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The Annapolis Times

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Hundreds Volunteer to Help Revitalize Collington Square



Kevin McCarthy, Senior Manager, T. Rowe Price; Savannah Isner, Senior Specialist for Comcast Public Relations; Jessica J. Gappa, Director of Community Impact for Comcast Cable; Dana Robinson of the Baltimore Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; Lawrence Williams of Delta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and his son Ethan Williams, 15, during the 18th annual Comcast Cares Day on Saturday, May 4, 2019. Now in its 18th year, Comcast Cares Day is one of the largest corporate commitments to volunteerism and service in America. To date, more than 1 million Comcast Cares Day volunteers have contributed over 6 million service hours to improve local communities at more than 10,000 projects. (See article on page 8) Photo: Ursula V. Battle

Vaccines protect you, your family and your community

By Matthew Baker
Region III Regional Director
Health and Human Services

Washington, D.C.— Pockets of our country are experiencing a significant uptick in the number of measles. Measles is not just a harmless childhood illness. It is actually a highly contagious, dangerous disease that can even be deadly.

However, measles is also easily preventable with a safe and highly effective vaccine. It is especially important to remember the value of vaccines as we mark National Infant Immunization Week, which reminds us that vaccines are essential to the health of our youngest and most vulnerable.

As a regional director for the Department of Health and Human Services Region III, which includes Maryland, it's my job to raise awareness of facts that can help protect the health of all Americans. Vaccines play an extremely important role in this goal because they save lives, protect your children from

debilitating and deadly diseases, and promote the overall health of the community where you live and work.

Vaccines are safe and highly effective. There is a lot of misinformation swirling around out there suggesting otherwise, so we want to get the facts out.

Vaccines are among the most extensively studied medical products we have. Large studies undertaken over the years have confirmed their safety again and again. Vaccines do not cause autism and do not contain toxic chemicals. Any serious side effects from vaccines are exceedingly rare, and the protection from diseases that vaccines provide outweighs any risks.

Some parents also wonder whether it is safe for children to get multiple vaccines in a day. The answer is yes, and we have years of science that backs that up. Even if your child gets several vaccines in a day, the weakened germs in vaccines that build protection make up only a tiny fraction of what a child's immune system fights off every day.

So what can you do to maximize the



value of vaccines and help stop preventable diseases?

If you're a parent, talk to your child's doctor and make sure your child is up to date on all of his or her scheduled vaccinations. This is especially important if you have an infant, because vaccinating your baby according to the recommended immunization schedule provides protection against 14 serious childhood illnesses.

If you're an adult, check with your doctor about whether you're up to date on your vaccines.

If you're a healthcare provider, explain to your patients that vaccines are safe, effective, and highly recommended, and remind them to stick to their vaccine

schedule. For measles in particular, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that children get two doses of the MMR vaccine, starting with the first dose at 12 to 15 months of age, and the second dose at 4 through 6 years of age.

You can find out more about the measles vaccine and other vaccines at [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

We all want our children to grow up in a world that is free from preventable diseases. The single most important thing each of us can do to make that happen, is staying up to date on our vaccines. So let's get serious about this issue before it gets out of control—let's get vaccinated.

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Rookie Daylon Mack overcame depression and disappointment en route to Ravens

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens got quite a bargain when they selected defensive tackle Daylon Mack in the fifth round (No. 122 overall) of the 2019 NFL Draft. Mack was coming off a senior year at Texas A&M in which he posted 5.5 sacks and 9.5 tackles for a loss. The 6' 1" and 340 pound defensive lineman managed to rebound after a disappointing sophomore and junior year.

Mack was an Under Armour All-American coming out of Gladewater High School in Texas. He was considered a five-star recruit when he decided to attend Texas A&M. He showed promise as a freshman rotational player and ended his season with a forced fumble in the Aggies' loss to Louisville in the Music City Bowl.

The plan to go to the NFL after a couple of seasons in college seemed to be in tact. All Mack had to do was build on his outstanding freshman season. Unfortunately, a major change in his life had an adverse impact after his excellent freshman year.

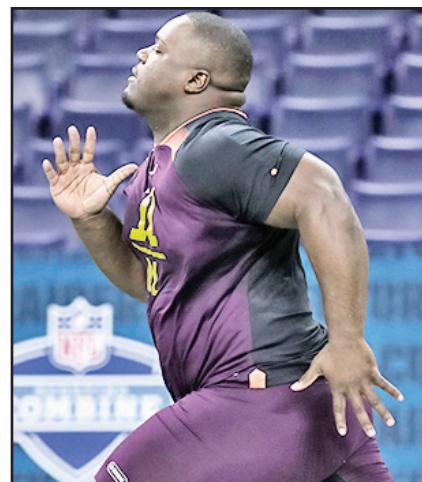
"My parents got a divorce during my

freshman year in college," Mack said at the Scouting Combine in March. "During the season it didn't affect me much but when I got home I saw how different things were."

Although he was never diagnosed with depression (he didn't seek help), Mack knows he was depressed. His production on the field reflected it. Mack struggled over the next two seasons. He only started one game only posting a combined 2.5 sacks and 7.5 tackles for a loss over the next two years. Mack considered transferring but decided to stick it out with Texas A&M.

