



## GCCA Celebrates 25 Years of the Progressive Dinner

It was a pleasure celebrating with you during the 25th Anniversary of the Garden Court Community Association Progressive Dinner on September 28, 2019. Over 100 neighbors, friends and family joined GCCA in the festivities. Our gracious hosts who opened their homes and businesses with international flare included: **Frank Allegra** (mouth-watering appetizers); State Representative **James Roebuck** (Vietnamese); **Craig Carnaroli and Amie Thornton** (Italian); **Angela and Reginald Dowd-Burton** (Ethiopian); **Liz Campion and Larry Motyka** (Moroccan); **Susan Best and Fran Talarowski** (Mexican); **Carl Lewis** at the 48<sup>th</sup> Street Grille (Caribbean); and the **Garden Court Apartments/ Spruce Street Commons** (delectable desserts).

During dessert, the GCCA Board took the opportunity to acknowledge all hosts and sponsors that have supported the Garden Court Progressive Dinner over the past 25 years. Those honored received commemorative anniversary candles and citations.

The purpose of the Progressive Dinner initially was to increase community engagement. In 2017 we established the Cheryl Roebuck Memorial Music Scholarship where we have directed much of the proceeds of the event. During dessert, we were delighted to have two award recipients, **Aviva Bock** past concertmaster of Musicopia, and a member of Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, All City Orchestra, Center City Chamber Orchestra, and Central High Orchestra; as well as **Oliver Young** of Musicopia, and Girard Academic Music Program School, who gave a short recital expertly accompanied by David Shunskis. We thank their parents for allowing them to stay out late on a Saturday night. *(Continued on page 3)*



# Mary Allegra, A Friend and Force of Nature

*We were saddened by the loss of Mary Allegra, Garden Court Community Association President, this past August. Reproduced here are some thoughts on our dear leader and friend from fellow GCCA Board Member, Liz Campion.*



Mary Allegra was a star; not always visible in a day-lit sky, but always present to light easier paths for family, friends, neighbors and even strangers. Mary lit up a room, laughed often, was passionate and silly, forgave, and accepted forgiveness. She was brave, smart, funny, and refreshing. She made her own luck, (with intense preparation). She lived fully present in each day, while planning for the morrow. Mary knew that life was a time to make good friends and have great adventures. She knew the best stories, and could share them, because she lived them with us.

Mary feared little. A recent illness made her contemplate dependency and pain, and so, her relatively quick death, at the end of an almost perfect day, surrounded by those she loved most, can be considered a blessing. We are left to deal with the shock and loss, finding solace in many happy memories and the supports of the traditions and 'guide ropes' she wove around and through her lucky beloved. Misty Copeland says, "Anything is possible when you have the right people to support you." Mary was that "right person".

Mary was unapologetically herself, and an inspiration (sometimes hard push) to those striving to lead a better life. She gave us the freedom to be our best selves. She knew joy was contagious and smiles were a symbol of peace and proof of connection.

Mary could simultaneously be a traditional 'Catholic wife' and a liberal and liberated warrior. She fought for peace, and as a young woman followed Frank from Boston to NYC to help counsel young men trying to avoid the Vietnam Draft (encouraging conscientious service elsewhere; not faking "bone spurs"). I am just one of many people who is glad her path led them to Philly.

Mary had few prejudices and a plethora of preferences. She was fast and flexible in her thought processes and implacable in her moral compass. She built without destroying. Hard work was made fun: All senses were engaged. Her path through life made time for detours through the arts (culinary, dramatic, music, ornamentation, and photography). She could overlook a broken fence to admire the flowers in a garden, and as a gourmet level cook, she realized an egg, (or friend), is still good, even if cracked.

Mary made and retained friendships because she was a good friend. Just one example: when I was battling cancer, she cooked for me, and offered her husband Frank as chauffeur. She demonstrated friend-love by walking in, when many others disappeared. Other examples include the many dinners and parties she hosted to celebrate victories and raise money in support of scholarships and the goals of others.

Mary's achievements were remarkable, and listed in more formal obituaries. For now, I prefer the comfort and reminiscences of those who knew and loved her. At her memorial service, one of the speakers reminded us that someone who might have been defined, as 'one of the usual suspects' was the son of her heart. He credited her generosity, with food and housing, for helping him past a rough patch. The evidence is of a strong, healthy, and loving man, able and willing to pay her kindness forward.

My favorite Mary story, highlights her love of Frank and how misunderstandings can be positive.

