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Joy Bramble, Publisher

Maryland boy with big heart makes positive impact during coronavirus pandemic



Cavanaugh Bell had an idea to provide care packages with food and necessities to seniors, during the coronavirus pandemic. The 7-year-old Gaithersburg resident is sparking others around the country to remember to help seniors, during this global health crisis. Although Cavanaugh has been helping seniors and youth in Gaithersburg, he is willing to offer support to other parts of Maryland. through his nonprofit, Cool & Dope. The nonprofit was started in 2019, because Cavanaugh was told that he was too young to volunteer. His mother, Llacey Simmons, serves as the executive director.

(See article on page 8) Photos courtesy of Cool & Dope

Baltimore's squeegee kids helping to feed residents during coronavirus pandemic

By Stacy M. Brown

As recently as January, Baltimore City Police reported that they were receiving about eight calls each day from residents complaining about squeegee kids.

Complaints ranged from menacing to fear of property damage and injuries that could result from aggressive attempts by the squeegee kids to wash motorists' windshields to earn a buck.

Today, thanks to a program instituted through Mayor Jack Young's Office of Children & Family Success, the squeegee kids are a welcome sight and distraction from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many have been hired to give out meals to the needy, particularly families who depend on school lunches as all education facilities have shuttered indefinitely as the crisis rages on.

"The Mayor's Office of Children & Family Success leads emergency meal distribution for Baltimore's youth and families during the COVID-19 outbreak," said Tisha Edwards, the office's executive director.

The squeegee kids receive \$50 each day—or \$250 per week—for delivering the food, and based on a recent estimate, they've already handed out about 10,000 meals.

The Family League has spearheaded



Squeegee kids Tony and Quan get pep talk from Mayor Young before meal distribution begins at Westport Homes
Courtesy Photo/Office of the Mayor

the lunch giveaways for families at eight Baltimore housing authority sites

"The kids [have done] an amazing job, and they were grateful to have a chance to help. In the coming weeks, we'll continue to look for ways for these young people to support our emergency response efforts," Edwards said.

"We want them to get into something that's very productive," Mayor Young said. "We know they have entrepreneur-

ial skills because of what they're doing. But we want them to change that energy into something more productive."

When they're not delivering food, the workers trek door-to-door to let people know about where they can find meals. They are also reminding the public to wash their hands and practice social distancing.

Officials say that the change in atti-

tudes toward the squeegee kids has been noticeable. One official told local television news reporters that they are "seeing a lot of people saying thank you."

"A lot of the youth who squeegee are out on the corners because there is a financial need they're trying to meet. So, we want to support them in meeting that financial need in a productive way," Ed Hawkins, a program official, told the Baltimore CBS News affiliate.

"I want to see everybody live a long life," said Tony Brown, a squeegee worker.

Squeegee Alternative Plan participants are enrolled in a one-year program in which they receive a mentor, job training, and an opportunity to earn an income.

"The city's Squeegee Alternative Plan is where we work with youth who squeegee to develop social capital and access to safer, more sustainable ways of earning income," Edwards said.

A vital element of the plan is pairing youth with opportunities to generate income while developing personal growth and job skills, Edwards noted.

"Providing meals to families at our public housing communities during this time of extraordinary need gave 13 youth both a modest stipend and an opportunity for meaningful engagement," she said.

Special enrollment for 2020 healthcare coverage for uninsured Maryland residents

In response to Maryland's State of Emergency for Coronavirus (COVID-19), Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) has created an emergency special enrollment period for uninsured Marylanders as the concern grows for the uninsured and unemployed. The enrollment period is open now through June 15, 2020. Free consumer assistance is available by calling 1-855-642-8572 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays. Request or select "Coronavirus Emergency Special Enrollment Period."

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Staying healthy and productive while social distancing

By Charles “Chazz” Scott, Nucleus Team Member, Positively Caviar, Inc.

As a society, we are facing unprecedented challenges across our communities, country and the globe. COVID-19 is affecting day-to-day life, as we know it from school closures, to forced long-term teleworking, business closures, gym closures and many leisure activities have been put on halt due to this pandemic. With many of us working from home, not able to go to the gym, and practicing social distancing, self quarantine or isolation from family and friends, it's imperative that each of us does a mental check on ourselves in order to stay healthy and productive throughout these uncertain times.

It may seem as though you have a lot of time on your hands, and you probably do but now is not the time to Netflix binge all day. As this pandemic is forcing all of us to stay home, isolated and inside, it's imperative that you try to keep some type of schedule or daily routine to keep your mind and body moving.



