



# The Annapolis Times

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## Breast cancer survivor making a scRUMtious living



*Audrey Watson, founder of The Rum Cake Kitchen holding a piece of her famous rum cake. Watson took one of her rum cakes to a Bridal Shower and after it was gone in three minutes, she knew she was onto something. She decided to start her own rum cake business, The Rum Cake Kitchen." Watson posted a picture of her rum cake on Facebook and started getting messages from people asking where they could get one. She made a couple more rum cakes for people who requested one and from there, things took off. In less than a year business has been "sweet" for Watson. (Story on page 8)*

Photo by Ursula V. Battle

# I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul

By Nikki Abraham, Nucleus Team Member, Positively Caviar, Inc.

I recently came across a clip from Oprah Winfrey where she shared a reminder that you alone are responsible for your life. It's not about anybody else or what anybody did to you, it's about understanding exactly what William Ernest Henley said in his poem, *Invictus*: "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul."

I am the master of my fate and the captain of my soul means that I solely have control over determining my feelings and my destiny despite the circumstance.

Put yourself in the driver's seat of your own life and give yourself the control to choose your final destination. You are the only person with the power to decide the person you want to be.

I love asking children what they want to be when they grow up simply because their answers are infinite. As adults, we have been conditioned to limit our dreams and desires. We are conditioned to think that we're unable to conquer set

goals because of different variables such as age or lack of schooling.

Ava DuVernay didn't pick up a camera until she was 32 and the first black woman nominated for a Golden Globe as best director and the first black woman to direct a \$100 million film. Tiffany Haddish worked on her craft for years and was 37 when she received her breakout role as Dina in "Girls Trip."

There will always be naysayers who will tell you you're too old or that you don't have what it takes. When you have a vision or goal it's important not to be distracted by the opinions of others when you are captivated by your purpose. This isn't about anybody else. Live for you and honor the vision you set out for yourself.

On your journey it's inevitable that you will hit roadblocks and challenges that may seem too big for you in that very moment but it's always important to zoom out and keep that final destination in mind. Remember, despite the size of the obstacle that in order to get something you have never had, you have to



Nikki Abraham  
Nucleus Team Member  
Positively Caviar, Inc.  
Courtesy Photo

step out of your comfort zone and do things that you have never done. Whenever you feel overwhelmed, think back to your purpose and your why and I guarantee it will inspire you to keep moving forward.

In the same vain, it's important to motivate others to achieve their dreams and conquer their goals. Having a support system or likeminded community behind you will make all the difference. I don't think people understand the strength of their words and the power they have to either uplift someone or to derail off their mission.

Our nonprofit, Positively Caviar, instills mental resilience, equips minds with knowledge, and empowers lives to overcome adversity. We believe that it's important to become the architect of your own life and take control by using the frequency and vibrations of your own. While you can't control what happens to you, you can control how you react, and you always have the power to achieve anything you desire in this lifetime.

*Positively Caviar, Inc. (PCI) is a grassroots nonprofit organization focused on instilling mental resilience by way of positive thinking and optimism. To learn more about how you can support, volunteer or donate to Positively Caviar, Inc. visit: staybasedandpositive.com.*

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## New Exhibition at Reginald F. Lewis Museum

### Elizabeth Catlett: Artist As Activist Explores the Legacy of Renown Sculptor & Printmaker

Baltimore—The Reginald F. Lewis Museum's new special exhibition, Elizabeth Catlett: Artist as Activist opens Saturday, October 26, 2019 and runs until March 1, 2020.

Elizabeth Catlett (1915-2012), a sculptor and printmaker, is widely considered one of the most important African American artists of the 20th century. The exhibition includes 20 prints and 14 sculptures by Catlett, as well as one print by her husband, Mexican artist Francisco Mora.

Throughout her career, Catlett used art in support of issues that mattered to her—freedom, race and ethnicity, feminism and maternalism—and fought oppression, racism, class and gender inequality.

An American and Mexican citizen, Catlett is best known for her depictions of African American women, the African American experience, and Mexican people who faced injustice. For Catlett, art was a tool for social and political change.

"I believe that art should come from the people and be for the people," she said on in 1952.

While living in Mexico, Catlett was not afraid to use her art to confront the plight of the Mexican worker, especially sharecroppers, as well as injustices against African Americans during the Jim Crow era.



**Photo Credit:** Sharecropper © Catlett Mora Family Trust / VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY

She continued her fight for equality in politically charged, black expressionist sculptures and prints created during the 1960s and 70s.

"I feel it's extremely important for the museum to showcase the work of African American artists, who happen to be female, because they have steadfastly devoted their long careers to producing works that relate to black people and the black experience. They've always been there, but many were overlooked and neglected by the mainstream art world. As we celebrate the contributions of women, especially now, it's important that we recognize the work of Elizabeth Catlett," said Jackie Copeland, Executive Director and Curator, Reginald F. Lewis Museum.

Elizabeth Catlett was the recipient of numerous awards, recognitions, and honorary doctorate degrees, including a Lifetime Achievement Award in contemporary sculpture from the International Sculpture Center in 2003. She died at the age of 96 in her home in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum is Maryland's largest museum dedicated to the state's African American experience. A Smithsonian affiliate, the museum is located at 830 E. Pratt Street in Baltimore City. For more information, visit: [lewismuseum.org](http://lewismuseum.org).



