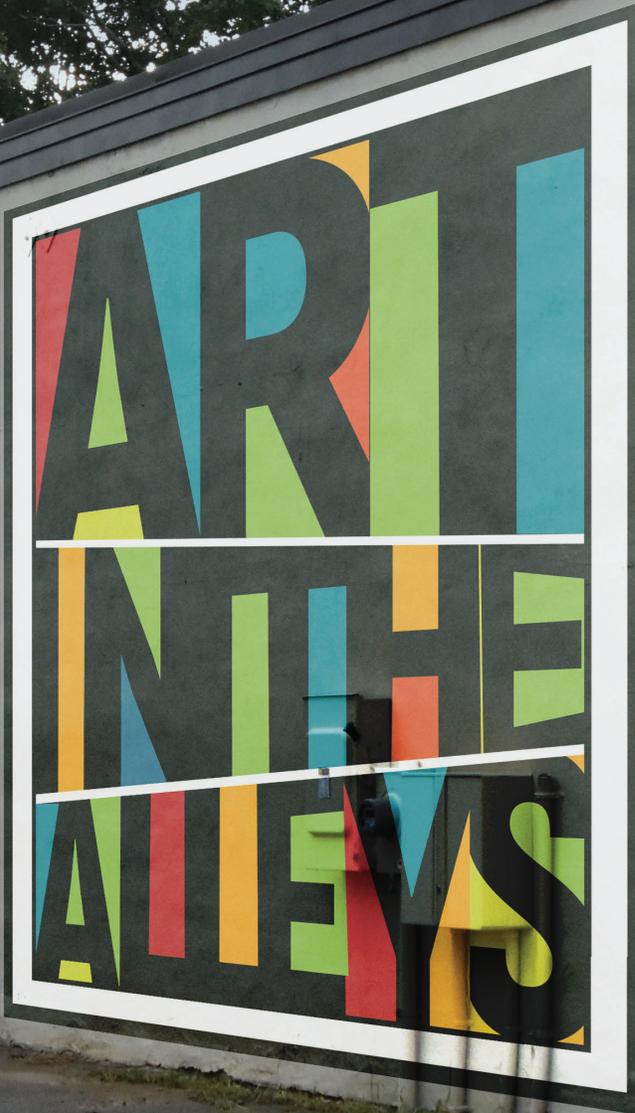


# INTUCKER

SEPTEMBER 2021 | VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 9



## PAINING A MASTERPIECE

PUBLIC ART IN THE SPOTLIGHT AS TUCKER  
EMBARKS ON AMBITIOUS STUDY PROCESS

# EDITOR'S NOTE



Everyone has special, God-given talents in life. Maybe you're a gifted salesperson or a talented public speaker. Perhaps

you're skilled in the kitchen or on an athletic field. In short, everybody's good at something.

By the same token, we all have that one thing that we are decidedly not good at. For me, since before I can remember, I have been a terrible artist. It's not that I don't enjoy art; we are fortunate here in Atlanta to have the High Museum, a place I have visited several times. I've been to galleries up and down the east coast, enjoying and admiring the works of some incredibly talented painters and sculptors. But I can't produce art to save my life. Drawing, coloring, and don't even get me started on painting. The artistic gene skipped me.

Fortunately, as you'll read on page 6, there are some very talented artists out there and they soon could be creating masterpieces in the alleys of downtown Tucker. This is an exciting step we'll be looking at in the coming months that could culminate in a little bit of a different look for Main Street and surrounding areas. This concept of public art is something we've seen in neighboring cities, and it comes in all different varieties. Murals are among the most popular. Sculptures are really cool. Some of these pieces have even become synonymous with the cities they call home.

So, follow this process and see what happens. In the end, our downtown charm could have a slightly different flavor. And that's a good thing, as long as they don't call on me to paint anything!

**MATT HOLMES**  
INTUCKER EDITOR

# IN THIS ISSUE



### ON THE COVER

People in and around Tucker have long discussed a desire for public art. But what? And where? On page 6, find out about the new program that aims to answer these questions and more!



### HEALTHCARE HEROES

A new program at Tucker High School could have a beneficial long-term impact on the health of our region. On page 10, go inside the school and learn how they're educating the next wave of healthcare heroes.



### BUSINESS BOOM

One Tucker enterprise is aiming to boost culinary quality all across metro Atlanta. On page 8, John McHenry looks at what's cookin' in the Business Boom.



### CITIZEN OF THE MONTH

From schools to scouts to sports, she volunteers to keep our Tucker community going. On page 14, get to know Patrece Keeter, our Citizen of the Month.



### ASK RIP

With activity at the pools and on the trails, parks have been the talk of Tucker lately. Our Parks and Recreation Director tackles some of your burning questions on page 15.



# INTUCKER

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 9

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# From the Mayor:



Each month, this column gives me the opportunity to talk directly to Tucker about what's on my mind and what I think you need to know about the projects, plans and initiatives happening in the City. It's a chance to call your attention to things that are important to our progress, that you need to be involved in, or at least aware of. This month, it's all about events and activities as we continue heading back to a more normal community life. With that said, COVID has not disappeared. We must remain vigilant as we expand our activities after a long time away.

