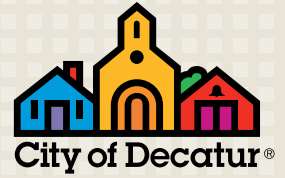


City of Decatur FOCUS



JUNE 2026
Volume 36 • Number 10

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CITY OF DECATUR, GEORGIA

Agnes Scott and Decatur Honor Mary Frances Early

The first African American to graduate from the University of Georgia was celebrated at the college's Joyful Noise Concert in April alongside family, friends, and community members.



In April, the City of Decatur and Agnes Scott College honored Decatur resident Mary Frances Early during the college's spring Joyful Noise Gospel Concert. Family members, friends, neighbors, and community members gathered to celebrate Ms. Early and her accomplishments.

Early made history in 1962 as the first African American to graduate from the University of Georgia. A trailblazer for civil rights and an advocate for music education, she later became the

first African American elected president of the Georgia Music Educators Association in 1981.

After retiring from public schools in 1994, Early taught at Morehouse College and Spelman College and served as chair of the music department at Clark Atlanta University.

The concert dedication honors Early's legacy and influence on education, music, and equity, as well as her deep roots in the Decatur community.



Recycle with Purpose at Decatur WatchFest '26

This summer, Decatur WatchFest '26 offers more than world-class soccer on the Square. Through the Keep Decatur Beautiful initiative, a recycling and sustainability activation is planned for the event, creating an opportunity for the community to support sustainability and a meaningful cause.

The concept includes a custom aluminum can recycling cage designed to reflect Decatur's identity while making recycling visible and accessible. All aluminum cans and cups collected during WatchFest will be recycled, with proceeds benefiting the Georgia Firefighters Burn Foundation.

Operating entirely on donations, the foundation funds programs such as children's burn camp, family retreats, hospital grants, and smoke alarm distribution through local fire stations. The organization partners with the fire service and burn care community to provide fire safety education, support medical facilities, and assist burn survivors and their families in recovery. Because the foundation works closely with fire departments across Georgia, including support for programs such as smoke alarm distribution and fire safety education, this effort also helps strengthen resources that benefit Decatur Fire and the broader community.

As you enjoy WatchFest, recycle. Each can contributes to a more sustainable event and supports those in need.

Volunteers Needed for Decatur WatchFest '26

Decatur WatchFest '26 is a 34-day celebration bringing free community activities to downtown Decatur from June 11 through July 19. Volunteers are needed to help welcome guests and support event operations throughout the celebration.

Volunteer roles include guest welcome, fan engagement, and event operations. Evening shifts are also available for those interested in later hours. Visit tinyurl.com/volunteerwatchfest to apply.



HOLIDAY SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING SCHEDULE

JUNETEENTH • Friday, June 19 (Subject to change, please visit decaturga.com/sanitation the week of June 15.)

Collection for Thursday, June 18, will be on Wednesday, June 17.
Collection for Friday, June 19, will be on Thursday, June 18.

INDEPENDENCE DAY • Observed Monday, July 6

Regular services for Monday, July 6 will be on Tuesday, July 7.
No change to the Thursday, July 9 and Friday, July 10 schedule.

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, 678-553-6540; email: decaturfocus@decaturga.com.



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Decatur Host Families Needed for 10-Day German Teacher Program

A group of nine Berlin teachers will spend 10 days with Downtown Decatur host families October 17-29. All of the teachers are German nationals who teach English at the high school level.

The program gives teachers insight into

the U.S. school system, allows them to experience school life in various educational settings, and provides opportunities to connect with U.S. teachers, students, and administrators. Participants will also learn about American history and culture with an emphasis on Georgia while improving their

English and immersing themselves in U.S. culture. This will be the third year for the program.

Families interested in hosting are encouraged to contact Dr. John Wilson at 706 271-7100 or jmwilson1@bellsouth.net.

Get Caught Up with Decatur Minute Live

Decatur's official podcast allows listeners to learn more about the people, programs, and priorities that are continually reshaping the City. Here is a quick recap of recent episodes.

Episode 1 – New Year, Bigger Vision

In January, the series launched with a look back at key takeaways from former Mayor Patti Garrett's 16 years of service and a look ahead at 2026, including insights from City Manager Andrea Arnold on her vision for Decatur's future.

Episode 2 - Decatur, an Age-Friendly City

In February, Lifelong Community Manager Julie Smith joined the podcast to discuss how the City supports residents of all ages and continues to build an age-friendly community.

Episode 3 - The Budget: How to Be Involved

In March, Operations Analyst Langston Leake broke down the City's budget process and shared how residents can stay informed and get involved.

Episode 4 - Newcomer's Guide to Living in Decatur

In April, the podcast highlighted life in the city from resident Corrine Millen's perspective and explored what makes Decatur a welcoming place to call home.

Episode 5 - Meet the Mayor

In May, Mayor Tony Powers discussed his role as mayor and the City's preparations for WatchFest.

Episode 6 - WatchFest: Everything You Need to Know

The June episode, featuring Decatur resident Jen Johns, will cover everything residents and visitors need to know about WatchFest. The episode will be available beginning June 8. To listen, visit decaturga.com/decaturminutelive.

New Year, Bigger Vision

City Manager Andrea Arnold
Former Mayor Patti Garrett

Decatur, An Age-Friendly City

Lifelong Community Manager
Julie Smith

The Budget: How to Be Involved

Operations Analyst
Langston Leake

Newcomer's Guide to Living in Decatur

Corrine "CM" Millen
Resident for 3 years

Meet Mayor Tony Powers

Mayor Tony Powers



THE DECATUR MINUTE

Decatur: A Welcoming City From the Better Together Advisory Board

Decatur is a welcoming city, and with the world arriving for WatchFest '26, this is a meaningful moment to consider what that means in practice.

Immigration is part of the story of this country, this state, and Decatur. The city is globally influenced, and many neighbors have deep roots in or connections to countries with teams competing in Atlanta. WatchFest is an opportunity to share space and stories across cultures.