At a neighborhood Christmas party, women had drifted to one area and men another. Mary began bragging about her good fortune in being married to Frank. Among his good qualities: “Frank delivers coffee to me, in bed, every morning”. Many women felt a twinge of jealousy, and I joked that she was making Frank a target for all those women who might want him as their own personal “Mr. Coffee”. Of course, I later shared the story with my husband, with a suggestion that he step up his ‘morning game’. Larry rose to the challenge. Over the course of the next year, Larry went through three types of bean grinders, culminating in a hand turned, ceramic grinder he now uses. He began comparing beans and roasters, to find my favorites. And is now friends with Joe Linn of LITTLE GOAT, the best coffee roaster in Delaware. We graduated to an espresso machine. Now he makes a weekend Latte for me and the volunteer who gardens in our courtyard. There is a punch-line. At the next Christmas Party, I thanked Mary and told how Larry was in a happy competition with Frank. At which point, Mary laughed and said, Frank brings me instant coffee. It was our ‘inside joke’ for years. I am drinking a home-brewed latte as I write my memories. (Thank you, Mary!)

Friends are the relatives we make for ourselves. At times, Mary played the role of Mother, Sister and mentor. I was lucky to know her. I delight in seeing the Chi-Adults, especially Jen’s theater friends, and Chris’s jock cohort, who benefitted from her love. Mary knew that growing up and independent did not mean growing apart. And she was delighted when the arrival of grandchildren brought her own children closer as peers through the shared experience of parenting.

Mary understood that friendship is a renewable resource. It enables growth; empowers children to attain a more productive adulthood; and neighbors to overcome artificial differences to join on common ground.

I am awed that her husband of 48 years, Frank was able to plan a funeral, and host a reception (for hundreds) at their home. It was as if Mary was there, helping everything run smoothly. (Special kudos to caterer, FRESH ON 47TH. Barbara Scott and team brought amazing, tasty food and made set-up and clean-up appear seamless). It was a beautiful send-off in the ALLEGRA style. Her children, Jennifer and Chris, (with wife Jen), her grandchildren Claire, Michael, and Lin Rose, family from Boston and Plymouth, friends and neighbors kept the mood upbeat.

Mary made our world better by feeding, comforting, entertaining, and inspiring the people in it. She was not just a good friend; she was the great friend who delivered chocolate (or wine, or whatever was most needed). She was the incredible friend, who was reliable and loyal and who made a difference. Like Maya Angelou, Mary knew to, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” Doing better, for me, will include supporting the people and institutions Mary loved. Frank will always be welcome at our home for Sunday dinners. Isabel Allende said, “True friendship resists time, distance and silence.” I trust that Mary will enjoy eternal rest in perpetual light, and that those who love her will meet again.

**Honoring a Dear Friend**

Mary’s life was celebrated at a Memorial Service on October 19, 2019 at the Mosaic Community Center.

Frank Allegra, Mary’s husband, was chosen by the Board of Directors in a special election to complete Mary’s term on the Board.

A Legacy Committee will be established to develop a fitting tribute in Mary's Honor.

# 25 Years of Community

*(Continued from page 1)*

We have been fortunate enough to have three dedicated Progressive Dinner Chairs over the past 25 years. **Maria Luisa Delgado** (Dinner Founder), **Mary-Knight Young** and **Mary Allegra** received silver keepsake boxes and deep appreciation for their contribution to GCCA. Frank Allegra accepted on Mary's behalf.

Our 2019 business donors included **Fresh on 47th Street**, **Reanimator Coffee**, **Spruce Street Commons**, and **48th Street Grille**.

While we beam with pride for our success in bringing so many of you together to enjoy our Community, we are even more grateful to have such welcoming neighbors and friends to share our lives on a daily basis.

Special thanks to the Garden Court Community Association Board Members and volunteers who gave of their time and talent to make the 25th Anniversary Progressive Dinner a success



## Supporting Music Education in Garden Court

Garden Court Community Association was proud to award the Cheryl Roebuck Memorial Music Scholarship to **Aviva Block** to attend Kinhaven Music Camp this summer.

Aviva is a resident of Garden Court and started violin and piano before the first grade. She is an alum of the Musicopia program where she rose to concertmaster. She is a member of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, All City Orchestra, Center City Chamber Orchestra, and Central High Orchestra, where she is currently a junior. She was recently invited to be part of the Philadelphia Music Alliance for Youth and the Fellowship Program.

The Cheryl Roebuck Memorial Music Scholarship is an annual scholarship in memory of Cheryl Roebuck, a dedicated music teacher, accomplished musician, and tireless contributor to the civic life of Garden Court. The scholarship is intended to supplement the musical development of qualified music students who live or attend school within Garden Court boundaries. We congratulate Aviva, her parents and her teachers and we look forward to her continued success in her bright future in music and in life. Visit our website to learn more.



# Committee Updates

## Garden Court Needs You!

Garden Court would be nothing without the dedicated volunteers who have built a thriving community here in West Philly. We need you to help us continue that mission by joining one of our committees today!

