tim Horton’s
- The Kitchen
- Harvest Pizza
- Katzinger’s
- Max & Erma’s
- Mohawk Restaurant
- Schmidt’s Deli
- Rooster’s
- Brown Bag Deli
- H. Johnson’s BBQ
- Donato’s
- German Village Coffee Shop
- Thurman Café
- Bake Me Happy
- Dan’s Drive In
- Red Brick Inn
- Plank’s Cafe & Pizzeria
- Tatoheads
- Tee Jaye’s
- Community Grounds Coffee Shop
General Activities

for Restaurants and Entertainment

**Board Games**
Businesses can include a mix of adult and family board games in their establishments. Board games can help people communicate and structure social interaction between patrons.

**Live Entertainment**
Live music is entertaining and appeals to a diverse audience. Music can enhance a business’s atmosphere for both customers and staff.

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**Café Conversations**  
Under the leadership of a resident “host” and trained facilitator, 8-10 families come together 3 times over the course of a month for dinner and conversation at one local establishments on the South Side, with the business providing a specialized low-cost menu or possibly free options. Community members from different walks of life get to know each other, talk about their individual neighborhoods, the South Side in general, or topics related to the city and state. After the first three meetings, neighbors can continue to meet regularly either at another restaurant or at the home of one of the members.

**After School Cooking Club**  
After school cooking clubs are hosted by local restaurants, educational service providers and other local organizations. Select South Side students can apply for a multi-month cooking club that will give students lessons on nutrition, food production and food preparation. By preparing food with friends and students from different walks of life, students gain valuable life skills that will lead them towards a path of well-being. Students will end their time in the club by working together to prepare a meal that is shared by club members and their families. This enables them to learn teamwork and communication, gain a sense of belonging and cultural appreciation, and contribute to the South Side in a powerful way.

**Taste of the South Side Event**  
Similar to the Taste of Columbus events, this program will allow community members from the South Side and beyond to sample food from local community restaurants and cafés by providing special menus, discounted prices, and other incentives from participating restaurants throughout the South Side. This will allow people to fully enjoy the wide diversity of food and entertainment on the South Side. This event will culminate in a two-day festival that will feature food from selected local home cooks that represent the diverse culinary traditions on the South Side. This even will encourage teams of local home cooks to partner with community members from different neighborhoods to develop new food combinations that represent a mix of their traditions. The festival will include a competition for best dish in several different categories.

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See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
South Side residents are almost universal in their concern for readying their children for the future. Children on the South Side deal with numerous challenges while growing up from the lack of after school and development activities to emotional, physical, and social pressures. Luckily, the South Side has a wealth of education-centered third places that are well-placed to offer South Side youth opportunities to succeed and grow. Education-centered third places can provide opportunities for South Side youth to overcome personal barriers, prepare them for high-quality employment and satisfactory lives. At the same time, these places can offer South Side residents of all ages the chance to build, learn, and share resources.

**Identified Third Places**
*(Places on Parsons Listed in Yellow)*

- Boys and Girls Club
- Seibert School
- South High School
- Southwood High School
- **Parsons Branch Public Library**
Child Welfare and Education
Third Places
**General Activities**

for Child Welfare and Education

**Pizza and Career Panel**  
Child welfare organizations can host career panels and provide pizza for participants and attendees. The career panels provide children with the opportunity to learn about careers they are interested in and introduce them to others which may spark new interests.

**Community Volunteering Opportunities**  
Child welfare organizations should provide children with opportunities to volunteer in their communities, like visiting the local senior center and spending time with the residents. Intergenerational activities are especially great because they benefit both children and seniors.

**Outdoor Community Talent Show**  
Outdoor community talent shows can provide children and other members of the community with the opportunity to showcase their talents and are easily accessible and entertaining.

**Friday and Weekend Evening Events**  
Child welfare groups can host events on Fridays/weekends to provide children with a fun, safe place to hang out during the evenings.

**Internship Program**  
Internship programs can include employment training that focuses on resume writing, interviewing, and professional workplace behavior. The program should provide teens and young adults with paid internships at local businesses, nonprofits, or companies. The program will prepare young people for future work experiences.