Welcoming in Practice

A few ways community members can extend a welcome during WatchFest:

If someone does not speak English, be patient, ask for help, or use a translation app to communicate. Cheering together needs no translation.

Be mindful of space, especially for neighbors and visitors with disabilities. Preserve accessible sightlines, ask before offering assistance, and honor designated accessible parking areas.

If you speak another language, consider offering help. Hearing one's native language while traveling can be a meaningful experience for visitors.

Know Your Rights

The City of Decatur wants every community members to feel informed and supported. Residents are reminded that they have the right to remain silent and to request legal counsel, are not required to open their door without a judicial warrant, and may ask whether they are free to leave in any interaction with law enforcement. Free Know Your Rights materials in multiple languages are available through the office of District 4 Georgia Congressman Hank Johnson. Visit hankjohnson.house.gov/KnowYourRights or call (770) 987-2291 to learn more.

The History of Decatur Square

Decatur Square sits on land with a long and layered history. It was originally home to Muscogee (Creek) people. Enslaved African Americans were sold at the DeKalb County Courthouse site from 1831 to 1863. In 2025, the City formally acknowledged these injustices and began an ongoing reparations process. Understanding this history is part of understanding Decatur and the ongoing work of building a truly welcoming community.

WatchFest Volunteers

Hundreds of Decatur residents have

stepped up to volunteer during WatchFest '26 and are currently in training to welcome guests and serve as city ambassadors across 34 days of events. Many volunteers bring the ability to communicate in multiple languages, which will be a valuable asset as fans from around the world gather on Decatur Square.



About the Better Together Advisory Board

The Better Together Advisory Board was established in 2016 to advise the Decatur City Commission and the community on inclusion and engagement. Created as part of a community action plan shaped by nearly 800 residents, the board remains active and works alongside the City's Equity and Engagement Director to advance that plan. To learn more about the Better Together Advisory Board and the Community Action Plan, visit decaturga.com.

Decatur Volunteers Make a Difference

Each year, community volunteers contribute hundreds of hours in service to Decatur. The City recognizes those who gave their time in 2025 and thanks them for their dedication and commitment to the community. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, contact Volunteer and Tourism Coordinator Kristen Leach at kristen.leach@decaturga.com or 470-513-4057.

Pictured (front, left to right): Debra, 19 hours; Maggie, 68 hours; Shirley, 30 hours; back row, Drew, 16 hours; Jack, 16 hours; Sandra, 18 hours; Kristen Leach, Volunteer and Tourism Coordinator; Jim, 24 hours.



WALK & ROLL SUPERSTAR

Meet **Brad Mathura**, our June Walk & Roll Superstar. A graduate of Decatur High School, he has remained closely connected to the community throughout his life. Brad lives in the heart of Decatur in a condominium building downtown.

Brad's daily movement throughout the city is centered on walking and public transit, which connect him to his two places of employment. He walks to Agnes Scott College, where he works in the dining hall. He also works at the DeKalb County Public Library processing center on Kensington Road, which he reaches via MARTA and walking.

Together, these routes form a steady pattern in Brad's daily life, shaped by years of repetition. Walking and transit structure his movement through Decatur — from home to work — creating a rhythm that is both independent and familiar. Out in the community on foot, Brad has a strong sense of connection to place.

Brad has worked for the library for 30 years and for Agnes Scott for 25 years. His long tenure in both positions reflects his reliability and the stability of the environments in which he works. Both employers participate in programs that support employees with different abilities, helping ensure sustained and successful employment.

Along his daily routes, Brad is a familiar presence in the Decatur community. Known for his friendliness and regular engagement with the places he passes, he stops by the Decatur Visitors Center to greet staff and see if he can help in any way. He has formed lasting friendships at both Traskside Tavern and Little Shop of Stories, where he



may stop in for a Diet Coke and a game of Mad Libs, respectively. He enjoys greeting the security guards in front of shops and others he sees regularly. These interactions reflect how his daily routes connect him to people and places along the way, making his movement through the city both functional and relational.

Each day, Brad moves through Decatur along familiar routes, walking from place to place and riding MARTA to get where he needs to go. Traveling through the city on foot keeps Brad closely connected to the people and places that shape his life.

Do you know a Walk & Roll Superstar? Nominate someone who inspires you by visiting bit.ly/Walk-and-Roll-Decatur.

Decatur Fire Rescue and Illustrator AG Ford Bring *Construction Site: Firefight!* to Life

In May, illustrator AG Ford led children from Decatur Fire Station One to the Decatur Public Library for a reading and sample illustration session featuring *Construction Site: Firefight!*, written by Sherri Duskey Rinker and illustrated by Ford. Members of Decatur Fire Rescue joined the young attendees for the event.



Heat Pump Water Heaters: Electrify Decatur Answers Questions on Energy Savings and Efficiency

What is a heat pump water heater and how does it work?

Heat pump water heaters (HPWHs) are an energy-efficient alternative to traditional systems. Instead of generating heat directly like standard electric resistance heaters, they use electricity to move heat from surrounding air into a storage tank. This makes them two to three times more efficient than conventional electric water heaters. By transferring rather than creating heat, HPWHs lower electricity use and monthly utility bills.

What are the ideal conditions for installing a heat pump water heater?

HPWHs perform best in spaces that stay between 40 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit year-round and have at least 1,000 cubic feet of air space. Common locations include basements, garages, or utility rooms. Homeowners are typically advised to select a unit similar in size to their current system, but consulting a contractor is important to ensure proper airflow and fit. Electrical upgrades may be needed when switching from gas systems.

What are the environmental and health benefits of heat pump water heaters?

HPWHs offer significant environmental advantages. Because they do

Home Efficiency Series Session 4: Heat Pump Water Heaters

Learn how you can turn insight into savings with heat pump water heaters!

