

Grad transfer excels

Ex-Hawkeye manager Baer now starting at Siena **SPORTS, A1**



Stabbing suspects

Two people charged for separate incidents **LOCAL, A3**



BREEZY, COOLER 42 • 30 FORECAST, A10 | **TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2023** | qctimes.com

TRANSFORMATION

Project Renewal helps to stabilize Davenport neighborhood

ALMA GAUL
newsroom@qctimes.com

From the outside, the white, vinyl-sided house at Davenport's 513 Warren St. looks in good shape.

Inside, it's a wreck. In its gutted state, one can see major termite damage, roof and floors rotted by water, shoddy construction practices and joists charred by fire. An area on the second floor reeks of cat urine.

Even so, until the end of October, a tenant still was living in the four-unit apartment building.

Tenancy officially ended Nov. 1 when the nonprofit Project Renewal bought the inner-city property for \$125,000 with the goal of renovating it for an expansion of its long-standing programs for neighborhood children, or tearing it down and building new.

At this point, a tear-down looks like the wisest use of donors' money, said Alex Cahill, board president of the nearly 50-year-old nonprofit.

Cahill and Ann Schwickerath, Project Renewal's executive director, said the purchase price was worth it just to gain control of the building that has been a source of trouble — violence, suspected trafficking and drugs — for the 29 years that Schwickerath has lived across the street.

Every so often, the place would change hands or the police department would clean up a nuisance and she would hope for a turnaround. None ever lasted.

"It has been a revolving door of violence and trauma for the neighborhood," Schwickerath said. "We never knew what we were going to get next. We were always looking over our shoulder. There were decent tenants, but they didn't stay because of the others."

A postal carrier once opened the building's front door to find someone using the entrance as a toilet, she said.

The last straw was a shooting on Mother's Day afternoon in 2020 that left bullet holes in the porch of the Project Renewal house across the street, she said.

She and the nonprofit's 11-member board began working on a strategic plan that eventually included a \$1.2 million fundraising campaign to buy the building as well as to update the two other buildings Project Renewal owns and operates for its after-school and summer programs and for staff housing.

"Some people say that's a lot of money, especially for a neighborhood that doesn't see that kind of investment," Schwickerath said.

But she has a ready answer.



GARY L. KRAMBECK

Once construction crew members began gutting the apartment house at 513 Warren St., Davenport, they found a wide range of structural problems, including rotten floors.

In addition to the 65 children from kindergarten through 12th grade that Project Renewal serves, the nonprofit provides a stabilizing presence in the neighborhood, it advocates for neighbors who might be afraid to speak up, and each "graduate" who becomes a solid citizen with jobs ranging from teacher to factory worker is a win for the future.

In the area of advocacy, Schwickerath points to the organization's opposition to a recent proposal to build a large juvenile-detention facility directly south of the Project Renewal campus.

Please see **RENEWAL**, Page A2



Project Renewal's purchase of the apartment building at 513 Warren St., Davenport, has already had a stabilizing effect on the neighborhood, Executive Director Ann Schwickerath said. This is a shot of what was a kitchen.



GARY L. KRAMBECK

Every child who comes to Project Renewal's "Treat House" after school knocks on the door, then is greeted and checked in by staff or volunteers.

Laughter, energy fill safe spot

After-school program provides structure for young students

ALMA GAUL
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It's a gloomy Tuesday afternoon when the first knock sounds at the door.

A volunteer jumps up to welcome the first of what might be 30 elementary school age students to the bright and colorful "Treat House," 510 Warren St., for a free after-school program operated by the nonprofit Project Renewal.

"We are a stable spot," Ann Schwickerath, the organization's executive director, said.

And while the children do get treats — today it's Goldfish crackers and juice — the nearly 50-year-old organization provides much more than that.

The first order of business is to ask each child if he or she has homework, and they'll work on that, maybe using one of 17 computers in the house. When homework is finished, kids are free to play a board game, read a book or just hang out.

Please see **TREAT HOUSE**, Page A2

WAR IN UKRAINE

Missile strike kills 40

Military experts see Russia preparing for a long war

VASILISA STEPANENKO
AND ANDREW MELDRUM
Associated Press

DNIPRO, Ukraine — Ukrainian emergency crews on Monday sifted through what was left of a Dnipro apartment building destroyed by a Russian missile, placing bodies from one of the war's deadliest single attacks in months in black bags and gingerly carrying them across steep piles of rubble.