**Life Skills Training**  
Child welfare organizations can host different experts to teach children skills they need to succeed in life, for example: study skills, negotiation, leadership skills, problem solving, time management, and organization skills.

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See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
Advanced Activities

for Child Welfare and Education

Strengths-Based Trauma-Informed Youth Resiliency Program
This program seeks to build social skills, creativity, and resiliency among at-risk minority youth using a host of informal artistic and expression-based activities. The program engages young people in interactive activities related to conflict resolution, coping skills, and cultural affirmation. Each workshop embodies a variety of activities, games, and mindfulness processing and psycho-educational teachings. The workshops seek to enhance participants’ compassion and resiliency with the objective of bringing greater safety to all communities. Participants can be chosen from schools or other South Side programs based on need and other factors.

Digital Media Creators Program
In conjunction with communications departments at The Ohio State University and Columbus State Community College, South Side partners will conduct a Digital Media Creators Program for South Side at-risk youth. The program will provide program participants with a grounded digital media education including print, audio, video, and app development as well as exposure to various new media careers. In addition, the program will provide participants with studio opportunities and possible internship programs with local businesses and community groups. Finally, participants also receive a full suite of wrap-around services including case management, academic and career advising, and therapeutic support.

Girls of Color Mentoring Program
The More Than My Brother’s Keeper has shown that developing, trusting bonds between South Side children and adults can be a powerful tool in helping young people succeed in all areas of life, as well as helping them develop better life skills in areas such as coping and relationship building. This program seeks to have a similar effect on Girls of Color on the South Side, who are often faced with similar or more challenging difficulties related to personal, scholastic, familial, and community stressors. This mentoring program can help girls of color access valuable scholastic and personal resources for growth and empowerment in all facets of life as well as providing them opportunities to form positive, lasting relationships with mentors.

Challenges Addressed:

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See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
Parks and recreation centers are designed specifically to be third places. The parks on the South Side are open to everyone and generally have a mix of programmed and unprogrammed spaces and host a wealth of activities geared towards people of all ages. As the South Side continues to change and grow, these spaces will play a bigger part in the lives of South Side residents. How can parks enliven these interactions and become a focal point for sharing diverse gifts, community assets, and growth opportunities within the community? With activities gained at intergenerational and cross-cultural contact, parks can become a major focal point in a burgeoning South Side renaissance.

**Identified Third Places**

- Schiller Park
- Roosevelt Park
- Ganther’s Place Park for All People
- Ganther’s Park
- Karns Park
- Park (Thurman/Champion)
- Fairwood Park
- Moeller Park
- Walker Brick Pocket Park
- Southeast Lions Park
- Lincoln Park
- Barack Park & Recreation Center
Parks and Recreation Centers
Third Places
General Activities
for Parks and Recreation Centers

Seasonal Events
Parks can host events that attract people to the area every season. Event examples: Easter egg hunts in the park, Halloween events with face painting, pumpkin carving, and kid friendly haunted houses, fireworks on the 4th of July, Turkey-Trot one-mile race for kids and teens, and fall family campfires.

Parent and Child Crafting Events
Parks can promote healthy child-parent relationships and host crafting events for parents to participate with their children in.

Movies in the Park
Parks can host movie nights in the park and project movies on a big screen for the entire community to come to and watch.

Community Walks
The parks can promote “after-dinner” walks that families can take every evening around the park.

Sporting Events
Parks can host specific sporting events, such as: a Breast Cancer awareness basketball tournament, softball games for a cause, chess tournaments, a night hoops league, after-hours swimming events at the pool, kayaking and canoeing trips, specific times to ride your bike around the park, and sporting events designed to provide seniors with fun experiences.

Park Service Day
Park service days can be held to clean up and maintain the park to encourage community members to take ownership of the park’s success making them feel more connected to it.

Family Events
Parks can also host family friendly events, such as: farmer’s markets, scavenger hunts, star parties to identify constellations, gardening competitions, and day camps for children.

Challenges Addressed:

See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
South Side Skills and Ideas Fair

South Side residents have a wealth of skills and ideas that could be turned into valuable entrepreneurship opportunities with adequate support. This event is designed to be a platform for South Side residents with various skills and competencies to show and market their skills in a free, comfortable environment. The event will also specifically invite investors, nonprofits, and interested businesses and services agencies so that South Side residents can share their ideas with others and possibly pursue lucrative business opportunities. The event will be open to families and the public, possibly centered on a meal.