Another change. This time, on the football field helped turn things around for the once budding star when new head coach Jimbo Fisher was hired to take over the program. Fisher then hired Mike Elko to be the defensive coordinator in 2018. He also had Elijah Robinson take over as the defensive line coach. Mack credits these three coaches with helping him turn things around.

"They came in and gave me a different mentality. They changed my life," Mack said.



Baltimore Ravens rookie Daylon Mack running the 40-yard dash at the 2019 NFL Combine in Indianapolis.
Courtesy Photo/nfl.com

The new defensive scheme allowed Mack to return to the up field, attacking player that he once was. He became known for his disruptive play during his senior year. Next up was an invitation to the East-West Shrine game where Mack played well enough to earn a call to play

in the Reese's Senior Bowl the following week.

Mack's performance during both weeks of practice paid off. The Ravens have always placed a heavy emphasis on college all-star games. Former GM Ozzie Newsome made the annual trip to St. Petersburg for the East-West Shrine week practices. He would have current GM Eric DeCosta right by his side.

This year DeCosta made the trip to both weeks as the Ravens GM. Fortunately for Mack, DeCosta got to see him stand out in person.

"Daylon Mack is a big, strong guy we saw at the East-West Shrine game and the Senior Bowl. He has two-gap ability as a nose tackle but he's also a sneaky pass rusher. He ran a five-flat 40-yard dash. For a big guy, he moves pretty well," DeCosta said after the final day of the draft.

The college years were an up and down rollercoaster ride for Mack. He ended on a good note and now finds himself with a franchise that prides itself on defense. He will have veterans Brandon Williams and Michael Pierce to serve as mentors as well.

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Editorials/Letters

Lost one, gained two in Baltimore City Government

It would not be hyperbole to describe the assumption of Baltimore's latest mayor and city council president as the Dynamic Duo. The elevation of Bernard C. "Jack" Young as Baltimore's Mayor, and Brandon M. Scott as city council president, is an exciting transition coming on the heels of a very uncertain period in the Baltimore history.

The recent scandal, which precipitated the unforeseen changes at the helm at City Hall, has actually repositioned the city for greater overall stability, including a meaningful reduction in crime and violence, and economic growth that is more equitable for more of Baltimore citizens.

The key to the city's positive prospect's are not only the passion and ability these men have brought to the task of municipal governing individually, but the long-term personal and professional chemistry and superb working relationship these two leaders have developed over a decade.

In the case of Jack Young, nearly 25 years of City Council experience including almost a decade as City Council President, uniquely position him to work with his former colleagues to address critical issues facing the city.

Young's popularity and longevity as the council's leader suggests shared concerns and priorities for the city's agenda. Now that Jack Young is in the mayor's chair, perhaps many of the goals of the council can become official policies and laws more expeditiously.

As council president, Jack Young has demonstrated he sees the big picture of how Baltimore must develop to be competitive among American cities, and as a world-class venue for commerce and culture based on policies he's supported and votes he has taken.

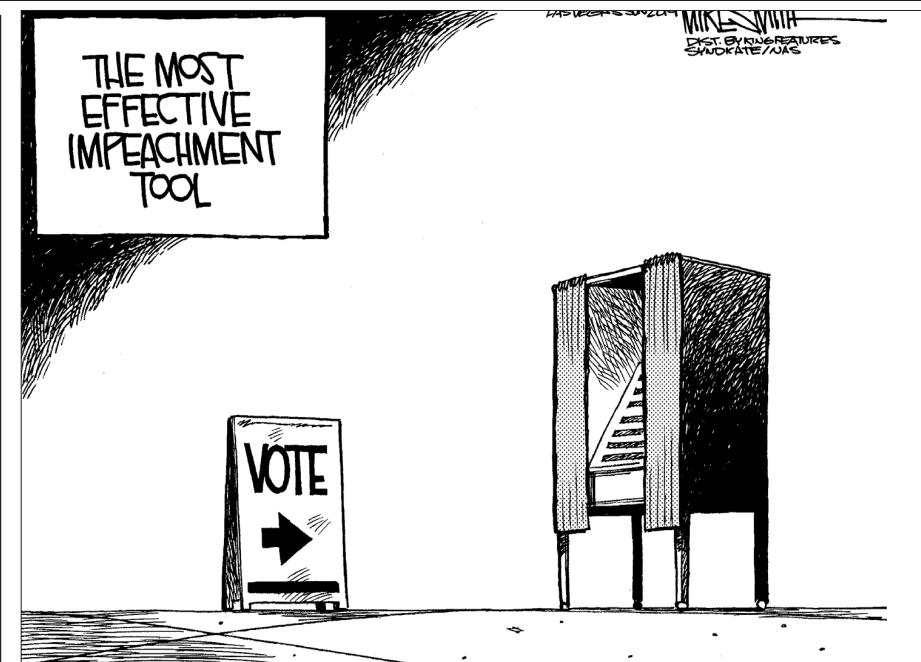
However, while fulfilling his role as a business booster, Young has kept his eye squarely on the prize as it relates to what is best for his constituents, and Baltimore's neighborhoods at-large, which is why he has remained a favorite of council members and voters alike. Jack Young is a steady hand at the wheel of city government at a crucial time.

