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Annapolis honors beloved 'Walking Man' with heart-warming mural



Annapolis legend, Carlester "Buckwheat" Smith, kept Annapolis clean for decades. However due to illness, Smith is no longer able to pick up trash on West Street but he is still very loved by the community. A team of artists painted a mural of his likeness at Pinkey's West Street Liquors located at 1100 West Street, which was documented by photographers and a film crew. Two more murals will be painted. Smith's fans contributed over \$5,000 to honor Annapolis' own "Walking Man" who was known to bring smiles to the faces of many people over the years. An online musical fundraiser allowed the dream to honor Smith to become a reality. Even though many murals have been popping up in public places all over Annapolis paying homage to Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, this particular artistic representation dif-

Wells Fargo commitment could potentially result in billions for small businesses

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior Correspondent
@StacyBrownMedia

In April, Wells Fargo announced it would donate gross proceeds from the Paycheck Protection Plan to nonprofits working with small businesses.

This month, the bank has ramped up its efforts by unveiling the details of an approximately \$400 million initiative to help small businesses impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The goal is to help keep the doors of small businesses open, retain employees, and rebuild.

Through Wells Fargo's new Open for Business Fund, the company will engage nonprofit organizations to provide capital, technical support, and long-term resiliency programs to small businesses, emphasizing those that are minority-owned businesses.

"We realized early on that small businesses were taking the brunt of what was happening with COVID-19 and the economic slowdown that occurred," said Jenny Flores, Wells Fargo's head of small business growth philanthropy. "We also noticed that diverse individuals were having a very negative impact, and with the data, it was coming to 41 percent or 450,000 Black-owned businesses closed when COVID hit. That is a disproportionate impact not only to the

entrepreneurs but also to the employees they have and the pocketbook."

Through June 30, 2020, Wells Fargo funded loans under the PPP for more than 179,000 customers, with an average loan amount of \$56,000, totaling \$10.1 billion.

Of the loans made, 84 percent of those are for companies with less than ten employees; 60 percent were for amounts of \$25,000 or less; and, 90 percent of these applicants had \$2 million or less in annual revenue.

Given the federal government's extension of the PPP, Wells Fargo will reopen its PPP loan application process to eligible customers as soon as possible through a link in Business Online Banking, the bank noted in a news release.

Additionally, the Wells Fargo Open for Business Fund's initial grants will allocate \$28 million to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), also known as nonprofit community lenders.

The grants are aimed at empowering Black and African American-owned small businesses, which the National Bureau of Economic Research said are closing at nearly twice the rate of the industry.

Among the first grantees are Expanding Black Business Credit Initiative (EBBC), which will support the launch of a Black Vision Fund to increase the flow of capital to Black-focused CDFIs for transformational work to close the



Given the federal government's extension of the PPP, Wells Fargo will reopen its PPP loan application process to eligible customers as soon as possible through a link in Business Online Banking.

Photo Credit: iStock/NNPA

racial wealth gap in African American communities.

The CDFIs will also receive capital for urgent deployment to impacted businesses in the Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, and Midwest.

Further, a Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) will provide grants and low-cost capital to more than 2,800 entrepreneurs, focusing on preventing loss in revenue, sustaining employment, and averting vacancies among vulnerable small business owners in urban and rural markets nationwide.

"This is an extension of the commitment we had to diverse businesses," Flores noted. "Small businesses need cash to open again, and we are putting \$260 million for community development financial pocket lenders that have a track record of reaching diverse communities. We want them to be able to do new loans and to have grant money."

Wells Fargo counts as one of the top

PPP lenders in the country and has spent a lot of time understanding various strategies to assist small businesses, Flores declared.

"We have key members across the country, and I talk to entrepreneurs directly," she said. "This reflects a very thoughtful approach, one that is based on really putting the customer right at the center, listening to what they need. This has potentially \$1 billion of impact in a three-year period."

"When they get the loans and recycle that and then for every million CDFI loans out to small businesses, they can support 18 businesses and create 31 jobs."

"Hence, if you take the \$250 million and work through it, it's thousands of businesses we're impacting in such a positive way. We're really proud of the opportunity we have to collaborate with CDFIs and particularly those who are led by diverse entrepreneurs."