I've written before about how important our city events are. They are a much-needed social outlet. They build community and they highlight various aspects of Tucker for our own folks, as well as the world beyond our city limits. Now as we enter fall, those events are really ramping up. As I write this, we are days away from Tucker Day, being held this year on September 4. This truly is the king of all Tucker events and has been for more than a half-century. It's always been run by volunteers, and the team from Main Street Tucker Alliance has been working diligently for the past two years to try and find the best opportunity to restart this great event. It was cancelled last year, and then postponed this year from its normal time in May to the Saturday of Labor Day weekend.

Speaking of great events, Taste of Tucker is coming up on October 2. This is another volunteer-led effort that draws people from all over metro Atlanta to sample the best that our Tucker restaurants have to offer. Of course, Trunk or Treat is a Halloween staple on Main. Run by our August 2021 Citizen of the Month Nancy Qarmout in conjunction with the DeKalb Fraternal Order of Police, Trunk or Treat is a safe trick-or-treating option that brings thousands of children to downtown Tucker each October 31.

Not to be outdone, our Parks and Recreation staff is putting on a trio of events this fall. Their annual Sip & Stroll is happening September 18 at Tucker Nature Preserve. They are organizing a Haunted Trail event in Henderson Park on October 29. And, in November, you're invited to join us for a night of Campfire & Cocktails at Kelley Cofer Park. As always, these Parks and Recreation events are free and open to the public, whether you live here in Tucker or you're just coming for a visit.

Of course, as I write this, we are dealing with significantly increased COVID cases relative to the low levels we had reached back in the spring and early summer. As we are forced to consider these trends and respond accordingly, I will continue to urge our city and our citizens to keep finding ways to Live, Work, Play, and Pray with careful

(continued on page 9)

# City Council Update

Tucker's Mayor and City Council met twice during the month of August, discussing and deciding on some important issues.

The first meeting happened on August 9. On a 6-0 vote, the Council adopted an ordinance to amend the City Code to make proactive life safety changes to issues like vehicle storage in the City. They then approved three contracts pertaining to mobility in the City. The first was a contract with Lowe Engineers for engineering services for sidewalk and trail design along Cooledge Road and Hugh Howell Road. The second was a \$58,825 contract with Atlas Consulting to negotiate right-of-way acquisition for the sidewalk project along Old Norcross Road. The third was a \$58,000 contract with Kimley-Horn for traffic calming design along Brockett Road.

There were a handful of other issues considered by the Mayor and Council that night, including:

- approving a resolution to receive funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
- reappointing Ted Rhinehart to the Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA)
- awarding a contract to Woodwind Construction Company for sidewalks

and designated parking spaces at Rosenfeld Park

- a special land use permit (SLUP) to allow an automobile repair facility at 2101 Northlake Parkway. This was before Council for a first read and public hearing, meaning no vote was taken.
- an ordinance to amend the Fiscal Year '22 budget. This amendment was necessitated in part by ARPA funds. It came before Council on a first read and public hearing, meaning no vote was taken.

Council also held a work session on August 23. Much of the session consisted of a joint conversation with the City's Downtown Development Authority. After the two sides covered a number of issues of mutual interest, Council got briefings on the progress of the convention and visitors bureau, the ongoing public art study (read more on page 6), and intersection improvements at Hugh Howell Road and Mountain Industrial Boulevard. No votes were taken during this work session.

The next meeting of the Mayor and City Council will be Monday September 13 at 7 p.m. at City Hall (1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350B).

## DATES TO KNOW

**September 1**  
Traffic Court

**September 6**  
City Hall Closed  
(Labor Day)

**September 8**  
Traffic Court

**September 13**  
City Council

**September 15**  
Municipal Court

**September 16**  
Planning Commission

**September 20**  
Downtown Development  
Authority

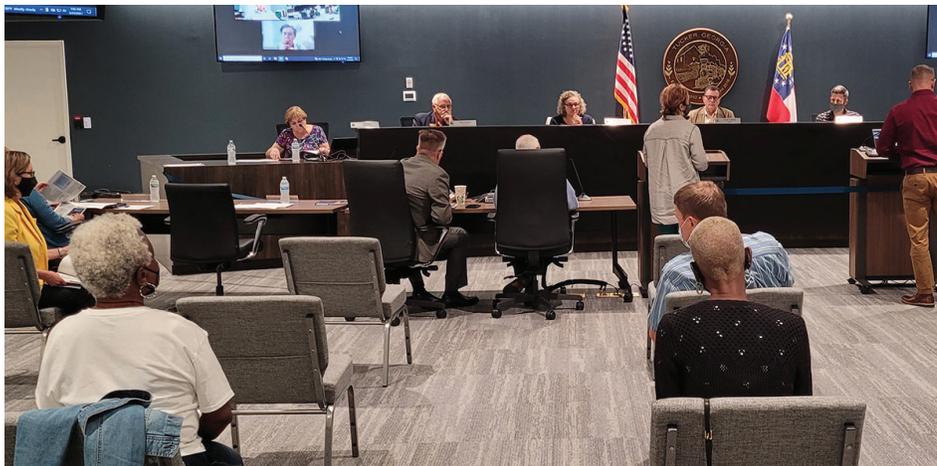
**September 21**  
Zoning Board of Appeals

