

## Park Heights Renaissance Leads Successful Nonviolence Rally



*The Park Heights Renaissance-Freedom School program held from July 1 to August 2, 2019 was a collaborative effort by participants from the Mayor's Employment Development Youth Works, Safe Streets Park Heights, and Baltimore Clay Works. Freedom School, a component of Park Heights Renaissance, is an academic enrichment program based in various schools, faith institutions, and community centers from around the country. Park Heights Renaissance engages in commercial and residential development projects, community outreach, education initiatives in area schools. The rally included more than 150 students who gathered at the Shirley Avenue Park carrying signs and slogans protesting violence. (See article on page 2)*

Courtesy Photo/Park Heights Renaissance Youth Works

# Park Heights Renaissance leads successful nonviolence rally

By Stacy M. Brown

To people who comprise the board, staff, and partners of the Park Heights Renaissance, the community that bears the same name of the nonprofit is more than a geographically organized collection of streets.

Park Heights is a highly diverse community, which shares a common aspiration to rebuild. It offers enhanced quality of life and economy opportunity, according to community leaders.

This was highlighted recently by a rally to prevent and stop violence in the neighborhood.

The event, titled “Park Heights Renaissance-Freedom School rally,” was successful, said Kaliq Simms, the education liaison for the Park Heights Renaissance.

Freedom School, a component of Park Heights Renaissance, is an academic enrichment program based in various schools, faith institutions, and community centers from around the country.

“Thirty high school youth published original stories of their lives in Baltimore and created a community mural in Park Heights’ Shirley Avenue Park,” Simms said.

The rally was part of a program for youth that ran from July 1 to August 2, 2019. Participants included individuals from the mayor’s Employment Development Youth Works, Safe Streets Park Heights, and Baltimore Clay Works.

“It was a truly collaborative effort where we hosted 30 high school youth from Baltimore in a program meant to teach career skills and community service,” Simms said.

A component of The Park Heights Ren-



(Left) Young man wearing a t-shirt that clearly expresses the sentiments of the Park Heights community. (Right) Master artist and teacher Herb Massie in the Youth Works Art Room with students as they work on a mural that when completed will be located in the Shirley Avenue Park at 3939 Reisterstown Road. Courtesy Photos/Park Heights Renaissance



naissance is to encourage and help educate the area’s youth, including teaching them how to write and publish books.

“The books [the students wrote and published during the program] featured their life stories and many of the youth took time to reflect on their experiences, set goals, and to affirm the family members and friends who have supported them,” Simms said.

In addition to book publishing, the youth staff learned how to create mosaic mural art for community beautification.

The rally included more than 150 students who gathered at the Shirley Avenue Park carrying signs and slogans protesting violence. Simms says this

was done to help young residents to understand the importance of community participation. He further said the organization must continue to lead by example.

“Park Heights Renaissance is the main community development organization in the neighborhood,” Simms said.

Park Heights Renaissance engages in commercial and residential development projects, community outreach, education initiatives in area schools, and performing landscaping tasks. The organization also partners with Safe Streets in efforts to reduce violence.

“Park Heights is the place to be,” Simms said. “There is so much potential for growth here.”

A Morgan State University graduate and fourth-generation Baltimorean, Simms taught for nearly two decades in

the city’s independent schools. Later, he opened a consulting business where he works to address inequities in education for underrepresented families. He chairs the Baltimore Student Diversity Leadership Conference, an annual high school student-led affair that promotes diversity, inclusion, and education equity.

“At Park Heights Renaissance, we pose this simple choice to our community, as well as to our legislators: ‘Children or guns?’ Simms said.

“We choose children every time and prove it by all of the work we are doing in this community to give them excellent educational opportunities,” he said. “We want them to know that they are our number one priority. I believe in Baltimore’s greatness, and I am honored to be a part of that legacy.”

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## Friendships may influence bone health in women



Baltimore— It turns out that good friends really do have your back—and your skeletal system, too. A new study funded by the Women's Health Initiative has identified a correlation between quality of social life and likelihood of bone health.

According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, nearly half of women over age fifty will break a bone due to osteoporosis—a disease in which bones progressively lose density, grow brittle, and become prone to fracture. While men can also be affected, post-menopausal women are at higher risk because of reduced estrogen levels.

In a study of more than 11,000 post-menopausal women, researchers found that participants who reported high levels of satisfaction with their friendships and low levels of social stress experienced less bone density loss in a 6-year period than women who lacked quality friendships.

In addition to investing in your friendships, you can care for your bones by following these suggestions from the experts at Saint Agnes Healthcare:

- Take your vitamins.** The Office on Women's Health recommends that post-menopausal women pay attention to their calcium and vitamin D intake.

- Lift some weights.** Weight-bearing activities are encouraged by the CDC in order to boost your strength.

- Practice moderation.** According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, it's wise to refrain from smoking and to limit your alcohol consumption to two drinks per day.

# Guest Editorials/Commentary

## New trade agreement would help black-owned businesses prosper

By Ron Busby

The number of black-owned businesses has increased by more than 30 percent over the last decade to 2.6 million. Congress can boost that number even higher by ratifying the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement as signed by all three nations. This recently negotiated trade deal is full of provisions that will help black-owned businesses create, grow, and thrive for decades to come.

USMCA updates the North American Free Trade Agreement, the 1994 deal that quadrupled trade among the United States, Mexico, and Canada and created the world's largest free-trade zone.