Youth Leadership and Advocacy Network

The purpose of this program is to support young South Side residents by providing opportunities for youth engagement, advocacy, and organizing efforts, and to provide opportunities to build relationships across the community and the city as a whole. Through the network, youth learn to share effective practices, lessons learned, and challenges related to creating and leading community efforts as youth leaders. Activities would range from sharing lunches to speaker events, capacity-building workshops, and coordinated events with other South Side leadership efforts.

Challenges Addressed:

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See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
South Siders from all over identified churches as third places. Within houses of worship such as Stowe Mission, Church for All People, and St. Ladislas play an important part in the lives of all South Sider residents, often providing services for youth, seniors, and families and community members who are struggling. Churches can also provide a space for community members to have deeper and more expansive interactions with community members that they may not often have the chance to interact with by offering settings and experiences that appeal to personal and spiritual uplift. Churches have also proven to be a space for thought-provoking conversation and listening around important community topics. The following activities may help churches on the South Side in providing this essential ingredient to the South Side.

**Identified Third Places**

- Holy Rosary St. John
- Livingston Ave United Methodist Church
- St. Mary’s Church
- Corpus Christi Church
- Apostolic Christian Church
- Gates-Fourth United Methodist Church
- St. Leo Church
- Clair United Methodist Church
- St. Ladislas Church
- Unity Church
- Washington Avenue United Methodist Church
General Activities

for Faith and Worship

Sponsor a School or Classroom
Churches can participate in many community outreach activities. Sponsoring a school or classroom is a way for members of the congregation to give back and provide schools/classrooms with things they need to help their students succeed.

Family Movie Night
Churches can host family movie nights, so members of the community can visit the church and enjoy free entertainment.

Holiday Events
Churches can hold events for every holiday. Examples include: Halloween alternatives such as Trunk-or-Treat where members of the congregation decorate their car trunks and pass out candy, Martin Luther King Day events, community Thanksgiving services, and election day activities.

Community Meals
Churches can host free community meals like free hotdog lunches, pancake breakfasts, and holiday meals.

Parents’ Night Out
Churches can provide childcare on certain nights so parents have the opportunity to go out and spend time with each other. The church can also provide childcare on weekend mornings to promote activities like “mothers morning out”.

Pulpit Exchange or Joint Worship
Churches can come together to have joint worship or have a pulpit exchange to promote diversity and provide church members with new experiences and opportunities to get to know new people.

Community Outreach Events
Churches can also host community events where everyone is welcome. Events could be things such as: day camps for children, hobby groups like scrapbooking or quilting club, day trips for seniors, community festivals to celebrate the neighborhood, free car washes, church yard sales, or concerts.

Success Recognition Activities and Events
Churches could host events that reward members for personal successes like having a report card reward system where children are rewarded for good grades or a graduate recognition ceremony where the church recognizes teens when they graduate from high school.

Challenges Addressed:

D = Diversity
C = Childhood Development
R = Connecting Resources

See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
Advanced Activities

for Faith and Worship

**South Side Movie Discussion Group**
Similar to movie nights, community members would be invited to watch movies together in a relaxed setting. However, these movies would touch on themes relating to important issues for South Side residents. Afterwards, community members would be invited to participate in a relaxed and facilitated discussion about the themes of the movie. Through examining these themes, community members from different walks of life might be able to get a better idea of the lives, thoughts, and feelings of South Side members from different areas of the community.

**Lending Clubs**
Lending Clubs are informal arrangements where individuals form a group and pool resources together to benefit each member of the group over time. Community members can form an informal group of 6 or 7 people and select a group administrator, possibly an established or trusted community leader or long-time resident. Club members can choose their own terms; how much money is paid to the members, how often, and how the money is distributed. The trusted administrator collects and keeps the payments and makes disbursements. Members can also choose to invest their money in financial instruments as well. Lending clubs can also host workshops and speakers designed to help build the financial literacy of members as well. In this way, lending clubs not only offer an affordable way of saving money, but also a mechanism for helping people learn more about how money and finance can benefit them.