Then there is Brandon Scott. As the youngest member ever elected to Baltimore City Council, and the first millennial chosen as the council's president, Scott is a youthful voice championing issues critical to the community, namely public safety. Scott has been an important partner of law enforcement when he recognized initiatives that have been germane to the interests and well being of citizens. On the other hand, he has been a fearless, unabashed critic of police where their policies, procedures and certain incidences were antithetical to citizen interests.

As a child of the Park Heights neighborhood, Scott has unfortunately been an unwilling witness to street violence and the ravages of Baltimore's high murder rates, which no doubt was a motivation for him to join, and then lead, the city council's Public Safety Committee. So seriously does Brandon Scott take the issue of murder in the Baltimore, he presided over his committee's meetings by opening with a report of the to-date murder tally and a moment of silence.

Along with his ascension to City Council President, Scott will also head the Board of Estimates, the municipal body that ultimately controls Baltimore City's purse strings. In this capacity he will heavily determine the appropriation of resources to fulfill the agenda of the city council relating to uplifting citizens that have been prioritized, in part, by himself and Jack Young.

Considering how bleak Baltimore's situation appeared just one week ago, citizens can take comfort that the city's governing is in very capable hands.



Letters to the Editor:

Editor:

Re: Two obnoxious and un-American Congresswomen

Incredibly, voters elected hate-filled Muslim women to the U.S. House of Representatives. Tlaib, Michigan and Omar, Minnesota have established platforms of Jew hating rhetoric. Is this typical of Muslim politicians?

It's not surprising the two women are Jew haters because many Muslims hate non-Muslims. This is why we should continue to restrict immigrants allowed into the United States from countries that harbor potential enemies. A very high percentage of Muslims from the Middle East and North Africa and around the world hate Christians as evidenced by thousands of attacks by Muslims on Christians over the centuries, including the 9/11/01 attacks in

the United States killing 3000 Americans, which Omar trivialized. She is un-American.

The United States, was founded on Christian principles by persecuted Christians who emigrated from Europe and most Americans believe in helping others in need, loving thy neighbors and respecting other religions. My extended family includes black Christians, Lutherans, Methodists, Unitarians, Jews, Catholics, Russian Orthodox and Evangelical Christians; and we all respect and nurture each other.

The two ugly mouthed congresswomen are disloyal to our country's founding principles and are un-American.

Donald Moskowitz
Londonderry, NH

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Page Opposite/Commentaries

Is the black jockey demise a precursor of where Pimlico is heading?

By Regi Taylor

Imagine if your great, great grandchild was viewing some cultural data on the Baltimore Times virtual communications portal during Black History Month in the year 2169, and happened upon a surreal account of a time 150 years earlier, in 2019, revealing that of the 494 National Basketball Association (NBA) players, 370 or 75 percent were African American, compared to only twenty or four percent, who were playing in the league contemporaneously.

Well, you don't have to imagine that this exact scenario has befallen the horseracing industry in America. In a 2012 CNN exposé, *The Forgotten Godfathers of Black American Sport*, Sheena McKenzie examined how the post-Civil War, pre-Jim Crow horseracing industry, then a nearly exclusive vocation for African American jockeys, had dwindled to less than three dozen riders nationally, of nearly 800 currently registered jockeys.

"Today you'd struggle to find an African-American jockey on a U.S. race

track. Just 30 of [roughly] 750 members of the National Jockey's Guild are black," according to McKenzie's CNN report. African American jockeys have gone from domination to decimation in American horseracing, representing only four percent of professional riders today.

As in other instances during and since slavery, when African Americans turned garbage into gold, former slaves elevated thoroughbred racing to an artform despite being conscripted by slave owners as

Maybe this shouldn't come as a surprise since 13 of the 15 jockeys competing in that race were African American. Fifteen of the first 28 Kentucky Derby Stakes were won by African American jockeys. However, the last African American jockey to win the Kentucky Derby was nearly 120 years ago in 1902 by 19-year-old James Winkfield, who also won the sweepstakes in 1901.

Twenty years after Winkfield's first Kentucky Derby win, 1921, the last

"Moreover, the early success of African American jockeys was further buttressed by the expertise of their support crews, also African Americans, who bred, trained, conditioned and groomed the race horses. These horse handlers were unsung but just as professional, and integral to the jockey's success at the finish line."

jockeys due to the perilous nature of racing horses for sport in the mid-1800s.

Not only were African American jockeys the original 'horse whisperers,' able to harmoniously engage with their steeds, they were able to develop a synergy that allowed them to function and perform as one with a horse, effectively channeling their mutual energies toward finishing first—efficiently and consistently.

Moreover, the early success of African American jockeys was further buttressed by the expertise of their support crews, also African Americans, who bred, trained, conditioned and groomed the race horses. These horse handlers were unsung but just as professional, and integral to the jockey's success at the finish line.

The very first Kentucky Derby Stakes, in 1875, was won by a renowned African American jockey, Oliver Lewis, at age 19.