Under NAFTA, black-owned businesses have flourished. Today, America's black-owned businesses generate more than \$150 billion in economic output.

But the world's economy has transformed since 1994. Back then, music and movies were consumed via cassette and VHS tapes, data was stored on floppy disks, e-commerce barely existed, and the Internet was largely a tool for university researchers.

USMCA responds to the past 25 years of technological advancements with a slew of 21st-century provisions that will make it easier for Black-owned businesses to trade internationally— while making them more competitive at home.

Black business owners have long been at the forefront of innovation, specifically in creative industries. In 1959, Berry Gordy founded Motown Records out of a garage with just \$800. He would go on to transform the music industry and manage a catalog that includes hits by The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, and Marvin Gaye.

Gordy's success was due in a large part to the robust intellectual property protections that safeguard American musicians, writers and other artists. For years, the United States has led the world in protecting intellectual property. Thanks to USMCA, Canada and Mexico will soon join us in protecting artists' creations and concepts.

Under USMCA, authors, musicians, filmmakers, visual artists, and software designers will enjoy 20 extra years of copyright protection for their creations compared to the status quo. This would afford black creators additional time to turn a profit from their books, music, art and movies— incentivizing the development of future creative content. USMCA also protects intellectual property beyond American borders, where 95 percent of the world's consumers live.

Black entrepreneurs are no strangers to the international market. Two decades after Motown's founding, Robert L. Johnson launched Black Entertainment Television with just two hours of programming per week. Today, BET programming reaches 90 million households around the world, from Canada and the Caribbean to Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. Black business owners across the country are eager to follow in Johnson's footsteps. Sixty-six percent of black business owners express a desire to expand beyond their current region and scale.

USMCA gives black-owned businesses the ability to succeed in the ever-changing international economy. The deal includes measures that would curb the trade of counterfeit goods and online piracy. Meanwhile, a prohibition on customs duties for digital products like video games and e-books will make it easier for Black creators to send their works abroad.

USMCA also raises the de minimis threshold, the value at which any international shipment is subject to customs duties and taxes. A higher threshold means that American businesses will pay less to ship products to customers in Mexico and Canada. Less paperwork, fewer fees, and larger markets all but ensure that black-owned businesses will become more profitable and competitive.

Reginald Lewis was the first black businessman to build a billion-dollar international conglomerate. When asked about the ambitions and future potential of black entrepreneurs, Lewis answered: "I think the sky is the limit."

Lewis was right. The talents and drive of Black entrepreneurs are boundless. And with USMCA ratified, there's no question that Black-owned businesses will reach new heights in the 21st century.

Ron Busby is president and CEO of the U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.



## Community Affairs

### BGE reminds customers that every dig requires a call to 811

Baltimore— Sunday, 8/11, served as a reminder for all customers and contractors to call 811 before digging so utility-owned underground lines can be identified and marked.

While incidents of damage to BGE's natural gas system have been reduced by 30 percent since 2006, making the company one of the leading natural gas utilities for reduced damages, an underground utility line is damaged every six minutes nationwide.

In partnership with the Common Ground Alliance, the national association that promotes the 811 phone number and safe digging practices, BGE reminds everyone that striking an underground electric or natural gas line can cause serious injury, damages and service interruptions.

Every digging project, no matter how large or small, warrants a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, building a deck, planting a tree and laying a patio are all examples of projects for which calling 811 prior to digging is appropriate.

BGE has more than 17,000 circuit miles of underground electric lines— 65 percent of the electric distribution system. Additionally, there are nearly 14,000 miles of BGE natural gas distribution and service lines throughout central Maryland. In addition to BGE's lines, there are underground communications cables, water and sewer lines, and other utilities.

When calling 811, customers and contractors are connected to Miss Utility, the local one-call center, which notifies BGE and other utilities of the intent to dig at a location. The utilities' professional locators then mark the approximate locations of underground lines with flags, spray paint or both at digging sites. Once lines are located, customers and contractors must understand the markings and look for evidence of unmarked lines, such as water and sewer lines on private property. Sewer cleanouts and water valve covers are examples of equipment that can indicate the presence of underground lines. After lines are marked, customers and contractors must proceed carefully. Hand dig with caution and never use mechanized equipment near marked utilities. To learn more, visit [www.bge.com/811](http://www.bge.com/811).

## Who cares about fair elections?

By Julianne Malveaux, NNPA  
NewsWire Contributor

The US House of Representatives passed the Securing America's Fair Elections (SAFE) Act in June by a nearly totally partisan vote of 225-184 in late June. Only one Republican voted for legislation that would mandate paper ballots, increase election security, and create safeguards to prevent foreign interference in our elections. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) opposes the legislation and won't even allow it to be introduced or voted on in the Senate.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was eloquently angry when she raised a series of questions, "I just would really like to know from my Republican friends, what's wrong with replacing outdated, vulnerable voting equipment? What is wrong with requiring paper ballot voting systems to ensure the integrity of our elections? What is wrong with

enacting strong cybersecurity requirements for elections technology vendors and voting systems? We must be relentless in the defense of our democracy, fighting on all fronts to keep America safe."