Authorities said the death toll from Saturday's strike rose to 40 and that 30 people remained missing Monday. Tall cranes swung across the jagged gaps in a row of residential towers, the engines growling as residents of one of Ukraine's largest cities watched largely in silence under a gray sky.

About 1,700 people lived in the multistory building, and search-and-rescue crews have worked nonstop since the missile strike to locate victims and survivors in the wreckage. The regional administration said 39 people had been rescued and at least 75 were wounded.

The reported death toll put it among the deadliest attacks on Ukrainian civilians since before the summer, according to The Associated Press-Frontline War Crimes Watch project. Residents said the apartment tower did not house military facilities.

Oleksander Anyskevych said he was in his apartment when

Please see **UKRAINE**, Page A4

MLK DAY

Daughter calls for action over words

BILL BARROW
Associated Press

ATLANTA — America has honored Martin Luther King Jr. with a federal holiday for nearly four decades yet still hasn't fully embraced and acted on the lessons from the slain civil rights leader, his youngest daughter said Monday.

The Rev. Bernice King, who leads The King Center in Atlanta, said leaders — especially politicians — too often cheapened her father's legacy into a "comfortable and convenient King" offering easy platitudes.

"We love to quote King in and around the holiday. ... But then we refuse to live King 365 days of the year," she declared at

Please see **MLK**, Page A4

■ **QC remembers MKL, A3**

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GERALD HERBERT, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Miss USA R'Bonney Gabriel reacts as she is crowned Miss Universe during the final round of the 71st Miss Universe Beauty Pageant on Saturday, Jan. 14, 2023, in New Orleans.

Miss USA is Miss Universe

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW ORLEANS — R'Bonney Gabriel, a fashion designer, model and sewing instructor from Texas who competition officials said is the first Filipino American to win Miss USA, was crowned Miss Universe on Saturday night.

Gabriel closed her eyes and clasped hands with runner-up Miss Venezuela, Amanda Dudamel, at the moment of the dramatic reveal of the winner, then beamed after her name was announced.

Thumping music rang out, and she was handed a bouquet of flowers, draped in the winner's sash and crowned with a tiara on-stage at the 71st Miss Universe Competition, held in New Orleans.

In the Q&A at the last stage of the competition for the three finalists, Gabriel was asked how she would work to demonstrate Miss Universe is "an empowering and progressive organization" if she were to win.

"I would use it to be a transformational leader," she responded, citing her work using recycled materials in her fashion design

and teaching sewing to survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence. "It is so important to invest in others, invest in our community and use your unique talent to make a difference."

According to Miss Universe, Gabriel is a former high school volleyball player and graduate of the University of North Texas. A short biography posted on the organization's website said she was also CEO of her own sustainable clothing line.

"We all have something special, and when we plant those seeds to other people in our life, we transform them and we use that as a vehicle for change," Gabriel said.

Nearly 90 contestants from around the world took part in the competition, organizers said, involving "personal statements, in-depth interviews and various categories including evening gown & swimwear."

The second runner-up was Miss Dominican Republic, Andreina Martinez.

Miss Curacao, Gabriela Dos Santos, and Miss Puerto Rico, Ashley Carino, rounded out the top five finalists.

Renewal

From A1

"The ripple effect in the neighborhood — (Project Renewal) touches way more lives than just the kids," she said.

Change is happening

The desired stabilizing effect already is apparent with the apartment purchase.

"It's like a light switched overnight. The traffic changed," Schwickerath said, referring to the people and cars passing by. "I wasn't expecting this. I wasn't prepared for the major change that has already happened in the environment around us."

So far, about \$505,000 — or 42% of the goal — has been raised for the fundraising campaign, jump-started by a \$120,000 challenge grant by Duncan J. Cameron, Bettendorf, former owner of Vanguard Distributing Corp.; John Anderson, CEO of Quad-City Bank & Trust; and Jim and Michelle-Solis Russell, owners of Russell.