Charles “Chazz” Scott
Nucleus Team Member,
Positively Caviar, Inc.
Courtesy Photo

While our traditional schedules have been modified, it can be easy for us to slip into bad habits that don't support our mind, body and spirit. Be intentional about where you are spending your time and energy as it can have the ability to compound its effects during these next couple of weeks.

As our schedules are rapidly changing it

may be helpful to create a checklist of items that we need to complete before the day starts—a simple yet effective way to guide our thoughts towards a productive and accomplished day. With the number of distractions at home—pandemic updates, social media, and the TV—it can be extremely difficult to stay focused on one task throughout the day. Ultimately, a checklist can guide us to a successful day of productivity instead of a day of distraction and dissatisfaction.

Use the constraint of social distancing to your benefit and buckle down on a proper diet, regular exercise, and even a morning routine to reinvigorate before the day starts. The gym may be closed but get creative and develop a home workout routine with the help of YouTube or other home workout apps. Go outside and get some fresh air, if you can.

As the temperature begins to rise for spring you may consider going for a walk or run. The sun can naturally energize you and help make nutrients for your body that are important for your bones, blood cells and immune system.

This pandemic has altered our way of life for what may be an extended period, so it's important that we don't allow it to negatively affect our mind and body.

Above all, remember that you have control over your mental health and it's important that you take time throughout these uncertain times to take care of yourself. Continue to stay active and take advantage of this time to ensure you feed your mind, body and spirit what it needs to be healthy, happy and productive.

Positively Caviar, Inc. (PCI) is a grassroots nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization focused on instilling mental resilience by way of positive thinking and optimism. Each month, a member of the Nucleus Team provides a column focused on mental and physical health tips, scientific studies and stories that are positive in nature to support a positive and healthy lifestyle. To learn more about how you can support, volunteer, or donate to Positively Caviar, Inc. visit: stay-basedandpositive.com.



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Guest Editorials/Letters

Saluting the nation's unsung heroes during COVID-19 pandemic

By Steve Jones

In spite of the uncertainty that Coronavirus (COVID-19) has caused, there are still many industries filled with hard-working men and women who are continuing to work amid the coronavirus outbreak. From hospitals to delivery services, to physical security companies to pharmacies, to grocery stores, transportation and logistics companies, there are many employees who, while they may not wear capes, are our nation's heroes.

These largely unsung heroes are helping us survive this crisis by driving vehicles filled with crucial supplies, stocking store shelves, filling prescriptions and providing essential public safety services.

Now is the time to share your appreciation for our nation's unsung heroes. While most of us are thankful for the doctors, nurses and emergency workers who are tending to the sick, we should also be appreciative for the men and women who hold essential jobs that require them to show up to work during the pandemic.

Consider thanking your supermarket's shop clerk who is doing their best to keep the shelves stocked with necessities and the cashier who is ringing up the purchases. Express your gratitude to the Amazon delivery person who brought essentials to your home.

As the CEO of a company that employs over 235,000 employees, I salute our hard-working highly trained men and women that are our country's first responders.

Nationwide, there are over one million security professionals on the job who have a wide range of skills. They can be put in high-risk situations as they confront and detain criminals engaged in theft, trespassing, gang activity and every other manner of unlawful behavior that occurs. Real world security professionals work in partnership with local law enforcement as some previously served in law enforcement and military positions.

These well-trained security professionals monitor and patrol facilities and are ready to respond quickly and effectively in any situation. During this challenging time, the physical security sector continues to provide essential public safety services. Security-sector clients, and the public at large, rely on security professionals to keep our communities safe and secure.

Employees, shareholders and other stakeholders look to their business leaders for strength and direction. Let's salute company leaders who are sharing their intel to help others during this challenging time. For example some leaders are publicly sharing their crisis plans, which include employee communications with information about COVID-19, how it's transmitted, what they're doing about it, employee FAQs, and links to resources with more information.

Based in Santa Ana, California, Steve Jones is CEO of Allied Universal, a leading security and facility services company in North America with more than 235,000 employees and revenues over \$8.4 billion. Jones is the author of "No Off Season"—a story of his path to success and the priceless wisdom gained along the way.



Letters to the Editor:

Editor:

Re: Trump's Tardy Coronavirus Response

Chinese farmers brought virus, contaminated animals to a marketplace in Wuhan, China. When humans contracted the virus at the market, medical personnel reported it to the authorities, but Chinese leaders decided to cover it up. This allowed the virus to spread around the world.