Republicans don't seem to want to defend democracy, though. They simply want to win. And McConnell, who

the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965. Arnwine's organization is among the many planning to ensure both voter turnout and election fairness in the upcoming elections. With so many focused on the 2020 election, and appropriately so, it is essential to note that 2019 elections are also significant. Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi

Some of them use a "state's right" argument, suggesting that states can manage their own elections on their own terms. African Americans understand states' rights all too well. States' rights made it necessary for our nation to pass a Voting Rights Act, despite the guarantees included in the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments. The question to ask is the questions Speaker Pelosi asked when the legislation came up for a vote on June 27. What's wrong with election fairness?

It is indisputable that Russia interfered in the 2016 elections to aid the 45th President. It is undeniable that millions of voters have been purged from the polls since 2016 with Secretaries of State eager to influence elections, as they did in both Georgia and Florida in 2018. It is indisputable that while Florida voters attempted to restore votes to former felons, the legislature undermined that vote by requiring people to pay all fines and fees before they are allowed to vote.

If the Congressional vote on the SAFE Act is any indication, Republicans don't want election fairness. They want to win by whatever means necessary. We've invaded foreign countries to "ensure democracy," but our Congress does not have the decency to ensure democracy at home. Since the government won't do its work, civil society organizations will have to. Kudos to Barbara Arnwine and the Transformative Justice Coalition for their work on voter fairness!

*Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist. Her latest project MALVEAUX! On UDCTV is available on youtube.com. For booking, wholesale inquiries or for more information, visit: [www.juliannealveaux.com](http://www.juliannealveaux.com).*

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***"Former special counsel Robert Mueller III testified that Russian election interference was happening even as he testified, too many Republicans chose to ignore his warning because it does not serve them.***

***McConnell is among those who seem to hope that Russian interference aids Republicans and perhaps ensures the reelection of the most odious human being ever to occupy the Oval Office."***

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behaves like the 45th President's handmaiden, has abandoned his duty as Senate leader in favor of partisan shenanigans. Former special counsel Robert Mueller III testified that Russian election interference was happening even as he testified, too many Republicans chose to ignore his warning because it does not serve them. McConnell is among those who seem to hope that Russian interference aids Republicans and perhaps ensures the reelection of the most odious human being ever to occupy the Oval Office.

Meanwhile, people are organizing and attempting to overcome interference by mobilizing the Democratic base of voters. Barbara Arnwine, who founded and leads the Transformative Justice Coalition ([www.tjcoalition.org](http://www.tjcoalition.org)) gathered dozens of activists to participate in a day-long strategy session on voting rights on August 7, fifty-four years after

will elect governors, New Jersey, and Virginia are among those who will elect state legislators, and some cities will elect mayors.

Activists can use these elections to test our broken system, and as practice, perhaps for 2020. But activists must also be clear that Republicans don't seem to want fair elections. If they did, McConnell would schedule a vote on the SAFE Act, which provides dollars for better, safer, voting technology.

Both houses of Congress are on recess this August month, and won't reconvene until after Labor Day. Most members of Congress will say that they aren't taking a six-week vacation because they are also working in their districts. Citizens need to meet with them, organize town hall meetings, and get input from those recalcitrant Republicans (all of the Democrats voted for the SAFE Act) on why they eschew fair elections.

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**Mailing Address**

**The Baltimore Times**

**2513 N. Charles Street**

**Baltimore, MD 21218**

**Phone: 410-366-3900- Fax 410-243-1627**

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# Comcast closing digital divide by opening more doors of eligibility

By Ursula V. Battle

A Chicago mother whose children had to use her cell phone at McDonalds to access the Internet; a Miami mother who had to use the Internet at a library to complete her homework. These were among the real-life stories David L. Cohen, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer of Comcast NBCUniversal highlighted in announcing the company's largest ever expansion of its Internet Essentials Program.

"I have met hundreds of families, mothers, and children whose stories broke my heart, but also gave hope," said Cohen in announcing Internet Essentials is expanding its eligibility to include all qualified low-income households in its service area.

"This expansion is the culmination of an audacious goal we set eight years ago, which was to meaningfully and significantly close the digital divide for low-income Americans," said Cohen. "The Internet is arguably the most important technological innovation in history, and it is unacceptable that we live in a country where millions of families and individuals are missing out on this life-changing resource.

"Whether the Internet is used for students to do their homework, adults to look for and apply for new jobs, seniors to keep in touch with friends and family, or veterans to access their well-deserved benefits or medical assistance, it is absolutely essential to be connected in our modern, digital age."

Internet Essentials is the nation's largest, most comprehensive, and most successful broadband adoption program in America. Comcast estimates a total of nearly seven million households now have access to low-cost Internet service,



*Since August 2011, Comcast's Internet Essentials has connected more than eight million low-income individuals from two million households, to the Internet at home.*  
Courtesy Photo/Comcast

which literally doubles the total number of previously eligible households. The expansion is the most significant change in the program's history.

Internet Essentials has an integrated, wrap-around design that addresses each of the three major barriers to broadband adoption that research has identified. These include: a lack of digital literacy skills, lack of awareness of the relevance of the Internet to everyday life needs, and fear of the internet, the lack of a computer, and cost.

"This expansion is the culmination of an audacious goal we set eight years ago, which was to meaningfully and significantly close the digital divide for low-income Americans," said Cohen.

The program includes multiple options to access free digital literacy training; the option to purchase an Internet-ready

computer for less than \$150; and low-cost, high-speed Internet service for \$9.95 a month plus tax. The program is structured as a partnership between Comcast and tens of thousands of school districts, libraries, elected officials, and nonprofit community partners.