JUNE 3 | FROM 12 PM TO 1 PM
Location:
HELD ONLINE THROUGH ZOOM

[RSVP HERE](#)

City of Decatur | Southface | gipol | Let's Go Electric

not burn fossil fuels, they avoid emitting harmful pollutants such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxide, which impact respiratory health. They also reduce carbon emissions by up to 64 percent compared to gas systems, preventing more than 12 tons of CO₂ over a unit's lifetime. Broad adoption could lead to cleaner air and lower healthcare costs.

How can heat pump water heaters save homeowners money?

Their high

efficiency allows homeowners to use less electricity to heat water, reducing monthly bills. While upfront costs may be higher, long-term savings often offset the initial investment. Lower energy demand also helps protect against rising utility costs.

What incentives are available in Georgia for heat pump water heaters?

Georgia homeowners can access incentives that make upgrading more affordable. The Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) offers rebates and low-interest financing for energy-efficient improvements, including HPWHs. Georgia Power also provides rebates for qualifying systems, helping reduce upfront costs and speed up payback.

Where can I learn more?

Electrify Decatur's Home Efficiency Series will host a free webinar on heat pump water heaters, covering how the systems work and connecting attendees with local contractors. Residents can also sign up for a free Home Energy Navigator appointment.

To register for the webinar or learn more, scan the QR code below or visit electrifydecatur.com.

Grow with us.
Work here. Make an Impact.

DecaturGA.com/jobs

City of Decatur

YOUR CITY YOUR POCKET

Subscribe to Email and Text Alerts to stay informed!

Scan the QR code or visit decaturga.com/portal

WELCOME TO DECATUR

Little Empire, a children's clothing and resale shop, opened at 533 W. Howard Ave. Learn more at littleempireshop.com.



2026 Welcoming Business Award Nominations Now Open

The Better Together Advisory Board (BTAB) is accepting nominations through Sept. 30 for the annual Welcoming Business Award. Winners will be announced alongside the City of Decatur's Hometown Hero Award winners in December.

BTAB established the Welcoming Business Award in 2019 to publicly recognize and honor Decatur-based businesses that act with intention to create a welcoming and inclusive business environment and to inspire others to prioritize these qualities as best practices. The award criteria includes, but is not limited to:

- Increasing accessibility for people with disabilities and sensory needs.
- Creating a welcoming environment and addressing perceived barriers for people who are historically marginalized based on race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age.
- Recruiting, hiring, and professional development practices aimed at creating and maintaining a diverse staff and supporting their career progression.
- Training staff to be aware of diversity and offer welcome to all patrons.
- Providing welcoming and accessible spaces for employees and customers, such as gender-neutral and wheelchair-accessible bathrooms.

Submit nominations online at decaturga.com/wba or emailed to Renae Jackson at renae.jackson@decaturga.com. Printable forms are also available for download on the website and should be mailed to City of Decatur, PO Box 220, Decatur, GA 30031. For more information, contact Renae Jackson at the email above.

Revival Women's Health, an obstetrics and gynecology practice, opened at 315 W. Ponce de Leon Ave. Visit joinrevival.co for more information.



Keller Williams Realty Metro Atlanta, a real estate brokerage, opened at 101 W. Ponce de Leon Ave. Visit kwmetroatl.com for more information.



Senior Events

Is This House Still Serving You?

June 17, 2 p.m. • Free

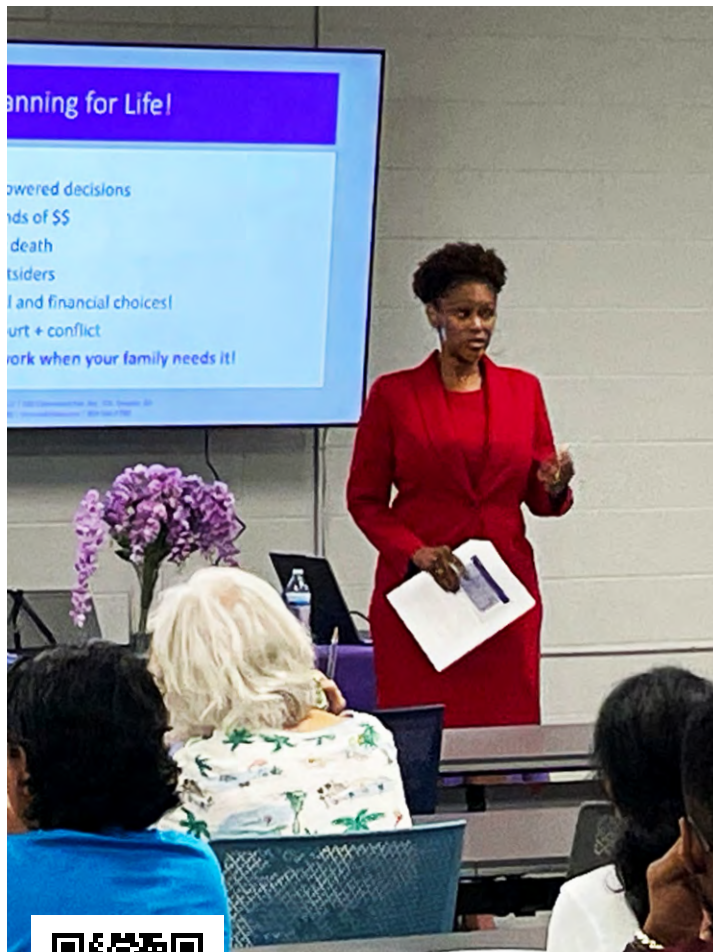
Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.

As we move into summer, it is a natural time to reflect. The home that worked years ago may not fit the same today. This session explores how housing needs change over time and offers simple tools to help you plan ahead, reduce stress, and support long-term safety and independence. RSVP to demetri.wheeler@decaturga.com.

Let's All Go to The Movies!

June 30 • \$25 • Senior Trip

Catch a midday matinee! Choice of movie to be determined. Movie admission and shuttle bus ride included in price. Register on CommunityPass by June 26.