The Trump administration downplayed the potential severity of the virus outbreak. This delayed the response and preparations by medical agencies and state and local governments to combat the virus. In January our intelligence agencies warned Trump of the impending coronavirus outbreak, but he ignored them.

Trump said the coronavirus was a "new hoax" by the Democrats and he blamed

the media for fake reporting about it. He said it was no big deal and it would quickly disappear.

Trump is concerned with a depressed economy adversely impacting his reelection, and he is questioning advice from medical professionals and leading infectious disease authorities within the country.

He finally decided to extend the coronavirus distancing guidelines to April 30, 2020, but governors and mayors should implement their own measures, including their timelines to address the coronavirus outbreak.

The country has to do whatever is necessary to get the pandemic under control. These times test the resolve of humanity.

Donald Moskowitz
Londonderry, NH



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Rectifying education underfunding in Baltimore City Public Schools, Part III

By Dr. Ken Morgan

Many Kirwan funding supporters say that all students would have an equal chance to succeed with new Kirwan funding through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. On a local Baltimore TV newscast, the chair of the Kirwan Commission, Dr. Brent Kirwan asked. "Are we going to be a state that invests in our young people and gives every kid in every ZIP code a chance to pursue the American dream?"

The Baltimore City Public Schools enrollment in 2019-2020 was 79,187. African Americans made up 76.6 percent. In 2015, the Needy Families, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP) determined that 84 percent met the low-income criteria. Now, BCPS removed the requirements. The 55 percent reported is far underreported.

Every person interviewed thought increased funding for BCPS helped the city's historic education underfunding.

Contrary to Kirwan's comments, most contended it left out or did not consider

or provided too little direction towards advancing student equality.

"Kirwan funding is needed, and eventually everything has a dollar sign," said Diamonté Brown, president of the Baltimore Teachers Union. "There are fundamental skills that our students need to apply to life.

"Many of these things are not in the curriculum. They need to be able to write to fill out an application or to create a resume. You cannot have a P.E. teacher teach art.

"The stifling status quo bureaucracy barrier remains unaddressed. BCPS district administration policies remain still too insensitive to educational and social student needs.

"Poor and working-class students with new funding will not generally have an equal chance to succeed as an upper-middle-class and wealthy student. You cannot model student values and administration management after business corporate values and beliefs. We have students, not commodities. More money is just the beginning."

A BCPS teacher and former principal who wished to remain nameless spoke out. The teacher said: "They train students the values of the rich. They do not know their interest. Students think money determines all of what they do, and think it is okay. Schools are a training ground for society."

Students suffer cultural and social poverty through racism. It took away black teachers. Teachers and principals are mostly white now, "the inner city teacher said. "There is no social or cultural connection, said the veteran teacher."

Kirwan only addresses money and supplies and equipment, according to the educator.

It does not address racist curriculum content. The curriculum says little or nothing about black resistance to racism.

On the standardized test, the question asked: Why did Macbeth turn red? Students said, "We do not turn red; we are black."

The Algebra Project, a student-based group, is an ardent leader for Kirwan funding. It is a student-based group that fights for a first-rate BCPS education and the end to the school to prison pipeline. Jamal Jones, a co-executive director of the Algebra Project and former student member, said, "I do not know what it takes," when referring to the amount of Kirwan funding.

"It is going in the right direction," he said. "The real question is what is done with the money.

"We need culture competency. We need an African, centered structured curriculum."

When asked about the importance of Kirwan funding, Gillen replied, "It is necessary and owed, especially to African American students, but it is not sufficient in itself to change educational results.

"The accountability structure proposed by Kirwan will undermine equity-based education because the proposed accountability structure is rooted in the assumption that expertise and 'high standards' must come from outside the affected communities."

This assumption means that the vast bulk of Kirwan funding will flow to the people outside the community who have the mandated credentials, authority and status to "hold people accountable."

"Instead," Gillen said, "students, families and teachers must be able to directly control the allocation of Kirwan funding and the ways to measure effectiveness. For example, the great majority of high school students in Baltimore believe that millions of dollars should go to year-round youth employment in entry-level, knowledge-based jobs, as opposed to

spending money on testing, policing and incarceration."

Dayvon Love co-chairs Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle, a black public policy and advocacy group. The State bill presented to amend the legislative Kirwan funding bill defined "culturally responsive pedagogy." It means "an explicitly antiracist instructional practice in which instructors acknowledge the cultural background of students and their families when developing curricula and designing the students' classroom experience."