Learn more about our work and how to join at [www.gardencourtca.org/what-we-do-1](http://www.gardencourtca.org/what-we-do-1)

### Business District:

#### 48th Street Businesses Support GCCA Progressive Dinner

Garden Court Community Association extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to the following businesses located on our 48th & Spruce Streets business corridor for their generous in-kind and financial support for the 25th Anniversary Progressive Dinner on Saturday, September 28th:

As hosts:

- Carl Lewis and his 48th Street Grille hosted a party of 20 sit-down diners in his restaurant for a flavorful Caribbean meal.
- Spruce Street Commons hosted the third course – dessert and musical entertainment – in its elegantly remodeled lobby at 47th & Pine Streets, and provided financial support.

As sponsors/contributors:

- Fresh on 47th Caterers furnished an array of delicious desserts and truffles for the last course.
- ReAnimator Coffee Roasters provided the coffee and supplies to accompany the dessert.

For more information about the GCCA 48th & Spruce Street Business District Committee, please contact mark at [business@gardencourtca.org](mailto:business@gardencourtca.org).

### Greening:

#### Help us Keep Garden Court Green!

One of the many things to love about Garden Court is the many beautiful parks and green spaces that fill our neighborhood. However, these spaces only stay that way with your help! This month there are several opportunities to meet other neighbors and friends and spruce up our parks! Everyone is welcome!

#### Love Your Park, Love Your Tennis Court

- Saturday, November 9, 2019
- 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- 47th & Spruce Streets

Activities will include bulb planting, picking up trash, raking leaves, trimming overgrown areas, discussing improvements to the courts, enjoying snacks.

#### Love Barkan Park

- Saturday, November 9, 2019
- 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
- Barkan Park, 50<sup>th</sup> and Spruce Streets

After a morning at the tennis courts, come join your neighbors at Barkan Park where we'll be raking leaves and cleaning up the playground.

For more information on our Greening Committee, email Victoria at [greening@gardencourtca.org](mailto:greening@gardencourtca.org).



# Upcoming Events

Hope to see you at one of these exciting upcoming events!

## Halloween in Cedar Point Park

Thursday, October 31st, 6 PM.

46th and Cedar and Baltimore Avenue

Annual GCCA Halloween giveaway of hot dogs, hot and cold cider, and candy begun by Mary Allegra. See the two headed 12-foot fire-breathing dragon! (Please come earlier to help decorate the park and help distribute goodies to the children. Contact Frank Allegra at [utestpreps@comcast.net](mailto:utestpreps@comcast.net) or 215-519-9350 if you want to help.



## Halloween Book Giveaway

Thursday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, 4:30 PM- 7:00 PM

48<sup>th</sup> St. Laundromat; 48<sup>th</sup> and Pine Streets

Be on the lookout for our resident GCCA Book Witch who will be handing out books to all the good little girls and boys! What a great Halloween treat!

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## GCCA Fall General Meeting Featuring Jamie Gauthier

Nominee for the 3<sup>rd</sup> City Council District

**Thursday, November 14, 2019**

**6:30 PM**

**Church of the Holy Apostles and the Mediator**

**260 S 51st St. Philadelphia, PA 19139**

# JOIN GCCA TODAY!

Join Garden Court Community Association today to be a part of a vibrant community, and affect positive change for our neighborhood.

Send your check payable to GCCA to:

**GCCA**  
**P.O. Box 16654,**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19139-0654**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Membership Type: (Choose 1)**

Individual (\$10.00) \_\_\_\_

Family (\$15.00) \_\_\_\_

Business (\$35.00) \_\_\_\_

I am interested in joining the following committees:

\_\_\_ Business District

\_\_\_ Communications

\_\_\_ Education

\_\_\_ Events

\_\_\_ Greening

\_\_\_ Membership

\_\_\_ Public Safety

\_\_\_ Zoning and development

Questions? Email [membership@gardencourtca.org](mailto:membership@gardencourtca.org)

## **Join a GCCA Committee Today!**

Join one of our many committees to be a part of a vibrant community,  
and affect positive change for our neighborhood

Business District- [business@gardencourtca.org](mailto:business@gardencourtca.org)

Communications- [info@gardencourtca.org](mailto:info@gardencourtca.org)

Education- [education@gardencourtca.org](mailto:education@gardencourtca.org)

Fundraising/Events- [events@gardencourtca.org](mailto:events@gardencourtca.org)

Greening- [greening@gardencourtca.org](mailto:greening@gardencourtca.org)

Membership- [membership@gardencourtca.org](mailto:membership@gardencourtca.org)

Zoning and Development- [zoning@gardencourtca.org](mailto:zoning@gardencourtca.org)

Garden Court Community Association  
P.O. Box 16654  
Philadelphia, PA 19139  
[www.gardencourtca.org](http://www.gardencourtca.org)

**Join us for our next General Meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup> – Details inside!**