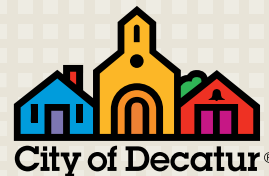


City of Decatur FOCUS



MAY 2025
Volume 35 • Number 9

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CITY OF DECATUR, GEORGIA

Decatur is officially a UNICEF USA Child Friendly City!

Decatur has earned recognition as a Child Friendly City by UNICEF and is the third in the country, alongside Houston and Minneapolis, to earn this prestigious designation. The milestone reflects a commitment to making Decatur a place where all children feel safe, supported, and empowered to thrive.

City leaders and community partners shared the announcement in March at a press conference, and kicked off a celebration that included the next day's Fair on the Square, a vibrant, youth-led festival organized by the Decatur Youth Council and Child Friendly City Initiative Teen Leadership team. The event brought the

community together with games, activities, and performances, all in honor of Decatur's dedication to putting children first.

This achievement is years in the making, and reinforces Decatur's pledge to continue fostering a city where all young people can thrive.



Dates to Remember

City Budget Process

Decatur's fiscal year 2025-2026 budget process is underway. If you want to get involved in the process, participate on these important dates (subject to City Commission approval):

- May 19** Formal presentation of the budget to the City Commission and adoption of tentative 2025 millage rates.
- June 2** Public hearing on proposed FY 2025-2026 budget and revised 2024-2025 budget and 2025 millage rates.
- June 4** Extended work session on proposed FY 2025-2026 budget and revised 2024-2025 budget.
- June 9** Public hearing on proposed FY 2025-2026 budget and revised 2024-2025 budget and 2025 millage rates (if needed).
- June 16** Public hearing and scheduled adoption of proposed FY 2025-2026 budget and revised 2024-2025 budget and 2025 millage rates.

All public hearings on the budget will be held in-person and via Zoom. Access to information and meeting times will be published on the City's website at decaturga.com/budget.

Copies of the FY 2025-2026 budget and revised 2024-2025 budget will be posted online beginning Wednesday, May 21. Hard copies will be available at Decatur City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St., and at the Decatur Library, 215 Sycamore St.

For more information, contact Chief of Staff Meredith Roark at 404-370-4102 or meredith.roark@decaturga.com.

Summer Screens in Decatur

May 23, 8:45 p.m. • Ebster Recreation Center, 105 Electric Ave.

Join us for Summer Movie Night under the stars as we set sail on a brand-new adventure with Moana 2! Bring your blankets, lawn chairs, and your whole crew for a fun-filled evening of family-friendly entertainment.

Follow Moana, Maui, and new friends on their latest journey across the ocean in this highly anticipated sequel. Sing along, enjoy the summer air, and make unforgettable memories with the community.

Summer Screens is free and open to all. Movie starts at sunset. Snacks and refreshments will be available.



**SUMMER
SCREENS**
FREE MOVIES IN DECATUR 2025

Read the Decatur Focus online at decaturga.com/focus.

Limited copies also available at Decatur City Hall, Decatur Visitors Center, and City of Decatur Recreation Centers.

Information for the FOCUS should be submitted by mail to Editor, Decatur Focus, P.O. Box 220, Decatur, GA 30031, or by email to decaturfocus@decaturga.com, or by using the submission form found at decaturga.com/focus.

The Decatur Focus is a joint publication of the City of Decatur, the Decatur Downtown Development Authority and the Decatur Business Association. It is a newsletter intended to provide announcements and information related to events, activities, and businesses in the city of Decatur. The purpose of the newsletter is to promote the city and encourage the exchange of information among residents, business owners and the school system. Letters to the editor, editorials or other opinion pieces are not published. All press releases, announcements and other information received for publication are subject to editing. Information found in the Focus is also posted on Decatur's official website at decaturga.com. The deadline for submitting articles, announcements or advertising is the first day of the month preceding publication. Contact: Editor, Decatur Focus, P.O. Box 220, Decatur, GA 30031, 404-371-8386; email: decaturfocus@decaturga.com.



DECATUR CITY COMMISSION

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Decatur Presents Inaugural Hometown Habitat Award

Congratulations to Donna and Wayne Robertson for being Decatur's first Hometown Habitat Award recipients. The Decatur Hometown Habitat is a program sponsored by the City of Decatur Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) to recognize city residents making efforts toward more sustainable practices when caring for their property. By highlighting residents like the Robertsons, the committee hopes to educate, inspire and create a community appreciation for environmental efforts.

The Hometown Habitat Committee includes Kate McAlpin of Woodland Gardens, Mark Collins of Appleseed Tree Service, Annie Archbold, Kristy Bible and Jane Lomas from the ESB and Allison Ericson, Decatur City Naturalist. The committee selected The Robertson's home at 257 Mt Vernon Drive from several nominees.

For the Robertsons, environmental responsibility has always been a priority. Wayne remembers environmental awareness during his youth in the Boy Scouts and then on to the consulting world with a LEED construction consulting. For years, the couple tried to maintain the lawn with little success because of shade trees. Several years ago, they both decided to rethink their front yard in a more creative and environmentally friendly way.

They chose a local landscape design

company who provided a complete design plan for their review. Unlike previous landscape projects, this plan took a more holistic approach to their yard that incorporated existing plants, added more native plants, and reduced the lawn to a small patch leaving space for their grandchildren to kick a soccer ball around.

The Robertsons have also seen cost savings now that they don't use a regular landscape service as well as a much lower water cost than previously to maintain their lawn.

All Hometown Habitat recipients receive a custom plaque for their yard designed by Decatur High School student Penelope Lesser. The plaques are a community-wide collaboration, crafted using wood supplied by Appleseed Tree Service, laser design by Decatur Makers member Carroll Bible, and metalwork by Carroll Bible and Pleasant Hugh Studio. To nominate a resident for future recognition, scan the QR code. Eligible properties should demonstrate at least one of



The Robertson home at 257 Mt. Vernon Dr. is selected as the first Decatur Hometown Habitat front yard

the following: native plantings and invasive species removal, stormwater solutions, recycled or reused materials, a healthy tree canopy, or eco-friendly maintenance practices.



Scan the QR code to nominate a neighbor for the Hometown Habitat Award

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City of Decatur

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City of Decatur

Grow with us.