"The secret sauce is making the investment with our partners to provide literacy training and expose them to the important things they can do with the Internet," said Cohen.

In making the announcement, Cohen also noted that since August 2011, Internet Essentials has connected millions to the Internet at home, most for the first time in their lives. Comcast's announcement follows 11 prior eligibility expansions.

"This is not a press release program," said Cohen. "You have to build partnership to reach and connect with these dif-

ferent populations. We want them to hear about the value and relevance of the Internet to them and subscribe to this program. We know significant hurdles remain. Too many people remain locked out."

Pointing out the "equalizing potential of the internet" for low-income individuals, Cohen also highlighted U.S. Census data statistics.

"According to the data, households living in cities with the highest poverty rates, are up to 10 times more likely than those in higher earning communities not to have fixed broadband at home," said Cohen. "For example, in Palo Alto, California or Bethesda, Maryland, where poverty rates are very low only about six percent of households do not have a broadband Internet subscription— 94 percent are connected.

"But in Trenton, New Jersey, and Flint, Michigan, where poverty rates are way above the national average, 60 percent or more of households do not have fixed broadband at home— that is, less than half are connected. That gap of more than 50 points defines the digital divide in this country."

Individuals participating in Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other government assistance programs may now apply for Internet Essentials.

The Company already accepts applications from households that have a student eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program; live in public housing or receive HUD Housing Assistance, including Section 8 vouchers; or participate in the Veterans Pension Program; and low-income seniors and community college students in select pilot markets.



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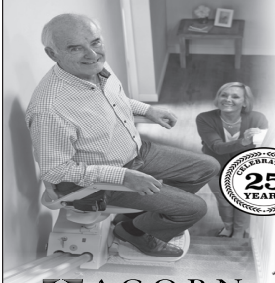


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# The Market at Montebello features yoga, wellness, plant-based foods

By Stacy M. Brown

Recent negative comments about Baltimore came from individuals who have never truly experienced all the good that Charm City has to offer, according to Nicole Foster.

“We have experienced love, support and acceptance; and have been inspired by the immense creativity and fortitude of the people in this city,” said Foster, the co-founder of Cajou, a plant-based creamery that has a new home in Lake Montebello. “The challenges are great, but instead of complaining about them on the sidelines, I wanted to dig my heels in and help to make a difference in the city. Especially with food.”

With Cajou, Foster hopes to address the issue of food justice and community equity. She is instituting a new market that features healthy food, yoga and green initiatives. To that end, she created The Market at Montebello, a monthly community market that will open on the third Saturday of each month.

The market will feature “Yoga on the Lake” by Bikram Yoga Wellness Works of Mount Vernon. It will include cooking and composting demonstrations by the Baltimore Compost Collective.

The experience will include a DJ and about 50 makers and creatives on the Baltimore scene including Zeke’s Coffee; Love, Puddin; Gingerly Vegan; Blondie’s Doughnuts; Orange Scissor Art; Heart of Doughmore; and youth entrepreneurial initiatives Lemontopia and Dinkra Stylez.

“Upon moving to Baltimore and one block from Lake Montebello, my hus-

band and I remarked that the area seemed to offer little in community programming and healthy food options,” Foster said. “For example, there were few events in the northeast part of town. Also, after folks walked, ran or biked the lake for exercise, there was nowhere to sit or gather to even buy a bottle of water or a cup of coffee.”

Foster and her husband began to speak informally about what may have been missing from the area with neighbors and community leaders. She then leveraged her background in public health, community engagement, food justice and health equity to create the Market at Montebello.

“It was less about potential, and more about equity,” Foster said. “Why did people in the neighborhoods have to leave their community to find healthy food or programming?”

Foster says the Market at Montebello reflects her love for Baltimore.

“The lack of healthy food options was a catalyst. We believe that plant-based foods are necessary to help eradicate the diet-related disease within our community,” Foster said. “As a public health lawyer committed to addressing food insecurity and food scarcity, this is my contribution on the community level. While I also identify opportunities to work on a macro level, we are committed to this mission through Cajou.”

Community feedback has been incredibly supportive, she said. “My family and I came and fell in love with Baltimore. We thought to ourselves if we don’t make changes that will make an impact, who will?” Foster said.



**(L-R) Mark Washington, executive director, Coldstream Homestead Montebello Association; Nicole Foster, founder of Market at Montebello; Lorna Hanley Principal of Montebello Elementary; Dwight Campbell co-founder of Market at Montebello and Cajou Creamery.** Photo: Nicole Foster/Cajou Creamery



**Akos Regal (left) of Regal Clothes with a Montebello Market customer**  
Photo: Cassandra Vincent



Routinely, Foster says she hears compliments like, ‘thank you for doing this’ and ‘this is what the community needs.’

“We have been told that we chose the perfect location for a market,” Foster said. “People have said that the lake has never been used for such an activity. They say they see it growing into a

much larger staple for the community.”

For more information about Cajou and the Market at Montebello, visit: [www.cajoucream.com](http://www.cajoucream.com)

# Prescribing an Innovative Remedy to Improving the Health of West Baltimore

By Ursula V. Battle

The office window of C. Daniel Mullins, PhD, Professor and Chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical Health Services Research (PHSR) at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, provides a picturesque view to the West Baltimore community he champions for, speaks highly of, and speaks about so passionately. And on this beautiful summer day, the view from his office, located in The Saratoga Building on 220 N. Arch Street, provided the perfect backdrop to the vision he was about to share.