"The issue with Kirwan is it presumes that the status quo can do differently than from what it is doing." Love said. "The teacher's role is to facilitate."

He said that it addresses the needs of black children in Baltimore, as well as all children.

Brandon Walker is a single working-class parent and Coppin student. He placed his daughter in a private school.

"There was no safe [drinking] water, no toilet paper, over flooded bathrooms, and no computer classes at the public school," Walker said. "Kirwan does not erase inequalities between poor and working-class with middle and upper-middle-class students."

Elanore Brown, no relation to the BTU president, is a grandmother who takes her grandson to public school said, "The Common Core materials that children get at home because of COVID-19 do not educate children. Many times parents are barely literate."

Do you think that all students will have an equal chance to succeed with Kirwan funding on the way? Whether you do or you don't—join the discussion and get involved.

Dr. Morgan is a long-time educator. He taught and coordinated the CSU Urban Studies Program.

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Metropolitan United Methodist Church

“Celebrating the Past – Embracing the Present – Anticipating the Future”

By Ursula V. Battle

Part II of a two-part series on Metropolitan United Methodist Church, located at 1121 W. Lanvale Street in the Harlem Park Community.

This year, Metropolitan United Methodist Church celebrates its 195th Anniversary. The theme for the 195th Anniversary Celebration is: “Celebrating The Past – Embracing The Present – Anticipating the Future. The work the church has done, is doing, and plans to do, makes the anniversary theme befitting.

Margaret J. Lowry, 99, has been a member of Metropolitan United Methodist Church for over half of its existence.

“I will be 100 this year,” she said. “I have been a member of Metropolitan all my life. I remember the ‘Tom Thumb’ weddings. I was a bride. My grandfather was a tailor, and he made the plumes and hats. He walked us down the aisles, and when it came time for us to say something, we were fast asleep. Back then, a lot of the programs were held at night.”

She added with a laugh, “There were so many programs. I remember the time my grandfather wanted me to say the Little Bo Peep poem. I said that all the time for two or three weeks. But when we got to the program, I couldn’t say a word.”

Despite closing in on being a centenarian, Lowry’s recollections of a child growing up in Metropolitan United Methodist Church are clear and detailed.

“Metropolitan had Children’s Day in June,” said Lowry. “It was the second week in June, and we all had to wear white. The boys wore white sailor suits and the girls dressed in white. Back in those days, in church, the children were not supposed to say anything. If you did, you would be reckoned for it.”

“She added, “We had to behave ourselves. Everyone went to Sunday School. At 13, most of us were happy to be 13. At that age we could go upstairs to Sunday School with the adults. We thought we were grown, but we were still children.”

Agnes Irene Taylor Ray, 96, who said she “was born and bred at Metropoli-



This undated photo was taken in front of Metropolitan United Methodist Church’s former Orchard Street location. Courtesy Photo

tan,” also recalled those days.

“I was in the elementary grades and we did crayon work,” said Taylor Ray. “But we always did Sunday School work and it was good and to the glory of God. They gave you a basket of candy, but you did learn, and it was just happiness.”

When asked how Metropolitan United Methodist Church has survived for so many years, Taylor Ray said: “It has survived by the work that has been done and all the members. I work behind the scenes, and for 40 years I worked on the Altar Guild. I have done a lot of housework on the altar. I know every nook and cranny of this church. All to the glory of God. I have lived my whole life in this church and devoted it to God.”

Metropolitan is actively involved in efforts that support the Harlem Park community. Those efforts include serving as a meeting site for the Harlem Park Neighborhood Association and the Sandtown-Winchester East Community Organization. The church also serves as the headquarters for the Harlem Park Community Development Corporation.

The church’s efforts also include scholarships for students; a free Community Clothes Closet; a partnership with the University of Maryland School of Nursing; a Computer Lab for fourth

and fifth grade students in Harlem Park; Computer Research classes for adults; referral services for seniors in need of assistance; and an athletic and fitness program for young males ages 12-17 made possible through a partnership

with a local non-profit organization.

The Rev. Dr. Howard W. Hinson is the Lead Pastor of Metropolitan United Methodist Church. On March 28, 2020 he will turn 84.

“Metropolitan is the ninth church I have pastored in the 65 years I have been in ministry, and I am still active.” said Dr. Hinson who has served there for three years. “Every cowboy gets to a place where he has to hang up his spurs. That time will come for me too. But I have worked hard in these three years. I am blessed to still be in good health. I thank God for the opportunity to pastor here, and I’m proud to be a part of such a glorious history.”