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Walters Art Museum Announces Summer Art Adventures: Museum at Home Edition

Baltimore— The Walters Art Museum is pleased to announce its free **Summer Art Adventures** program. Designed for ages 6 to 11 and combining live workshops, at-home art making projects, and art making videos, Summer Art Adventures features a variety of formats to support busy schedules and learning preferences.

Live workshops led by Walters educators are offered on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, with morning classes designed for ages 6 to 8, and afternoon sessions for children aged 9 to 11-years-old. In addition, Summer Art Adventures includes downloadable activity packets that include an introduction to a work of art from the Walters collection, an art-making project using materials that can be gathered from around the house, coloring sheet, and a scavenger hunt.

“Our free summer programming is another way we are fulfilling an important part of our mission, which is to serve as an educational partner with families in the region,” said Julia Marciari-Alexander, Andrea B. and John H. Laporte



Designed for ages 6 to 11, Summer Art Adventures is a free program that combines live workshops, at-home art making projects, and art making videos, featuring variety of formats to support busy schedules and learning preferences. To register, visit: thewalters.org. Courtesy Photo/The Walters Art Museum

Director. “We want to connect students with art and learning throughout the summer months and during this challenging time, it’s vital to provide working parents with additional no-cost resources that

cater to their specific needs.”

To accommodate families with limited Internet access, 2,000 Summer Art Adventures Art Kits are available for free for Baltimore City and County residents and can

be picked up at distribution sites around the city. Each kit, available in English and Spanish, includes the activity packet along with all of the supplies needed to complete the art making activity.

“Summer Art Adventures is a free digital version of some of our most popular offerings and everything is designed to give options to families that best suit their schedules and access to technology,” said Amanda Kodeck, Ruth R. Marder Director of Education. “Each 75-minute program is interactive, led by professional educators, and aims to connect students with works from the collection that span the globe. Kids will have opportunities to participate in art games or challenges, and to explore their own creative process with fun and imaginative art making.”

The themes and dates for each week are:

- *Fashion Forward—July 20-24
- *Full STEAM Ahead—July 27-31
- *The Natural World—August 3-7
- *Art Tales—August 10-14

Registration is available at: thewalters.org.



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Guest Editorials/Commentary

Businesses must embrace the digital age to survive COVID-19

By Brent Messenger

The coronavirus pandemic has triggered massive changes in consumer behavior. Demand for online grocery shopping has more than doubled. At-home fitness gear is flying off the virtual shelves. And e-commerce platforms of all types are recording unprecedented traffic. Online sales jumped about 50 percent in April following the beginning of shelter-in-place orders.

In an attempt to return to normalcy, several states across the nation are lifting shelter-in-place orders and removing social distancing requirements. But things won't ever be the same. The pandemic has profoundly altered the way we do business, and some of these behavioral changes are permanent. If businesses don't prepare for this new digital reality, they won't survive the pandemic or its aftermath.

E-commerce has boomed since the outbreak began. Compared to their 2019 figures, retailers that have both brick-and-mortar and online presences reported a 52 percent increase in online sales between late-January and February, according to analytics firm Quantum Metric.

Much of this business comes from new customers. A recent survey found that more than 40 percent of people shopping online for groceries were doing so for the first time.

Hiring patterns reflect this new wave of online demand. Businesses nationwide have laid-off millions of Americans. Yet in March, Amazon and Walmart announced that they planned to hire a combined 250,000 additional workers to fulfill and deliver e-commerce orders. Macy's recently stated that it would furlough most of its employees, but there would be "fewer furloughs in our digital business . . . so we can continue to serve our customers online."

Of course, people are primarily transacting online because they can't leave their homes, but these new customers won't all disappear once the virus subsides.

Consider the workout industry. The average gym membership costs nearly \$700 per year in the United States. It's far cheaper—and more convenient—to subscribe to a virtual fitness program and buy a set of weights.

Or consider meal delivery kits. Folks may initially sign up for Blue Apron or Hello Fresh to avoid visiting the supermarket, but some people will discover they enjoy cooking their own pre-packaged dinners and become lifelong subscribers.

Florida may reopen its beaches, Texas might allow residents back into restaurants, and Georgia may open up its gyms. But even with social distancing measures in place, there will still be untold numbers of people who are afraid to even leave their homes. Millions of high-risk people who suffer from chronic conditions will be particularly wary of venturing into busy stores and public places.