Work here. Make an Impact.

DecaturGA.com/jobs

City of Decatur

Neighborhood Cleanup Days Continue!

Saturdays through May 31, Beginning at 7:30 a.m.

The City of Decatur is hosting Neighborhood Cleanup Days on Saturdays through the end of May, to allow residents to dispose of bulky materials that would not normally be placed in Pay-As-You-Throw bags. Every street in the city has been assigned a Saturday — see the schedule below to find the date specified for your street. Please read carefully as last year's schedule has changed. Contact Sean Woodson at sean.woodson@decaturga.com or 404-377-5571 if you have questions.

All items to be collected should be placed at the curb no later than 7:30 a.m. to ensure that crews do not need to return for late setouts. Collections run until 3:30 p.m., or until finished, whichever is sooner.

May 3

Great Lakes

Clarion Avenue
Nelson Ferry Road
Woodlawn Avenue

Plainview Street
Coventry Road (Nelson Ferry to Scott Boulevard)
Fairfield Street (Coventry to Woodlawn)
Vidal Boulevard
Lamont Drive
Garden Lane
Beaumont Avenue
Oakland Street
Montgomery Street
Fairview Avenue
Ponce de Leon Place
Northern Avenue
Wilton Drive

May 10

Great Lakes

Clairemont Avenue (100 to 800 block)
Champlain Street
Seneca Street
Erie Avenue
Huron Street
Michigan Avenue
Superior Avenue
Lucerne Street
Geneva Street
Church Street (600 block to 1335)
Knob Hills Circle
Glen Lake Commons

Willow Lane
Pensdale Road
Eastland Drive
Parkside Circle
Brownstones
Landover Drive
Ferndale Drive
North Decatur Road
Scott Blvd (800 to 1300 block)

May 17

Westchester Neighborhood

Westchester Drive
Dogwood Way
Maediris Drive
Harold Byrd Drive
Clairemont Avenue (900 to 1100 block)
Ridley Circle
Mockingbird Lane
Chelsea Drive
Kathryn Avenue
North Parkwood Road
Coventry Drive (North Parkwood Road to Scott Boulevard)
Merrill Avenue
Pope Circle
Harold Byrd Lane South
Walden Square Way

May 31

Lenox Place

Greenwood Circle
West Howard (300 to 900 block)
Patillo Way
Eastlake Drive (2300 block)
Atlanta Avenue
Hibernia Avenue
Braeburn Lane
Ridley Lane
Adair Street
Cottonwood Place
Emerson Avenue
West Ponce de Leon Avenue (600 to 900 block)
Drexel Avenue
Devonshire Avenue
Hampshire Avenue
Lansdowne Avenue
Melrose Avenue
Chief Matthews Drive
East Parkwood Road
West Parkwood Road
Upland Road
Wimberly Court
Parkwood Lane
Pinetree Drive
Scott Boulevard (100 to 700 block)
Swanton Hill Subdivision
Charter Square

Do You Know the History Behind the Bell at Decatur Fire Station One?

The large bell in front of Decatur Fire Station One is more than just a decorative fixture—it is a historic piece of the City's firefighting legacy.

On Jan. 28, 1913, the Decatur Fire Department purchased the 800-pound bell to summon volunteer firefighters to emergencies. For decades, its ringing signaled the need for an immediate response to fires across the city.

In 2008, the bell was damaged when someone attempted to rock it back and forth, requiring repairs to restore it. Today, it stands as a symbol of Decatur's firefighting history and a reminder of the City's early emergency response efforts.

Visitors are welcome to stop by Decatur Fire Station One to see this piece of local history—just do not try to move it.





Green Office Golf, an indoor golf experience and event venue, opened at 245 E. Trinity Pl.



Sugar Posh Nail Bar, a nail and beauty salon, opened its doors at 167 Clairemont Ave.



Rreal Tacos, a restaurant with Mexican street food, celebrated its new location at 312 Church St.

Welcome to Decatur

Decatur recently celebrated five ribbon cuttings.

Fawn Wine & Amaro Bar, a restaurant with coastal winemakers and seasonal seafood plates, opened at 119 E. Ponce de Leon Ave.



The Intown Retreat, a day spa with yoga, sauna, massages and a lounge opened at 102 Church St.



LIFELONG DECATUR

Want to be a Dementia Friend?

The Georgia Division of Aging Services will host a Dementia Friends Informational Webinar on Tuesday, June 24, from noon to 1 p.m.

This free, one-hour virtual session is offered each year in June and February and is open to anyone interested in learning how to better support individuals living with dementia.

Dementia Friends is a social-action movement that aims to improve society's understanding of dementia. People who live with dementia can continue to be vital members of our communities—shopping, dining, working and thriving. The webinar's goal is to shift the conversation from viewing individuals as “suffering from dementia” to “living with dementia,” promoting inclusion and community engagement.

Dementia is an umbrella term for a group of symptoms affecting cognitive abilities, memory and behavior. The symptoms range from mild to severe. Alzheimer is the most common cause of dementia. Other types of dementia include vascular, frontotemporal, and Lewy body. Dementia is not part of the normal process of aging.

Why become a Dementia Friend? Over 10,000 persons in DeKalb County are estimated to be living with dementia. In 2024, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners presented a proclamation recognizing the county as dementia friendly, meaning that the county is working with other agencies and businesses to make DeKalb a positive place for both those with dementia and their caregivers.

As part of these efforts, DeKalb opened its first Connection Café in April 2024 at the East Central DeKalb Community and Senior Center in Stone Mountain. The Café offers a monthly opportunity for individuals with dementia and their caregivers to connect in a supportive environment. Information on the Café is available at dementiaspotlightfoundation.org. Connection Cafés were previously highlighted in the September 2024 and January/February 2025 issues of The Decatur Focus and can be found at decaturga.com/focus.

To register for the June 24 webinar, visit the Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services at bit.ly/aginggeorgia.

Lifelong Community Advisory Board (LCAB)

LCAB supports the Decatur Age-Friendly Community Action Plan by promoting initiatives and sharing resources for residents of all ages. Meetings are open to the public and held on the fourth Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St. Learn more at decaturga.com/bc-lcab.