“My vision is that we would have such an impact on West Baltimore, that it would be a model to the nation,” said Dr. Mullins. “Through research, we want to make West Baltimore one of the healthiest, vibrant communities in the nation.”

He added, “We want residents to know they can put aside the distrust based on history and began to actively participate in transforming health in our city. We want people to know that you can transform a community that has low health measures, and have them be above average. Every jurisdiction would say if it can happen in West Baltimore, it can happen in their community.”

A bold vision. But one that is not impossible thanks to The PATIENTS Program. Housed in the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, The PATIENTS Program leverages innovative partnerships with patient communities and health care systems to ensure that patients, health care providers, and other partners are actively engaged in research.

Dr. Mullins is Executive Director for the program.

“One thing I have observed is that you have to listen to what the community and community partners have to say,” said Dr. Mullins. “This ultimately helps the way research is done. Working together, we are developing solutions to deal with the challenges people face. This program offers a community-driven lens that fills the research gap.”

The PATIENTS Program trains patients, stakeholders, and researchers to



***C. Daniel Mullins, PhD, Professor and Chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical Health Services Research (PHSR) at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, is Executive Director of The PATIENTS Program.***

become co-developers of Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR). The innovative program is funded through a five-year infrastructure development grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

“We have started thirty-five new projects we support,” said Dr. Mullins. “Some are very small and may be five or ten thousand-dollar projects led by the community, and some are twelve million-dollar clinical trials. What they have in common is that we work with people with experience in the community, and researchers, with the goal of having patients make more informed decisions around healthcare.”

He continued, “The program has done great. The initial five million dollars for the program came from AHRQ. We have generated over 40 million dollars. The important part is that we require any researcher we work with to support our community partners. Money should be given to the community to compensate them for their time the same way our staff and faculty are compensated.”

The program’s partners include the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC); PatientsLikeMe; Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church; the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC), and Bon Secours



***(L-r) Lynsee Roane, BSN, RN, and Barbarajean “BJ” Robinson-Shaneman, Senior Program Specialist checking a PATIENT’S blood pressure during a program event. Courtesy Photos***

Baltimore Health System. More than 60 University of Maryland researchers also support The PATIENTS program.

Dr. Mullins has been with University of Maryland School of Pharmacy for 25 years. His research and teaching focus on community-engaged, patient-centered effectiveness research to advance health equity. In addition to AHRQ, he has also received funding from the National Institute on Aging (NIA), the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), and various pharmaceutical manufacturers including Bayer, Merck, and Pfizer.

“We think about the clinical aspect and social determinants,” said Dr. Mullins. “These are factors that makes it harder for people to be healthy, such as food deserts – healthy foods not in walking distance; and food swamps, abundant access to foods that are not healthy. The reason why we see childhood obesity is because children have abundant access to foods that are not healthy.”

He added, “We don’t want to scare people. However, we want to ensure they are informed by having the information they need, so that they can make healthy



***Rodney Elliott, an Engagement Specialist with The PATIENTS Program and PATIENTS advisor Debra Marvel (center front), participate with the Het Heru Healers in a line dance during PATIENTS Day 2K19.***

choices for themselves. We want people not only to remain on this planet, but to remain on this planet in a healthy state of being. That means low rates of heart attack, early diagnoses of cancer, the ability to solve health problems when patients come to the hospital, so they are not readmitted, and educating people as to why prevention is so much wiser than waiting to get sick and then seeking treatment. The PATIENTS Program provides a way to make all of those things possible.”

For more information about The PATIENTS PROGRAM, visit <https://patients.umaryland.edu/>

## The PATIENT Program's Gail Graham

# Helping To Fight HIV and AIDS Through Education and Awareness

By Ursula V. Battle

Gail Graham has lived with HIV for over 22 years. After her diagnosis, Graham recalls encountering stigmas associated with the disease.

"Family and friends wanted me to eat on paper plates and disinfected the bathroom right after I used it," recalled Graham. "People think you are dirty, nasty, look sick and nobody will want you."

According to Graham, dealing with such stigmas, depression, and apprehension about others knowing her HIV-positive status, it didn't help when a merger prompted her clinic to change its name.

"The clinic's name was renamed 'The Center for Infectious Diseases,'" recalled Graham. "I started seeing people looking around before they went in. I thought it was bad enough living with the disease and here this clinic was putting it out there. We didn't need that constant reminder."

Graham shared her concerns about the name change with C. Daniel Mullins, PhD, Professor and Chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical Health Services Research (PHSR) at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. Dr. Mullins serves as Executive Director of The PATIENTS Program. A Patients Consultant with The PATIENTS Program, Graham recalled the advice she received from Dr. Mullins.

"He told me to speak up" recalled Graham. "That encouragement gave me the extra push I needed to say something."

And she did.

"I attended a planning group meeting and brought it up there," said Graham.



*Gail Graham is a Patients Consultant with The PATIENTS Program, which leverages innovative partnerships with patient communities. She is HIV-positive and utilizes the program to educate others and combat stigmas about the disease.* Courtesy Photo

"About six months later, I went to my doctor's appointment, and the receptionist asked if I had heard the name of the clinic had been changed to 'Thrive'. I was immediately in tears."