Youth Events

Register on CommunityPass.

Father and Me Day Out

June 13 • 2-4 p.m. • \$35 R/\$45 NR; \$20/sibling

Oakhurst Rec Center, 450 E Lake Dr.

An unforgettable afternoon for dads and their kids to spend quality time together. Enjoy fun activities, shared experiences, and plenty of opportunities to connect. A chance to create lasting memories and celebrate the special bond you share.

Oakhurst Family Games

June 27 • 12-2 p.m. • \$15 R/\$25 NR; Teams \$50 R/\$60 NR

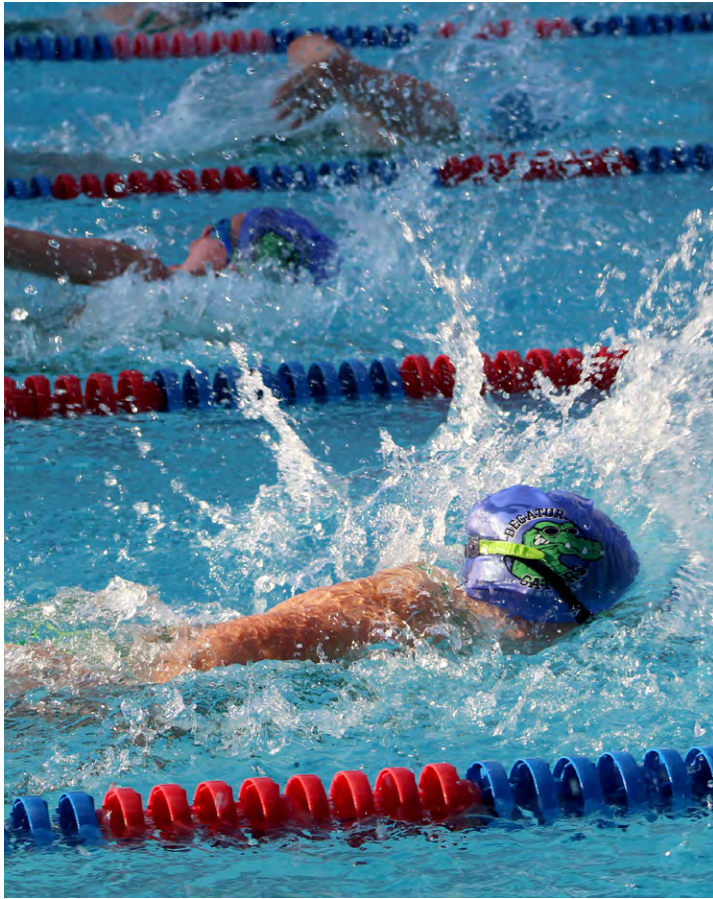
Oakhurst Rec Center, 450 E Lake Dr.

Kick off your summer at the Oakhurst Family Games! Gather your family or friends to compete for medals, trophies, and bragging rights. Enjoy fun challenges, team spirit awards, and lots of laughter. Teams must consist of two to five participants, with a minimum of two kids under the age of 17. Individuals can also register to be placed on a team.



Register

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



Athletics

Register on [CommunityPass](#).

Gators Fall Swim Team

Registration opens June 29 • \$225 R/\$250 NR

Make a splash this fall with the exciting Fall League Swim Team season! Running Aug. 3 through Sept. 12, this high-energy program keeps swimmers active, improving their skills, and having fun in a supportive team environment. Practices take place Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at Ebster Pool, with swim meets on Saturday mornings.

The Academy at Glenlake

Monday-Thursday • 10:30-12:30 p.m. • \$210 R/\$235 NR

Glenlake Tennis Center Sessions for tournament-level competitive players ages 8-18 will be led by Academy Director Christy Lynch. Expect high-intensity live ball drills, competitive match play, and advanced strategy and mindset training in a fun and engaging environment. Sessions run June 8-11, June 15-18, July 13-16, and July 20-23.

Community

Baseball Opening Day Parade

June 6, 11 a.m.

Oakhurst Elementary School, 175 Mead Rd.

Get ready to kick off the baseball season at the annual Baseball Opening Day Parade! New this year — join us for a walking parade through Oakhurst. The parade begins at 11 a.m. at Oakhurst Elementary School and ends at Oakhurst Park, where games kick off at noon.

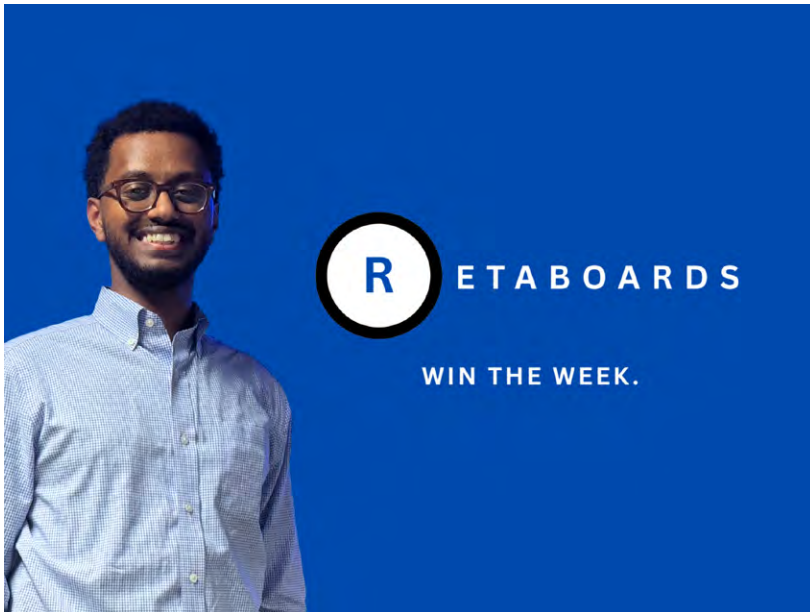


Go to decaturga.com/playbook or scan the QR code to see the latest Playbook, and dozens of programs for active children, youth, adults, and seniors.