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# Guest Editorials/Commentary

## The answer to our psychiatrist shortage lies abroad

By Dr. Laurence Dopkin

More than 40 million American adults suffer from mental illnesses like anxiety, depression and schizophrenia. Nearly six in 10 aren't receiving treatment.

That's often because they can't find a mental health professional. Sixty percent of U.S. counties lack a single psychiatrist. More than 110 million Americans live in mental health professional shortage areas.

This shortfall will likely grow worse in the years to come. More than six in 10 practicing psychiatrists are nearing retirement age. By 2024, the United States could be short between 14,000 and 31,000 psychiatrists, according to a study published in the medical journal *Psychiatric Services*.

Graduates of international medical schools can help plug this gap. These doctors—many of whom are U.S. citizens who chose to pursue their medical degrees abroad—already account for a significant share of our nation's psychiatrists. Recruiting more of them to practice stateside would greatly improve Americans' mental health.

One in five adults in the United States lives with a mental health condition. About 16 million people struggle with major depression, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Over 6 million struggle with bipolar disorder. And many patients cope with multiple conditions simultaneously.

It's becoming harder for them to find mental health specialists. California, Florida, and Texas—the three most populous states in the union—have less than half the number of psychiatrists they need to meet patient demand. In rural areas, 95 percent of mental health professionals say they can't handle their communities' needs.

International medical graduates are well equipped to fill these shortages. They already account for nearly one-third of our country's psychiatrists—and roughly one-quarter of all physicians nationwide.

IMGs tend to minister to high-need populations. They account for more than 35 percent of the active psychiatry residents who specialize in adolescent and child treatment. Their work is crucial, given that 20 percent of kids between 13 and 18 suffer from a mental health condition. Research shows that increased access to mental health care for our nation's youth could help reduce suicide rates, juvenile delinquency, and school dropouts.

International medical graduates also tend to practice in high-need areas. In places where three-quarters of the population is non-white, over one-third of practicing doctors graduated from international medical schools. Doctors trained abroad are "more willing than their U.S. medical graduate counterparts to practice in remote, rural areas," according to a report from the American College of Physicians."

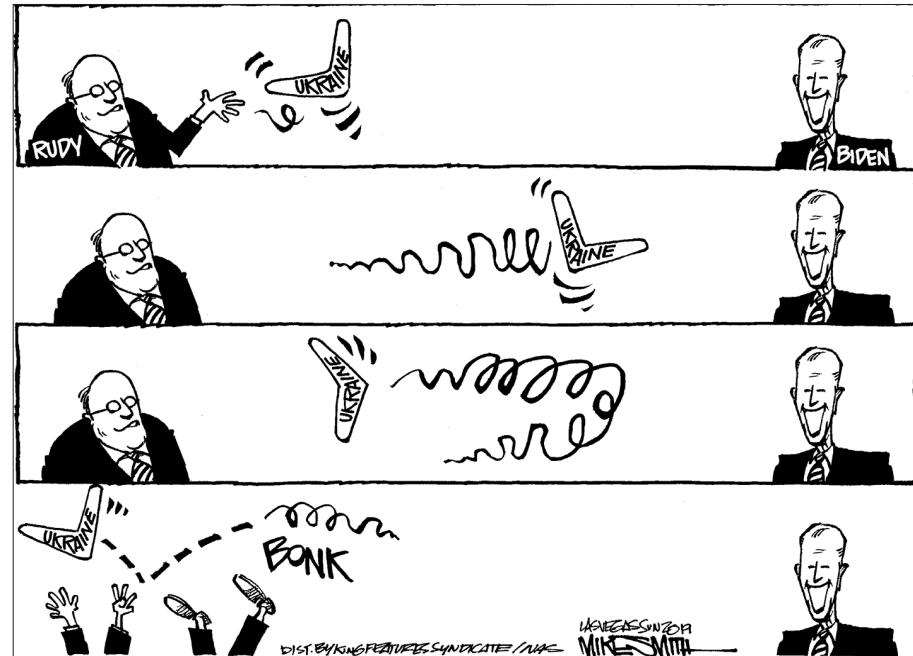
Physicians trained abroad provide top-notch care—sometimes even better than their domestically trained counterparts. A 2017 study in the *BMJ*, a medical journal, found that patients treated by international medical graduates had lower mortality rates than those treated by U.S. medical graduates.

This year, IMGs matched to U.S. residencies at the highest rate since 1991. Many of these new doctors are U.S. citizens returning home to practice. More than 60 percent of Caribbean medical school graduates, for example, are U.S. citizens.

Forty graduates of the school I work at, St. George's University in Grenada, matched into psychiatry residencies in March. They started working at hospitals across the country this summer, from Tennessee and New York to Kansas and California.

America needs thousands of additional psychiatrists to meet patient demand for mental health services. The nation should look abroad, to international medical schools, to find them.

Dr. Laurence Dopkin is a practicing psychiatrist and serves as Assistant Dean of Students at St. George's University ([www.sgu.edu](http://www.sgu.edu)).



## Community Affairs

### MSDE to enhance instruction about Holocaust in public schools

*Curricula being revised to raise awareness*

Baltimore—Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) officials have announced that they intend to adopt a number of changes to enhance and expand required Holocaust instruction in the state's public schools.

The planned changes include teaching about the roots of Antisemitism, and strengthening the required Holocaust instruction in both high school U.S. history and high school modern world history.