A video of Lowry, Taylor Ray, and Dr. Hinson reflecting on the church’s history can be viewed at <http://baltimore-times-online.com/>

In celebration of its historic anniversary, Metropolitan United Methodist Church will hold an Anniversary Banquet and a Church Anniversary Worship Service. The dates will be forthcoming. For more information call (410) 523-1366.

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Local community leaders remain on a positive note despite worsening public health crisis

#OnAPositiveNote Campaign - What are you doing to stay motivated and positive? The Baltimore Times is sharing #OnAPositiveNote entries to highlight how our neighbors are overcoming a very challenging time with positivity

By Demetrius Dillard

Over the past three weeks, the state of Maryland has been overwhelmed with escalating public health concerns. In the midst of intensifying public anxiety, a local partnership has brought hope to Baltimoreans affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

The Night Brunch, a vibrant pop-up dining series led by Jason Bass, has partnered with Hotel Revival, a boutique inn located in Mount Vernon, to provide vital resources to numerous community members in addition to a good deal of Baltimore's service industry workers.

Since The Night Brunch began two years ago, it has used Hotel Revival for two of its events, which was the beginning of what has been a long-standing partnership.

The prime focus of The Night Brunch is striving to create spaces and experiences through food, music, and community by uniting various sectors of Baltimore City with 'night brunches.'

However, since the COVID-19 has virtually put the globe at a standstill, community leaders such as Bass have been forced to take alternative approaches—largely involving charitable action—to continue influencing Baltimore in a positive way.

"Once this pandemic came into place, of course our focus had to change," said Bass, the CEO and co-founder of The Night Brunch along with Ryan Rhodes. "We had to figure out ways of how to help the people who we would normally bring together, and that's how I was able to then pivot and bring Night Brunch back—not as an event—but a way for us to really contact the community, engage the community better."

Since the virus has spread into Maryland, subsequently leading to thousands of Baltimoreans who have been laid off and the shutdown of several local eateries



The Night Brunch, a vibrant pop-up dining series led by Jason Bass, has partnered with Hotel Revival, a boutique inn located in Mount Vernon, to provide vital resources to numerous community members in addition to a good deal of Baltimore's service industry workers. Photo Credit: Devin Allen



and bars, Hotel Revival has designated a segment of its first-floor bar as a donation and distribution center. Another portion of the hotel's first floor serves as a space for pop-up restaurants and food vendors to cook and process delivery orders.

Additionally, The Night Brunch's partners at Hungry Harvest are providing fresh produce and discounted monthly memberships for those in need. According to Bass, The Night Brunch served 500 free lunches last week, took about 250 packed lunches and produce bags to a few senior centers in East Baltimore and provided Mera Kitchen Collective with free produce as well.

The project's giveaways and food supply drives over the past few weeks have been made possible by food donations.

The Night Brunch continues to use its online platforms to solicit donations for something called the Baltimore Service Industry Fund—a charitable enterprise set up to supply food and resources to the countless individuals affected by COVID-19.

"The goal was really to provide an immediate solution to the problem of Baltimore service industry [workers] being laid off," Bass said. "If we can keep the help of having strong partners, like the hotel and food suppliers, I think we can start to feed a few thousand people a week."

Night Brunch hopes to host two supply drives this week, added Bass, owner of Kiss Tomorrow Hello, a local marketing agency. Since Gov. Larry Hogan has is-

sued a stay-at-home order effective March 30, Bass said he and other collaborators will create a registration system for food pick-up as a precautionary measure.

Donte Johnson, general manager of Hotel Revival, has collaborated with Bass to continue giving the people of Baltimore a reason to celebrate something positive. The hospitality industry executive had one question in mind when he, Bass and a host of others began the initiative.

"How can we at that hotel, not so much focus on the day-to-day business of running the hotel, but focus on what are the needs and wants of our community and how can we meet those needs?," Johnson said. "That's been an ongoing commitment since day one here. This unfortunate circumstance just creates an environment where those needs have to be amplified, particularly for the people who might be underserved or the people who are most impacted."

Prioritizing the needs of the people affected while providing free space for pop-up food and beverage purveyors has been the cornerstone of Johnson's and Bass' commitment to public servitude.

Moreover, the hotel's rooms are being offered to provide accommodations "to people on the front lines fighting this fight," according to Johnson.