DBA Member Highlight

Kib Yayehyrad is the founder of RetaBoards, a restaurant consulting team that provides technology services to help local restaurateurs manage their operations and “Win the Week.” Yayehyrad is also co-owner of Latin Fresh, a Latin cuisine restaurant in Decatur.

With eight years of experience in the restaurant industry, Yayehyrad created RetaBoards to help owners navigate technology decisions. The firm handles system design, setup, training, and ongoing maintenance, allowing restaurant owners to focus on day-to-day operations.



June Meeting Preview

June 23 • 5:30-7:30 p.m.

The Decatur Business Association invites members to its monthly membership meeting. The gathering offers an opportunity to hear announcements, connect with fellow business owners, and share ideas.

More details can be found at decaturbusinessassociation.com.

Escape the Heat at Woodlands Garden

Did you know that the temperature drops by up to 10 degrees under the tree canopy? Woodlands Garden is a free, public garden spanning more than seven acres of trees, providing shade and urban refuge for visitors. Stop by the Visitors Center to explore a collection of nature guides, books, and other resources for all ages.

Here are a few ways to enjoy the garden:

- Go for a peaceful walk on the trails and explore the Georgia Piedmont Native Garden and the Morse Family Heritage Garden.
- Pack a picnic and enjoy it on the lawn. Leave no trace when you say farewell.
- Bring the family and check out a Garden Exploration Kit filled with activities for visitors of all ages. Please note that pets are not permitted in the garden. For an outing with a dog, visit a City of Decatur Dog Park.
- Borrow a guidebook and binoculars from the Visitors Center to look for favorite birds or native plants.
- Check the calendar for upcoming programs such as guided garden tours, Tai Chi, Music in the Garden, and more.

For more information on current programming, visit woodlandsgarden.org or follow [@woodlandsgarden](https://twitter.com/woodlandsgarden) on social media.

Mascots of Decatur



Decatur Education Foundation was honored to be a part of the annual CSD Art Exhibition, March 31-April 2 at The Solarium, to experience a showcase of the incredibly talented CSD teachers and students. This year's theme for Youth Art Month, "The World Needs Art," reminds us of the vital role art plays in our lives.

Students from every CSD school submitted their original artwork for a chance to be featured on a t-shirt that would be used as a fundraiser for Zara's Fund, DEF's arts fund. The Mascots of Decatur t-shirts were well received at the CSD Art Exhibition and while supplies last are available with a minimum \$30 donation. Make your donation and include your t-shirt sizes on our homepage at decatureducationfoundation.org.

Green Office Expands in Decatur with New Space and Flexible Summer League

Green Office, the indoor golf studio in Downtown Decatur, is moving into a larger space inside The Sycamore Building this summer and launching its second summer season with two ways to play.

The move reflects Green Office's focus on building a more consistent, accessible place for people to play golf, learn, and connect in Decatur. The larger space will allow for more players, expanded programming, and continued growth as a community hub.

This summer, Green Office is introducing the Summer Greenie experience. One season, two paths. Compete in the Summer League for a chance to win free membership or build your game in Summer Camp and start saying yes to the golf trips. Both run June 1 through August 31, designed to fit around travel, busy schedules, and Atlanta's summer heat.

The Summer League is a 2v2 competition where players book two-hour rounds with tee times released weekly, completing six rounds to qualify. Top teams advance to a playoff for the chance to win a year of free golf.

Summer Camp brings group instruction to Green Office all summer long. Five lessons on a flexible schedule, with new lesson times dropping weekly for adults, juniors, and everyone in between.

Both programs include 20% off additional practice all summer. Registration is open now with spots filling weekly. Learn more at greenoffice.golf/summer.

Decatur Civic Chorus Completes 75th Season

The Decatur Civic Chorus has completed its 75th season. The chorus partnered with PORCH Decatur and the Frank Hamilton School for its spring concert. The chorus will resume activities after Labor Day. Those interested in joining for the 76th season can learn more at decaturcivicchorus.org/sing-with-us. For updates, follow [@decaturcivicchorusga](https://www.facebook.com/decaturcivicchorusga) on Facebook and Instagram.



Meaningful Conversations in Decatur

Guild+Journeyman hosts a community event every Saturday from 2-4 p.m. called "Meaningful Conversations in Decatur." This free event, organized by the Decatur Bahá'í community, is meant to spark meaningful dialogue. Inspired by writings from the Bahá'í Faith, the event is open to everyone and welcomes every perspective. Go to [facebook.com/MeaningfulConversationsDecatur](https://www.facebook.com/MeaningfulConversationsDecatur) to learn more about upcoming topics.



Summer Solstice ArtWalk

Thursday, June 18, 6-10 p.m.

Downtown Decatur

Decatur Arts Alliance invites the community to a Summer Solstice ArtWalk, a free evening stroll through downtown Decatur featuring live art activations, light refreshments, and participating shops, galleries, restaurants, and retailers.

Look for SunSpot posters at participating businesses, which include a QR code linking to a digital map of locations. A limited number of complimentary items will be available at each stop while supplies last.

Visit decaturartsalliance.org/event/summer-solstice-artwalk for more information.



Wylde Center Summer Camp Registration Open

Wylde Center has openings available for summer camp sessions the weeks of June 15 and June 22. Two programs are offered:

Wylde Critter Camp introduces campers to insects, worms, pollinators, and other garden residents through outdoor exploration and play, with a focus on how these creatures support local ecosystems.

Garden Constructions Camp invites campers to design and build using natural and reclaimed materials, with an emphasis on creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving in an outdoor setting.

Both camps are screen-free and held outdoors. Spots are limited. To register, visit wyldecenter.org/camps.



Music Together of Decatur Fall Classes Now Enrolling

Music Together of Decatur fall classes begin Sept. 12, with enrollment currently underway. Classes are designed for babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and their caregivers and incorporate singing, dancing, and group music-making.