Dr. Karen B. Salmon, Superintendent of Schools, also pledged to work with the state's 24 local school systems to ensure that professional learning opportunities are created so teachers have the tools necessary to teach the Holocaust with confidence.

"We strongly believe there is a need to enhance Holocaust education in our state, so that all children learn about this horrific event and ensure it never happens again," Dr. Salmon said. "We see the changes that we are making as a substantive improvement over the current objectives and frameworks."

The changes were announced in response to concerns about Maryland's Holocaust education requirements raised earlier this year by members of the General Assembly, the Baltimore Jewish Council, and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington.

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# Page Opposite/Commentaries

## *Importance of educators of color for black and brown students*

**By Ron Rice, Senior Director  
Government Relations at the National  
Alliance of Public Charter Schools**

I have been a black student, education policymaker, and now an advocate for providing the best educational opportunities for all our children. One reality I've had to face and embrace through each of these stages in my life and career is that the prevalence of leaders of color like me is a major contributor to educational success and whose lack thereof stifles that potential. As a student of color, those examples helped me thrive; and today they inform my advocacy.

This month, my organization, the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools released its highly-anticipated report, "Identity and Charter School Leadership: Profiles of Leaders of Color Building an Effective Staff" which examined the ways that school leaders of color experiences and perspectives

influence how they build school culture, parent and community relationships, and effective staff. This needed report affirmed what I and many fellow school leaders of color have witnessed firsthand in schools from New Jersey (where I advised the state Department of Education) to Massachusetts, California, Louisiana, Missouri, Wisconsin, and

come from nontraditional backgrounds and fields of study. But how do we dispel the myth that there are not enough qualified and passionate people of color who can and want to fill this educational pipeline? One way to do this comes from Eric Sanchez, co-founder of Henderson Collegiate—a network of three schools serving elementary, middle and

raphy behind their journey. While nearly all schools struggle with activating this principle for the benefit of our students, our report demonstrates that public charter schools are making substantial progress where traditional public schools haven't.

Third, achievement and demonstrated success—not myths, preconceptions and inherited political biases—must be the basis upon which we support the best educational opportunities for all our children. For example, by their design, public charter schools have the flexibility to create and fine tune curricula, teaching methods, and optimal outcomes that traditional public schools do not. So, why would we ever consider putting obstacles in any educational paths that are showing real achievement?

Race and identity of both our educators and students is only one factor in the holistic successes we are all working towards. However, it's also true that all schools across our country in every community have historically not valued students' diversity and identity as assets to enrich the education they receive. Public charter schools are making real progress to expose this blind spot and make the needed course corrections to ensure the success we've seen for some students are the norm for all.

*Ron Rice Jr. is a former two-term Newark, NJ city councilman, chief advisor to the New Jersey Department of Education, and is currently Senior Director, Government Relations at the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools.*

**"This month, my organization, the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools released its highly-anticipated report, 'Identity and Charter School Leadership: Profiles of Leaders of Color Building an Effective Staff,' which examined the ways that school leaders of color experiences and perspectives influence how they build school culture, parent and community relationships, and effective staff."**

North Carolina, where school leaders of color were studied. The report's finding is clear: our children of color thrive with diverse and experienced teachers who understand their challenges and have a personal, unwavering dedication to their success.

Most importantly, our report is instructive as well because it sheds light—through the profiles of three public charter school leaders of color from Louisiana, North Carolina, and California—on the principles that can help match our best current and future teachers with our nation's students. Three of those principles that resonated with my two decades in education policy are:

First, fill our school leadership pipeline with talented educators of color who

high school in Henderson, North Carolina. Instead of only recruiting future educators from traditional education programs, Eric also recruits graduates from university programs focusing on social justice and ethnic studies. And this encouragement doesn't end once the teachers reach the classroom—we must provide clear pathways for these teachers to pursue school leadership.

Second, school leaders and education policymakers of all colors must be committed to seeing and promoting diversity as an asset, not a deficit; an opportunity, not an obstacle. Imagine how better prepared our children will be for the world of tomorrow if they have been taught the history behind their identity, the language behind their culture, and the geog-

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# One-On-One with Mayor Bernard C. “Jack” Young

By Ursula V. Battle

**Part 1 of a Two-Part Series, on Baltimore Mayor Bernard C. “Jack” Young.** Mayor Young recently sat down with The Baltimore Times to discuss a variety of topics, including crime, homelessness, keeping the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico Race Course, and his vision for Baltimore City.

On Thursday, October 9, 2019, exactly six months to the day after being sworn in as the 51st Mayor of Baltimore City on Thursday, May 9, 2019, Bernard C. “Jack” Young took a brief trip back down memory lane.

“I grew up in East Baltimore,” said Mayor Young. “We made our own fun. We played skelly, and made our own tops by filling them with wax. We played hopscotch, jump rope, and played basketball. I also sold worms to a lady on Broadway Street, who gave me a quarter for each can of worms. I collected soda bottles and got two cents for each bottle. I also shined shoes and sold newspapers. All of those things taught me how to save.”

He added with a laugh, “I got my first job working as a bagger at a food market and would also take people their groceries. I got paid a quarter. I was doing food delivery long before Uber came along.”

Little did the “Young-ster” know at the time that these work experiences along with the others that followed, were all grooming him to one day become the Mayor of Baltimore City.