**Dementia Friends
Informational
Webinar**

Tuesday, June 24 | 12-1 p.m.
Hosted by the Georgia Department of Human Services

Register → 



FRIDAY, JUNE 13 • 4-10 PM

Beach Party Is Back!

June 13 • 4-10 p.m.
Downtown Decatur
101 East Court Square

Kick off the summer season in the heart of the City with the return of Decatur Beach Party. We're bringing back the fun, the sand, and live music for a night of family-friendly entertainment, dancing, and tropical vibes.

Whether you are building sandcastles, dancing to live music or relaxing with friends and neighbors soaking up the summer atmosphere, mark your calendars and get ready for beachside fun—no travel required.

**Truckin' Tuesdays
Are Back at
Legacy Park**

Tuesdays in May • 5-8 p.m.
Legacy Park South Lawn
500 S. Columbia Drive

Truckin' Tuesdays return to Legacy Park on May 6, running from 5 to 8 p.m. every Tuesday throughout the month.

Enjoy a variety of food trucks and vendors, along with music and plenty of space to relax with friends and family. Bring blankets, chairs, plus your appetite and get ready to discover new flavors.

Truckin' Tuesdays are weather-dependent, so be sure to follow Decatur Legacy Park on Facebook or @LegacyDecatur on Instagram for updates.

SOLID WASTE HOLIDAY RECYCLING SCHEDULE**Memorial Day • Monday, May 26**

Regular service for Monday will be on Tuesday, May 27

Regular service for Tuesday will be Wednesday, May 28

The full holiday sanitation schedule for 2025 can be found online at decaturga.com/sanitation and in the 2024 November Focus.

WALK & ROLL SUPERSTARS

Meet **Francesca Piccione** and **Fernando Lopez**, May's Walk & Roll Superstars. Francesca, originally from Lafayette, Louisiana, moved to Decatur in 2020. Fernando, born in Brooklyn and raised in Atlanta since age 13, relocated from Midtown to Decatur after meeting Francesca. They were married in November 2024. Over the last few years, they have prioritized an active, healthy lifestyle with an intentional effort to get more physical movement throughout the day.

During the film industry strike several years ago, Francesca and Fernando found themselves impacted. They decided to turn the unexpected situation into a positive and travel to Europe. While Francesca had visited the continent before, it was Fernando's first time. What struck him as the starkest difference between the United States and Europe was the walkability of the latter's built environment.

They traveled for a week, did a work stay in Denmark at a sustainable farming community for three weeks, and capped off the trip with one more week of traveling. Francesca and

Fernando adored the more active lifestyle. Francesca realized she needed more physical movement in her life.

Once they were back home, they engaged in some deep thinking and ultimately made a commitment to lead healthier, more active lives. This included more physical activity as well as healthier, less processed food. They made an effort to cook more meals at home and decided to eat out only if they walked or biked to the restaurant, and they continue to honor this agreement with themselves. Francesca went a step further and switched to doctors in Decatur whose offices were within walking distance, and she began walking or biking to work when possible, also utilizing MARTA when it made sense. Francesca reports feeling better than she has in years.

In addition to health benefits, walking and biking in the city have allowed Francesca and Fernando to see aspects of Decatur they might



have otherwise missed. They love the walking trails in their Lenox Place neighborhood and appreciate the small, almost hidden green spaces one notices when spending a lot of time as a pedestrian. One evening, they

stumbled upon an informal comedy night in the woods organized by neighbors. Francesca enjoys catching sight of details like fairy gardens and fun yard decorations when walking down the street.

Francesca is interested in pedestrian and bike safety and has joined Decatur's Active Transportation Committee, a group of citizens working to promote walking and biking safety. The newlyweds continue to enjoy all Decatur has to offer as they walk to various festivals and events in town.

Do you know a Walk & Roll Superstar? Visit bit.ly/walk-and-roll-decatur to nominate someone who inspires you.

Decatur Community Member Raises CPR Awareness

Decatur resident, Amber Womble, recently partnered with Decatur Fire to organize CPR classes for her neighbors from recruitment to bringing lunch for attendees.

Womble aimed to increase awareness and preparedness. The first class was filled immediately showcasing a strong interest from the community in this life-saving education.

Womble was inspired to take a CPR course after the birth of her first child. While initially reaching out to Decatur

Fire regarding a school fundraiser, she saw an opportunity to engage her school's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and offer CPR training to other families who had similar goals. With PTO support, lunch was provided for all participants.

The event fostered connections among parents, teachers, and Decatur emergency professionals. Womble emphasized the importance of building community, learning about local resources, and helping ensure the safety and well-being of neighbors.



Touch-a-Truck and Touch-a-Budget Brings the Community Together

The annual Touch-a-Truck and Touch-a-Budget event returned in March on the Decatur High School parking lot, offering residents an engaging opportunity to connect with City services.

Families explored fire engines, police vehicles, and public works equipment, while meeting the staff who operate them. City employees were also on hand to showcase their work and gather community input.

Youth participated in interactive activities such as the Bike Rodeo, funded in part by the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety. Young attendees also shared ideas on how the City should spend its budget "allowance," with ideas like affordable housing and more splash pads. Others contributed drawings of what a child-friendly city could look like.

The event continues to serve as a meaningful way for residents of all ages to engage with local government and envision Decatur's future.



Blazing Brave Girl's Fire Camp Grows in Year Two

In March, Decatur Fire Chief Toni Washington, in partnership with DeKalb County Fire, hosted the second annual Brave Girls' Fire Camp, providing young women with hands-on experience in the fire service.

Thirty participants from 14 to 18 years old participated in a one-day camp where they wore protective fire gear, operated fire hoses, learned hand-only CPR, experienced aerial ladder operations, made new friends, and discovered the career of firefighting.

Decatur Fire personnel including Chief Ninetta Violante, Fire Inspector Jazzmin Rullan, Fire Apparatus Operator (FAO) Kamisha



Sims, and FAO Orielle Thomas, served as group leaders and mentors throughout the day as the girls experienced four different stations and demonstrated what they learned.

Four participants were recognized with the "Blossomed and Brave" award—an honor for the participant who demonstrated the most personal growth throughout the day. Winners received a Decatur Fire challenge coin presented by Chief Washington and DeKalb

Fire Chief Fullum.