African American jockey would compete in the prestigious Churchill Downs sweepstakes for the duration of the 20th century. Since 1921, only two African American jockeys have competed in the Kentucky Derby stakes: Marlon St Julien in 2000 and Kevin Krigger in 2013.

Besides seeing a previously spectacular display of African American athleticism essentially stolen as many of the culture's contributions have over the centuries, your great, great grandchild's visit to the Baltimore Times history portal would also provide them a glimpse of the admiration, even if fleeting, that the larger society would have for African American sports heroes.

African American jockey's success earned them cultural adulation and financial wealth comparable to today's sports superstars. Isaac Burns Murphy

the first jockey to win the Kentucky Derby three times, in 1884, 1890 and 1891. By 1887 he was arguably the highest paid athlete in the U.S., the first millionaire black athlete and in some quarters considered the best professional jockey of all time.

Some estimates say Isaac Murphy won 44 percent of his races, while the consensus accepts his success rate on the track being at least one win in three. An anonymous sports writer wrote about Murphy at the time: "He has a steady hand, a quick eye, a cool head, and a bold heart."

Not only did Burns employ a Caucasian valet, his purchase of a large home in Lexington, Kentucky was covered on the front of the June 13, 1887 edition of the New York Times.

The prevalence and good fortune of African American jockeys began to wane around the turn of the century. After 1900, the backlash of racism exercised through Jim Crow laws, and the lucrative lure of horseracing was attracting Caucasian riders who employed racist threats and physical intimidation to drive African American jockeys out of the sport.

There were frequent accounts of African American jockeys and their horses being steered against the rail, and sometimes shoved over, during races. Horse owners began to deny opportunities to African American jockeys less concerned about the riders well-being as much as their concern of possible injury to their expensive thoroughbreds.

Regi Taylor is a West Baltimore native. The married father of four is an artist, writer and media professional specializing in political history.

Want to comment on the editorials or any other story?

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Time off for boxer 'Papi' Allison means helping children reach their goals

By Stacy M. Brown

When Mack "Papi" Allison's latest boxing match scheduled for May 4, 2019 in Waldorf was postponed, the Baltimore fighter took the time to attend another one of his passions—helping others who aspire to ring greatness.

Allison, the son of boxing Hall of Fame member Mack Allison Jr., joined Coach Troy Harris and others at UnBoxed gym in Cockeysville, Maryland, where he helps to teach young ones the sweet science.

"Troy Harris admires the boxing knowledge that I have and he wanted me to help give some of that knowledge to the people at his gym," said Allison, who with a professional record of 10-2 is already on the fast track to getting a shot at a world title.

UnBoxed is a small group-training studio where individual fitness and wellness goals are assessed by fitness and health coaches. A combination of small group classes, personal training options and nutrition counseling offered at UnBoxed is tailored to each individual.

Each client is provided a coach whom Harris says is passionate and invested in their clients' success and assists and guides them to their desired goals. A variety of classes are also offered at the facility, including: fitness boxing, functional training, cardio, resistance training and yoga.

The Unboxed mission is to provide clients with an individualized fitness and wellness plan while coaching them to realize and reach their full potential.

The gym even includes martial arts and boxing in a 45-minute "Combo Kids" class designed to get young people moving and having fun while learning discipline, coordination and focus.



Baltimore boxer Mack "Papi" Allison IV in 2016 after he won the United States Boxing Union Championship. Now, whenever Allison has free time he helps to teach young people the sweet science at the UnBoxed gym in Cockeysville, Maryland. He also teaches kids how to play chess. Courtesy Photo

"I teach various ages, but most of them are kids," Allison said. "I like teaching people the basics because it's hard to start someone off. It's hard training people new to boxing because it's a lot of things they have to get accustomed to doing that they never previously did."

"But, I love watching the person finally catch on. That's my reward—seeing the person get better and finally catching on."

The time away from the ring also allows Allison a chance to help young people in another of his favorite pastimes—chess.

"I first learned how to play chess in middle school," Allison said. "An old friend of mine named Maurice Chandler taught me how to play chess. We were the same age, but he was so advanced at chess and who won numerous chess championships."

Now, Allison says he enjoys teaching kids to play chess because the game presents many strategic challenges that are useful in life.

"Chess is an important game because at any time you make the wrong move [and] it can cost you the game," Allison said. "So when I teach the kids it helps to make them think, and it teaches them patience, since a chess game can really be long."

Mostly though, Allison says he enjoys working with young ones and teaching them something they can use as they pursue their goals.

"The advice I give young ones is that nothing in life is easy, especially the goals you want to accomplish," Allison said. "But, I always tell them that they can do it. Just stay focused and don't quit no matter what!"

An advertisement for Acorn Stairlifts. On the left, a man and a woman are shown sitting on a white Acorn Stairlift. The man is smiling and looking towards the camera. The woman is also smiling. To the right of the image, there is text about the company's 25th anniversary and its solutions for mobility issues. There is also a promotional offer for \$250 off the purchase of a new stairlift.