“I also worked as a stock boy and a meat cutter,” said Young. “I eventually went to work for the City of Baltimore as a trash man in 1973, and did that for a year.”

From working on a trash truck to overseeing the entire Baltimore City Department of Public Works, which is responsible for residential trash collection, Mayor Young’s ascension from East Baltimore to the city’s top elected seat, reads like a storybook. He became mayor after former mayor Catherine Pugh resigned from the position amid corruption allegations.

“Serving as mayor has been a real journey for me,” said Mayor Young. “I came into the position inheriting a



**Baltimore City Mayor Bernard C. “Jack” Young in his City Hall Conference Room.**  
Photo by Ursula V. Battle

budget that was not mine. On top of that, everything that could happen after I became mayor happened. I’ve had water main breaks, and the city’s network infected with ransomware. I have put together a great team. We have weathered the storm and gotten a lot done.

“What I like best about this job is that it allows me to do all the things I have always wanted to do to make things better in this city. It’s a great position to be in if you want to change the lives of people.”

Mayor Young talked about one of his biggest “giants”—crime. He believes that like David in The Old Testament defeated Goliath, crime can be brought down.

“We are looking at the total family, and the barriers in those families,” said Young. “We are looking at why kids aren’t going to school, and getting parents who are using drugs into treatment. Drug use affects the whole family. We need to connect the dots between social services, the school system, and job training, to ultimately try to figure out how we heal our families. If we do that, we can drive crime down in our city.”

“We also are working with the Baltimore Department of Recreation and Parks to look at opening rec centers on Saturday and Sunday. It will give our young people an opportunity to do

something different. I am also working with Baltimore City Police Commissioner Michael Harrison, who has put together a strategic plan that had led to a reduction in shootings. If those numbers continue to go down, we will see our murder rate go down.”

Mayor Young also discussed Baltimore’s ‘squeegee kids,’ youngsters who wash windshields at busy intersections for money.

“I am working with Commissioner Harrison to devise an alternative squeegee plan,” said Mayor Young. “It’s dangerous for those youngsters to be in the streets. I am afraid they will get hurt weaving in and out of traffic. I’m also concerned some are doing it when they should be in school. We need to connect with the parents to find out why their children are squeegee kids, and what that parent needs.”

“We also have panhandlers all over the city darting in and out of traffic for money. It’s also a safety issue for them. We’ve got a lot of work to do. As Mayor, my goal is to do all I can to ensure children and family success.”

Mayor Young served from 2010 to 2019 as the President of the Baltimore City Council, and for 14 years prior to that as a District Councilman.

“We want to drive development into neighborhoods that haven’t seen it,” he said. “We are doing major development across the city, including mixed income and affordable unit developments. I don’t believe in tearing everything down, because we tear down our history in Black neighborhoods. Development in our neighborhoods creates job and rebuilds our communities.

“We are also looking at how we can attract more grocery stores. But we can’t ignore the fact that they look at the prospect of people stealing. Stealing drives their profits down to zero. Merchants will not go into neighborhoods where they can’t meet their bottom line. Attracting and retaining neighborhood businesses is very important to the city.”

Just days after this interview, Mayor Young lost his longtime friend U.S. Congressman Elijah Cummings. Cummings, 68, died on Thursday, October 17, 2019, from complications stemming from longstanding health challenges.

“With the passing of U.S. Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, the City of Baltimore, our country, and people throughout the world have lost a powerful voice and one of the strongest and most gifted crusaders for social justice,” said Mayor Young, who reportedly plans to name the Courthouse East building in downtown Baltimore after Cummings. “Rep. Cummings, the son of sharecroppers whose ancestors were slaves, wasn’t afraid to use his considerable intellect, booming voice, and poetic oratory to speak out against brutal dictators bent on oppression, unscrupulous business executives who took advantage of unsuspecting customers, or even a U.S. President.”

“He was, put simply, a man of God who never forgot his duty to fight for the rights and dignity of the marginalized and often forgotten. As we enter this period of mourning, let us remember his long legacy of justice as an example to us all of a life well lived.”

*Part II of the series concludes next week. To see a short clip of Mayor Young discussing his vision for Baltimore City, visit <http://baltimoretimes-online.com/>*

# Coppin State student is a girl with a plan

By Stacy M. Brown

Karissa Carson says leading one of the workshops at the recent PNC Bank, Times Community Services, and The Baltimore Times' "Mind Your Business" Seminar gave her ego a boost.

"It kind of made my head a little big," said Carson, a Coppin State University senior who in business management major. "Seeing all of the people there and knowing you're going to come away even more empowered was great."

Originally from New York, Carson has already made her mark in Baltimore. She was recently appointed vice president for the College of Business students for Ingepreneurial Impact. She is also the director of "Free Your Voice," an organization dedicated to helping women find their voice by offering empowerment services.

"I have mastered the artistry of side hustles," Carson said. "From doing hair, hosting workshops, and making handbags. When it comes to generating multiple streams of income, I am the girl with the plan."

One of seven children, Carson says she was the dreamer in her family. She was also the one with the big heart.

"Now that I'm older, I started making these handbags that have these inspirational quotes on them," Carson said, explaining that a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the bags is given to the homeless.

"When you drive down some areas of Baltimore city, you see a lot of homeless people. I look around, and I wonder what resources do I have that I can use to help these people," Carson said. "So, I make and sell the bags, and I use half of the proceeds to purchase items like toiletries and other things for the homeless."