Brave Girls' Fire Camp continues to inspire the next generation of women in fire service, building confidence, teamwork, and awareness of career opportunities in public safety.

Decatur Square Shake Up!



City officials, along with project partners from MARTA, Jacob's Engineering, JHC Construction, and Ascension Construction Solutions break ground on the Decatur Square Shake Up, a project of the Town Center 2.0 master plan.

In April, City officials, partners and community stakeholders gathered at the community bandstand to commemorate the groundbreaking of the Decatur Square Shake Up, the highly anticipated redesign of Decatur Square. The Square Shake Up is one of the direct outcomes of the 2023 Town Center 2.0 master plan. Through extensive engagement, including partnering with the Downtown Neighbors Association, business interviews, festival pop-ups, online surveys, and live input sessions, the community feedback inspired seven key goals:

- 1 Balance land use patterns with human-centered design;
- 2 Stimulate economic growth in the downtown area;
- 3 Create welcoming and vibrant open spaces, parks, and plazas;
- 4 Promote mobility enhancements that improve connectivity;
- 5 Support a resilient & environmentally sustainable downtown;
- 6 Enhance downtown's historic character and unique identity;
- 7 Improve the quality of the downtown experience.

Within these goals was an expressed desire to enhance Decatur Square, with



hopes for a more comfortable daily experience and space adaptable to special events. The plan also proposes initiatives to better connect the energy of Decatur Square to its surroundings by creating pedestrian-first environments in current parking areas, improving the MARTA Bus Terminal, and enhancing walkability on surrounding streets. The redesigned Decatur Square aims to address these wishes and offer a public

plaza that can evolve with the needs of our community.

Phase One will feature:

- A new children's hillside play area
- Expanded greenspace in front of a new performance stage
- Permanent public restrooms
- A redesigned gateway to the square from North McDonough Street and the MARTA Bus Terminal
- A performance stage with a green room to host entertainers for live events such as concerts and performances, as well as a large screen for projected viewings.

The iconic Celebration statue will move from its current home at the center of the Square to the North McDonough Plaza as a welcoming gateway to the city's center.

While construction is expected to finish by Spring 2026, pedestrian and ADA access to the Square and its surrounding businesses will remain available.

To learn more about the project features, history, and latest updates, visit squareshakeup.com.

Decatur FC Launches “Path to the Pitch” to Support Young Athletes

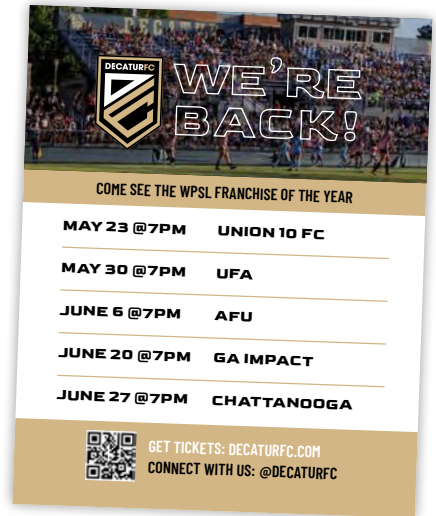
Decatur FC has launched “Path to the Pitch,” a new initiative designed to expand access to women’s soccer for young fans and aspiring players. The program will provide opportunities for youth to engage with the game, ensuring that more young supporters can experience the excitement of live soccer and connect with positive role models on and off the field.

As the inaugural sponsor of Path to the Pitch, Arrow Exterminators, led by President and CEO Emily Kendrick, is helping Decatur FC build a stronger community around women’s soccer. In addition to making games more accessible to young fans, this partnership will support local youth development clinics, mentorship opportunities with Decatur FC players,

support Decatur recreation programs, local youth clubs scholarship programs, and outreach programs focused at encouraging young girls to step onto the field and dream big.

By breaking down financial and participation barriers, Decatur FC and Arrow Exterminators are committed to inspiring the next generation of women’s soccer stars—both in the stands and on the pitch. The “Path to the Pitch” initiative will complement Decatur FC’s ongoing efforts to engage with the community and create a welcoming atmosphere at all home games.

The 2025 season kicks off this month with five home matches on the schedule. Season tickets are available. To purchase tickets and find additional information about “Path to



the Pitch” and ways to get involved, visit decaturfcc.com.

Through this initiative, Decatur FC and Arrow Exterminators are building a stronger, more accessible soccer community—one that will inspire the next generation of female athletes.”

Summer Intergenerational Art Courses at Legacy Park

The Decatur Arts Alliance invites community members to participate in this summer’s session of art courses, designed to build community in a supportive environment. Courses are open to all skill levels and artists ages 15 and up. Taught by local professionals in small group settings, these courses offer supportive, hands-on instruction for both beginners and experienced artists.

All courses will be held at Hyatt Cottage at Legacy Park, a new community art space that hosts exhibitions, performances, and artist work studios. Develop your artistic expression this summer and create lifelong memories. For more information and to register, visit decaturartsalliance.org/art-classes-summer-2025.



Watercolor Ephemera with Sylvia Cross
Tuesdays, June 3–July 15 (no class July 1)
7–8:30 p.m. | 6-week course
Tuition: \$160 (materials not included)



Collage with Tom Zarrilli
Wednesdays, June 4–25
7–9 p.m. | 4-week course
Tuition: \$150 (materials not included)



Printmaking with Colleen Dunbar
Wednesdays, July 23–Aug. 13
6:30–8:30 p.m. | 4-week course
Tuition: \$175 (includes most materials)

Decatur Presbyterian Church Funds Local and International Missions

As part of its bicentennial celebration and capital campaign, Decatur Presbyterian Church (DPC) has awarded two \$50,000 grants to local nonprofits, Hagar's House and A Home for Everyone in DeKalb, to support their work with unhoused and displaced individuals in the community.



Founded in 1825 and incorporated in DeKalb County in 1827, DPC is marking its 200th anniversary with a yearlong campaign themed “Renew God’s Church, Strengthening Our Mission.” In keeping with that mission, the church’s governing body, known as the Session, committed to designating 10% of all campaign funds for local and international service projects.

With pledges totaling over \$2.5 million and donations already exceeding \$1.4 million, the church distributed the first grants to organizations focused on housing insecurity in Decatur and DeKalb County.