"For us, it's really a matter of how can we be a good neighbor, a good partner, a good support of the people who are really doing the heroic stuff that's going to get us through this," Johnson continued. "It's just an opportunity for us to do what we normally do, but do it in a way that makes a huge difference."

About the Baltimore Times #OnAPositiveNote Campaign: Amid ongoing public health concerns prompted by the spread of the coronavirus, the Baltimore Times is committed to highlighting the positive efforts of local influential figures, organizations and otherwise devoted to gathering support for initiatives prioritizing community over commerce.

Maryland boy with big heart makes positive impact during coronavirus pandemic

By Andrea Blackstone

For seven-year-old Cavanaugh Bell, the coronavirus pandemic offered a prime opportunity to spread positivity, while showing senior citizens how much he truly cares about their wellbeing. The Gaithersburg, Maryland resident kicked off a growing coronavirus campaign, by using \$600 of his own money to begin purchasing hygiene and cleaning items for seniors.

The forward thinking first grader is also a social justice activist who implements his ideas to improve the community through his nonprofit called Cool & Dope. Cavanaugh started the organization in 2019, after he was told that he was too young to volunteer.

Cool & Dope is an acronym, for 'Considering Others' Obstacles in Life, Dish Out Positive Energy.' That is exactly what Cavanaugh is doing with help from his mother and the nonprofit's executive director, Llacey Simmons.

"My grandma is my best, best friend and it is important to make sure our senior citizens are taken care of because they took care of our moms and dads when they were growing up. A lot of times people forget about senior citizens, and they live their life all alone, and that makes me very sad for them," Cavanaugh said. "I always take care of my grandma and sometimes she is very strict with me, but I love her so much and I want her to be taken care of. I also think about her friends who don't have family to visit them, and so I want to just spread the love I have in my soul to all of them."

The mother and son team illustrates that even in the midst of crisis situations, youth can still come up with ideas and make a difference.

Simmons explained that making coronavirus care packages was Cavanaugh's idea, after considering the effect that the pandemic could have on his 74-year-old maternal grandmother.

"She has COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) and does not have a car or easy means to get to and from the grocery store. On a trip to see her to get

her items from the store, Cavanaugh asked if we could buy more to help the other seniors in her community," Simmons said. "To do this, he asked if he could use the savings that I had put aside for him over the last few years. That's how it started. We used the money to get the items from Target, and he recruited his teenage cousins to help him package the items and distribute them to seniors the next day."

So far, 78 care packages have been put together and distributed to senior citizens who reside at Hillside Senior Apartment Homes (Hillside) in Gaithersburg, in addition to 31 hot meals, which were also delivered.

Kendra Dickerson, Regional Marketing Manager for the Franklin Johnston Group, remarked that Cavanaugh's organization has been amazing to the seniors who reside at Hillside. She added that in this climate, some seniors feel forgotten, but Cavanaugh has a passion to lend a hand with a smile on his face.

Additionally, enough food to feed 90 students who attend "So What Else" program in Rockville, Maryland was distributed. Cavanaugh and his mother remain on the move, in spite of challenges of maintaining social distancing requirements and meeting the sanitation concerns.

"His savings covered the initial care pack assembly of 68 packs. He had \$78 left over that covered a portion of the meals. Donations covered the other \$125 for the food as well as the \$145 for the food for the 90 students. We are now solely working on donations that have come in since Friday last week."

"We've been very conscious of wearing gloves and keeping things sanitized as much as possible. For the care packs, we left most of them at the door for the elderly residents to get them later," Simmons said. "When we shop out in the public, we do our best to keep our distance from people and usually do one large store run, instead, of multiple smaller store runs. And lots of hand washing!"

Cavanaugh's proactive attitude is capturing attention from across the country.



Cavanaugh Bell shops for students who attend "So What Else" program in Rockville, Maryland, So far, he has provided enough food to feed 90 students.

Photos courtesy of Cool & Dope

Donations are still being made. The public's financial response to Cavanaugh's call-to-action will enable him to make more care packs to provide meals, groceries, and assistance to senior citizens and youth in need during the pandemic.

"I'm so thankful for everyone who donated and supported me. I couldn't do this without you and I know together we can pull through this," Cavanaugh said.

Not only has Cavanaugh stepped up during the pandemic, but he has made it his mission through Cool & Dope to inspire kids to take a stand and speak out against bullying and working toward eradicating it by his 18th birthday in November 2030. Cavanaugh was once bullied, but he explained that he tries to tell himself positive things, and not let haters bother him, because he knows he has good in his soul.