Carson is also an advocate for women.

"I just want women always to be aware that they matter," Carson said. "When I was growing up, I was so timid and I let people make decisions for me."

"But, I started to realize that my voice matters and that I was going to share my voice with the world. I'm not going to be quiet because society makes it hard for women who speak out."



**Coppin State business management major, Karissa Carson lead the "Art and Science of the Side Hustle" workshops at the "Mind Your Business" seminar held at Coppin recently.**

Courtesy Photo

Ultimately, Carson says her goal is to start women organizations that will help ignite business opportunities for single mothers and other women. That's the reason she got involved with "Free Your Voice."

"Essentially, Free Your Voice is a bunch of college students who are dedicated. We have uplifting speeches, raffles, women empowerment exercises, food, mimosas and live entertainment. We have discussions about trauma and so many other things that affect us. It's all about women empowering women," she said.

Carson noted that attending the Mind Your Business seminar was essential to all that she aspires to accomplish.

Mind Your Business was an informative event designed for small business owners, entrepreneurs, creative industry organizations, and DIY businesses. In breakout sessions, the agenda included how to structure a business; how to finance your business; and when a CPA or legal expert should be consulted. Also included was an introduction to tax incentives that are available if a business is located in an arts district.

"I was inspired. There are so many talented people and the seminar was a great resource for everyone," Carson said.

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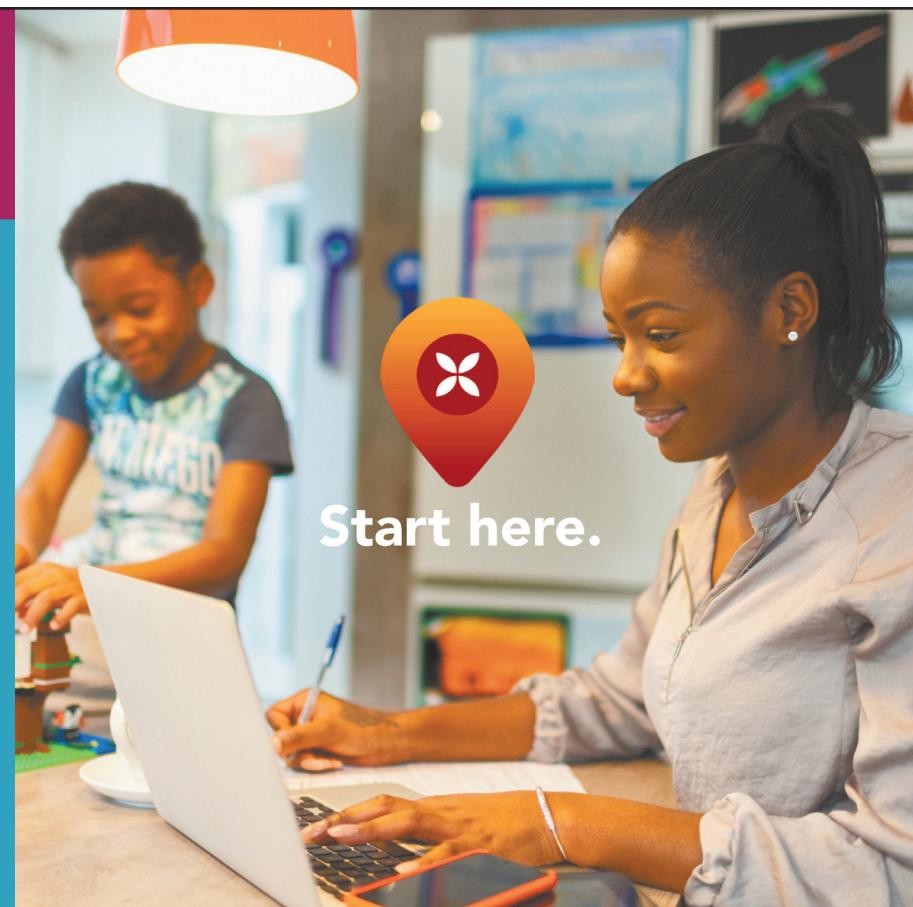
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# Breast cancer survivor making a scRUMtious living

By Ursula V. Battle

This article is part of a series of articles published in observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. An annual international health campaign, Breast Cancer Awareness Month is observed every October to increase awareness of the disease, and to raise funds for research into its cause, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and cure.

Last November, Audrey Watson was invited to a holiday gathering. She recalled wanting to bring a dessert that varied from the traditional sweet potato pie. She decided to call her cousins in The Bahamas to get a recipe for rum cake.

"Everybody typically does sweet potato pie for Thanksgiving and I wanted to do something different," she said. "I decided to do a rum cake, and it was a hit. I posted a picture of the rum cake on Facebook, and started getting messages from people asking where I got it. I made a couple more rum cakes for people, and from there, things took off."

"I also took one of my rum cakes to a Bridal Shower, and it was gone in three minutes. I knew I was onto something. I decided I would start my own rum cake business, The Rum Cake Kitchen."

Less than a year later, business has been "sweet" for Watson.

"The rum cakes are very popular," she said. "I travel to New York with my rum cakes quite a bit, and also sell them at various events. It's rum cake with a twist. People love the moistness of the rum cakes. They also like the fact that the rum is not overpowering and that the cakes come in a variety of flavors. People like having options."