Other contributions include pledges from board members, \$200,000 from the Bechtel Trusts; \$45,000 each from the Regional Development and Scott County Regional authorities (the nonprofit entities that hold the gaming licenses for Rhythm City and the Isle, respectively), \$12,500 from the Doris and Victor Day Foundation and \$10,000 from Project Renewal's own reserve.

The goal may have to be increased, depending on how much the "problem property" ends up costing.

Cahill hopes a new building can be constructed, if that is what the board decides, by the end of this year. Russell did the



GARY L. KRAMBECK PHOTOS

Project Renewal purchased this problem property at 513 Warren St., Davenport, to either renovate or tear down and rebuild.

How to help

To help with Project Renewal's fundraising campaign, send a check to Project Renewal, 906 W. 5th St., Davenport, IA 52803, or use PayPal by going to the organization's website, projectrenewal.net

interior demo work and is working with Project Renewal to rebuild or, more likely, tear down and construct anew.

Either way, the property will add a third building to the Project Renewal campus that consists of a brick house with offices and apartments for two staff members; the "Treat House" where programs are offered and a park that is used for programs in the summer.

The third building will provide space for musical, culinary and visual-arts programs and indoor exercise, such as dance and yoga that can't be squeezed



Project Renewal's original location at 906 W. 5th St., Davenport, was where Mother Teresa stayed in 1976 when she was in Davenport to receive the Diocese of Davenport Pacem in Terris award. The house now is used for staff offices and housing.

into the Treat House. The upstairs will house two apartments, one for a third full-time staff member the organization hopes to hire and the other for a summer employee, typically a college student.

Other monies will be used to upgrade the plumbing and electrical systems in the brick house, Project Renewal's original home, and the Treat

House, which it bought in 2002 when it outgrew its original space. In addition, walls will be reconfigured in the Treat House to enlarge the tiny kitchen and improve traffic flow.

The reason Project Renewal provides apartments on site is to continue the vision of its founder, a Catholic sister, who wanted staff to "have the perspective of neighbors."

 **VIEW:** Bettendorf News has moved from print to online (qctimes.com/community/bettendorf). To read, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link.

NEWSVU

CORRECTIONS

The Quad-City Times strives for accuracy and regrets all errors. If you notice inaccurate information, please call 563-383-2375 and ask for the section where the error occurred. All corrections will appear here.

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At least 25 percent of the newsprint has been recycled.

Treat House

From A1

Special programs are offered year-round by staff of the Figge Art Museum, Common Chord (formerly the River Music Experience) and the Davenport Public Library.

All the while, Project Renewal volunteers and staff strive to quietly affirm each child. They also try to teach how to resolve squabbles without fighting, use time constructively and interact with "appropriate social behavior," in the words of the organization's website.

A visiting newspaper reporter sees an example of this when a volunteer suggests to Isaac, a second-grader, that he should introduce himself to the reporter. Isaac springs from a couch, walks over and extends his hand.

Amy Kersten, of Davenport, now in her ninth year of volunteering at Project Renewal, said her first impression of the place was that it was "filled with laughter and high energy." It still is, and that's one of the reasons she stays. Another volunteer, PJ Slobogan, calls it "a happy place to come to."

At present, 65 children are enrolled, kindergarten through 12th grade.

A change in the past several years is that older children are sticking around.

Previously, kids began drifting away once they got to upper junior high and high school.

"We might not see them anymore," Schwickerath

said. "Maybe it (coming to Project Renewal) wasn't cool. But more kids have started staying with us longer, into high school."

And the organization has responded with programs just for them, offered in the evenings so teens who might have after-school extracurricular or part-time jobs can attend.

An emphasis of these programs is career exploration, looking at what the kids might do after high school. To that end, Project Renewal takes the kids on college visits — private and public four-year institutions as well as community college, trade school and apprenticeship programs — and has speakers come in to talk about various lines of work.

Staff also tries to caution the kids on possible pitfalls. In partnership with the Center for Alcohol and Drug Services, staff comes in to advise on decision-making, refusal skills, healthy hang-outs and identifying trusted friends and adults.

"We're walking through life with them so they can become productive in society," Schwickerath said.

And when school is out for the summer, Project Renewal picks up with a robust slate of programming from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily.