Challenges Addressed:

D = Diversity  
C = Childhood Development  
R = Connecting Resources

See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
Third places that are centered on social services, such as the new Reeb Community Center, provide an important opportunity not only for people to access resources in the community, but also to meet community members from different walks of life. The mix of residents, volunteers, and service providers can provide the basis for healthy and groundbreaking interactions related to shared challenges on the South Side. Social service-oriented third places can deliver more effective services to residents by transforming their spaces into comfortable spaces for those who are in need of service to be treated with dignity and capacity building opportunities.

**Identified Third Places**
*(Places on Parsons Listed in Yellow)*

- Reeb Community Center
- Food Pantry
- AA Meeting Hall
- Hazel’s House of Hope
- Church for All People
- Bikes for All People
- Church for All People Free Store
- Stowe Mission
General Activities

for Social Services

Community Resource Fair  
Social Service agencies can host community resource fairs and invite all organizations that provide community resources to come, set up a booth, and talk about what services they offer.

Job Fair  
Social service agencies can host job fairs and invite all local businesses, nonprofits, and companies to come and talk about what positions they have open and how to apply. Attendees should be encouraged to dress professionally and bring their resumes.

Speaker Series  
Social service agencies can invite different people to come speak to the community on different topics, for example host TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) Talks.

Back-to-School Health Fair  
Back-to-School Health fairs are an opportunity for parents to bring their school-aged children to get school-required immunizations. The fairs can also feature lead tests, vision and dental screenings, and provide healthcare resource information. Rewards could be given to children who are up-to-date on their shots, such as free backpacks and school supplies.

COTA Travel Training  
Social Service agencies can promote the public transit system by providing free training to help people understand how to use COTA services effectively. Participants that complete the training could be rewarded with a free 31-day bus pass.

Volunteer Recognition Events  
Volunteers are very important to the success of our communities. Social Service agencies could host volunteer recognition events to show the community’s appreciation.

Challenges Addressed:

D = Diversity  
C = Childhood Development  
R = Connecting Resources

See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
Connectors’ Table
Building on ideas from Peter Block’s groundbreaking community-building work, *The Abundant Community*, the Connector’s Tables are a series of gatherings of members from associations specific to the South Side. New initiatives such as the Southern Gateway Project, the Reeb Community Center, and the South Side Neighborhood Leadership Academy have shown that when the South Side works together, community members can achieve amazing things. The Connectors’ Table is designed to be a set of informal meetings between members of different groups, programs and associations on the South Side—from formalized organizations such as the South Side Area Commission and Parsons Avenue Redevelopment Corporation, to less formal organizations like the Lending Circles and books clubs. While collective decisions about community action might be discussed at these meetings, they are primarily designed to allow members from different associations on the South Side to share best practices and lessons learned, as well as paving the way for partnerships in the future.

South Side Story Project
This activity will bring together long-time residents from different walks of life who can share stories about different community issues and their histories over meals or other informal activities that fit into the rhythms of senior life on the South Side. The activity will also recruit youth, primarily from the Digital Media Creators program and similar local youth programs, to use digital media resources to record and share these stories with community members from across the South Side and beyond. Youth and facilitators will elicit stories from seniors that illustrate the deep and rich diversity that exists on the South Side now and that has existed on the South Side for generations.

Circles of Support
Circles of support consist of smaller friendship groups between community members from different walks of life that focus on building deeper long-term relationships between individuals. Local churches or community groups such as block watches and community gardens can foster these gatherings. Groups can meet over a meal or any other activity and gather to support each other in their daily lives. Meetings can and should vary in time, length, location, and issue to accommodate the wide variety of life experiences on the South Side. Groups of community members gather in a circle to talk about what is “new and good” in their lives, community announcements, and listening activities centered on events ranging from personal to community topics. Neighbors can decide as a group if there is something that they can do together to help build the community and implement different ideas or activities using the assets that they share. These groups can also be used to help develop ideas for helping community members in times of need. The goal of these dinners is to build friendships and a sense of community among a diverse group of people.