Watson's rum cakes flavors include



*The Rum Cake Kitchen features cakes, mini cupcakes and pies. Watson says she is currently in the process of developing keto, vegan and gluten-free rum cakes.*

Photo by Ursula V. Battle

Nutty 4U, a rum vanilla cake with walnuts, drizzled with rum vanilla glaze topped with walnuts; Chocolate Rum-chata, rum triple chocolate cake drizzled with rum vanilla or chocolate icing; and Coco Cabana, rum vanilla cake drizzled with rum vanilla glaze, topped with sweet coconut. Other flavors include Rum Velvet, Rum Cherry Vanilla, Very Berry Strawberry, Orange Creamsicle, and Vanilla Caramel Kiss.

The Rum Kitchen also offers mini cupcakes in a variety of flavors and peach cobbler.

Watson says she is currently developing keto, vegan and gluten-free rum cakes.

"I didn't think it would turn into all of

this," said Watson reflecting on how her business began. "But if you have a good product, people will support you. A chef is also going to launch my Peach Cobbler at a restaurant in Georgetown. Sometimes, I am speechless.

"I have always been a good cook, and even as a child I liked to bake cookies and cakes. My grandmother and all of my family in The Bahamas baked all the time. But I had never thought about doing it for a living. It came as quite a surprise."

Watson, 51, is also a seven-year breast cancer survivor. She said her diagnosis also was surprising.

"I found out that I had breast cancer from my annual mammogram," recalled

Watson. "I was 44-years-old at the time. I didn't have a lump in my breast, but the mammogram showed my breast was different than the year before. Breast cancer doesn't run in my family. It came as such a shock. I didn't believe it when they told me. I was going every year for my mammogram but kept rescheduling it because I was busy. I am glad I finally went.

"I tell women to make sure they get their annual mammogram, and if they feel something, go to the doctor to get it checked out. I am surprised by the number of people who feel a lump and ignore it. I ask them are they crazy. Time is of the essence because cancer spreads so quickly. I was very lucky. Mine was caught at stage one. It was treated with a lumpectomy and radiation."

Watson, who says she regularly participates in breast cancer awareness events, is a native of Harlem, NY. She is the mother of three girls—a set of twin girls who are 30-years-of-age, and a 23-year-old daughter. She shared her "recipe" for success.

"Social media is very important for advertising and getting your ideas noticed," she said. "People call me from New York, Texas and other places for rum cakes. You have to be consistent and engage your audience and respond back quickly. You can't be lackadaisical because there is so much competition. Social media has taken my business to another level. It seems there are new opportunities every time I turn around."

"Never stop working towards your dreams. Stay positive and work hard. I also encourage women to make sure they get their annual mammograms."

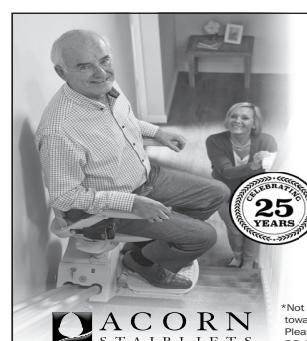
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# Afterschool program uses ‘universal language’ of music to educate students

By Stacy M. Brown

Robert Levine III says he recognized at a young age that music could help people express themselves in a way they otherwise could not.

Levine, the founding executive director of the Baltimore nonprofit, Beyond the Natural Foundation (BTNF), says music connects emotions and fosters bonds that can strengthen and motivate young people.

“Music is a universal language. I believe that in every facet of our lives, music plays an integral role,” Levine said.

BTNF uses music education in afterschool programs to engage and empower students from Edmonson-Westside, Mergenthaler Vocational Technical and Paul Laurence Dunbar high schools.

BTNF programs, which serve about 500 students each year, are also held at various recreation and community centers in and around Baltimore.

“Students are learning the art of songwriting, production, and audio engineering as a platform for positive self-expression and promoting campaigns like anti-bullying and anti-violence,” Levine said.

BTNF believes arts education is an essential part of achieving success in school, work, and life. Arts engagement has a profound impact on unlocking the creativity needed for future generations of innovators.



**Robert Levine III is the founding executive director of the Baltimore nonprofit Beyond the Natural Foundation, which believes that arts education is an essential part of achieving success in school, work and life. Levine says music connects emotions and fosters bonds that can strengthen and motivate young people.**

Courtesy Photo

Levine says expressive art methods of pure skill and focused sensitivity enhance one’s capacity for sharing thoughts, feelings, and experience. In this way, youth come to know themselves on a deeper level and they also become aware of their impact on those

around them and allow them to encounter their world with compassion and presence.

The overall goal is to use music therapy to promote wellness, manage stress, alleviate pain, express feelings, enhance memory, improve communication, and promote physical rehabilitation.

The students have responded, Levine said.

The lead single from one of this year’s projects is a song written, recorded and produced by students called “Group Chat.”

“The song inspires peers to use technology in a positive way,” Levine said. “I can honestly say, I had nothing to do

with that.” Levine said. “They came up with that. We like to give them the autonomy to make decisions about what they create, but the song itself is about kids. You know, nowadays, they communicate primarily through social media and texting.

“It’s a song about promoting a positive environment. Making sure that kids aren’t using that platform to bully other kids, and making them feel bad in any way. They are responsible for the primary form of communication nowadays. So it’s really cool to see them take ownership and have fun with creating such a positive message.”