**September 27**  
City Council

## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



nextdoor



# with Lt. Schoeppner

Lt. D.G. Schoeppner was Tucker's liaison to the DeKalb County Police Department and can be followed at [facebook.com/dgschoeppner](https://www.facebook.com/dgschoeppner) or emailed at [dgschoeppner@dekalbcountyga.gov](mailto:dgschoeppner@dekalbcountyga.gov)



By now, it should be fairly old news that I am being reassigned. I am moving from Tucker Precinct to be an assistant commander over the homicide unit. I am looking forward to my new assignment, but I am also truly sad to be leaving Tucker.

In my final column, I wanted to take some time to reflect on the nearly four years that I have been your liaison officer.

The Tucker Liaison Officer was the first position of its type. When Tucker incorporated into a city, it was the first to not create its own police department. The liaison was intended to help keep smooth operation between city government and the police department. Lt. R.S. Smith was the inaugural Tucker Liaison. He laid much of the groundwork for the position. However, when I relieved him in October of 2017, it was still very much a work in progress. Since then, Tucker Precinct has taken over police responsibility for the entire City, and we have worked

with Tucker in opening their own city court. We also worked very closely in navigating the uncharted waters of the pandemic, which no one could have predicted. During all of this, I have enjoyed an incredibly good relationship with the citizens and all the City's elected officials and employees.

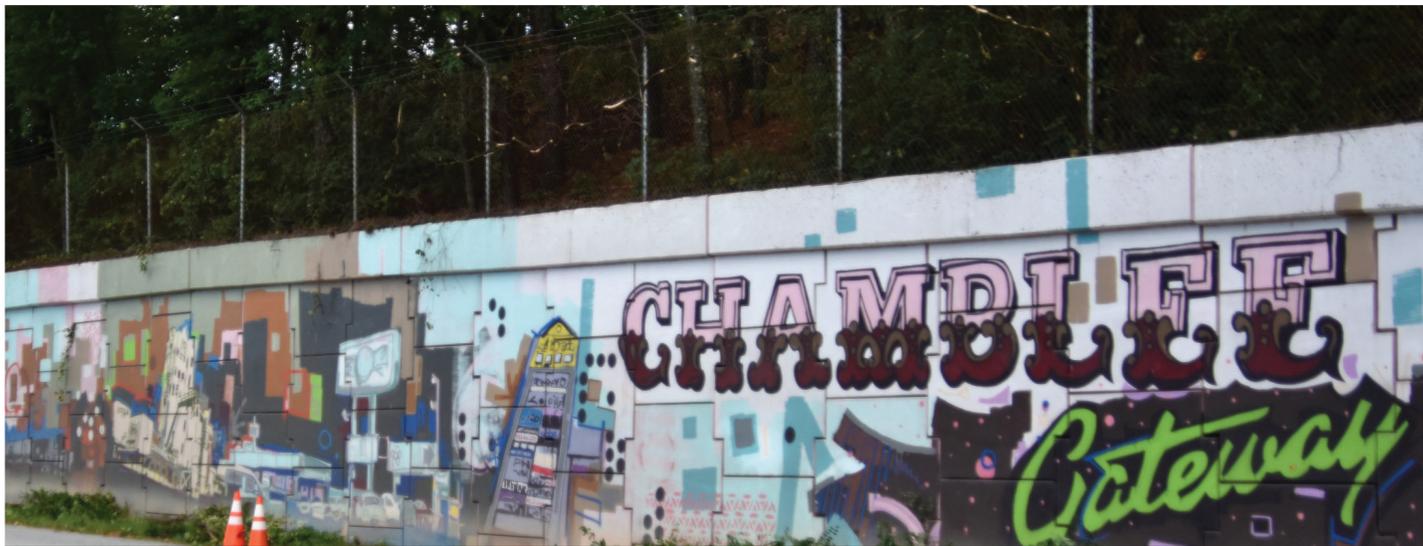
Your next liaison officer is going to be Lt. Jim Berg. He is a 23-year veteran of the DeKalb County Police Department and has been at Tucker Precinct even longer than I. While at Tucker, he has held positions such as watch commander and duty lieutenant. He has a wealth of knowledge and the City could not be left in more capable hands. I know that you all will be as kind and welcoming to him as you have been with me.

I would like to end this article by saying thank you to you all. The time I have spent here at Tucker has been some of my best working for the DeKalb County Police Department. I am happy to leave here with the relationship between the City and P.D. being strong. As we continue to work together, I truly believe there is nothing but good things in Tucker's future.



