

# Bolton Hill

## Community Association

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## **Spring is Coming? (Photos of the Season)**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/photo-mar23/>

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## **Bolton Hill schools hold their own in ratings while others are downgraded**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-schools-ratings-2023/>



Students at Midtown Academy

All three public schools located in Bolton Hill maintained their quality levels in a state rating system updated this month for the first time since 2019.

Mt. Royal Elementary and Middle School and Midtown Academy, a public charter, kept their three-star status while Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary came in, as before, with two stars.

This state-issued “report card” is designed to give families a simple guide to the quality of a school. It was first developed in 2017 and first used in 2018 to rank each school in Maryland. Some educators complain that it is simplistic and fails to properly acknowledge demographics and other variables in the schools. The ratings were not issued during the three years when the COVID pandemic wreaked havoc on school participation and classroom standards.

Schools are ranked on a one-to-five-star basis based on student performance on Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program tests, access to a well-rounded curriculum, graduation rates, English learner proficiency, attendance and other criteria. Only one Baltimore city institution, the high school Baltimore School for the Arts, scored five stars.

A quarter of Baltimore County schools and three quarters of Baltimore City schools received one or two stars, which is considered below average. Eutaw-Marshburn is slated to close next year. Statewide, 62.5% had the same star ratings as 2019, [according to the state](#). Of those that changed, 139 schools gained a star while 336 schools lost a star. Individual school ratings can be found [here](#).

## **BHCA urges city to move forward on a bike lane along Eutaw Place**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bhca-eutaw-bike-lane-update/>



Do you bike to work? It turns out many folks in Bolton Hill rely on a bike to get around the city, or to reduce a household’s cars from two to one.

Last month, BHCA urged the city’s Department of Transportation to move forward on plans for a bike lane along Eutaw Place, but to take note of concerns of businesses and residents about the continuing need for car parking along the street. The organization sent a letter after a special Feb. 21 board meeting in which a wide range of opinions from Bolton Hill residents and others were heard. So far there has been no response to the letter.

A little history:

Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) has been developing plans for more equitably shared road use for many years. Its [Complete Streets](#) policy, adopted in 2018, recognizes that our city’s pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair-drivers and transit users need to access and navigate our roads safely. Everyone pays the taxes that pave the roads and provide “free” parking.

BCDOT published plans for bike lanes in [2015](#) and an addendum in [2017](#), after multiple public hearings. The 2017 plan focuses on creating a network of protected lanes, to “increase the number of people in Baltimore City who can meet many of their basic travel needs by bike over the next two to five years.” Although the City [failed to budget](#) any bike lane projects, the *state* DOT’s [Bikeways Program](#) provided a grant to design the planned lane for Eutaw Place.

In 2022, BHCA initiated an information session on the plan’s status. This was the first time some residents were aware of the plan, which eliminates a third lane of overnight and weekend parking in the southbound lane of Eutaw Place.

Early in 2023, BCDOT informally communicated that it was “pausing” development of the project. BHCA quickly received pleas from two directions: from some nearby residents, the Estep Brothers

Funeral Home and fraternal organizations concerned about loss of parking; and from bike commuters and other residents concerned that the city's only active bike networking project might never be built.

BHCA held a special Zoom meeting on Feb. 21 for the board to hear neighborhood opinions and concerns about the protected bike lane planned for Eutaw Place. The board considered input from many sources: the recommendation of its Traffic Committee, a summary of city actions from council member Eric Costello, a petition to support the proposed bike lane signed by 112 Bolton Hill residents, and an email from the Eutaw Place Conservancy asking the board to oppose the southbound lane. The board also read the 36 written comments submitted by Feb. 20, and listened to the oral testimony of 30 individuals.

The board then voted to take a formal position on the lane; opinion on this was mixed and required a roll call vote. After discussion that acknowledged the concerns about adequate parking on and around Eutaw Place, the board voted to encourage Baltimore City Department of Transportation to "un-pause" the Eutaw Place bike lane project and to provide more information about possible alternative corridors, including those previously considered and the reasons they were dismissed.

Although this was board business, BHCA invited the public to participate by submitting written comments and by contributing oral testimony during the meeting. Notice of the meeting was provided a week in advance, via the BHEN email system and the BHCA Facebook page. If you'd like to be more aware of BHCA activities, please considering [joining](#): you'll get occasional emails about important neighborhood issues, notice of our meetings and the local pickup of parking permits, among other benefits. The first year's membership is free.

--Amy Sheridan

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## Police step up patrols after neighborhood car incidents

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/police-step-up-patrols/>



Police stationed at Wilson and Park

A rash of carjackings across the city and disproportionately in Bolton Hill has caused city police to step up security in the neighborhood.

