

# Ardmore Business District Authority The Ardmore Initiative Annual Report 2013



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### ex officio

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**Christine Vilardo**, Executive Director  
**Linda Suter**, Office Manager (PT)  
**Nicole Ratke**, Marketing Director (PT)  
**Cyndi MacFarland**, Office Staff (PT)  
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Our **MISSION** is to create and maintain a thriving, economically viable downtown business district for the benefit of merchants, residents, and visitors alike and to serve as advocates for the district's commercial property and business owners.

The Ardmore Initiative en**VISIONs** Ardmore as a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown center with a diverse mix of businesses and restaurants.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ARDMORE INITIATIVE

The Ardmore Initiative (AI) is a business district authority responsible for economic development, advocacy, business recruitment and retention, marketing and promotions, streetscape amenities, and oversight of Façade Improvement programs within Ardmore's central business district. The Ardmore Initiative started as the Ardmore Main Street program in 1988, was designated a municipal business district authority by the Township of Lower Merion (LMT) in 1993, and was renewed in 1998, 2003, 2008, and 2013. We are a nationally accredited Main Street Program (National Trust for Historic Preservation), and designation as a Keystone Communities Main Street is pending (new designation required due to restructuring within the Pa. Department of Community and Economic Development). We participated in the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Classic Towns program in 2011 and 2012. The organization's constituent base is made up of business and property owners within the district. AI's primary source of funding is a special assessment on commercial properties within the district boundaries, which generates approximately \$175,000 annually. Fundraising and grant activities generated an additional \$120,000 in 2013. These revenues are used to support our above-mentioned programs and activities.



## BUSINESS RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

The Ardmore Initiative works to assist downtown businesses, to identify and attract a strategic mix of businesses to downtown Ardmore, and to promote commercial properties through a variety of programs and marketing activities. **In 2013, we continued the CDBG funded Business Assistance Grant program, awarding \$20,000 grants to The Tasting Room and to Lulu's Casita.** These grantees join 2012 awardees, Tired Hands Brewing Company and Viva Video.

**These 4 businesses have created 12 FT and 18 PT jobs for low-moderate income individuals.**



### 2013 "Charlie" Award Recipients:

**CHARLIE AWARD:** Mike Silver

**SHINING STAR:** Budo Bunul

**COMMUNITY BRIGHT SPOT:** Janet Long



## ORGANIZATION

The organization is overseen by an 11-17 member Board of Directors, comprised of local property and business owners, residents, professionals, and representatives from Lower Merion Township. Along with their time and expertise, our Board members also make annual financial contributions to the organization. In addition to the working Board, many in the community serve as volunteers on committees, special projects, and special events. The Board is run by an Executive Committee consisting of Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer, and the Initiative conducts its activities through Board-led committees and Task Groups.

The staff consists of a full-time Executive Director, 2 part-time administrative assistants, and a part-time person responsible for sidewalk cleaning. AI also sub-contracts a Marketing Director on an as-needed basis.

## ARDMORE BY THE NUMBERS IN 2013

**1,058** Volunteer hours devoted to Ardmore

**\$2,662,449\*** in improvements to 53 properties

\*This is an increase over previous years: \$1,136,952 for 44 properties in 2011, and \$923,888 for 40 properties in 2012. - Based on LMT permit activity

**\$776,073** Amt. Ardmore generated for LMT parking revenues (41%)

**216** district businesses that occupy ground level, **77** retail, **40** restaurant,

**65** service and **34** professional uses.

**"ARDMORE IS A SPECIAL PLACE.** Its mix of people, businesses and entertainment is unlike any other on the Main Line. It is affordable, yet offers best-in-class living, dining and shopping, all with a close-knit community feel."

— Joe Petrucci, The Tasting Room



## MARKETING & PROMOTIONS

The Ardmore Initiative engaged in the following Marketing Activities in 2013:

**March and November (Holiday) "Ardmore Spotlight" Supplements in Main Line Today Magazine**- reach 230,000 readers, additional 2500 copies distributed at community events

**Main Line Times Taste Program Book/ Holiday supplement**

**10,000 copies of new Pocket Guide and Downtown Map**, distributed to businesses, at events, and at the U.S. Open held at Merion Golf Club

**Seasonal and event marketing campaigns** designed with a variety of print and online components to reach target markets at several key points of interest

**Quarterly print newsletter** (also available online)

**Print and online ad campaigns** with Main Line Media News and Main Line Today

**57 E-blasts** to our list of over 1300 subscribers

**51 Media mentions for AI** (increase over 36 mentions in 2012)

We are also **building a strong online community** by interacting daily on

**FACEBOOK TWITTER INSTAGRAM ALLABOUTARDMORE.COM**

## GRANTS & FUNDRAISING

Our signature fundraiser in 2013 was the popular Taste of Ardmore event. In its 5<sup>th</sup> year in 2013, the event involved 20 restaurants, 12 retailers, 5 salons and 17 volunteer models in a showcase of Ardmore's food and fashion scene.