Classes are offered at First Baptist Church of Decatur and The Retreat at Decatur. The Retreat location features Music Together's Generations class, which brings young children and senior residents together to make music.

Email wendy@musictogetherofdecatur.com for more information or to register, or call 678-466-0737.



Photo: AC Madden

HOME v.2: Homeland

May 29–July 18
 Thursday-Saturday from 1-5 p.m.
 Fourth Floor Gallery of the Decatur Library
 215 Sycamore St.

HOME v.2: Homeland is a juried multimedia exhibition presented by the Decatur Arts Alliance in collaboration with the Decatur Land Trust.

The exhibition explores homeland as both a geographical point of origin and a state of being, with works expressing cultural and ethnic elements. Themes include the experience of home from the perspective of immigrants, expatriates, displaced communities, and indigenous peoples, as well as how cultures preserve heritage and acknowledge the indigenous inhabitants of the lands on which communities now live.

The exhibition is sponsored by Ameris Bank, Russell Elam The Mortgage Pilot, Chad & Christina Carter Real Estate, and Lockman Homebuilding Co.

Volunteers are needed to serve as gallery sitters. Visit decaturationartsalliance.org/volunteer to learn more or to sign up.



Serenity, Gabriela Landaverde



Descendant of Magyars, Living on Ute Land, Carrie Keating



Absence of Presence #14, Terry Brewer



Same Blood, Desteney Pelcastre

Compassion Corridor Grows With New Public Art Installation

In May, neighbors gathered in Scottdale to celebrate the unveiling of Lungs of Mother Earth, a new public art installation and the next milestone in the growing Compassion Corridor. Created by artist and Master Naturalist Shannon Willow and led by Compassionate Atlanta, the event brought together approximately 75 residents along the PATH trail at 541 Proctor Ave.

Attendees heard a talk on eco-consciousness, explored the surrounding pollinator meadow, and each took home a native plant. The installation connects to the nearby Heart of Mother Earth in Clarkston, forming a symbolic link across the corridor.

The Compassion Corridor is an expanding environmental art and community initiative designed to connect Clarkston and Scottdale, with future plans extending through Avondale Estates, Legacy Park, downtown Decatur, and toward Stone Mountain. Each segment brings together art, nature, and community voice to foster environmental stewardship and community connection.

Upcoming opportunities to participate include:

Shakespeare on the Green – No More Liddering Workshop May 23, Avondale Green A workshop inviting participants to create art from recycled materials, held during Shakespeare on the Green.

Peace Post Workshops June 6, 13 and 27, 9 a.m.-noon at Tobie Grant Recreation Center. Community members can help shape a permanent Peace Post through workshops led by Posts for Peace and Justice.

Eco Workshops with Shannon Willow Sept. 20 and Oct. 4 at the Lungs of Mother Earth site, 541 Proctor Ave. Hands-on workshops covering native planting and environmental care.

A Compassion Corridor Peace Walk is also planned for early fall. The corridor is supported in part by the DeKalb Arts Alliance’s efforts to expand access to public art across DeKalb County.

For the latest Compassion Corridor news, visit compassionateATL.org/corridor.



Decatur Filmmaker Premieres Short Film at McDonough Storytellers Film Festival

Decatur-based filmmaker Naserian (Nse) Gioia recently premiered their debut short film, *Sweet and Tender*, at 7 Stages Theatre in May as part of a curated short film program followed by a live Q&A.

The 8.5-minute film follows a man who believes he overhears something important while inside a restroom stall and must decide whether to act when no one else can hear him.

Gioia has submitted the film for consideration in the inaugural McDonough Storytellers Film Festival, taking place June 5-6 at McDonough Square in McDonough, hosted in part by Story on the Square. The festival will include film screenings, storytelling panels, and discussions. On June 5, a conversational panel titled “The Secret Sauce to Great Storytelling” will bring together local authors to discuss creative process and narrative craft.

For more information and tickets, visit storyonthesquare.com.



EVENTS CALENDAR

JUNE

- 1 City Commission Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 4-7 Amplify My Community Concert**, 12 p.m., 400 Church St., page 15
- 8 Zoning Board of Appeals**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 9 Parks & Rec Board Meeting**, 6 p.m., Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.
- 9 Better Together Advisory Board Meeting**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 9 Planning Commission**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 15 City Commission Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 16 Historic Preservation Commission Meeting**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 18 Summer Solstice ArtWalk**, 6-10 p.m., Downtown Decatur, page 12
- 22 Environmental Sustainability Board Meeting**, 4 p.m., Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.
- 22 Lifelong Community Advisory Board Meeting**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 27 Pollinator Festival**, 10 a.m., Harmony Park, Oakview Rd., page 16

JULY

- 4 Pied Piper Parade**, Concert & Fireworks, 6 p.m., Downtown Decatur
- 14 Parks & Rec Board Meeting**, 6 p.m., Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.
- 18 Decatur 4 Mile**, 7 a.m., Decatur High, 310 N McDonough St.
- 20 City Commission Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 27 Environmental Sustainability Board Meeting**, 4 p.m., Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.
- 27 Lifelong Community Advisory Board Meeting**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.

Visit decaturnwatchfest26.com for Decatur WatchFest 26 concerts.

Amplify Decatur Music Festival Returns for 10th Year

The 10th annual Amplify Decatur Music Festival returns June 4-7, with events on and around Decatur Square, at Avon Theatre in Avondale Estates, and at Eddie's Attic. All proceeds benefit Decatur Cooperative Ministry, the Decatur Education Foundation, and Neighbor in Need.

The festival's flagship concert, scheduled for June 6 on the new downtown Decatur stage, will feature performances by Gillian Welch and David Rawlings, Patterson Hood of Drive-By Truckers, Dylan LeBlanc, Kyshona, and Georgia Mountain Stringband with Reverend Hylton. The show runs 3-11 p.m.