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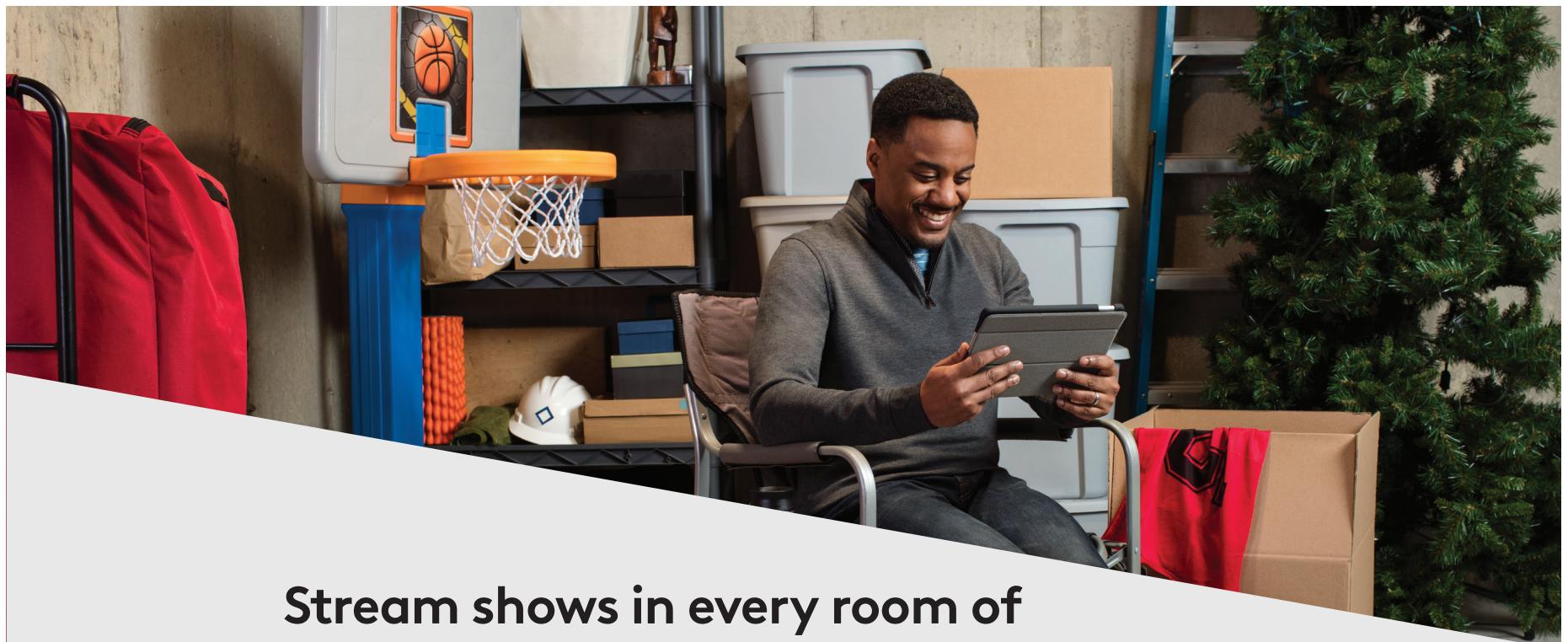
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Comcast Holds 18th Annual Comcast Cares Day

Hundreds Volunteer to Help Revitalize Collington Square

By Ursula V. Battle

Sleeves rolled up and working the gardening edger in her hand, Jessica J. Gappa, Director of Community Impact for Comcast Cable looked out at the picturesque view of Baltimore City from the grounds of Collington Square School.

"When you look out from here, it gives you a real feeling of promise," said Gappa. "Working together with fellow employees and community members, adds to that feeling. This is a city I love, and having this opportunity to give back is wonderful."

Glancing around at the scores of volunteers who were cleaning, painting the playground, power-washing, planting, and carrying out other activities, Gappa added, "When you talk about hope, well... this is it."

Gappa was among the hundreds of Comcast Cable employees, their families, friends and community partners, which included the Baltimore Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. who volunteered to clean and beautify Collington Square's elementary school, recreation center and neighborhood in Baltimore City as part of the 18th annual Comcast Cares Day.

Councilwoman Shannon Sneed of District 13 also participated in the event, which was held Saturday, May 4, 2019 at the school, which is located at 1409 N Collington Ave. in Baltimore. Activities also included painting murals (indoor and outdoor) and picking up trash and debris on and around school grounds.

"From the Comcast employee perspective, Comcast Cares Day is a part of my everyday job," said Gappa. "I live here, work here, and this is where I want to serve. I think that there is something really special about gathering so many community partners together. Great things happen when everyone pitches in and work together. One person can do a lot, but with a collective effort, so much more can be accomplished."

Comcast Cares Day is one of the largest corporate commitments to volun-



Comcast Cable employees and their families, friends and community partners, which included the Baltimore Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., all volunteered to clean and beautify Collington Square's elementary school, recreation center and neighborhood. Photos: Ursula V. Battle

teerism and service in America. To date, more than 1 million Comcast Cares Day volunteers have contributed over 6 million service hours to improve local communities at more than 10,000 projects.

"Comcast truly cares about our community," said Gappa. "As an employee, I am proud to be a part of this company."