A Home for Everyone in DeKalb will use its grant to support the development of Georgia’s first Women’s Workforce Transition Program, housed at 232 East Lake Drive in the Oakhurst community. The funding will help cover renovation and furnishing costs, first-year operations, and multiyear maintenance. The project aims to create a stable and supportive environment for women transitioning into the workforce, addressing both housing and career readiness.

Hagar’s House, operated by the Decatur Cooperative Ministry (DCM), is the only emergency family shelter in DeKalb County. The facility was severely damaged by Hurricane Helene in September, with stormwater infiltration causing widespread destruction and bacterial contamination. The funds from DPC will help rebuild and restore the shelter so that it can continue serving families in crisis.

Hagar’s House can accommodate up to five families at a time and plays a critical role in keeping families together during housing emergencies—something many shelters are not equipped to do.

DPC’s bicentennial celebration also honors its longstanding partnerships with institutions such as Agnes Scott College and Columbia Theological Seminary, along with a legacy of community outreach and mission work that spans two centuries.

For more information about the bicentennial campaign or Decatur Presbyterian Church’s mission initiatives, visit dpchurch.org.

Meaningful Conversations in Decatur

Every Saturday from 2 to 4 p.m., The Decatur Bahá’í community organizes an open community event called “Meaningful Conversations in Decatur.” Inspired by the writings of the Bahá’í Faith, the event is meant to spark meaningful dialogue and invites open and thoughtful dialogue from people of all backgrounds and perspectives.

To find each week’s location and upcoming topics, visit facebook.com/MeaningfulConversationsDecatur.



HOME V. 1: Gimme Shelter- Redefining and Reimagining the Place we call Home

Applications Open: April 28–June 8

Exhibition Dates: July 11–Aug. 15

Opening Reception: Friday, July 11, 6–9 p.m.
Decatur Library, 215 Sycamore St.

The Decatur Arts Alliance and Decatur Land Trust, in partnership with the Georgia Center for the Book and the Decatur Library, are launching a new annual exhibition - Gimme Shelter: Redefining and Reimagining the Place we call Home.



This exhibition invites emerging, established, and student artists of all mediums – painters, sculptors, photographers, mixed media artists, and more – to lend their creative voices to this important cause.

Artists are encouraged to look beyond brick and mortar, beyond place and community, to let creativity illuminate the diverse ways we experience and define “Home.”

Applications will be accepted exclusively on CallForEntry.org. Artists may submit up to 3 entries for jurying. Student artists may apply using their student email and the coupon code provided in the application. Adult artists will pay \$20 to submit up to 3 artworks.

Awards for Best in Show

- First Place – \$1,000
- Second Place – \$700
- Third Place – \$500
- Youth Award – \$500

For more information and to apply, visit bit.ly/decatursalliancehome

Senior Events

Mark your calendar for our upcoming events for seniors! RSVP to xaviea.conover@decaturga.com.

Cinco de Mayo

May 14, 11 a.m., \$5 at the door.

Decatur Recreation Center, 231 Sycamore St.

Join us for a festive Cinco de Mayo celebration filled with music, food, and great company. Wear your brightest colors and get ready to enjoy a fun-filled morning with decorations, lively entertainment, and a joyful atmosphere. Come ready to celebrate with friends and enjoy some festive treats.



The Great Paper Chase: Important Docs for Seniors

May 14, 1 p.m., Free

Decatur Recreation Center, 231 Sycamore St.

Could your loved ones find your essential documents in an emergency? This session covers how to organize and securely store key financial, legal, and medical documents. Learn best practices for digital vs. physical storage, document safety, and easy ways to keep everything up to date for peace of mind.

Senior Health & Fitness Fair

May 28, 11 a.m., Free

Decatur Recreation Center, 231 Sycamore St.

Join us for a free Senior Health & Fitness Fair, where wellness meets fun. This special event is designed to promote healthy living for seniors with interactive fitness demonstrations, health screenings, expert tips, and more. Come explore resources, try activities, and take steps toward a healthier lifestyle. Don't miss this exciting event, bring a friend and let's get moving.



Register

for Parks and Recreation programs at register.communitypass.net/cityofdecatur

Youth Events

Register on CommunityPass.

Oakhurst Family Games

May 3 • 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Individual \$15 R/\$25 NR, Team \$50 R/\$60 NR

Oakhurst Recreation Center, 450 East Lake Dr.

Kick off summer with the first-ever Oakhurst Family Games! Gather your family or friends and compete for medals, trophies, and bragging rights. Enjoy fun challenges, team spirit awards, and plenty of laughs at Oakhurst Rec Center. Teams of 2-5 (min. 2 kids under 17). Individuals can register to be placed on a team.

End of the Year Bash

May 16 • 6:30-9 p.m. • \$25 R/\$35 NR

Ebster Recreation Center, 105 Electric Ave.

Celebrate the end of the school year at Ebster Recreation Center. Participants can enjoy a night of dancing, sports-themed games, group challenges, a photo booth, giant games, karaoke, crafts, sweet treats, prizes, and more. Grab your friends and get ready for an epic night of fun before summer begins! Grades 3-5.

Defensive Nature – Nature Hike

May 20 • 4-5:15 p.m. • Free

Legacy Park, 500 S. Columbia Dr.

Learn how animals and plants defend themselves using poison, shells, spikes, and more. Experience nature's incredible survival strategies at Legacy Park. Grades K-5

Teen Takeover

May 23 & 30

6:30-10 p.m. • Free

Ebster Recreation Center, 105 Electric Ave.

Experience Teen Takeover! Enjoy an evening of fun open-play activities, games, and socializing with friends. From exciting competitions to chill hangouts, there's something for everyone. Join us for a vibrant, action-packed night where you can unwind, have fun, and make new friends. Grades 9-12.





Dive into Summer Fun

Pool Season officially kicks off in Decatur!

Our outdoor pools at Mckoy, Ebster, and Glenlake will be making a splash starting May 24. Grab your season pool passes now online or from any of our centers. Whether you're looking to cool off, swim some laps, or just soak up the sun, our pools have something for everyone. Check out the Aquatics section in the April-June Playbook for all the details at decaturga.com/playbook or scan the QR code at the bottom of this page.