# ART IN THE ALLEYS

## NEW PROGRAM LOOKS AT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTISTIC BEAUTIFICATION



More established cities have embraced public art like this mural on Peachtree Road in Chamblee. (Credit: tuckerga.gov)

Tucker's Main Street has been around for more than a century. Once just a dirt road with a handful of merchants sitting in the middle of a quiet, rural community, it's now the hub for some of the best and most iconic restaurants in metro Atlanta. But one of the things that makes Main Street so alluring is the charming, historic downtown feel. It's an ambience that's been cultivated over decades, not years. It hasn't been done through knocking down old buildings and trees to construct new, but through creative use of existing spaces and preservation of Tucker's historic look.

But something new may be coming to Main Street someday soon.

Earlier this year, Tucker was selected by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to get low-cost consulting through their Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP). Essentially, ARC staff will come in and lead a community-driven process to determine people's appetite for public art in the alleys of downtown Tucker. The idea is to get the public to weigh in on where art would best be suited in downtown. Sculptures or murals? Bright, flashy colors or a more muted, sophisticated look? How much art is too much? How best to keep it from clashing with the existing feel of downtown? These questions and more will be presented to the public through events and surveys conducted by Marian Liou and her ARC team.

Marian, who is managing this program for the ARC, sat down recently with *InTucker* to discuss the process and to let the community know exactly what they can expect and when they can expect it.

*InTucker*: Tell us the basics of the CDAP program.

*Marian Liou*: The CDAP program is run by our Community Development group, in which I work. It's our program in which we offer basically technical assistance and support to ideas or project challenges and opportunities that a local jurisdiction is interested in pursuing or addressing. We have a full staff of planners, and we work with local governments on that idea or project. We offer time and [experience] to the communities that we serve. And so, for this particular project, it's really interesting and I hope it will be a fun one because it is working with the City of Tucker to help develop their ideas and resident ideas for public art in the alleys in the downtown areas.

*InTucker*: What kind of professionals do you have at ARC?

*ML*: [The CDAP program is] in our community development group, so we're mostly a staff of planners, but obviously we have [a] wide range of experts and staff who work on a huge variety of topics like...transportation or resources or aging. So, we do have a lot of people who are experts in their field, very experienced, who we can call on to help us. It's not just community planners. And this project, I think it's interesting because...it's my first year working in the CDAP program and managing a project, but I manage the arts program. We have a

very small team of us [in the arts program]. Like two full-time staff and then a part-timer...and then an intern. We work on arts and culture at the ARC and so for me to be able to work on this project is really exciting.

**InTucker:** How did Tucker get to be a part of this program?

**ML:** Every year we put out a call for projects. We have eight different priority areas whether it's creative place making [or]... others like smart city, smart communities, there's workforce development. If you go to the CDAP program page on our website, we have eight different issue areas. Tucker fell nicely into the creative place making priority area. They applied for CDAP's technical assistance program, and they were selected. That's how that occurred. I do know that there have been lots of conversation and planning in the past around art in Tucker, so we already know there's been a lot of work done and we know conversations in the City about it.

**InTucker:** What is this process going to look like?

**ML:** The process will take about 10 months. We're about to start with our first kick off meeting (which happened in August). So, we're just starting our initial planning stage of the project working with the City of Tucker to kind of outline the strategy for engagement and figure out specifics around the timeline. It's envisioned to take about 10 months, so it will be from now through spring, like May of next year. So much planning has already happened in Tucker around this, so many conversations, so we're going to do a review of what's happened up until now. We're also going to review some of the ordinances and regulations that might potentially govern or reject what's possible. Although I would say since it specifically pertains to the downtown area, I think the goal is really to think about downtown and see what people's thoughts are around the downtown area and potentially expand in the future to think

about public art for the City. But really we're focused on the downtown area and those alleyways. We're looking at fall for community engagement and we'll take all of those findings, the things we hear from community members and residents, business owners and we will compile all of that into some draft recommendations.

**InTucker:** The big question that people have is "when am I going to see art in downtown?"

**ML:** We're not going to be involved in fabricating any art or the making of the art. We're obviously interested in what folks want to see at the end of this right? Interested in hearing folks' ideas on what that should be. And again, I know there's been a lot of engagement, a lot of ideas in the past over really wanting to have concrete steps and recommendations by the end of the process. I do know that the people we've talked to in the City and the Community Improvement District (CID) are... before the pandemic, I think there were thoughts on temporary activation of an alley of downtown. So I guess we can't make any predictions since we're still in the middle of the pandemic, but that would be a great thing to see, a temporary activation so people can see what our alley might look like.

**InTucker:** Are there other cities in metro Atlanta that you would point to and say, "This is what it could look like" or "This is what public art has done for this community"?

**ML:** They have a pretty active art program in Hapeville. The way that they've installed...especially in the central business area is really fun and unique and reflective of the community and so I always think Hapeville is a cool place to visit. I don't know what that population is, but that downtown area is comparable I believe to Tucker's.