Challenges Addressed:

- **D** = Diversity
- **C** = Childhood Development
- **R** = Connecting Resources

See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
Shops & Market Centers

Shopping centers, such as grocery stores and small shops, make natural third places because they attract people from different walks of life. At the grocery store, corner shop, and gas station, the diversity of the South Side is often on display. These third places could enhance their opportunity to promote diversity and community assets by providing spaces for community members to interact more sociably by adding spaces that act as ‘community lounges,’ places where community members can interact with the space and each other more casually. These changes would not only help build relationship on the South Side, but can also raise the profile of local businesses and create a more friendly environment for local, small businesses to flourish.

**Identified Third Places**
*(Places on Parsons Listed in Yellow)*

- Kroger’s
- Ace Hardware
- TY Furniture
- Salvation Army
- Merion Village
- Merion Village Farmer’s Market
General Activities
for Shops and Market Centers

Family Events and Activities
Businesses can host family-friendly events and activities, such as: classes for kids, summer camp options, child-free shopping experiences by providing child care while parents are shopping, story times, store tours, cookie and cupcake decorating, parent-child cooking classes, and food tasting days with free samples.

Adult Activities
Businesses can also host adult-only events, such as: weekly beer and wine tastings, seminars on nutrition for seniors, and cooking demos.

Hang Signs and Outreach Materials
Businesses can hang signs and provide other outreach materials about enrolling in programs like SNAP and other assistance programs to help provide shoppers with the resources they need to shop there.

Challenges Addressed:

- [D] = Diversity
- [C] = Childhood Development
- [R] = Connecting Resources

See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
Advanced Activities

for Shops and Market Centers

Local Student and Small Business Mentorship  
This program is similar to other student/local business leader mentoring models where high school students are paired with local business owners to build their capacity for future meaningful employment. However, this program will also focus on political efficacy and increased cultural competence with a specific emphasis on STEM-related lessons. This mentoring program is aimed at helping South Side children develop both their traditional intelligence and emotional intelligence, making them more able to succeed in modern collaborative-oriented workplaces and communities.

Shopping Buddies  
This program pairs up community members from different neighborhoods who are interested in grocery shopping together as a team. Community members would sign up to a listing administered by a local community service provider and be based on characteristics such as neighborhood, shopping style, store, and other factors. After signing up, community members can match up with other community members who may have similar shopping habits or shop at the same stores. Local stores and shops can offer also discounts to Shopping Buddies and the increased shopping at local businesses can be beneficial to local business owners. Shopping buddies can also agree to shop for each other due to illness or other impediments, or agree to share responsibilities that tend to make shopping difficult such as transportation and childcare.

Challenges Addressed:

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C = Childhood Development  
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See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
Informal Spaces

Sometimes, the community creates its own spaces. On the South Side, residents identified a number of spaces within the community that were not officially a part of any official business or institution. These unclaimed spaces were frequented by members from all walks of life on the South Side and provide a place for community members to gather on their own terms. By providing resources, programming and services to these spaces, informal spaces can also provide valuable educational, asset building, and community sharing experiences as well. These may help uncover assets on the South Side that may have gone unnoticed in other settings.

Identified Third Places

- Fishing Spots (2)
- Hely Ave. Elementary School Project
General Activities

_for Informal Spaces_

**Meeting/Teaching Spaces**
Informal spaces can provide space for people from the community to meet and take classes. These types of spaces can be used by humanities/arts groups, mentoring organizations, literacy volunteers, volunteer federal income tax preparer, and more.

**Monday Morning Job Search Program**
Informal spaces, such as the library, can host regularly scheduled Monday morning job searching and guide participants in how to find a job.

**Computer Classes**
Informal spaces that have computers can host computer classes and teach residents to use programs like Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and other basic computer skills.

**Employment Discussion Groups**
These spaces can host employment discussion groups and invite local employers, professors, and other professionals to be present.

**Book Events**
The library can host events with popular book themes to encourage participants to read and give community members things to talk to one another about. In addition, informal spaces such as community gardens can provide small lending libraries for community members to share books and magazines.

**Kid Friendly Events**
The library can also offer events and activities to serve families, such as: teen library lock-ins, exercise classes at the library, free-babysitter training, or an outdoor or indoor movie showing.