Baseball Opening Day Parade

Get ready to swing into action and kick off the baseball season at our annual Baseball Opening Day Parade. Mark your calendars for June 7 as we rally together for a day of fun, excitement, and community spirit. The parade will kick off at College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center and wind its way through the vibrant streets of the Oakhurst business district, ending in Oakhurst Park. Then, it's game time at 12 p.m. as our young athletes take to the field to showcase their skills and team spirit. Don't miss out on this unforgettable celebration of America's favorite pastime.



May is National Bike Month

Decatur celebrates with a variety of bicycling opportunities!

May 1 – Learn to Ride a Bike Day

May 7 – National Bike to School Day

May 12-18 – National Bike Week

May 16 – Bike to Work Day

May 16 – Bikes & Brews: Meet at 6:30 p.m. in front of Guild+Journeyman, 115 Clairemont Ave., for a 6-mile bike ride. Afterwards we'll grab a drink from one of our local breweries. Helmets required.

Be sure to check our social media channels (@decaturparksandrec) for more biking events in May.



Go to decaturga.com/playbook or scan the QR code to see the latest Playbook, and dozens of programs for active children, youth, adults, and seniors.

PORCH-Decatur: Combating Food Insecurity at the Front Door

More than 85,000 residents—approximately 11.2% of the population—face hunger, and 59% of those do not qualify for SNAP benefits, according to FeedingAmerica.org.

In response, PORCH-Decatur was founded in July 2020 by Barbara Hardin, Hope Baker, and the late Dot Moye during the COVID-19 pandemic. What began as a neighborhood food drive initiative has grown into a dedicated, volunteer-driven effort to fight hunger locally. The leadership team now includes Ellen Bishop and Sue West, alongside co-founders Barbara and Hope.

PORCH-Decatur is part of the national nonprofit PORCH Communities and is supported locally by Holy Trinity Parish. The organization collects non-perishable food and cash donations monthly to help at-risk families in Decatur.

How It Works

- **Collection:** Donors leave food on their porches, for Neighborhood Coordinators (NCs) to pick up.
- **Sorting:** NCs bring collections to Holy Trinity Parish (515 East Ponce de Leon Avenue) on the second Sunday of each month from 3–4:30 p.m., where volunteers sort the items.
- **Distribution:** Partner organizations ensure the food reaches families and individuals in need.

Donations and Impact

In 2024, PORCH-Decatur collected approximately \$34,000 in donations, supporting local organizations such as:



- Decatur Emergency Assistance Ministry (DEAM)
- Decatur Housing Authority
- Decatur Education Foundation
- Casa Alternia
- Holy Trinity's sack lunch program for the unhoused.

Neighborhood Coordinators emphasize the positive impact on both volunteers and recipients. Participation in PORCH strengthens community connections while meeting a vital need. Many volunteers describe their monthly involvement as meaningful, simple, and deeply rewarding.

Volunteer Opportunities

Community members can support PORCH-Decatur in several ways:

- Serve as a Neighborhood Coordinator
- Donate items monthly
- Assist at Holy Trinity during the monthly drop-off window

Volunteers of all ages and abilities are welcome. Students may also receive service hours for participation. To learn more or sign up, visit porchcommunities.org/decatur or email decatur@porchcommunities.org.



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Sun: 12 PM - 5 PM



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May Meeting Preview

Tuesday, May 27, 5:30 p.m.
The Intown Retreat, 102 Church St.

Join DBA at The Intown Retreat for its monthly business meeting. There will be a reveal of the new DBA branding, updates on the Decatur Square construction, and a chance to connect in the lounge. There will also be complimentary yoga and chair massages—bring comfy clothes if you want to join in on the relaxation.

Send questions (and RSVPs) to info@decaturdba.com.
 Check decaturdba.com for updates

Celebrate Mother's Day with Music Together of Decatur

Celebrate Mother's Day with a music-making experience at Music Together of Decatur. Families with babies, toddlers, and preschoolers are invited to sing, dance, laugh, and play together in a fun, welcoming environment.

This special event is also a thoughtful gift option for a parent, grandparent, or friend. Sessions are available by reservation.

Visit musictogetherofdecatur.com to learn more.



Joy Lee Photography

36th Annual Fine Arts Exhibition: 'Cat & Mouse'

May 2-June 13, Thursdays-Saturdays, 1-5 p.m.
Fourth Floor Gallery, Decatur Library, 215 Sycamore St.
Closing Reception: Friday, June 13, 6:30-9 p.m.

The Decatur Arts Alliance in conjunction with the Decatur Arts Festival, invites the community to experience the juried multimedia exhibition showcasing 60 unique artworks from artists across the United States. The exhibition is free, open to the public and produced in collaboration with the Dekalb Library Foundation and the Georgia Center for the Book.

"Cat and Mouse" is the theme—a playful way to illustrate a certain type of power struggle. Learn more and see the exhibit online at decaturartsfestival.com/fae.





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EVENTS CALENDAR

MAY

- 5 City Commission Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 6 Better Together Advisory Board Meeting**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 9 Decatur Development Authorities**, 8 a.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 12 Zoning Board of Appeals Regular Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 13 Parks & Recreation Board Meeting**, 6 p.m., Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.
- 13 Planning Commission**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 19 City Commission Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 20 Historic Preservation Commission Meeting**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 23 Summer Screens on the Square**, 8:45 p.m., Ebster Rec Center 105 Electric Ave., page 2
- 26 Environmental Sustainability Board Meeting**, 4 p.m., Decatur Rec Center 231 Sycamore St.
- 26 Lifelong Community Advisory Board**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 27 DBA Meeting**, 5:30 p.m., The Intown Retreat, 102 Church St.

JUNE

- 2 City Commission Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 3 Better Together Advisory Board Meeting**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 9 Zoning Board of Appeals Regular Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 10 Parks & Recreation Board Meeting**, 6 p.m., Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.
- 10 Planning Commission**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 13 Decatur Development Authorities**, 8 a.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 13 Decatur Beach Party**, 4 p.m., Downtown Decatur, 101 E. Court Square, page 7
- 16 City Commission Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 17 Historic Preservation Commission Meeting**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 23 Environmental Sustainability Board Meeting**, 4 p.m., Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.
- 23 Lifelong Community Advisory Board**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.