To provide your feedback, complete the online survey at [www.publicinput.com/tuckeralleys](http://www.publicinput.com/tuckeralleys)



Consultants for the Art in the Alleys program connected with young artists at the City of Tucker's National Night Out celebration on August 3. (Credit: tuckerga.gov)



The ARC team has taken multiple trips to the City of Hapeville to look at their public art installations and get ideas ahead of the Tucker project. (Credit: ARC)

# BUSINESS BOOM

by John McHenry, Community and Economic Development Director



Back in early 2020 we reported on the arrival of PREP Atlanta at the former Le Cordon Bleu site, the acquisition of a 60,000-square-foot space with one existing tenant, Woodruff Medical. The space was love at first site for Sean Rush and the team at the

Shular Institute.

“When we first saw the new PREP location, we knew it would be the perfect future home of the Shular Institute and FarmED Kitchen + Bar,” said Rush, the Operations and Marketing Partner for the Shular Hospitality Group. “Myself and Certified Master Chef Shular coming back to Tucker was a dream come true thanks to the PREP team.”

PREP Atlanta is the largest provider of commercial kitchen space in the southeast serving over 260 businesses in metro Atlanta, with future expansion in Texas. For PREP Atlanta owner Mitch Jaffe, the location of their Tucker enterprise could not be better.

“The reason that we moved to Tucker is because it’s an emerging growth city with all its fundamentals in place,” Jaffe explained. “One key factor is drive time for our businesses, which is excellent due to the easy Perimeter access. The existing building was a perfect fit for our expansion from the Doraville area.”

Over the last year, PREP Atlanta has repurposed and created membership agreements for roughly 48,000-square-feet of cost-effective shared and private commercial kitchen facilities. PREP Atlanta is a leader in providing permit ready kitchen space to food entrepreneurs. Tucker now has a multi-purpose facility with 39 companies including FarmED Kitchen + Bar, the Shular Institute, and other companies including caterers, restaurant commissaries, and 15 food trucks including Fruity Ice Treats, Lobster Dogs, Love at Wurst Sight, and MoMo Food Truck. Of course, the pandemic had a catastrophic impact on restaurants, but we are now seeing a return to indoor dining.

“The future is bright for restaurants,” Jaffe said. “Folks want the experience of dining, and the restaurant community has responded in creating a safe environment.”

Want proof of Jaffe’s assessment? Just look around the City of Tucker at its packed restaurants and bars. The happy customers do not lie.



# FROM THE MAYOR (continued from page 3)

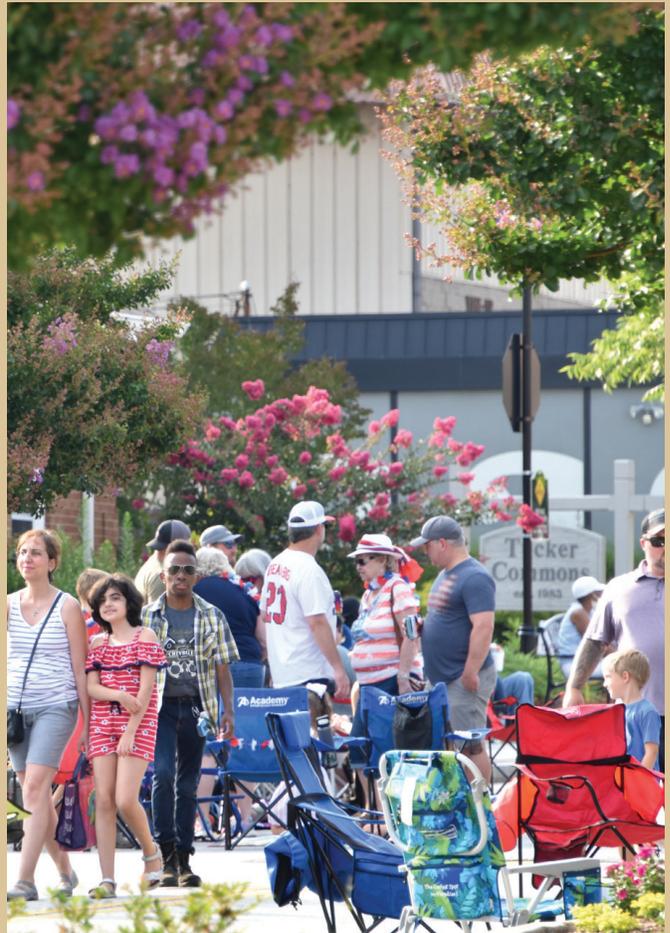


attention to safety for ourselves, each other, and our community. We will do our best to balance the needs for public health against the very human, very real needs to socialize, earn a living, pursue education and so many other things that are essential to our quality of life. As conditions change, we will adjust as well.

As you consider whether, or under what circumstances, to participate in all these events, I urge you to take care in your decisions. Many of us have been vaccinated and have felt a little “bulletproof”, except that now we are hearing of breakthrough cases where vaccinated people have become infected, sometimes with serious results. Many others have chosen or are not able to be vaccinated, and we now know that the Delta variant is especially hard on them. I don’t pretend to have the answer for every person in every circumstance, but I do offer one piece of advice to everyone: Don’t take this lightly. Don’t trust internet groups and social media with this decision. Seek advice from a medical professional you know and trust. And if you are at increased risk of becoming infected, take care of yourself and them by staying out of circulation.