Arlene Wongus, president of the Baltimore Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, said the sorority's participation aligns with its extensive array of public service initiatives through its Five-Point Programmatic Thrust: Educational Development, Economic Development, International Awareness and Involvement, Physical and Mental Health and Political Awareness and Involvement.

"We are a public service sorority," said Wongus, who highlighted the efforts of chapter member Cori Ramos. "We have been participating in Comcast Cares for many years. It's our way of giving back to various communities. We always have a large contingency to participate. As I look around, I get so excited looking at the transformation. I would love to see the students' faces when they return to school."

She added, "Environment makes a difference and says, 'we care'. All it takes is one day to make a tremendous difference in an area. We are all here because we want to help and make a difference."

Devin Johnson is the principal of Collington Square School.



Volunteers helped beautify the grounds of Collington Square School in East Baltimore during the 18th annual Comcast Cares Day on Saturday, May 4, 2019. Now in its 18th year, Comcast Cares Day is one of the largest corporate commitments to volunteerism and service in America. To date, more than 1 million Comcast Cares Day volunteers have contributed over 6 million service hours to improve local communities at more than 10,000 projects.

"It was inspiring to see so many fraternities, sororities, community members, parents and teachers dedicate their time to pour into a beautification project that will have a lasting impact on students," said Johnson. "It shows them the community cares about the environment in which they live, play and go to school."

He added, "In addition, several other projects were done, which included installing computer labs and upgrading our food pantry. This shows that people are not only willing to talk about it, but are

also willing to put time and sweat into their communities. That was evident today."

Johnson proudly surveyed the transformation made possible by the volunteers. As he walked outside the building, he was joined by parent Larry Wardlow.

"This made me smile," said Wardlow.

For more information on Comcast NBCUniversal volunteer and community impact initiatives, visit www.comcast.com/community.

50 Years Later, Father and Daughter To Unite

'The Greatest Mother's Day Gift I Could Have Ever Received'

By Ursula V. Battle

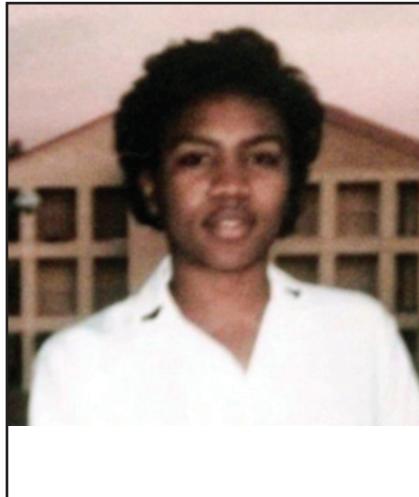
This is Part 1 of a Two-Part Series on the making of a Surprise 50-year reunion between Arthur Shepard and his daughter Brenda Sawyer. The father and daughter found one another through Ancestry.com and Facebook. Part 2 of the series will conclude next week with the result of the Surprise Reunion, which is taking place on the evening of Friday, May 10, 2019.

A daily prayer was always on the lips of Arthur Shepard. "I prayed that before I close my eyes for the last time, I would find my daughter," recalled the 66-year-old. Just over 700 miles down the road in Warner Robins, Georgia, a school teacher by the name of Brenda Sawyer was also praying to one day find a close relative. "I prayed that before I took my last breath, I would find my father," said the 49-year-old.

On Good Friday, April 19, 2019, the prayers of both Shepard and Sawyer were answered after the father and daughter connected as a result of Ancestry and the online social media networking service Facebook. Shepard recalled the message he received from Sawyer that day on Facebook.

"I was at a friend's house when I received the message from her on Good Friday. She wanted to know if I knew the name of a woman that lived in Washington, D.C. At first, I thought someone was playing with me. And then, I just fell apart because I knew this was my daughter."

The name of the woman Sawyer had given, was that of her biological mother. Sawyer was able to contact Shepard using Facebook after a persistent, decades-long journey.



Brenda Sawyer as a youngster.
Courtesy Photos

"She was looking for Tony, which is my nickname," said Shepard. "All of these years, she was looking for the wrong person, and so was I. But neither one of us gave up."

Sawyer utilized Ancestry to contact family members of Shepard, which eventually led to her correspondence with him on Facebook. The two then utilized AncestryDNA to confirm they were father and daughter.

The Ancestry brand family encompasses Ancestry, AncestryDNA, AncestryProGenealogists, and more. Sophisticated engineering and technology harnesses family history and consumer genomics, combining billions of rich historical records, millions of family trees, and samples from over 10 million people in the AncestryDNA database to provide people with deeply meaningful insights about who they are and where they come from.

"We took the DNA testing, and every-



Brenda Sawyer who turns 50 in July, is looking forward to meeting her father for the first time.

thing matched," said Shepard. "We have been talking and sending pictures back and forth ever since. It's like I am watching her grow up all over again. The last time I laid eyes on her, she was two days old. We will see each other again when she comes to Baltimore in May."