"I learn from him (Cavanaugh) everyday about what it means to help others selflessly," Simmons said.

"When the coronavirus season is over, I am going to make more speeches to raise awareness about bullying to get that to stop by 2030. For now, I'll just keep making care packs, and hopefully inspiring people to do the same thing for the senior citizens in their communities."

For more information about Cavanaugh and his campaigns, visit: www.coolanddope.com.

Ravens Ray Lewis starts 52 card challenge

By Tyler Hamilton

Seven seasons have passed since the last time Hall of Fame linebacker Ray Lewis suited up for the Baltimore Ravens. Lewis was known for his intensity and legendary work ethic. He's bringing that same intensity to a new program called the 52 Card Challenge.

Lewis developed a workout using a deck of cards when he was a child. He wanted to get strong so he could protect his mother from being abused by his stepfather. The strength he developed led to him not only protecting his mother, but he also became one of the best football players ever and was able to provide for her financially as well.

Ironically Lewis wore number 52. There are 52 cards in a deck. Lewis would shuffle a deck of cards then pick one and do push-ups according to the cards he drew. Any face card was worth 10 pushups, an ace was 25 pushups, and a joker was 50.

The 52 Card Challenge is an opportunity for people to emulate Lewis' workout. His social media account encourages people to go to teamnoexcuses.tv and sign up. The first thing that appears on the page is an image of Lewis yelling with the phrase, "Be inspired for greatness! Never be comfortable with just good enough."

There are few athletes in sports who are credited for being a more intense leader than Lewis was in his 17 seasons with the Ravens. Through his site, Lewis is challenging others to be a leader by registering a team.



Hall of Fame linebacker Ray Lewis played for the Baltimore Ravens for 17 seasons
Photo Credit: Larry French/Getty Images

The site says the following:

Lewis strongly believes that incorporating physical movement into your daily routine will help you build confidence, character and discipline, so you become a better version of yourself in everything you do. Team No Excuses Members receive a new workout every weekday, built from the cards that Ray draws each Monday. Every day each suit represents a different exercise, and the number on the card is the number of times you perform the exercise. Ray developed his cards workout method as a young child, and it has stuck with him every day of his life. He still does his cards workout once a day, and credits the cards for a lot of his success in life.

The new workout has different parameters. Jokers call for 52 pushups while the Aces call for squats, lunges, jumping-jacks or sit-ups depending upon the card.

In total, each deck has 52 cards. Lewis' challenge started on March 23, 2020. The goal is to grow more teams and together hit 1,000,000 reps.

Both Federal and State Tax Deadline Moved to July 15!

Please don't waste your money on paid preparers when you can get your taxes done for free! Tax Deadline Day has now been changed to July 15, 2020 so there is no need to rush to file your taxes before April 15. If you earned \$56,000 or less in 2019, you could qualify for free tax preparation services from the nonprofit CASH Campaign of Maryland. While the CASH Campaign and their partners are on temporary hiatus due to the coronavirus, they will resume taking appointments again soon. Keep Your Money— why waste it on paid preparers when you can get it done for free and on time for the new July 15 deadline? For more information, visit: www.bmorefreetaxes.org or www.cashmd.org



Want to Help Health Care Workers on the Front Lines Without Leaving the House?

Have your kids (or you!) create thank-you cards for our nurses, doctors, nurse's aides, techs, cafeteria workers, therapists, and everyone else working every day to keep the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) running and to help save lives during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

They are the true heroes who are worried about not having protective gear to wear, not having enough blood for people who need it, and leaving their families at home while they head into work.

Let's show them some love!



To help prevent the spread of germs into the hospital, email a picture of your card to cards@umaryland.edu and we will compile the photos into a thank-you video for UMMC staff.

So create the card, snap a photo, and send it to us right from your phone. Easy! Thanks for your support, and stay healthy!

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OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

BGE warns customers about utility scammers during COVID-19

Baltimore— With Maryland and the world experiencing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, BGE is reminding customers to always be on alert for potential scams targeting utility customers. Scams occur throughout the year, but the company has seen an increase in scam reports over the past week with scammers attempting to use this health crisis to trick utility customers. The company has received reports that scammers are offering cash or credit incentives from BGE in order to obtain a customer's personal or financial information.

It is important to remind customers again of important energy assistance that is available to help meet their energy needs. BGE has many programs in place to help customers through temporary or extended financial hardship.