Thanks for reading, thanks for what each of you does to make Tucker a great hometown. I hope to see you on Main Street (or in our parks) real soon.

**FRANK AUMAN**  
MAYOR



# EDUCATING FOR LIFE

## TUCKER HIGH PROGRAM SEEKS TO TRAIN STUDENTS FOR THE WORKFORCE

America today is hampered by workforce shortages the likes of which have not been seen in generations. Whatever the reason, and there's quite a number of factors to debate, companies can't find enough truck drivers, waiters, technical workers. One industry that always has a need is healthcare. That particular segment of the workforce has been stretched thin over the past year and a half as COVID has filled emergency rooms and forced doctors and nurses to work long, stressful shifts each day.

At Tucker High School, a new program could mean help is on the horizon for these healthcare heroes. The International Baccalaureate (IB) Career Readiness Program is training up the next generation of hospital reinforcements. The program launched with about 30 students studying with a focus on healthcare science. It is a program that is the first of its kind in DeKalb County. The school's principal, Dr. Eric Parker, says this type of educational journey fills a void for some students.

"It's going to allow us to be a little more inclusive of our IB students," Parker said. "For those students who want the IB experience, but...the [IB] Diploma Program isn't necessarily a good fit really. Even though they want to go to college, that level of readiness, they may not be able to do the rigor, they may not be able to handle the intensity, or they may just want the career-related focus."

The concept of balancing education with workforce preparation is nothing new at Tucker High School. The December 2019 issue of *InTucker* profiled the school's Work-Based Learning Program, where students spend time during and after the school day working part time jobs for class credit. Parker says this new IB program has a very different goal.

"[Work-based learning is] focused on hourly jobs. This will be more focused on career and the career pathway, which may still entail some hourly work, but I think essentially it's going to be a lot more apprenticeship, internship-driven, tied to post-secondary career or technical school type apprenticeship opportunities," he explained.

But what if a student isn't interested in a potential career in the healthcare field? That doesn't necessarily mean this program is not for them. Tucker High also offers focuses on entrepreneurship and marketing, and has plans in the future to expand the program to offer popular high-tech careers like cyber security and game design.

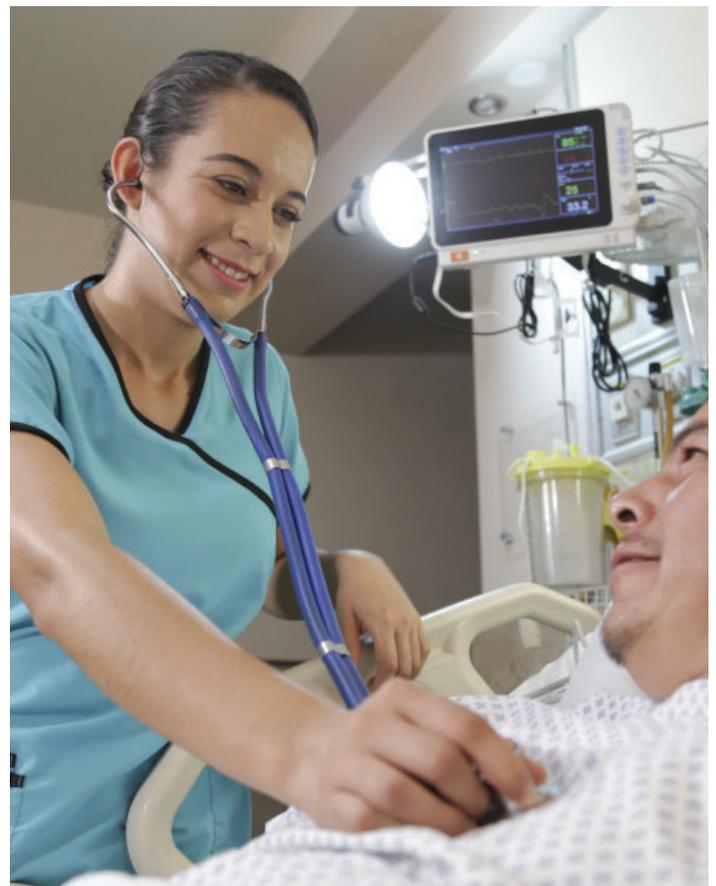
Even before this new IB program, Tucker High drew students from across DeKalb County thanks to their much-heralded IB

Diploma Program. Just one of three schools in DeKalb to offer IB, Tucker has sent bright young minds to everywhere from the Ivy League to Georgia and Georgia Tech. That program combines the academic rigors of college studies with a focus on global citizenry.

Still, while the IB Diploma Program is popular, it's the IB Career Readiness Program that is currently the talk of the school.

"It provides them some variety," Parker explained. "While a college readiness component is always appealing for some students...some of them want additional options, whether it's right out of high school, or working their way through college to not incur the debt, or just do a gap year, or they just want different options versus what would be a regular matriculation into a four year college or post-secondary experience."