The motivation Graham received from Dr. Mullins is among the many ways he and The PATIENTS Program have helped her to bring about change. She is a member of Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, pastored by the Rev. Dr. Franklin Lance. The church is among

The PATIENT Program's partners.

According to Graham, The PATIENTS Program sponsors Mt. Lebanon's Annual World AIDS Day Testing for Turkeys, and it's Back to School event.

"I am very grateful to Dr. Mullins and The Patients Program," said Graham, who is a certified HIV tester and counselor. "Through the program, I am able to reach people, local, nationally and internationally. It's all about educating the community about HIV and AIDS. He's made it easier to share this information, and I am so appreciative. He and his staff are more than just doctors and sponsors. They are my friends."

However, such a productive partnership took some 'PATIENTS.'

"After finding out I was HIV-positive, and after going through the stigma with family and friends, I decided to learn as much as I could to help others," said Graham. "As I was living with HIV, and learning, I joined Mt. Lebanon and spoke to Dr. Lance. He said 'Gail, this is your ministry.' Being in a community with a high rate of HIV and AIDS, I wanted to bring as many services to our community as possible. I was also protective of the community. Many organizations wanted to come into our community and not give back."

She added, "Pastor Lance told me he wanted me to meet this group. However, when he said research, I thought to myself, 'here we go again.' However, he talked me into meeting the group and it was Dr. Mullins and The PATIENTS Program. Dr. Mullins asked if I was interested, and I said 'no', given all I had gone through. But he didn't give up."

Graham shared what changed her "no" to "yes."

"The PATIENTS Program had a table at one of the church's events. I figured I would put them on the side and watch them. I had taken my eyes off of them for a moment and I turned around and saw their members sitting at the table and holding hands and listening to people at the event. They had me."

Dr. Mullins also recalled their early beginnings.

"Gail made it a point to say she had no interest in working with us," said Dr. Mullins. "There is such an historical distrust of universities that we should expect people might be hesitant to work with us. However, once she saw we could help HIV patients live healthier lives, she became an ally. It took some time, but now she is one of our biggest fans. It's a reminder to the research community that it takes time, but in the end it's worth it."

When she was first diagnosed, Graham had to take a "cocktail" of pills; now, she takes a single pill a day – and her viral load is undetectable. With the help of Dr. Mullins, she also published in The British Medical Journal,

"The PATIENTS Program has helped me with what I wanted to do, and that is educating people about HIV and AIDS," said Graham. "I am able to tell my story about how you can live a long and healthy life with HIV. The program has also allowed me to travel nationally, publish, and most of all educate. All of this came through my connection with The PATIENTS Program."



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## Ravens defensive back Brandon Carr receives Tim Wheatley Award

By Tyler Hamilton

Baltimore Ravens defensive back Brandon Carr was named the 10th recipient of the Tim Wheatley Award on Tuesday, August 13, 2019. Carr received the award for his community service in Baltimore.

David Wheatley, son of the late Tim Wheatley presented the award to Carr.

"I should have brought a note-card for this gentleman. He has a long list. He does everything from Baltimore to his hometown of Flint, Michigan, and Dallas and Kansas City where he played throughout his career. He's done an incredible job mentoring our youth here in Baltimore and the other places I mentioned before," Wheatley said before giving Carr the award.

The award honors a local athlete who provides contributions to a team on the field and in the community. The award is named after Wheatley, a former Baltimore Sun sports editor who was killed in a car accident in 2009.

"I am honored and privileged to accept this on behalf of the Carr Cares Foundation. It's always refreshing and empowering to do great things, and try to do as much as I can off the field in addition to on the field," Carr said after receiving the award.

Carr's foundation— Carr Cares Foundation was founded to inspire young students to reach their potential through literacy programs and other learning tools. The foundation also strives to help students live a healthy lifestyle through extracurricular activities and balanced nutrition. Carr developed the desire to impact the community after seeing his parents do the same thing while raising him.

"Community service to me is second nature. I saw it my whole life from my parents growing up," Carr said. "My mom teaching in the Flint community schools to my dad coaching me as an AAU basketball coach and being a mentor to my teammates and peers



**Brandon Carr recently expanded his Carr Cares Foundation's outreach to include raising awareness about breast cancer, which took his mother Kathy's life in 2014. Courtesy Photo/NFL.com**

growing up.

"They've always stressed the importance of using your platform in a positive way. The platform was there for me and it's an opportunity for me to give back to the youth, and connect with them and the community as well. I've found a few different avenues along the way to try to utilize my time, efforts, and energy towards breast cancer, child literacy and try to move the needle in each community."

Carr recently expanded his foundation's outreach to include raising awareness about breast cancer, which took his mother Kathy's life in 2014. Like he does on game day, Carr draws energy from the people who watch him play and repurposes it towards his community service.

"I've met a lot of amazing people that give me energy every day. Whether I win or lose on the field, I know on Mondays and throughout the week, I have kids counting on me— looking forward to resources or more time or another initiative. Something to keep them occupied and interested so they continue to grow and learn. That's the reason why I do it," Carr explained.

## Ellio's Pizza kicks off Third Annual Phenomenal Kids Scholarship Contest

Mount Laurel, NJ.— Ellio's Pizza officially kicked off the 2019 Phenomenal Kids Scholarship Contest, which will award a \$10,000 scholarship as well as other amazing prizes, including a family vacation to select cities, gift cards and more.