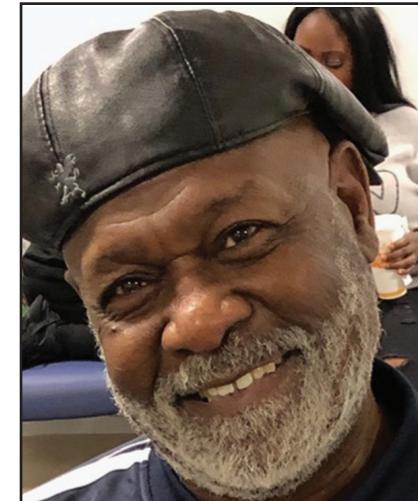
Little did Shepard know at Baltimore Times press time that the visit would be coming much sooner than he expected. With the help of Shepards' children and other relatives, Sawyer is coming to Maryland on Friday, May 10, 2019 for a surprise visit.

"I can't wait to see him," said Sawyer. "It's going to be a family reunion. After contacting him on Facebook, everything catapulted into now. I will turn 50 this year, and this has been one of the most amazing things I have ever felt."

According to Sawyer who was raised by her grandparents, the first clue she received as to who her father was, came from a relative.

"My relative told me his name was Tony," she recalled. "I named my son who is now 20 after him. I knew Tony could be many things, so I named my son after what I thought my father's name was - Anthony."

She added, "I kept that name Tony with me all my life. Sweet 16, then 18, and 25, and now I am almost 50. My fiancé gave me AncestryDNA for Christ-



Arthur Shepard, 66, is looking forward to seeing his daughter again.

mas. Through the test, I was able to connect with family members, and eventually my father. Some say it was AncestryDNA, and others will credit it to Facebook, but I know it was God. This is the greatest's Mother's Day gift I could have ever received."

Sawyer said her son, who is a sophomore at Kennesaw State University in Georgia, plans to travel to Maryland with her to meet his grandfather for the first time.

"All of my siblings and other relatives have reached out to me," said Sawyer. "They have really poured out. We talk on the phone for hours. They are so loving to me."

One of those siblings is Toni Saunders.

"When my father told us about the call that he received from his daughter, my initial thought was 'What in the tarnation is going on?'" said Saunders with a laugh. "As he went further into how she found him, I said 'Look at God.'"

She added, "As we approach this Mother's Day weekend, let us not forget that, yes we are uplifting the mothers who birthed, cared for and nurtured us...but within this miraculous story we are celebrating those who don't give up."

Coming in next week's edition: The Reunion. Also be sure to log-in to baltimoretimes-online.com/ to see video and photos captured from the long-awaited reunion of the father and daughter.

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You Can Help an ‘OrchKid’ Grow Over the Summer

\$20,000 Day of Giving Campaign to be held May 16

By Ursula V. Battle

To help keep its “OrchKids” growing over the summer, the program will hold its “Day of Giving” online crowdfunding campaign. The campaign will be held on Thursday, May 16, 2019, and will include String Ensemble, Wind Ensemble, and Full Orchestra performances by students from Booker T. Washington Middle School for the Arts, Mary Ann Winterling Elementary School and Highlandtown Elementary School.

The concert will take place at 5 p.m. in the Creative Arts Room of the Enoch Pratt Library located at 400 Cathedral St. in Baltimore.

“The Day of Giving is a day for us to do a big campaign to raise money for the OrchKids Summer Program,” said Raquel Whiting-Gilmer, Executive Director for OrchKids. “We host a four-week music summer program at The SEED School and serve over 150 students. We supply private lessons, ensemble classes, academic tutoring, and various fun activities for the students.”

She added, “We believe summer learning is really important. Our students feel they get a good mix of fun while also keeping up with their instrumental skills. Students from the East and West side come together for the summer. They get to meet new friends, and reconnect with old ones.”

OrchKids is a year-round during and after school, music program designed to create social change and nurture promising futures for youth in Baltimore City neighborhoods. Founded in 2008, OrchKids is the cornerstone of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra’s community engagement efforts across the city.

In collaboration with Baltimore City Public Schools and several community partners, OrchKids provides music education, instruments, academic instruction, meals, as well as performance and mentorship opportunities at no cost to students and families.

According to OrchKids, every summer, low-income youth lose two to three months in reading while their higher-in-



OrchKids students will hold a concert on May 16, 2019 at the Enoch Pratt Library as part of its Day of Giving fundraising campaign. Courtesy photos

come peers make slight gains. The program also points out that low-income youth lose access to healthy meals over the summer, and that six out of every seven students who receive free-and-reduced-price lunches lose access to them when school lets out for the break.

“Students are actively engaged with a full day program from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.,” said Whiting-Gilmer. “Through this program, we are helping to avoid summer learning loss. Summer is really an important time. When kids don’t have places to go when they are out of school, that is problematic. We want them to be safe and productive.”

According to Whiting-Gilmer, program expenses includes shuttle transportation for the students, which costs \$500 per-day, along with other expenses, which includes meals, field trips, academic tutoring, recess and physical activities, guest artist performances, and sending OrchKids students to prestigious summer programming opportunities across the country.