The full four-day schedule:

Thursday, June 4, 7 p.m. Penny and Sparrow with Eliot Bronson Avon Theatre, 106 N. Avondale Road, Avondale Estates. Ticketed event; tickets start at \$53.89 with VIP packages available.

Friday, June 5, 5 p.m. Pop-up performances at select restaurants on and around Decatur Square, including Brick Store Pub's Beer Garden and O'Sullivan's Pub.

Friday, June 5, 6:30 p.m. The Sundogs Present: The Tom Petty Show with Canyonland featuring Michelle Malone, Decatur Square, 101 E. Court Square, free. The evening includes a silent auction benefiting Neighbor in Need.

Saturday, June 6, 3-11 p.m. Gillian Welch and David Rawlings, Patterson Hood of Drive-By Truckers, Dylan LeBlanc, Kyshona, Georgia Mountain Stringband, and more, Decatur Square, 101 E. Court Square. Tickets start at \$75 with VIP packages available.

Sunday, June 7, 8 p.m. Amplify Hall of Fame featuring Run Katie Run, Eli Blackshear, StoryGhost, Wyatt Espalin, Polly Holliday, and Mike Killeen, Eddie's Attic, 515-B N. McDonough St. Tickets start at \$26.70.

The festival is presented by Lenz and produced in partnership with Eddie's Attic. Amplify My Community, the Decatur-based organization that hosts the festival, has produced more than 140 concerts and donated more than \$645,000 in unrestricted gifts to anti-homelessness and poverty-focused organizations. For tickets and more information, visit amplifydecaturn.org.

Decatur Cooperative Ministry, founded in 1969, works to help families facing homelessness find safe, stable housing through a range of prevention and supportive programs.

Decatur Education Foundation supports City Schools of Decatur students with resources, opportunities, and experiences to foster academic success.

Neighbor in Need provides critical home repairs for low-income seniors in Atlanta's East Lake, Kirkwood, and Edgewood neighborhoods. The organization is volunteer-run, with all funds directed to licensed contractors.



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South Columbia Multi-Use Path Opens at Legacy Park

The City of Decatur celebrated the completion of Phase III of the South Columbia Multi Use Path with a ribbon cutting ceremony at Legacy Park in May. Community members, City leadership, staff, and partners gathered to recognize the completion of the project and Decatur once again being named the highest-ranking Bicycle Friendly Community in Georgia with a Silver-level designation from the League of American Bicyclists.

The South Columbia Multi Use Path is part of a larger effort to improve connectivity throughout the city by linking neighborhoods, schools, parks, and destinations through safer walking and biking infrastructure. The path also supports Safe Routes to School connections for Talley Street Upper Elementary and Winnona Park Elementary and helps advance the City's vision of a more connected, walkable, and bike-friendly community.

Guests celebrated the occasion with bicycle-themed cupcakes while recognizing another step forward in active transportation, mobility, and community wellness in Decatur.



Beecatur Pollinator Festival

Saturday, June 27 • 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Harmony Park, corner of Oakview Rd. and East Lake Dr.,
Oakhurst neighborhood

Bee City USA- Decatur, a program of Wylde Center, will present its annual Pollinator Festival at Harmony Park in Decatur's Oakhurst neighborhood. This free, family-friendly festival celebrates pollinators, native plants, and environmental sustainability. This year's event also marks Beecatur's 10th year as a Bee City USA affiliate.



The festival will feature environmental organization exhibitors, face painting for children, and music. For more information, visit facebook.com/events/26916049651354382.

Decatur DeKalb 4 Miler

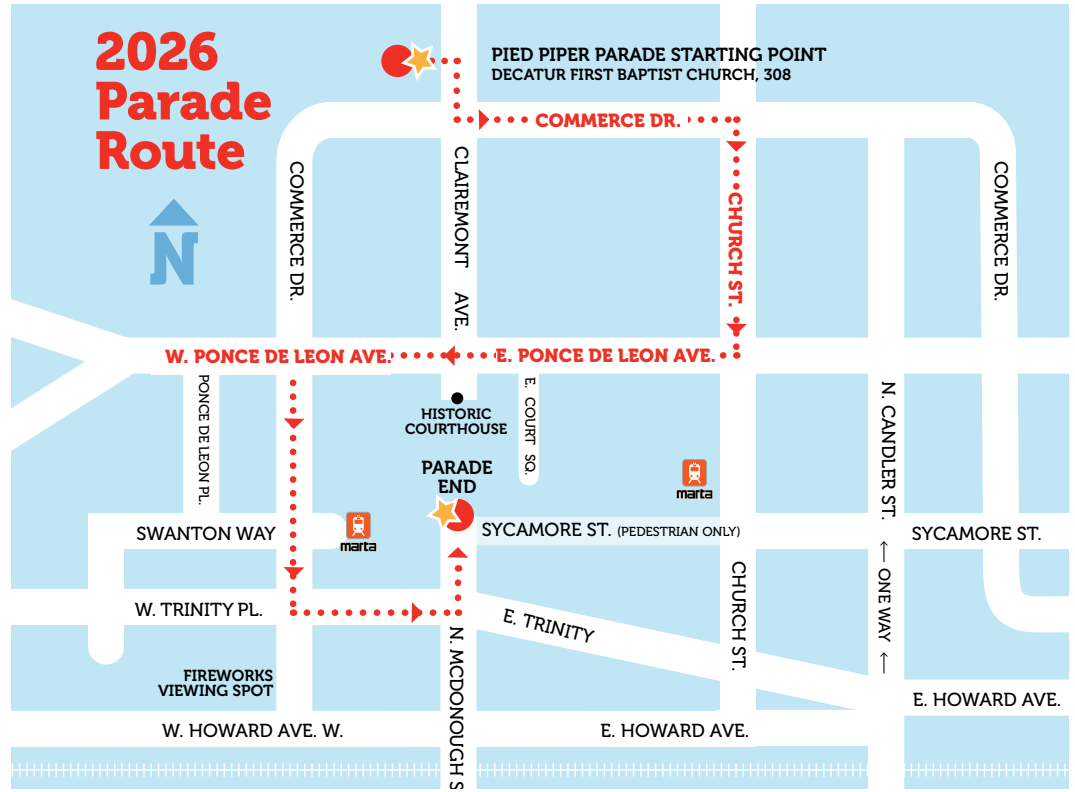
Saturday, July 18 • 7-10 a.m.
Decatur High School, 310 N McDonough St.