BTNF serves at-risk youth by engaging them in music education and performance to provide expressive therapy and inspiration for creating more significant life opportunities. As an organization, Levine says the goal is to be at the forefront of providing musical arts enrichment and music therapy for the youth of our communities.

The nonprofit provides hands-on education in the art of songwriting, producing, audio engineering, and musicianship while utilizing basic music curriculums and state-of-the-art equipment via BTNF’s flagship onsite program Music for F.U.N. — or Fundamental Understanding of Notes— and The E.A.R. Arts Institute.

“As a kid growing up, it was all about music for me, and the great music that my parents used to listen to,” Levine said. “I’ve been doing music all of my life in some way. So, if our students walk away from our program with creativity, collaboration, commitment, and community, then we will have accomplished what we set out to do.”

For more information, visit [www.beyondthenatural.org](http://www.beyondthenatural.org).

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## Celebrate the Witching Season with the “Official Drink of Halloween”: Chocolate Milk

Spice up your Halloween festivities with a glass of nutrition in disguise

Philadelphia, Pa.—More often than not, All Hallows’ Eve seems to fall on a weekday when most parents have worked “All Hallows’ Day.” And though we hope the energy of our little monsters becomes contagious,

sometimes, that’s not the case. Have no fear! What’s bubbling in the witch’s cauldron is a magic potion—It’s chocolate milk and it’s scary good.

Chocolate milk is the “Official Drink of Halloween.” Finally, something neither children—nor adults—have to be afraid on October 31st. Parents can feel good knowing their little ghouls and goblins are getting a spine-chilling boost of energy they need to make it through the moonlit night, while they too can rediscover that chocolate milk has been an adult favorite for many years.

While you’re conjuring up a unique spirits menu for the adults on the Halloween trail, consider using chocolate milk as a mixer in some of your most enchanting “boo-zy” cocktails. But you don’t have to stop there. Imagine the look on your guests’ faces when they sink their fangs into otherworldly baked goods that have been infused with chocolate milk, proving that this devilish delight can be hauntingly good and enjoyed in a variety of ways.

And at the end of the night, when the guests have disappeared and the last little zombie has rung the doorbell, mummies and daddies can give their families a warm mug of nutrition in disguise as they all settle in to watch the full moon.

Any way you dress it up, chocolate milk is the drink that can make skeletons of any size happy and strong.



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## Drivers reminded to stop when school bus stops during National Bus Safety Week

Baltimore— To help ensure our children stay safe when getting on and off the bus, the Maryland Center for School Safety, Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland State Police, Maryland Department of Transportation, and local school systems all teamed up for National School Bus Safety Week, October 21-25, 2019. This public education campaign focuses on the importance of school bus safety, especially when it comes to other drivers on the road.

More drivers in Maryland are obeying the law and stopping for school bus arms than in previous years, according to the latest survey of state bus drivers conducted by MSDE. However, officials are working together to continue to spread the school bus safety message far and wide across the state for all drivers.

"More than 641,000 of our students ride school buses in Maryland," said Governor Larry Hogan. "As community members, we must work together to ensure our children are safe getting to and from school. I encourage our residents and visitors to our state to pay attention when driving, especially in school zones and school bus stops, and to stop when the bus stops."

Students are about 70 times more likely to get to school safely when taking a school bus instead of traveling by car, according to the American School Bus Council. To recognize this and focus public awareness on student transportation, this year's National School Bus Safety theme is My School Bus, The Safest Form of Student Transportation!

It is illegal to pass a school bus with its red lights flashing and stop-arm extended when it has stopped to load or unload students. In Maryland the law states that if a school vehicle has



stopped on a road and is operating the alternately flashing red lights, the driver of any vehicle following or approaching the school bus must stop at least 20 feet from the front or rear of the school vehicle. Failure to stop for the bus can result in up to a \$500 fine, three points on a driver's license, and increased insurance rates.

"One violation of the stop arm is one too many, because it puts children at risk of harm," said Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools. "Each driver in Maryland has to do their part to maintain safe driving practices for the sake of our students."

The Maryland Center for School Safety is doing its part to make sure drivers are aware of the law and the importance of school bus safety.

"We are requesting the help of our partners and the entire community in reminding all drivers about school bus stop arm safety," said Maryland Center for School Safety Executive Director Kate Hession. "We have placed messaging in all of the Motor Vehicle Administration service centers throughout the state and launched a new school bus safety public service announcement on social media, television, and digital billboards to remind drivers to STOP for any school bus with its flashing lights on and stop arm extended."

For more information on National School Bus Safety Week, visit [www.napt.org/nsbsw](http://www.napt.org/nsbsw).

**Send your community calendar events to: [kreevie@btimes.com](mailto:kreevie@btimes.com)**

## Annapolis Towne Centre hosts First Fall Fest



*The inaugural Fall Fest at the Annapolis Towne Centre will be held on Saturday, October 26, 2019 from noon to 4 p.m. The fun, family-friendly event is overflowing with harvest-themed festivities and is free and open to the public.*

**Photo Credit: ClipArt.com**

Annapolis— As fall foliage appears, the Annapolis Towne Centre will hold its first Fall Fest on October 26, 2019 from 12 noon to 4 p.m. This fun, family-friendly event is overflowing with harvest-themed festivities. Let the kids run through a hay maze, try their hands at pumpkin decorating, take a train ride, or visit the petting zoo; all while parents enjoy a crisp drink at the Beer Garden presented by Gordon Biersch, or a range of upscale shopping options.