The Ellio's Phenomenal Kids Scholarship Contest invites parents and legal guardians with children between the ages of six and 12 to write a brief 500 to 1,500 character submission highlighting what makes their child phenomenal for a chance to win a \$10,000 scholarship. Key pillars for this year's contest include Community Involvement, Passion with Purpose, Creativity and Academic Achievement.

Submissions are currently being accepted at [www.ellios.com/phenomenalkids](http://www.ellios.com/phenomenalkids). No purchase is necessary. The deadline to apply is Monday, October 14, 2019 at 8:59 a.m. ET.

The grand prizewinner will receive a \$10,000 scholarship, a \$500 gift card and an Ellio's Swag Bag. The second place winner will receive an all-expense-paid trip for four to their choice of city – New York City, Philadelphia, Boston or Washington, D.C. – plus a \$100 Amazon gift card and an Ellio's Swag Bag. Eight runner-up prizewinners will receive a \$75 Amazon gift card and an Ellio's Swag Bag.

"At Ellio's Pizza, we want to make a positive impact on the lives of the families we serve," says Bill Whalen, executive vice president of Dr. Oetker USA, LLC, the parent company of Ellio's Pizza. "The Phenomenal Kids Scholarship Contest is a great way for us to give back to the families who have supported us through the years and to celebrate outstanding kids in communities across America."



Last year, the contest received more than 1,100 submissions, resulting in 10 finalists who submitted short videos showcasing their phenomenal kid to the voters and the Ellio's Pizza community. Fans voted for their favorite submission online.

"This scholarship offers us a meaningful opportunity to invest in future generations," says Melissa Vesci, Brand Manager for Ellio's Pizza. "We truly believe that phenomenal kids have the power to shape the future."

The 2019 contest is open to residents of Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. Applicants with more than one eligible child are encouraged to submit one entry for each minor.

After the finalists are selected, voting will be open to the public from November 12 through December 3, 2019. The scholarship winner will be announced soon after the voting is complete.

To learn more about Ellio's Pizza and how to enter this year's promotion, visit: [www.ellios.com/phenomenalkids](http://www.ellios.com/phenomenalkids).

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# Three day event planned to commemorate first African landing in Virginia

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Correspondent  
@StacyBrownMedia

In August 1619, more than 20 Africans landed at Old Point Comfort, the present-day Fort Monroe in Hampton, Virginia, and were forced into labor as slaves.

That was the beginning of the slave trade in America.

This month, 400 years after that humiliating and disgraceful day, the city of Hampton will commemorate “African Landing Day.”

The three-day commemoration, which begins Friday, August 23, 2019, will include a host of special guests and a variety of history tours, education programs and special exhibits.

“One of the objectives we want to achieve is to correct history,” said retired Lt. Col. Claude Vann, the Hampton 2019 Commission co-chair. “I think history has done the African American a disservice because we have never been told what our real history was. For the folks here at Hampton, particularly, we were taught that the first African landed in Jamestown. Well, that’s incorrect.”

The place where the first African landed was Point Comfort, described by PRI.org as as far east as you can get in Virginia — on a peninsula that extends out into the Chesapeake Bay.

To get to it, you have to cross a bridge over a moat. On the other side is the largest stone fort in America — Fort Monroe — encompassing 565 acres, according to PRI.

“The city saw the importance of this commemoration early on and they created a commission within the city for it,” said Luci Cochran, the executive director of the Hampton History Museum. “This is a history that so many people are not aware of and we want people to understand that the landing of the first African is a thread that shaped everything.

“It shaped our country and it continues to affect our country today,” she said. According to a news release, the commemoration kicks off on Friday, August 23 at 12:00 p.m. at the Hampton Roads Convention Center where Byron Pitts of



*This model shows a typical ship in the early 1700s on the Middle Passage. To preserve their profits, captains and sailors tried to limit the deaths of slaves from disease, suicide, and revolts. In the grisly arithmetic of the slave trade, captains usually chose between two options: pack in as many slaves as possible and hope that most survive, or put fewer aboard, improve the conditions between decks, and hope to lose fewer to disease. (Photo Credit: Ken Lu/Wikimedia Commons/This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license.)*

ABC Nightline, and formerly of CBS Evening News and 60 Minutes, will host the African-American Political Firsts Luncheon featuring panelists Kentucky Lt. Governor Jenean Hampton; L. Douglas Wilder, former governor of Virginia; U.S. Representative Bobby Scott (VA-3), and former mayor and North Carolina State Senator Howard Lee.

On Saturday, at 9:30 a.m. in Continental Park, Fort Monroe, the 2019 Commemoration of the First African Landing Ceremony will include remarks from CNN political contributor Van Jones and remarks and greetings from Virginia Governor Ralph Northam; U.S. Senator Mark Warner; U.S. Senator Tim Kaine; U.S. Representative Bobby Scott (VA-3), and Dr. Joseph Green, Jr., Chair of 400 Years of African American History Federal Commission.