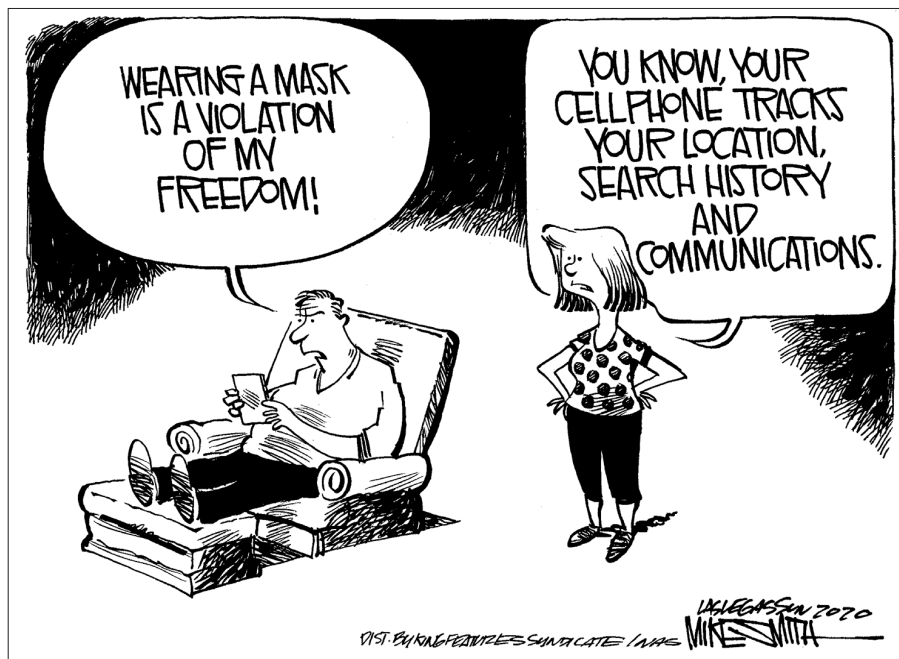
If businesses want to survive in the new reality, they'll need to significantly expand their online presence.

My company, Fiverr, has worked quickly to adapt to the new ways that Americans are living and working. When the pandemic began, we opened several new categories on our website—including online coding classes and music lessons—to meet the demand for virtual assistance. Now, we're working with businesses to help them digitally transform their offerings—whether that's creating a website, helping with e-commerce, or optimizing social media channels.

We're not alone. Shopify, an e-commerce company, is offering an extended 90-day free trial to new customers who are looking to take their retail stores online.

The coronavirus pandemic has ushered in a new digital-first age, one that'll last long after the virus fades. Businesses of all sizes will have no choice but to adapt.

Brent Messenger is vice president of public policy and community engagement at Fiverr. This piece originally ran in the International Business Times.



Community Affairs

Local leaders pressed to enforce public health requirements in bars and restaurants

Annapolis— Governor Larry Hogan has directed local leaders to step up enforcement of public health requirements in bars and restaurants across the state. State health officials have connected an increasing number of COVID-19 cases to non-compliance with face covering and physical distancing rules.

"The vast majority of bars and restaurants in our state are in compliance, but some are flagrantly violating the law and endangering public health," said Governor Hogan. "You have the responsibility to enforce these laws. Violators should be warned, fined, have actions taken regarding their licenses, or closed if necessary. Local health departments, local liquor boards and inspectors, and local law enforcement agencies must work together to ensure public health is protected."

Currently, the positivity rate among Marylanders under 35 is now 84 percent higher than it is for Marylanders 35 and over. Under Executive Order 20-06-10-01, which was issued on June 10, 2020 and accompanying directives from the

Maryland Department of Health:

*Bars and restaurants are open for seated service only with physical distancing and capacity restrictions. Customers must be seated at least six feet apart from other guests. Standing and congregating in bar areas is strictly prohibited.

*All staff must wear a face covering while working and interacting with customers.

*For facilities with booths, every other booth must be closed.

*No more than six people may sit at a table.

"Our continued economic health and recovery depend on the active and aggressive local compliance and enforcement of these critical public health measures," Governor Hogan continued. "We cannot allow a small segment of willful violators to squander the collective efforts of the overwhelming majority of Maryland citizens and businesses."