According to BHCA Safety Committee Chair Jim Prost, there were six incidents in Bolton Hill between Feb. 14 and 22 – three armed carjackings and three additional attempted carjackings. In addition, there were two similar incidents in nearby Madison Park during the same period.

There were 73 carjackings citywide during the months of January and February, according to BPD data. The perpetrators in some of the incidents in Bolton Hill were said to be two or three young men, armed with a black handgun with a green laser, seen in a four-door Accord or a silver Acura.

BPD Officer Dennis Gillespie told the March BHCA meeting at Memorial Episcopal Church that a police detail has been assigned to Bolton Hill during evening hours for the near term, with a second police vehicle roving nearby as well.

Prost reported that there were no such incidents in Bolton Hill during January or the rest of February, nor were any reported in the first half of March. During 2022 there were 22 reported carjackings in the area compared to only three in 2021 and eight in 2020.

With weather improving, neighbors are encouraged to be part of a weekly Citizens on Patrol walk around the neighborhood. For further information contact [Jim Prost](#).

## **Eight months after its opening, here's an update on our Unity Hall**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/unity-hall-update/>



Amir Muhammad is a freshman at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, and a youth journalist for The CHARM Report. Here he interviews Petula Caesar.

Unity Hall is a new non-profit community-building space on Bolton Hill's western edge, opening its doors on July 17, 2022. Creating a safe space for the people and organizations in Baltimore is important to what Unity really is and hopes to be.

Petula Caesar, as the founding executive director of Unity Hall, says she is setting the stage for what was once a headquarters for a garment workers' union can be: a place where you can host baby showers, birthday parties or any other events you could think of; a base of operations for the people who need one; and a hub for diversity and inclusion which is something that the city of Baltimore really needs and has needed for a while.

"It is meant to be a place where people can gather and share community," Caesar said. "Especially as the pandemic is less intense than it used to be, I think people are valuing gathering in person more. We're here at a time when people really want to be in the presence of others, and that's what we do -- we provide a home."

Caesar is building this home not just as a figurehead but by being hands-on with the community events in Unity Hall. When a community member is having issues storing items for an event, Caesar will be there to provide options and even offer Unity Hall's employees to cater and help with the event.

The organizations that live within Unity Hall's walls include No Boundaries Coalition; Equality Equation; Baltimore Music Box; CHARM: Voices of Baltimore Youth; Arts Every Day and The Community Builders. There are also six artists that are in residence and coworking areas.

Unity Hall is trying to mend the bridge of safety that has been broken over so many years of consistent hurt dealt to the city we live in. It's also a place that should inspire change, not only within Baltimore but extending to many other areas around the world.

“It is important to me that I make sure this place continues to be welcoming and continues to be in operation,” Caesar said. “Especially for a lot of the people who are in Baltimore there isn't really a place where they feel comfortable. For a lot of people in Baltimore, they don't necessarily feel safe all day, every day. It's important to me that people feel comfortable here. They feel safe here. They have a good time here. And I need to work to make sure all that continues to happen.”

--*Amir Muhammad*

### ***What you should know about Charm. . . .***

Bolton Hill resident and former middle school educator Whitney Ward Birenbaum was one of a group of teachers and students who in 2013 founded [\*CHARM: Voices of Baltimore Youth\*](#). Since then the non-profit organization has produced 14 publications that feature the poetry, fiction, essays, and artwork from students across public schools in Baltimore City. She is now its executive director, based at Unity Hall.

“In addition to the magazine, we offer programming for middle and high school students both during and outside of the school day— seeking to develop, inspire, and amplify student voices,” she said. She co-founded CHARM because she saw how much her students grew—both academically and in their self-confidence—when they produced writing that made an impact on the world around them.

The Bolton Hill Bulletin will publish contributions from CHARM authors over the coming months.

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## On-street parking permits can be picked up nearby March 18, 25

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/parking-permits-2023/>



It's not too late to apply for a renewal of your parking permit and to pick it up in the neighborhood, avoiding a trip (and a parking dilemma) downtown. If your vehicle has a current parking permit decal or placard, you should have received an email from the Baltimore City Parking Authority to renew online.

When you renew online, choose "Pickup at Office" if you want to pick it up at the community parking permit pick-up at Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church. You also have the option of having your new parking permit(s) mailed (for an extra fee). First-time permit applicants are not eligible for neighborhood pickup.

The community parking permit pick-up at Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church will be held on Saturday, March 18 and again on Saturday, March 25 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bring your auto registration and driver's license. Be sure to renew no later than a couple of days in advance if you want to pick it up at Brown Memorial. You'll need a renewed permit to park on Bolton Hill streets by April 1 (no joke).

Questions about parking permits? Go to the [Parking Authority website](#). Questions about community distribution? Contact Bobbi Schilling at [parking@boltonhillmd.org](mailto:parking@boltonhillmd.org).