In 2013, we added the Infiniti of Ardmore Open Festival in June to coincide with the U.S. Open Championship at Merion Golf Club. Event sponsorships, vendor fees, and ticket sales generated \$45,500. We also operate a fee-for-service program that provides services to and generates revenue from out-of-district businesses and from special events such as Clover Market, Ardmore Oktoberfest, and the Cricket Craft & BrewFest.

In 2013 we disbursed \$34,540 from a 2012 \$80,000 New Communities Grant we received from the Pa. Department of Community & Economic Development (\$26,218 for Façade improvement grants, \$2746 for Streetscape improvements, \$5576 for Marketing activities.) We also received a \$500 pledge from the State Farm Foundation, and a contribution of \$10,000 from Lower Merion Township.

## DESIGN & STREETScape

905 hours in downtown cleaning- this is an increase over the 878 hours in 2012.

50 downtown flower pots are planted 3 times per year with seasonal plants. The flower and tree beds are cut back and maintained semi-annually.

Façade Improvement Grants totaling \$26,218 were awarded to the following 10 business/property owners for facade projects totaling \$61,543:

**A La Maison \$1682.75**

**Froyo La La \$1750**

**The Tasting Room \$727.44**

**Kunz Law \$1270.71**

**Lance Rogers Counsel \$5000**

**Melodies Café \$4131**

**pucciManuli \$3859.50**

**Photopoulos Family \$5000**

**The Mud Room \$941.43**

**Viva Video \$1855**



Photo by Top Gun Photography



Photo by Ann Marie Casey Photography

**"DOWNTOWN ARDMORE'S IDENTITY IS EVOLVING. The growth of the business district has been organic and market-driven. The majority of households in LMT are classified as family households, and many of Ardmore's new businesses serve this market. Also, the rebranding of Brownie's 23 East as the Ardmore Music Hall, along with new restaurants, significantly increase Ardmore's desirability as an "After 5" destination."**

– Christine Vilardo, Executive Director of The Ardmore Initiative

# NEW IN 2013

**Cut N Shave Barber Shop**

**Canby's on Cricket** (closed)

**E&A Therapy**

**Froyo La La**

**Jules Thin Crust Pizza**

**L'aragosta**

**Lulu's Casita**

**Melodies Café**

**The Tasting Room by JPM Catering**

**Paint Spot**

**pucciManuli**

**Trillium Flowers**

## New Names/New Locations:

**Ardmore Music Hall**

(formerly Brownies 23 East)

**Santander Bank**

(formerly Sovereign Bank)

**Stash Knits**

**First Position Dance Arts**

**SNAP Pizza**

(formerly Peace-A-Pizza)

## Coming Soon:

**Host Interiors, Iron Hill Brewery**

**Maido, Tired Hands** (additional location)

# WORTH NOTING

New in 2013, **Last Friday Movie Nights**, produced by Viva Video, join **First Friday Main Line**, **Ardmore Oktoberfest**, and **Cricket Craft & Brew Fest** and **Clover Market** as business-owner-driven events that further contribute to the vitality of downtown Ardmore.

**The commercial properties in the district are valued at \$100,625,810.**

According to tax millage rates, we estimate that these properties have contributed to the tax base as follows: \$--- to Lower Merion Township, \$---- to the School District and \$ to Montgomery County.

Ardmore was pilot location for Creative Montco's "Art Out of the Box" project repurposing Philadelphia Inquirer honor boxes into functional and/or whimsical art creations.



Photo by Ann Marie Casey Photography



Photo by Top Gun Photography

## 2013 FINANCIAL INFORMATION\*

### Revenues

Assessment Revenue	180,432
Fee for Service	7,252
Fundraising Events, Sponsorships & Contributions	47,120
Interest Income	556
Miscellaneous Revenue	2,867
Reimbursed Program Expenses	200
Grants	64,540
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>300,100</b>

### Expenses

Business Support & Advocacy	124,221
Economic Development & Marketing	50,087
Fundraising & Special Event Expenses	13,019
General & Operating Expenses	51,583
Streetscape	37,709
Training & Professional Development	403
Grants Awarded	46,218
<b>Donations</b>	<b>192</b>

<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>323,240</b>
<b>Net Income (Loss)</b>	<b>&lt;23,140&gt;</b>

\*Pre-audit figures, reported on accrual basis