**Fishing Events**
Fishing spots can offer free fishing days approved by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. These will be scheduled days that no license is required to fish. The fishing spots can also hold family events on these days.

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**Challenges Addressed:**

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*See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.*
Advanced Activities

for Informal Spaces

Home Cooking Skills Classes

One of the biggest challenges faced by organizers of community cooking classes is ensuring that those who need the information the most are able to access the classes. Informal spaces can offer cooking classes that take advantage of existing knowledge and third spaces that are closer to the lives of every community member. The Home Cooking Skills Classes can use parks, gathering spaces, individual homes, and hangouts to teach discrete, informal lessons on cooking. Organizers can use mobile, ‘pop-up’ elements to create simple presentations and workshops that can be moved quickly and can fit perfectly in spaces large and small.

Policy Tables

One of the most pressing challenges for South Side residents is creating the time and energy to become involved in local decision-making. Often, the spaces where decisions are made in the community may be difficult to get to or uncomfortable for residents not used to the language and systems of traditional community development. Community policy tables are informal meetings coordinated by local service providers or organizations designed to allow community members to discuss community challenges and solutions at their own pace. These groups can also bring in different speakers and educators that can help community members from every walk of life gain a greater voice in community issues. The group can then create concrete action steps and promote promising, culturally competent policies and practices in local government. The group can also focus on what supports are needed for sustaining these effective programs and services. This dialogue process can be replicated in each of the cities with local stakeholders to support community-based action plans.

Challenges Addressed:

D = Diversity  C = Childhood Development  R = Connecting Resources

See page 7 for more details about these types of challenges.
Developing a Connected Community

Beyond these recommendations for individual third places, those interested in broader community development and capital improvement can pursue wider community development goals that promote greater social empathy, emotional intelligence, and bridging social capital. Furthermore, research has shown that the inclusion of culturally aware, pro-learning planning can also help children grow and learn from a place of authenticity and ensure that everyone has a chance to access community resources from whatever walk of life they happen to inhabit.

A Community-Centered Parsons Avenue
Parsons Avenue has historically been a thoroughfare where neighbors met one another. In this way, Parsons Avenue acted as an important tie that bound the South Side together and allowed community members from different walks of life to share assets and learn about one another. With careful development, Parsons Avenue could once again take its rightful place as a community bridge.

Culturally Aware, Trauma-Informed Public Spaces
Across the South Side, community members are inhabiting the neighborhood from a variety of circumstances and backgrounds. Furthermore, challenges such as poverty, violence, and lack of resources and support have left many people in the community without adequate tools to interact with traditional community settings. However, these community members possess a wealth of assets that can uplift the entire community if supported by the community. Creating community spaces that can create a comfortable setting for all people to meet one another and learn from one another can help lift all community members.

Parsons Avenue Plaza: A ‘living room’ for the South Side
In addition to additional green space along Parsons Avenue, Parsons Avenue would also benefit from a central park or plaza that could be designed to invite people from across the South Side and beyond to come together and share the great diversity that exists on the South Side. Concentrated and dedicated green space has greatly benefited the areas in other areas of Columbus and beyond by bringing people to main thoroughfares and inviting them to stay and meet one another, shop locally, and learn new things about their neighbors and the community in which they live, turning Parsons Avenue from a barrier between communities to a bridge between them.
Conclusion

The neighborhoods of the South Side have an immense asset in their wealth and diversity of community spaces. From churches and service institutions to parks and schools, South Side residents have many opportunities to meet one another on their own terms. In our research into the challenges that South Side residents are facing, the Kirwan Institute has found that it is these type of community spaces that can be catalytic in changing lives for the better.

The key in ensuring that third places are able to play this vital role in our communities is to create activities and programming that both enliven third places and make them venues for positive and powerful community action.

While this may seem to be a daunting task, the activities listed in our ‘Third Places’ Activity Book & Guide show that even the simplest activity—a craft sale, a stable of available board games, cooking classes for single moms—can be a doorway to deeper, richer, and more powerful community relationships. It is the social capital that is derived from these interactions that create pathways for community members to discover and share assets that help strengthen communities.

We hope that this guide may mobilize community members, service providers, and community advocates toward the first step along a path to a stronger, more inclusive community.