The Decatur DeKalb 4 Miler is part of the Atlanta Track Club's 2026 Grand Prix Series. The race runs through Decatur neighborhoods and is considered one of the Atlanta Track Club's more challenging courses. Registration opens 60 days prior to the event. For more information, visit atlantatrackclub.org/grand-prix-series.



July 4 Pied Piper Parade

July 4 • Downtown Decatur
 Celebrate Independence Day with a hometown tradition in downtown Decatur. Watch or join the Pied Piper Parade as it winds through downtown with floats, wagons, and bicycles. Community members of all ages are invited to walk, ride, or skate in this inclusive parade. Neighborhoods and organizations are encouraged to participate. Following the parade, find a place on Decatur Square for a community celebration, concert, and a fireworks display, which begins after dark at 9:15 p.m.



Agnes Scott College Post-Bacc Bridge Program Prepares Students for Health Professions

Known for its rigorous pre-medical studies, Agnes Scott College supports career changers and grade enhancers as they transition into the health professions. The Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Bridge Program is a graduate-level certificate designed to strengthen academic credentials for medical, dental, veterinary, and other health professions programs.

At the heart of the program is academic renewal. This one-year pathway is ideal for students who need to complete or refresh core science prerequisites. Students take foundational courses such as Biology I and II, along with an integrated test preparation course for exams like the MCAT, DAT, or GRE.

After building a strong science foundation, eligible students may bridge into the Medical Sciences Accelerated master's program. Advanced, graduate-level coursework, including Anatomy and Physiology I and II, allows

students to further strengthen their academic profile while continuing their education during a gap year as they move through the medical school application process.

Throughout the journey, students receive individualized guidance from Agnes Scott's health professions advising team. Advisers support every stage of the health professions application process, from refining personal statements and preparing for interviews to identifying purposeful clinical and volunteer experiences aligned with long-term goals.

With rigorous coursework, expert advising, and clear pathways to academic success, the Post-Bacc Pre-Medical Bridge Program helps students move confidently to a career in the health professions.

For more information and admission requirements, visit agnesscott.edu/forwardthinkers.



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DHS Boys' Golf Team Heads to State Tournament, First Time in 20 Years

The Decatur High School (DHS) boys golf team qualified for the state golf tournament. This achievement marks the first time in 20 years for the team after finishing second in the Area Tournament led by senior captain William Campbell, who fired a 77; junior dual-sport threat Andrew Westerkom, who carded the low score of the day for the team

at 76; senior Owen De Winne, who fired an 83, and junior Austin Nobles, who recorded an 81. Other DHS golfers were Henry Widener, Rossi Chamberlain, Parker Jordan and Jacob Pinyon.

The team competed in the 36-stroke play state championship at the Jekyll Island Golf Club in May.



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DHS Senior Named 2026 Georgia Scholar by GaDOE

Decatur High School (DHS) senior Payton Sobon became the third DHS student to receive the prestigious recognition of being named a GaDOE Georgia Scholar. Payton's commitment shines through in every aspect—from holding pivotal roles in the DHS Student Government Association and Best Buddies Club to notable academic achievements in the Science National Honor Society, National Honor Society, and Mu Alpha Theta. Payton also serves as senior captain for the DHS Girls Varsity Lacrosse Team. Beyond her school activities, Payton has also served on the City of Decatur Environmental Sustainability Board and the Decatur Youth Action Team and volunteered at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Sobon has made a positive impact on her school and community. She plans to attend the University of Chicago and major in Economics.



Payton Sobon

DHS Seniors Earn "5 Strong" Scholarships

Congratulations to Decatur High School (DHS) seniors Mohamed Atik, Morgan Arnold, Hamza Holbrook and Isaiah Pierson for earning scholarships through the 5 Strong Scholarship Foundation. All DHS applicants participated in a rigorous process alongside students from across Metro Atlanta to be matched with a college or university of their choice. Each earned a full-tuition scholarship. 5 Strong is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization that partners with HBCUs to provide promising student leaders with scholarships and ongoing mentorship and support from matriculation to graduation.



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What's next for our Class of 2026 DHS seniors?

The class of 2026 shared their post-graduation plans at Decision Day on Friday, May 1, on the Decatur High School field. Students and staff celebrated as each senior announced their future plans. We are eagerly looking forward to seeing what these seniors will achieve!



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CSD Celebrates Future Educators and Real Estate Agents at Signing Day

City Schools of Decatur (CSD) celebrated Decatur High School (DHS) Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) with two signing days during the second annual Future Educators Signing Day. The day honored current DHS high school students, CSD student teachers, and CSD paraprofessionals and their milestone steps towards entering the teaching professions through the respective CTAE pathway.

Later, DHS juniors Karsyn Baker, Joshua Black, and Audra Zaemisch were honored with a separate signing ceremony, marking their Work-Based Learning (WBL) real estate internships with Olivia J. Price Real Estate, where they will take their real estate licensing exam and gain hands-on industry experience. CSD is proud to support these students as they grow in their careers.





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Two DHS Students Selected for Governor's Honors Program

Decatur High School (DHS) students Charlotte Kemper and Charles Kennedy were selected as finalists for the Georgia Governor's Honors Program (GHP), a highly selective summer program for gifted and talented rising juniors and seniors. They will attend the four-week residential program to immerse themselves in courses from their selected area of concentration. Charlotte Kemper will focus on German, and Charles Kennedy will study engineering.



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