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Brazilian Festival in Decatur

Celebrate Brazilian culture on Friday, May 16, in Downtown Decatur with live music, capoeira performances, food, drinks, and more at Capoeira Maculele, 133 Sycamore St.

For more details, visit trycapoeira.com.

Capoeira Maculele Celebrates Juneteenth

June 16-21

Celebrate Juneteenth with a week of free Capoeira activities in Downtown Decatur. Hosted by award-winning Capoeira Maculele, 133 Sycamore St., the event invites the community to experience Capoeira—the dynamic Afro-Brazilian martial art that blends movement, music, and culture.

Open to all skill levels, this week-long celebration will include workshops, demonstrations, and community connection.

Visit trycapoeira.com to learn more.

Madison Avenue Derby Returns Oct. 25

The 14th Annual Madison Avenue Derby will take place on Saturday, October 25, in Decatur. This beloved event features thrilling soapbox derby-style races, where gravity-powered, creatively themed cars compete for awards like “Most Creative” and “Best Craftsmanship.”

The derby is more than just a race; it’s a community celebration. As in previous years, the Madison Avenue Community Fund will designate a local nonprofit as the event’s beneficiary, with all funds raised going to support their work. While the 2025 beneficiary will be announced soon, the organization will focus on supporting children and families in Decatur.

The event draws spectators of all ages for a day of racing, festivities, and fundraising. Sponsorship opportunities are available, and race registration is now open.

For more information, to register, or to become a sponsor, visit madavederby.org, sign up for updates at madavederby.org/email-signup, and follow @MadAveDerby on social media.

Used Book Sale at Decatur Library

Saturday, June 7 • 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. • Decatur Library • 215 Sycamore St.

The Friends of the Decatur Library is holding a used book sale on the ground floor of the library. Proceeds support library programs for children, youth and adults.

Shoppers will find fiction and mystery titles for all ages as well as a variety of non-fiction categories, including history, biography, sports, health and cooking. Most hardback books are priced at \$2 and most paperback books at \$1. Credit cards, cash and checks are accepted. Shoppers are encouraged to bring their own bags.

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Decatur Women's History Walking Tour

Saturday, May 10 • 10:30am

Led by City Planner and Historic Preservationist Aileen de la Torre, this 1.5-mile tour honors women who helped shape Decatur. Highlights include Agnes Scott College, architect Leila Ross Wilburn, Mayor Emerita Elizabeth Wilson, and more. Meet at the community bandstand on the square. Remember to bring water!



Decatur Architecture Walking Tour

Tuesday, May 13 • 7-8:30 p.m.

Sycamore Park (700 block of Sycamore St.)

The DeKalb History Center presents a brand-new 90-minute walking tour highlighting the history and homes of Sycamore Street. This significant



Decatur street features houses that showcase a variety of architectural styles from the 19th and 20th centuries. Learn about the history of the homes and some of the residents on this tour.

The tour covers approximately one mile. Tickets are required; no walkups allowed. Visit dekalbhistory.org for tickets or to learn more.

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Remembering Decatur's Veterans This Memorial Day

The Veterans Memorial at the Decatur Cemetery was first dedicated in 1945. This year the City reflects on the 80-year history of this monument and the remembrance ceremonies held there to honor those who died in service to their country.

Each Veterans Day since 2009, Friends of Decatur Cemetery volunteers place flags at the graves of more than 1,000 known veterans throughout the Decatur Cemetery. A remembrance ceremony is held annually at 11 a.m. on November 11 to honor all veterans interred at the cemetery.

To ensure no veteran is overlooked, Friends of Decatur Cemetery encourages families to reach out if a veteran's service is not noted on their marker or if service details are not on file. We want to make sure we honor all the U.S. Veterans who are buried in the Decatur Cemetery at our Salute to Veterans event in November and all year long.

If you have a loved one buried at Decatur Cemetery who may not be on the veterans list, email friendsofdecaturcemetery@gmail.com.

For more information, visit legacydecatur.org/friends-of-decatur-cemetery



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“Yes, I Can!” Awards Celebrate Students with Exceptionalities

City Schools of Decatur’s Student Support Services department celebrated National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month with their annual “Yes, I Can!” Awards in March.

Families, educators, and district staff gathered to honor the accomplishments of students with exceptionalities who have excelled in their unique talents.

The ceremony was supported by the Decatur Education Foundation and Trudy Cathy White, ambassador for Chick-fil-A. Attendees included Board Chair Dr. Carmen Sulton, Superintendent Dr. Gyimah Whitaker, school principals, and executive cabinet members.

The 2025 “Yes, I Can!” Award recipients are:

College Heights ECLC

Truman Culversmith

Clairemont Elementary

Morgan Goolsby, Asher Kendrick, Catalina Ramos

Glennwood Elementary

Isaac Irby, Milani McQueen, Kaleb Roberts

Oakhurst Elementary

Alai Bandi-Hariharan

Westchester Elementary

Roy Barja-Silvestre

Winnona Park Elementary

Isla Andre, Josiah Jordan, Seamus Robbins

Fifth Avenue Upper Elementary School

Bodhi Burke, Isabella Fullington, Elliot Kemper, Ta’nia Moss, Clara Mulvaney, Heidi Story, Lina Williamson



Talley Street Upper Elementary

Janiyah Patton

Beacon Hill Middle School

Wyatt Hartle, Milan Johnson, Riley McDonald, Theodore Pearson, Solomon Robinson

Decatur High School

Matthew Jeremiah Atkins, Austin Bibb, Berkley Cade, Jack Diamond, John Rowan Hollister, Maya Pomfret, Evan Smith, Natalie Thompson, Gavin Violante

This annual celebration highlights the diverse capabilities of students in the district and reinforces CSD’s commitment to inclusive education and student support.

CSD Students Compete in District’s First Special Olympics

The Decatur High School stadium was filled with immense glee during City Schools of Decatur’s (CSD) first Special Olympics competition on March 26. Athletes were welcomed by cheerleaders, staff, and

enthusiastic spectators. The event included competitions like the 50-yard dash, soccer, and tug-of-war.

Thanks to CSD Student Services and all involved for its success. Plans are already

underway for next year’s event, with a continued focus on promoting understanding and awareness of developmental disabilities and providing inclusive and transformative experiences both in and out of the classroom.