Whatever the course of study, Tucker High is churning out the next generation of highly qualified, well-educated young professionals. In light of the ongoing worker shortage, that is welcome news.





# Tucker Cluster

## Updates & News

### IMPORTANT DATES

#### September 6

Schools closed for Labor Day

#### September 13

Board of Education Meeting

## BRAG SHEET

### BROCKETT ELEMENTARY

- Brockett had nine staff members complete their first International Baccalaureate (IB) training and will have another round of training for additional teachers.

### IDLEWOOD ELEMENTARY

- Superintendent Cheryl Watson Harris was on hand this summer as the Idlewood Media Center was formally dedicated to former Principal Rosemary Malone.

### LIVSEY ELEMENTARY

- This summer, Livsey hosted Camp Invention at Tucker First United Methodist Church. Nearly 30 campers in grades K 6 got to collaborate in hands on, open ended STEM challenges.

### TUCKER HIGH

- The Tiger football team was featured on Peachtree TV for the season opening Corky Kell Classic. They came out on the wrong side of a 32 7 decision in a hard fought matchup with Dacula High.

# BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

# TOTAL FITNESS FOR LIFE

Anithea Rigmaiden is a fitness fanatic. Having dedicated her life to the physical fitness of others, she's worked in gyms throughout Tucker, including My Fair Lady and Eric's Fit Lab. She has a huge following that she's now hoping to parlay into success for her very first entrepreneurial venture, Total Fitness for Life.

"It's been a long journey," Rigmaiden explained. "You start out working in different clubs and then you decide that it's time to venture out on your own and it's been a real journey."

Rigmaiden opened Total Fitness for Life on August 14, hosting a ribbon cutting ceremony at her new space at the Tucker Plaza Shopping Center. The facility features everything clients need to enjoy a good workout.

"They can come in [and] they can do cardio, strength training," Rigmaiden said. "We have several classes: classes for the seniors, we have high impact classes, we have boot camp

classes. We also have several very knowledgeable and professional personal trainers and instructors."

While she acknowledged that location was important and she could have chosen to open her gym anywhere, she said Tucker had to be the spot due to her client base coming largely from the Tucker area. Now that the dream is a reality, Rigmaiden expressed a hope that her gym could be an inclusive place for all people to come and exercise.

"I wanted to create an environment where everyone is welcome to come and work out," she shared. "So many fitness centers are geared toward a specific type of client, and I wanted a place where everyone would feel welcome, no matter your age, no matter your fitness level. You feel welcome to come in and work out."

Total Fitness for Life is located at 4401 Hugh Howell Road. You can find them online at [www.totalfitforlife.com](http://www.totalfitforlife.com).



# TEAM TUCKER *Spotlight*

## SALIM MAALOUF, LAND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER



### **Tell us about the work you're doing here in Tucker...**

I review land development plans to make sure they are in compliance with city, state and federal regulations, and I assist applicants through the permitting process. Once the permit is issued I inspect the site to ensure compliance with the approved plans. At completion of the project, I inspect the site to make sure the plans were implemented properly. In addition, I process tree removal permits in accordance with city codes.

### **You're new to the job, but no stranger to Tucker...**

That is correct. I lived in Tucker from 2008 to 2019, when I left for overseas for two years. I traveled halfway around the world and couldn't find a better place to come back to.

### **What were you doing in between stints working in Tucker?**

In the last two years, I was working overseas on a land development project, but due to COVID and political unrest, the project was put on hold indefinitely.

### **Why is a land development professional important to a city?**

A land development professional is important to a city because he/she makes certain that construction activities are following city, state, and federal regulations. A land development inspector ensures that our state waters (streams, creeks, lakes, etc.) are not getting polluted with land development activities. After all, the health of our waterways is essential, not only because it is our source for drinking water, but also it is important for the health of our crops, forest, and recreational waters.

### **What is the best part about your job?**

As a big advocate of the Clean Water Act, it's gratifying to me to identify a potential problem that might pollute our waters and be able to fix it before it happens as most of that pollutant will end up in a natural body of water or in the storm water system. I enjoy being out in the field walking the site and monitoring the progress of work. I can say I am blessed that I love what I do for a living.

## *Off the Wall*

### **What do you do for fun on the weekends?**

I dedicate most of my free time to my two kids. We love hiking and we enjoy taking road trips whenever we can do so.

### **What is your favorite sport?**

Soccer is my favorite sport and Bayern Munich (German league) is my favorite team of all times. I am also a Falcons fan (I remain faithful).

### **You are officially the tallest member of Team Tucker. How tall are you?**

I am 6'4". The only time my height worked to my advantage was when I played volleyball in high school.

### **Do you have any pets?**

I don't have a pet but I love dogs.

### **What is your dream car?**

Why not dream big? My dream car would be the Aston Martin DBS.

## CITIZEN OF THE MONTH

# PATRECE KEETER

Patrece Keeter is the embodiment of Citizen of the Month. In fact, I can't imagine how this could be the first nomination for such an outstanding neighbor to us all. She is the kind of person you meet, and you feel like you know her because she is real in all the best ways. Her immeasurable mark on this community and its civic organizations stretches far and wide.