Lining the North East end of Towne Centre Boulevard will be Boutique Row. Here, guests can enjoy stylish, quality shopping from the many tenants at the Annapolis Towne Centre. Shop from South Moon Under, Scout & Molly, Lou Lou Boutique, J. Jill, Talbots, and more for the coziest trends this season. Stores will also be stocked up on goodies to celebrate Halloween a little early this year. Pick up a fall fest map and complete with a trick-or-treat trail at the Information Booth when you arrive.

"The Fall Fest is the perfect jumpstart event for new and familiar guests of the Towne Centre to see all of the exciting experiences we have planned at the property," said General Manager, Anthony Henry. "We want to bring

something new to the area that the community will embrace for years to come."

Food and beverage samplings to be provided by Paladar Latin Kitchen & Rum Bar, Bin 201 and Newk's Eatery. Additional food trucks will line the streets to provide an additional array of food options. Live music will be provided throughout the day by David Sparrow, along with a special live production by the Maryland Performing Arts Center.

This event falls in line with the Towne Centre's mission of being a central gathering place for locals, visitors, and business professionals alike by offering next-level entertainment and events. The Towne Centre's ability to provide direct access, an elevated atmosphere, and a strong depth of entertainment experiences makes them the newest competitor in community-focused events in the Annapolis and Anne Arundel County region. Paired with great shopping opportunities and plenty of dining options, the Annapolis Towne Centre is a step above the rest.

The inaugural Fall Fest is free and open to the public. Parking around the Towne Centre, as always, will be available at no cost. For more information, visit us at [www.visitatc.com](http://www.visitatc.com).

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# Are rude and crude the new norm or will America bring back civility?

News & Experts—Can we talk? Joan Rivers made that catchphrase popular decades ago but in 2019 the answer to the late comedian's heartfelt query appears to be a resounding no. Whether it's tweets on social media, pundits on TV, politicians in Washington or parents at a youth soccer match, much of the communication we engage in today is ill mannered, inconsiderate, vicious and sometimes downright cruel or violent.

In short, civility is taking a beating. "Incivility occurs because we lose sight of what it means to be an ethical person," says Dr. Steven Mintz, author of *Beyond Happiness and Meaning: Transforming Your Life Through Ethical Behavior*. "Ethical people do not berate others. They certainly don't promote violent behavior. Being willing to accept the ideas of others who may not agree with you is a sign of civil behavior. It values those with opposing views as members of humanity."

Ellen DeGeneres made that point recently when she became the target of online outrage after she was seen enjoying a Dallas Cowboys football game with former President George W. Bush. Those taking umbrage with DeGeneres didn't understand why she would hang out with someone whose beliefs and



ideals are diametrically opposed to hers.

"When I say be kind to one another, I don't mean be kind to the people who think the same way you do," DeGeneres told a studio audience. "I mean be kind to everyone."

An annual poll by Weber Shandwick, a public relations firm, found that 93 percent of Americans believe there is a civility problem in the country, and Mintz

says whether people realize it or not, we all pay a price.

"Incivility can negatively affect happiness and impact wellness," he says. "It can harm mental and physical health, affect productivity in the workplace, inhibit civil engagement, and, taken to an extreme, cause violence in our streets, schools, and places of business."

Who is at fault for the decline of courteous communication? The Weber Shandwick poll found that 57 percent of Americans lay the primary blame on social media and the Internet. Other culprits they point to include behavior in the White House (50 percent), politicians in general (47 percent), news media (40 percent), political and social commentators (38 percent) and Hollywood celebrities (30 percent).

Mintz says all is not lost, though. He

offers these tips for how everyone can do their part to stem the rising tide of incivility:

- Think before speaking.
- Focus on facts rather than beliefs and opinions.
- Be open to others' ideas without hostility.
- Disagree with others respectfully.
- Focus on the common good rather than one's personal agenda.

"Finally, ask yourself how you would feel if the comments you are about to make or treatment of others went viral on social media," Mintz says. "Would you be proud of it?"

Mintz is convinced the nation could use a good public debate on civility.

"Unfortunately, our leaders don't seem to think it's important enough to do," he says. "The Democratic presidential debates haven't touched on these issues, but what better way to address gun violence, workplace harassment and bullying than openly discuss how a lack of civility is tearing apart the basic fabric of society."

*Dr. Steven Mintz, author of "Beyond Happiness and Meaning: Transforming Your Life Through Ethical Behavior" has frequently commented on ethical issues in society and business ethics. His Workplace Ethics Advice blog has been recognized as one of the top 30 in corporate social responsibility. He also has served as an expert witness on ethics matters. Dr. Mintz spent almost 40 years of his life in academia. He recently retired as a Professor Emeritus from Cal Poly State University in San Luis Obispo. For more information, visit: www.stevenmintzethics.com.*

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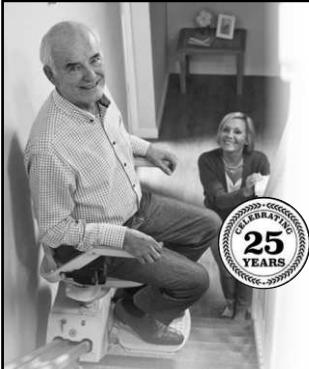


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