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## **May 19 is BHCA night at the symphony. Buy tickets now.**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/may-19-is-bhca-symphony-night/>



New BSO Music Director, Jonathon Heyward (Photo

credit: Jeremy Ayres Fischer)

Living within walking distance of a great symphony hall with an outstanding orchestra is one of the delights of Bolton Hill. Music lovers gravitate to our neighborhood and make it stronger and more vibrant.

Whether you attend all the time or have never been before, BHCA members and guests will have a great opportunity to visit and hear a Baltimore Symphony Orchestra concert seated with your neighbors on Friday, May 19.

The orchestra's brand-new conductor/music director Jonathon Heyward will lead a performance of the venerable Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique." The evening also will feature a double bass virtuoso, Xavier Foley, performing his own Double Bass Concerto.

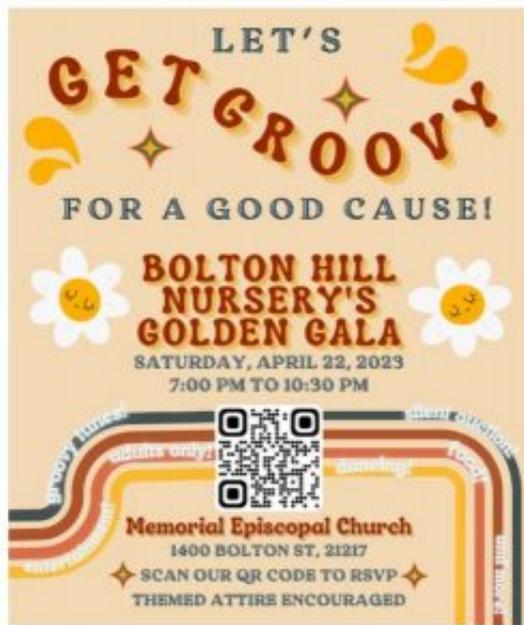
There will be a designated gathering area inside the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall for BHCA prior to the 8 p.m. concert and during intermission for drinks and socializing. You can buy tickets through the [BHCA website here](#). A limited number of discounted tickets are available on an as-needed basis.

BHCA board members [Steve Howard](#) and [Kevin Cross](#) are working on a more lasting relationship with the Symphony. If you have ideas or concerns, contact them. [Here is a video](#) of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique."

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## **Bolton Hill Nursery April gala is three years overdue**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bh-nursery-gala-overdue/>



Bolton Hill Nursery will hold its “golden anniversary” gala celebration on Saturday, April 22 – *53 years after the school was founded.*

COVID caused the delay, of course, but in Bolton Hill a party is always a good idea. This one reaches back to 1969 when neighborhood families came together to get the nursery school started. Now it is well-regarded citywide, with a waiting list for admission.

There will be food, drink and music – and what’s a gala without high-dollar sponsors: bronze for \$250, silver \$500, gold \$1,000 and platinum for \$2,500. Perhaps some of the school’s early alumni – now in their 50s -- will become platinum sponsors.

The event will take place from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. at Memorial Episcopal Church. Donations are invited for the silent auction that will take place at the event. To contribute or for more information email [office@boltonhillnursery.org](mailto:office@boltonhillnursery.org) .

## Reduced enrollment at MICA results in layoff plans

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/mica-layoffs/>



A post-pandemic drop in student enrollment has led MICA President Samuel Hoi to announce that staff and faculty layoffs will take place at the end of the current semester in May.

At a “State of MICA” event, Hoi said the institution continues to reel from the blows of the coronavirus pandemic, which has cut international and residential enrollment. He said the five-year average before the pandemic stood at about 1,700 students and has now leveled to 1,200 to 1,400 over the last three years.

The college will also restructure its educational programs to become more sustainable. It plans to consolidate its 18 undergraduate studies departments to about seven, and it will create more interdisciplinary options for students. It also will offer more “applied practical” courses that teach skills outside artmaking.

MICA [experienced a round of cuts](#) ahead of the 2022 fall semester. In an interview with the Bulletin last fall, Hoi said optimistically that, while there were fewer international students, they were representing a greater range of countries. Chinese students are fewer, reflecting that country’s extended COVID policies as well as geopolitical tensions.

According to the [Baltimore Banner](#), the college owns property and equipment worth close to \$170 million and has some \$117 million in endowment funds. Many of these funds are restricted by donors, which means administrators can’t use them for needs outside of what donors intend

## Herb Massie to lead new mosaic mural project at Mt. Royal school

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/herb-massie-mosaic/>



The Mt. Royal Elementary/Middle School Parent Teacher Organization is working with community artist Herb Massie to design a ceramic mural to be installed on the outside of the school. Facing McMechen Street, it will celebrate the spirit of the Mt. Royal “Golden Eagle.” They have secured a \$6,900 [Public Art Across Maryland \(PAAM\) Grant](#) from the [Maryland State Art Council](#) which will be used to pay for initial expenses.