The ceremony will feature African drumming and the I.C. Norcom High School Choir from Portsmouth, Va. Following the ceremony from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., there will be musical performances by Cheick Hamala Diabate, a GRAMMY-nominated World Music Artist; EMA Live, a billboard chart topping gospel group, RaJazz, 2019 First African Landing Commemoration Concert, Hampton Coliseum, Common, with Sounds of Blackness, Day of Healing and Gospel Music Festival,

The event will include a bell ringing across the United States, gospel choir performances, and a keynote speech by Michael Eric Dyson. The event will feature a National Park Service Town Hall, libation ceremony, blessing of the land, a tribute to the

ancestors with a release of 400 butterflies, and Ghanaian drumming.

“From a historian’s perspective, we hope people will take away that all of this wasn’t an accident,” said Beth Austin of the Hampton History Museum, who conducted much of the research. “It happened in a global context both in terms of the wider Atlantic world in 1619 and it had the enormous global impact. The slave trade and the practice of slavery in America impacted the New World and Africa and it’s had a very long-term and profound legacy.”

For more information about the 2019 Commemoration of the First African Landing in Hampton, Va., visit [www.firstafricanlanding.com](http://www.firstafricanlanding.com).

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## *In Joy and Gratitude:*

### Special Brian Ganz Piano Performance



**Brian Ganz**

**Photo Credit: Jay Malin**

Annapolis— Classical pianist Brian Ganz will inaugurate the newly acquired 7-foot Steinway grand piano at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis (UUCA) on Sunday, August 18, 2019 at 3 p.m. Well-known as one of the leading pianists of his generation, Ganz is recognized for his insights into the work of Chopin and his valued performance of other classical composers. The program will include some of his favorite music selections while demonstrating the superb qualities of the Steinway.

Brian Ganz is a laureate of the Marguerite Long Jacques Thibaud and the Queen Elizabeth of Belgium International Piano Competitions. He has ap-

peared as soloist with such orchestras as the St. Louis Symphony, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the Baltimore Symphony, National Philharmonic, the National Symphony and the City of London Sinfonia performing with conductors including Leonard Slatkin, Marin Alsop, Mstislav Rostropovich and Piotr Gajewski. Ganz and the National Philharmonic began a multiyear partnership in 2011 in which he committed to perform the complete works of Chopin. The tenth installment will be heard February 1, 2020 at Strathmore with a preview on January 5, 2020 at 3 p.m. at UUCA.

Ganz, a member of the faculty of the Peabody Conservatory and St. Mary's College of Maryland, also serves as artistic director for the UUCA Arts in the Woods-classics series. The next Arts in the Woods concert features pianist George Bowerman on Sunday, September 1, 2019 at 3 p.m. Award winning Bowerman combines superb artistry with illuminating and often humorous commentary about the works he performs.

Tickets are \$15 at the door only; youth 16 and under free. For information: 410-266-8044 or visit [www.uuannapolis.org](http://www.uuannapolis.org)

The August 18 celebratory event completes one year of fundraising to acquire a concert quality instrument, which was researched and selected by Ganz. Numerous donors made the purchase possible and a special donor event will precede the concert at 2 p.m.

### Youth Photojournalism Project Exhibition 'We Rise!': Celebrating Maryland's African American History'



Annapolis— Banneker Douglass Museum (BDM) recently had the opportunity to work with talented youth from Baltimore City's Forest Park High School on the youth photojournalism project titled, "We Rise!: Celebrating Maryland's African American History."

This project amplified the voices of local youth through photography and media training. Participants met with instructors on a weekly basis with an overarching goal of connecting their personal history to profound moments in Maryland African American history, such as Maryland Emancipation, the 1964 Civil Rights Bill, and the Baltimore Uprising.

The project was led by teaching artists Beverly Price and Carlissia Young and

outcomes included a youth-led BDM photography exhibit where participants interpreted the "We Rise!" theme of the 50th anniversary of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. Additionally, participants created a mini-documentary that captures the trials and triumphs of growing up in Baltimore City.

The public is invited to stop by and visit the exhibit housed on the first floor of the museum in the Verda Welcome Hall until December 14, 2019.

The Banneker-Douglass Museum is located at 84 Franklin Street in Annapolis. For more information about the exhibit or the Banneker-Douglas Museum, call 410-216-6180 or visit: [www.banneker-douglassmuseum@gmail.com](http://www.banneker-douglassmuseum@gmail.com).

### Reginald Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture Needs Volunteers

The museum is dedicated to serving the community by providing multifaceted support through meaningful interactions with history and material culture of Maryland African Americans. Volunteers are needed to assist at the Information Desk, as Docents, for Special Events, and more. There are ongoing opportunities on Saturdays and Sundays for assistance with greeting guests and patrons at the main entrance and to work with kid's activities during public hours. The minimum age for volunteers is 14. Volunteering is open to adults, seniors, college, and high school students. Service learning credit hours can be earned by high school students. We are accepting applications for the following volunteer positions: Special Event Volunteer, Administrative Assistant, Curatorial Assistant, and Visitor Services. Contact Joy Hall at 443-263-1800 or email: [hall@lewismuseum.org](mailto:hall@lewismuseum.org); or visit the website: [www.lewismuseum.org](http://www.lewismuseum.org).

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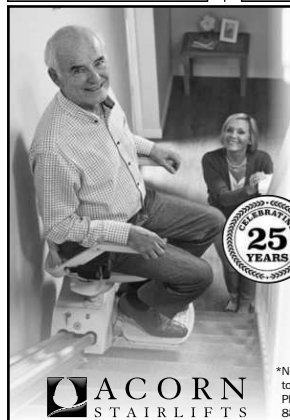
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