Additionally, BGE is suspending service disconnections and waiving new late payment charges at least until May 1 and will be working with customers on a case-by-case basis to establish payment arrangements and identify energy assistance options.

BGE is also working with residents whose service was disconnected prior to the March 13 service disconnection moratorium to have service restored. Those customers should contact the company at 800-685-0123. As part of the reconnection process, BGE Customer Care representatives will work with residents to help identify assistance programs that can supplement bill payment and can help ensure service remains on after this pandemic.

"It is unfortunate that scammers are using this time of health and financial uncertainty to attempt to deceive our customers," said Tamla Olivier, senior vice president and chief customer officer for BGE. "These scammers are constantly changing their tactics and it's important that our customers stay vigilant to avoid becoming victims."



In some cases, the recorded message that customers hear when calling a legitimate company has been duplicated by scammers, so when customers call the number provided by the scammer, it sounds like an actual business. Some scammers also use caller ID "spoofing" to replicate a utility's phone number.

Don't Get Scammed— customers can avoid being scammed by taking a few precautions:

- Never provide your social security number or personal information to anyone initiating contact with you claiming to be a utility representative or requesting you to send money to another person or entity other than your local utility providers.

- Always ask to see a company photo ID before allowing any utility worker into your home or business.

- Do not give payment in any form— cash, check, or credit— to anyone coming to your door.

How to protect yourself

- Utility representatives will never ask

or require a customer with a past due balance to purchase a prepaid debit card to avoid disconnection. Additionally, all service disconnections have been suspended through at least May 1, so any disconnection notices are likely scams.

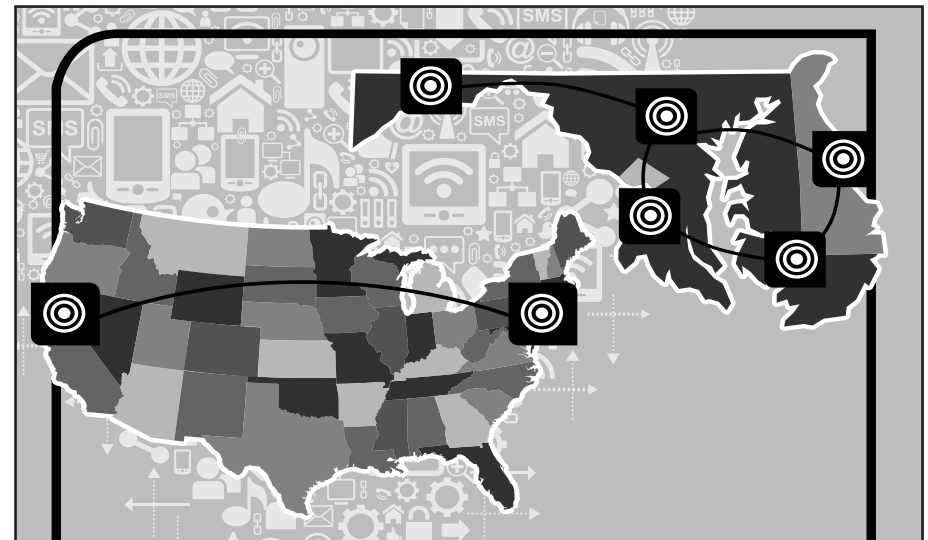
- Customers can make payments online, by phone, automatic bank withdrawal, mail or in person.

- While BGE is currently suspending service disconnections, under normal circumstances customers with a past due balance will receive multiple shut off notifications— never a single notification one hour before disconnection.

- If a customer ever questions the legitimacy of the call, hang up and call BGE at 800-685-0123.

- BGE already has your account information and past bills. If you are authorizing a legitimate third-party energy supplier to switch your energy supply, they will need you to disclose your electric choice ID or natural gas choice ID at the time you are authorizing to be switched to their service. If you do not intend to switch your energy supplier, do not provide your choice ID number(s) or a copy of your bill to anyone.

Any customer who believes he or she has been a target of a scam is urged to contact their local police and call BGE immediately at 800-685-0123 to report the situation.



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What are you doing to stay motivated and positive during these times?

The Baltimore Times will be sharing #OnAPositiveNote entries to highlight how our neighbors are overcoming a very challenging time with positivity. Join us.

ON A POSITIVE NOTE

Send us an email at btimes@btimes.com with the subject line #OnAPositiveNote. Tell us in 200 words or less (or send a 2 minute video) sharing how you have been creative in overcoming the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has caused.



#OnAPositiveNote