“We provide a lot of opportunities for our students,” said Whiting-Gilmer. “Students from all over the city get to experience extensive musical programs and travel to other places which include Europe. We pick them up from their school-based site, and then transport



OrchKids is a year-round during and after school, music program designed to create social change and nurture promising futures for youth in Baltimore City neighborhoods.



The OrchKids Summer Program offers its students tutoring and a variety of other activities.

them to The SEED School.”

She added, “Every day, the program costs us a few hundred dollars. Through the Day of Giving, we want people to be a part of supporting the phenomenal journey of these students.”

The organization is also looking for both groups and individuals to volunteer in areas which include: academic tutoring, serving meals and snacks, morning greeters, and classroom support.

According to Whiting-Gilmer, the last “Day of Giving Campaign” took place in 2017, and raised over \$30,000. This year’s goal is \$20,000. Whiting-Gilmer is hopeful this year’s campaign will also surpass its fundraising goal.”

“We did great in 2017,” she said. “We raised over \$30,000 and our goal was

\$10,000. This year, our goal is \$20,000. Like 2017, we are hoping to surpass our fundraising goal.

Recently, OrchKids received some news that was “music to their ears”:

“We had a donor who said they would match our campaign dollar-for-dollar up to \$10,000,” said Whiting-Gilmer. “That gives us a great start. The campaign is online. People can also send in gifts. People can also attend the concert and bring their contributions. We are asking everyone to join in and support this wonderful endeavor to support our summer music camp.”

To support OrchKids’ “Day of Giving” online campaign visit <https://www.bso-music.org/>. For more information call (410) 783-8061.

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Marylanders warned about DNA testing scam targeting Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries

Baltimore— Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh, is warning consumers to be suspicious of representatives of companies that purport to offer "free" DNA testing to check for cancer. The DNA testing scam is a new twist used by scammers to trick people into giving away their health insurance information for the purpose of committing identity theft and fraud.

Scammers are targeting Medicare beneficiaries with phone calls and by visiting health fairs, assisted living homes, and senior events. Claiming the DNA testing, is covered by Medicare, they will use a cotton swab stick to take a saliva sample from the inside of your mouth. They request your Medicare information and may also ask for your social security number. Do not be fooled; this is a scam. Medicare only pays for certain genetic testing and cancer screenings that are medically necessary and ordered by a doctor.

In other states, scammers have also targeted Medicaid beneficiaries by claiming to be affiliated with a local Medicaid insurer. In Louisville, Kentucky, scammers paid \$20 to Medicaid recipients as an incentive for them to take a DNA test, and subsequently requested their Medicaid insurance information. It is illegal to pay anyone who is a recipient of government health insurance to induce them to receive a medical service.

Although the Maryland Office of Attorney General has received a small number of complaints, other states across the country have received numerous complaints about the DNA testing scam, which may be the work of an organized group or individuals acting alone.

The scam raises concerns about potential health care fraud and identity theft since scammers have the names of con-



Call 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227) or 1-800-HHS-TIPS if you think you have been the victim of Medicare fraud and contact the Maryland Department of Health's Program Integrity Division at 1-866-770-7175 if you believe you have been the victim of Medicaid fraud.

Photo Credit: ClipArt.com

sumers and their health insurance information. This information could be sold to unscrupulous health care providers who may bill Medicare and Medicaid for medical services that were not provided to the consumer. It could also be used by an imposter to obtain free medical care using your identity and health insurance information.

It is unclear if the genetic samples or test results are being misused or sold for other illicit purposes. Authorities in other states have found evidence of cheek swabs being discarded rather than sent away for actual genetic testing at health fairs.

"These scammers prey on vulnerable individuals, exploiting them for profit

and potentially to steal their identities," said Attorney General Frosh. "I encourage anyone who has been a victim of this 'DNA' scam or seen it carried out within their community to immediately report it to our Health Education and Advocacy Unit by calling 410-528-1840 or toll-free at 1-877-261-8807."

Additional tips on how to protect yourself against the DNA testing scam:

- Be suspicious of anyone offering free DNA tests and cancer screenings. Only a doctor can determine if such testing is medically necessary for you. Be suspicious of anyone offering to pay you to take a DNA test; it is against the law for Medicare or Medicaid beneficiaries to receive payment in exchange for under-

going medical tests.

- Never share your Medicare or Medicaid insurance number (or Social Security Number) with anyone who offers free medical products or medical services.

- Monitor your credit reports for unauthorized activity and your Medicare statements for suspicious charges, especially if you have shared your personal medical information with anyone offering a free DNA test.

- Call 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227) or 1-800-HHS-TIPS if you think you have been the victim of Medicare fraud. Contact the Maryland Department of Health's Program Integrity Division at 1-866-770-7175 if you believe you have been the victim of Medicaid fraud.



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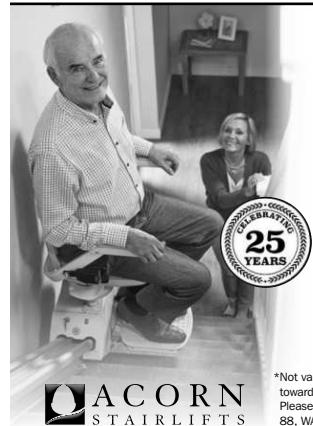


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