Patrece and I first met as volunteers with the Livsey Elementary School PTO. Between sending two children to Livsey, she spent the past 10+ years serving in multiple capacities including being Room Parent and organizing class parties and the fifth grade end of school celebration, often leading events like the Fall Festival, benefiting every child attending school there. Her volunteer service continued with too many other organizations to name throughout the City, including her church and the Tucker High Soccer Booster Club.

Patrece and her late husband John (Citizen of the Month, April 2019) were integral in the startup of Tucker Arm in Arm, and when John passed away Patrece stepped up to help with Tucker's Boy Scout Troop 129. Patrece's ever-impressive talents do not end there because she manages to tirelessly give to this community while working a full-time job for DeKalb County Transportation Division as the Traffic Engineer Manager. Her engineer work can be seen throughout our streets. As you drive through our city and entire county, know that Patrece is keeping you safe and has touched your life. The devotion to her family, friends and this community are remarkable. We're all lucky she has our back.

*Nomination by Erin Kirn*



# “ASK RIP”

*Rip Robertson is the Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Tucker. He brings to the job years of experience in Parks and Rec, as well as Public Works.*

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Over the course of the last two years, we have worked hard to improve our pools and give our community a safe, fun place to “chill” during those dog days of summer. Last year, we were determined to operate our pools safely, but give our citizens a place to come and relax after enduring lockdowns and few personal interactions with friends and family. By accomplishing this, we were able to showcase our new and improved facilities. We showcased and improved them so well, in fact, that we saw our annual pass participation increase by over 800 percent these last two seasons.

The “introduction” of our facilities to so many have allowed us to provide even more fun this year. We made some exciting changes at both of our pools with new features. We installed a slide and aquatic zipline, as well as made upgrades to the chemical balancing system, fencing, deck, pool house, and a new pavilion during this time.

We opened this season with many of the same protocols and the reservation system utilized last summer, but we were eventually able to fully open, easing some of the reservation restrictions and increasing our capacity to allow more access. We hope to bring even more features and fun to our pools in the coming seasons. Thank you Tucker for your trust in our department to come out and celebrate summer.

With that said, we have received a couple of questions on some park issues recently that I wanted to touch on. First, there was a big discussion on Facebook stemming from the question “What is happening at the Henderson Park/Lake Erin dam?” DeKalb County commissioned a study last year after the dam at Lake Erin became blocked. The lake had risen to unsafe levels, and we worked with the County to unblock the dam and lower the levels. During this time, AECOM completed

their study on the condition and recommendations for the dam. Dams are designed to contain water on a stream/river for specific reasons. They prevent flooding, provide energy or, in our instance, provide a lake for recreational activities such as fishing. Trees, brush and other growth compromise dams due to their root growth. Our dam was overdue for clearing and that is what everyone is seeing taking place now. The root systems loosen and compromise the compaction of a dam and allow water to seep through and could potentially cause dam failure. So this is just normal maintenance of our dam. You may begin to see more work to ensure the dam stabilization. By the way, the dam and lake are part of the County’s stormwater system and that is why you see the County performing this work, as well as any needed maintenance. The City does partner with the County on certain projects but the stormwater system is solely the County’s.

The second question that caused a stir on social media regarded the failing bridge at Probst Park (formerly Smoke Rise Park). “What is the plan to repair this bridge?” folks asked. As most park users have seen, we have been replacing/repairing bridges and boardwalks in many of our parks. Probst Park has had two bridges repaired and is currently having a boardwalk constructed to provide safer access from the newly constructed parking lot. During a recent visit we noticed the deterioration of a fourth bridge on the northern section of the trail. This bridge has been closed and is being replaced as quickly as possible. We have signed a contract with one of our bridge builders and hope to start that work very shortly.

I’ll remind you, the best way to get your questions answered promptly and accurately is to reach out to us directly. Send any questions you have to [parcs@tuckerga.gov](mailto:parcs@tuckerga.gov) and we’ll be sure to get right back to you.



## TUCKER Community Corner



### **9/4 – Tucker Day**

**9 a.m.-5 p.m., Main Street**

Join all your neighbors and friends on Main Street for live music, arts and crafts vendors, food, and fun! This year's theme is "Fall Fantasy", so make your way to Main and join in the party!

### **9/11 – Tucker Cruise In**

**11 a.m.-2 p.m., Main Street**

It's the talk of the town! The Tucker Cruise In is back in full force and ready to welcome you to Main Street. A cool city packed with cool classic cars? It's an event you don't want to miss!

### **9/18 – Sip & Stroll**

**4-7 p.m., 4440 Lawrenceville Highway**

Enjoy a stroll through Tucker's Nature Preserve at this free Tucker Parks and Recreation event featuring wine, light refreshments and water. Drinks are limited to two per attendee and ID is required.

### **9/25 – Great Day of Service**

**8 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 5095 Lavista Road**

Tucker First United Methodist Church is sponsoring multiple service projects to meet the needs of friends and neighbors. Volunteers welcome!