This includes swim lessons; work in math, reading and writing; craft projects and field trips. Kids have visited the Davenport Spray Park and Nahant Marsh in Davenport, the Wapsi Environmental Center near Dixon and Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat center near Wheatland, Iowa. Smaller

groups have attended ballgames at Modern Woodmen Park in Davenport, visited Niabi Zoo in Coal Valley and have volunteered at Bix at Six training runs.

How Project Renewal got its start

The group traces its roots to 1972, when Sister Concetta Bendicente came to Davenport from Chicago to serve her order, the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ. She moved to the neighborhood just west of downtown and began observing needs — people experiencing homelessness, kids playing on the railroad tracks, elderly people with no family.

She decided she could help and bought a condemned brick house on the corner of 5th and Warren that she fixed up and lived in to be a positive presence in the neighborhood and to serve as a base for helping those she encountered.

"At that time, there weren't all the great social service organizations there are now," Ann Schwickerath, executive director of Project Renewal, said. "Sister Concetta did a little bit of everything, providing food, clothes, transportation and helping the homeless and elderly."

In time, the focus narrowed to children, and efforts were organized in 1974 under the auspices of a nonprofit organization. To serve more children, the organization purchased for park purposes a nearby vacant lot where a 1850s school once stood and, in 2002, a duplex that became the Treat House.

For the first 20 years, the staff was all-volunteer.

In 1993, Ann Schwickerath, then newly graduated from the University of Iowa where she majored in sociology and art education, came to work for the summer and never left.

She became executive director and was the only full-time employee for many years. The organization now has two full-time and three part-time staffers who work year-round, and it generally hires about eight seasonal staffers to help with summer programs, often work-study college students.

The organization's annual operating budget is about \$245,000, with money coming from federal Community Development Block Grants administered by the city of Davenport, grants from area foundations and "a great list of faithful private donors," Schwickerath said. The budget is expected to increase to \$280,000 for the fiscal year beginning July 1 with the hiring of an additional staff member and operation of the expanded space.

A point of pride for Project Renewal is that its original brick house is where Mother Teresa stayed in April 1976 when she was in Davenport to receive the Davenport Catholic Interracial Council's Pacem in Terris award. Mother Teresa was the founder of a religious order of nuns, known for her work with the poor and sick in India and other places in the world. In 2016 she was canonized as a saint.

— Associated Press

BIRTHDAYS

Actor **James Earl Jones** is 92. Talk show host **Maury Povich** is 84. Singer **Chris Montez** is 81. Actor **Joanna David** ("Downton Abbey") is 76. Actor **Jane Elliott** ("General Hospital") is 76. Former Rolling Stones guitarist **Mick Taylor** is 75. Singer **Sheila Hutchinson** of The Emotions is 70. Singer **Steve Earle** is 68. Singer **Paul Young** is 67. Actor-comedian **Steve Harvey** is 66. Singer **Susanna Hoffs** of The



Harvey



Carrey

Bangles is 64. Writer-director **Brian Helgeland** ("42," "Mystic River," "L.A. Confidential") is 62. Actor **Jim Carrey** is 61. Actor **Denis O'Hare** ("The Good Wife," "True Blood") is 61. Actor **Joshua Malina** ("The West Wing," "Sports Night") is 57. Singer **Shabba Ranks** is 57. Actor **Naveen Andrews** ("Instinct," "Lost") is 54. Electronic musician **DJ Tiesto** is 54. Musician **Kid Rock** is 52. Actor **Freddy Rodriguez** ("The Night

Shift," "Six Feet Under") is 48. Actor-writer **Leigh Whannell** ("Saw" and "Insidious" movies) is 46. Actor-singer **Zooey Deschanel** ("New Girl") is 43. Singer **Ray J** is 42. Country singer **Amanda Wilkinson** of The Wilkinsons is 41. Actor **Ryan Gage** ("The Hobbit") is 40. DJ **Calvin Harris** is 39. Drummer **Jeremiah Fraites** of The Lumineers is 37. Actor **Jonathan Keltz** ("Reign," "Entourage") is 35. Actor **Kelly Marie Tran** ("Star Wars: The Last Jedi") is 34. Actor **Kathrine Herzog** ("Madame Secretary") is 26.