State Superintendent Honors Talley Street ES and Beacon Hill MS



In March, Georgia State Superintendent Richard Woods visited CSD to recognize two schools. Talley Street Upper Elementary as a 2023–2024 Literacy Leader School, and Beacon Hill Middle School as a 2023–2024 Math Leader School, based on student performance on the Georgia Milestones Assessments.

Stay Connected with City Schools of Decatur

City Schools of Decatur is highly ranked among Georgia schools and at the heart of a supportive community. CSD invites you to be “All In” and subscribe to receive the latest news and information at bit.ly/cdschoolnewsletter. Or scan the QR code.



CSD Schools Celebrate Georgia AGWeek

Students in City Schools of Decatur celebrated Georgia Agriculture Awareness Week, March 17–23, by learning about plants, pollinators, and gardening. Partners from the Wylde Center introduced the youngest learners to the world of bees and pollination, as they enjoyed running around and collecting “pollen” and transferring it from one area to another.



Winnona Park students prepare the soil in the school garden for herbs and veggie starters from the Wylde Center's Decatur Farm to School program



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Agnes Scott College and the City of Decatur Partner on Climate Resilience Plan

Since 2007, Agnes Scott College has been committed to setting ambitious carbon reduction goals, including achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2037. It has been the long-held belief of Agnes Scott that in order for the college to deliver on its mission to educate its students to live honorably and engage in the intellectual and social challenges of their times, students must have a robust understanding of climate change and climate justice. Nearly a decade ago, Agnes Scott expanded its climate goals to include implementing a groundbreaking Climate Resilience Plan (CRP) that would ensure both the college and the City of Decatur were working at the local level to build community resilience to respond to the impacts of climate change.

As global average temperatures increase, the Southeastern United States is expected to have some of the largest economic losses from climate change nationwide. Decatur is already experiencing longer and more frequent heatwaves. The region is also experiencing an increase in heavy rain events, which is compounding the decline of the region's infrastructure and leading to critical compromises in the region's wastewater infrastructure.

Like Agnes Scott, the voices of the City's youth population have been critical to driving change for climate action. A youth representative on the City's Environmental Sustainability Board said it is inspiring, as someone who grew up in Decatur, to see the City and Agnes Scott College lead the way in addressing climate change. It shows even a small community can make a big difference with collaboration and action.

With the full support of Agnes Scott President Leocadia Zak and City of Decatur Mayor Patti Garrett, the college and the City began developing a joint Climate Resilience Plan in 2018. Implementation of the plan began in July 2021. The purpose of the plan was to identify together the most pressing impacts of climate change anticipated in the region and outline the strategies for addressing these impacts, both in terms of preparation and response.

Since 2018, Agnes Scott and the City of Decatur have been supported in developing and implementing the CRP through a network of partner organizations. Currently, the CRP is managed through an Implementation Task Force made up of staff from Agnes Scott College, the City of Decatur, City Schools of Decatur, Columbia Theological Seminary, Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, as well as members of the City's Environmental Sustainability Board and Decatur residents.

The CRP Task Force strives to produce transferable solutions and frameworks for other communities resulting in mutually beneficial collaborations, shared capacity, subject matter expertise, and opportunities to engage the broader community. Moving forward, the CRP Task Force will be providing regular updates in The Decatur Focus about this work and sharing opportunities for the Decatur community to both engage in this collaborative process and take actionable steps to improve their own resilience to these compounding challenges.

To learn more, visit agnesscott.edu/climate-resilience-plan.

Agnes Scott Mental Health Counseling Program Earns Accreditation

Agnes Scott College's Clinical Mental Health Counseling master's program has received eight-year accreditation from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)—a nationally recognized standard for counselor training programs.

Now entering its fourth cohort, the program was launched in fall 2022 and integrates a unique, intersectional framework that emphasizes holistic and social justice-based approaches to mental health counseling.

The program is led by Dr. Jennifer Fulling-Smith, Ph.D., LPC, ACS, RPT-S, and has gained recognition from community partners for the quality and preparedness of its students. These partnerships provide essential clinical supervision and fieldwork opportunities, further strengthening the student experience.

Since its inception, the program has demonstrated strong career outcomes. Among the inaugural cohort, 78% of students secured counseling jobs before graduation, and 94% were employed in the field within four months of completing the degree.

CACREP accreditation affirms that the program meets rigorous academic and professional standards required by many state licensing boards, enabling graduates to pursue licensure as Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs).

For more information about the program and application details, visit agnesscott.edu/counseling.



Mayor Emerita Elizabeth Wilson and Michael Thurmond Inspire DHS Students at Lecture Series

City Schools of Decatur (CSD) hosted the first Elizabeth Wilson Lecture Series in March, featuring Decatur Mayor Emerita Elizabeth Wilson and former DeKalb County CEO Michael L. Thurmond, who shared leadership insights with Decatur High School students, CSD staff, Wilson family members, and the community.

Mayor Emerita Wilson discussed her journey into public service, inspired by her experiences as a PTA mom, and encouraged students to pursue positive change despite inexperience. Mr. Thurmond emphasized Wilson's influence on his career. He urged students to take advantage of the opportunities she fought for, allowing them access to one another to broaden their awareness and collective impact.



The event was attended by Board Chair Dr. Carmen Sulton, Board Member Dr. Jana Johnson-Davis, Superintendent Dr. Gyimah

Whitaker, City of Decatur Mayor Patti Garrett, Mayor Pro Tem Tony Powers, and Commissioner Kelly Walsh.

Step Up for CSD Teachers & Staff!

This May, Decatur Education Foundation (DEF) is providing the community with an easy way to show appreciation for City Schools of Decatur (CSD) teachers, administrators, and staff through a Step Up for Teachers campaign.

Community members, students, parents, and alumni can participate by visiting stepupforteachers.com to make a small donation and leave a short note of gratitude.

Tributes will be published on DEF's website and notifications will be sent to the individuals honored.

Contributors who give \$35 or more can choose a yard sign:

- "We Step up for CSD Teachers & Staff!"
- "Congratulations Class of 2025!"

Proceeds from the campaign support Teacher Innovation Grants that are awarded every fall. Visit decatureducationfoundation.org to learn more about DEF. If you are unable to donate but would still like to send a tribute, please email merry@decatureducationfoundation.org with your message.



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