Massie was selected for this project because of his extensive experience working in ceramic mosaics. He has led similar projects with Baltimore City Schools, community groups, and organizations like Jubilee Arts, and he leads workshops in ceramics for children and adults. In 2019, he was commissioned by the Walters Art Museum to produce [Reflections of Sybby Grant](#), a work for the newly opened 1 W Mt. Vernon Place, which is part of their permanent collection.

The school has held a series of planning and brainstorming sessions with students to produce sketches and ideas on paper and in clay. Students will participate in a school-wide vote choosing between two concept sketches and the winning design will be used to inspire the final composition.

The PTO intends to apply for an additional PAAM Project Grant in October 2023 to cover the project costs and installation, and it hopes to begin producing the artwork starting March 2024. Installation is anticipated during the summer of 2024.

## **Bolton Hill Notes**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes-march23/>



### ***Arts in the Parks plans 13 summer events***

The third annual Arts in the Parks summer picnic concert series this summer – managed by BHCA’s Greening Committee – will feature 12 concerts in parks in and near the neighborhood, plus another birthday party honoring novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald.

The concerts will take place on Thursdays, July 6 through Sept. 14. Familiar musicians, some of them neighbors, will perform, including jazz maker Todd Marcus and bluegrass artists Brad and Ken Kolodner, plus Craig Alston, Ray Winder and Jimmy Wilson.

The Fitzgerald birthday party, as in the past, will feature music and gin drinks from his era. Fitzgerald lived for a while near the park where the event will take place: Fitzgerald Park at Bolton and Wilson streets.

Financial support is needed. [Click here and designate AITP.](#)

### ***Fresh and free food options are available nearby***

Although Bolton Hill is a relatively affluent neighborhood with a grocery store that carries fresh products, another reliable source of fresh produce within walking distance is *Fresh at the Avenue* inside The Avenue Market at 1648 Pennsylvania Ave., Thursdays to Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It’s a project of the No Boundaries Coalition. In season, much of the food is grown nearby.

And for those who need it, there is free food available at the Eutaw-Marshburn school food pantry, 1624 Eutaw Place, Mondays 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### ***Garden club has speaker on invasive species***

Wondering about that plant that took over your entire garden last year? Baltimore city arborist Megan Carr will speak to members and guests of the Bolton Hill Garden Club on Tuesday, March 21, at 7 p.m. She will talk about invasive vegetation: why invasive vegetation is a problem, how to identify invasives,

how to get rid of them and what to plant instead. For more information [contact Joyce Oliner](#).

### ***Save the Date for Midtown's Town Hall***

Please join us for Midtown's **2023** Town Hall and at-large election on Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. This year's meeting will be held virtually on Microsoft Teams and will also be live streamed to [Midtown's Facebook page](#). During the meeting, Midtown staff will be updating constituents on the organization's projects and goals for the year ahead, as well as announcing nominees for the four at-Large representatives to serve on Midtown's board (one to represent each of the four neighborhoods) for the coming year. There will be time for questions and input from attendees; Visit <https://www.midtownbaltimore.org/town-hall> for additional details.

### ***Yoga on Eutaw Place (and beyond) starts this week***

No Boundaries Coalition is kicking off monthly free yoga instruction and exercise sessions at Baltimore Unity Hall Saturday March 18, 11-12:30 a.m., open to residents of the 21217 ZIP Code. Mats will be provided, as will refreshments. For more information email [organizer@noboundariescoalition.com](mailto:organizer@noboundariescoalition.com) or call (410) 800-2452.

### ***City Council considering new oversight for landlords***

Attention renters and landlords: The city council appears poised to pass a bill protecting renters from landlords with 20 or more units who refuse to provide safe habitable housing. Apartment buildings in poor condition with numerous complaints and outstanding violations would go on a priority list to receive semi-annual visits from city inspectors rather than a third-party inspector hired by a landlord, which the law currently allows. [The Strengthening Renters' Safety Act](#) is sponsored by council members Zeke Cohen and six other council members. Eric Costello is not among them.

### ***About the Bulletin. . . .***

*The Bulletin* is designed by Elizabeth Peters. We invite others to help write, edit, provide photos or work the business side. Send suggestions and comments to [bulletin@boltonhillmd.org](mailto:bulletin@boltonhillmd.org). Thanks to Whitney Ward Birnbaum, Kimberley Canale, Steve Howard, Paula Jackson, Joyce Oliner, Francine Marchese, David Nyweide, Jim Prost, Amy Sheridan and Lee Tawney, among others, for advice and contributions this month. Errors and omissions are the responsibility of the editor, Bill Hamilton.

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**Bolton Hill**

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