

# YPA Founder Steps Down after 10 Years

By Carolyn Ristau *The Bulletin*

*Friendship* – After founding the Young Preservationists Association (YPA) in 2002 and presiding as the chief executive officer for 10 years, Dan Holland of Friendship stepped down from his post at the end of June. Since 2002, Holland and YPA made great strides in involving youth in historic preservation in the Pittsburgh region.

Holland started YPA “because it needed to be started.” The goal of YPA is to “put young people front and center, at the core of preservation activities.” YPA works to create a better quality of life through identifying, recognizing and restoring, renovating or adapting sites of historical significance in the region. It was the first preservation association in the country focused on young people. Now more than 10 cities nationwide have organizations dedicated to young preservationists. YPA was also part of a larger movement “to get young people involved in Pittsburgh.”

“The first board meeting was in my living room,” Holland said. “Three people showed up; I was one of them.” Over the years, YPA grew to a board of 15 members and to a membership of more than 350 people. In addition, more than 5,500 people participated in YPA events since 2002.

Even though YPA covers nine counties in southwestern Pennsylvania, it has done a lot of work in Pittsburgh’s East End neighbor-

hoods. Since 2005, YPA awarded the Michael Eversmeyer Promise Award honoring new preservation efforts to three East End groups: The Union Project, Highland Park, in 2005; students at the former Peabody High School, East Liberty, in 2011; and Michael Stanton and Open Hand Ministries, Garfield and East Liberty, in 2012.

Every year since 2003, YPA has published a list of Top 10 Preservation Opportunities in the Pittsburgh Region. These lists have frequently included sites from the East End such as Garfield’s B’Nai Israel Synagogue Sanctuary, East Liberty’s Town Square, Lawrenceville’s Pittsburgh Brewing Co. and East Liberty’s Highland Building.

Holland said he is most proud of the Youth Main Street Advisors Program YPA established. In this program, high school students spend a year researching and writing a book about their neighborhood, which then gets published. Students at the former Peabody High School participated in this program over the 2010-2011 school year, and published a book called “Pittsburgh’s East End: Then, Now and Later.” Holland explained that when the students hold the book in their hands “they know they’ve achieved all they set out to do and more. I know it means a lot to them.”

“This is only the tip of the iceberg. I hope

YPA can grow and expand and spread the message of young preservation nationally and internationally,” Holland said. He said he would like to see high school and college chapters of YPA in the future.

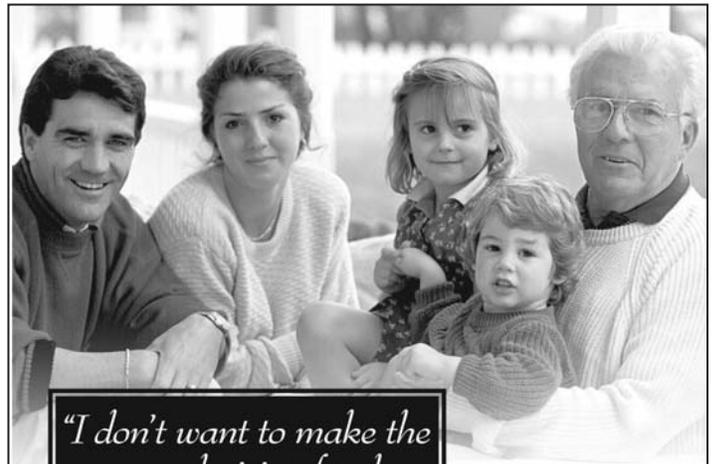
Although Holland stepped down as CEO, he explained, “I will remain as a consultant to the board and will continue to look for opportunities to work with young people. There is a feeling of hope and promise in young people.” Through the summer and fall, Holland will be coaching track and working on an oral history project with SLB Radio, a radio program that engages children, youth and families. While he will continue to work with other youth, Holland said one of his main goals is “getting my own kids involved in community and leadership.”

Looking over the past 10 years with YPA, Holland said, “I want to acknowledge the role the board and advisory committee played in making this a great experience. It

was an amazing team effort. We were fortunate to have such good teamwork.”

For more information about YPA, its programs and awards, visit [youngpreservationists.org](http://youngpreservationists.org).

BELOW: Rick Sebak, emcee at YPA’s 10th Anniversary Celebration, and Dan Holland. Photo by Carolyn Ristau



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