The state continues working to further increase the convenience and accessibility of COVID-19 resources and testing. To learn more about COVID-19 in Maryland, or make a plan to get tested at one of more than 220 testing sites, visit: coronavirus.maryland.gov.

‘Closing the Distance’ Between COVID-19 and Baltimore Students’ Return to School

By Regi Taylor

Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) system has the unenviable task of safely returning students to school, or a stable, effective learning environment, in six weeks in the midst of the deadliest pandemic in a century.

Despite Governor Larry Hogan’s respectable stewardship fighting the coronavirus in Maryland, the raging disease flaring in other parts of the country is a mortal threat to us locally as the disease respects no geographic boundaries.

“Closing the Distance, Preparing for Reopening of City Schools” is the theme the board of education has adopted to convey the daunting task to maintain instructional continuity and the highest standards of learning for Baltimore students who were receiving a less than stellar education prior to COVID-19.

BCPS Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises, conducted a Family Virtual Town Hall last week to

update stakeholders; school administrators; teachers and staff; families; students; elected officials; unions; and community partners of the district’s strategies under consideration for school reopening scheduled for Monday, August 31, 2020.

Tentatively, the plan outlines a 3 Phase Framework. Phase 1 is fully remote learning, 100 percent virtual. Phase 2 is a hybrid model, combining virtual and

at-home children appeared to be parents’ most challenging task.

As difficult as Baltimore City Public School administrators’ jobs appear to be, there are a plethora of related issues that must be addressed in coordination with City Hall to assure a smooth return to school next month whether instruction is virtual or in-person.

There are roughly 90,000 students attending Baltimore City Public Schools,

of the entire public school population. Including students, teachers, staff and bus drivers, BCPS comprises nearly 100,000 persons, one-in-six of the total Baltimore City population.

With a lag time of two to three weeks before COVID-19 fully displays symptoms, and with current test result turn-around times as long as seven to 10 days, an outbreak in the city school system would be catastrophic before it was ever determined there was a problem.

While all of these issues are being weighed, there are other pressing logistical issues that must be resolved. In the event that students were to return to the classroom en masse how would social distancing be maintained for students transported by bus? If capacity is reduced on buses how will all students be transported to school on time?

If all students are taught virtually at the start of school how will the shortage of laptops and electronic notebooks be addressed? What about students who don’t have Internet access?

Then there is the question of nutrition. Under the long-distance learning scenario, how will students continue to receive school-served breakfast and lunch, particularly during inclement weather?

These concerns are very real. Tune-in and stay tuned to developments regarding city school reopening plans and to COVID-19 in general.

Adopting “Closing the Distance” as its theme becomes crystal clear when you consider how far Baltimore City Public Schools has to go to safely and effectively educate our children in the age of COVID-19.

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

“Moreover, since the African American population has been determined to be more susceptible to coronavirus, exposing children to the disease in the school environment, coupled with the vulnerability of people in their immediate proximity, how long would it take to spark an uncontrolled spread in Baltimore?”

some limited in-person classroom instruction, and Phase 3, “the new normal” is mostly in-person learning with some virtual as needed, incorporating hygiene and distancing best practices as necessary.

Dr. Santelises’ July 9, 2020, virtual town hall also shared some preliminary results from polling the District conducted between July 1st and 8th from 7,665 respondents that revealed 83 percent of families were satisfied with the support received from their children’s teachers with distance learning and 81 percent who felt that school’s communicated clear curricular expectations.

On the downside, 48 percent of families reported their student’s emotional well-being suffered and 30 percent felt their children lost academic ground. The results were inconclusive among families regarding the overall efficacy of distance learning. Juggling work versus caring for

nearly 15 percent of the city’s population. If there is a COVID-19 outbreak in the public school system, how long would it take for these kids to expose the rest of the city’s population, their immediate family, friends and neighbors?

Moreover, since the African American population has been determined to be more susceptible to coronavirus, exposing children to the disease in the school environment, coupled with the vulnerability of people in their immediate proximity, how long would it take to spark an uncontrolled spread in Baltimore?

One in seven, 14.5 percent of Baltimore’s population, is over 65 years old. These are the grandparents and elder relatives of the city’s 90,000 students. The risk of exposure from infected child carriers to older family members could be calamitous.

Then there’s the collective population

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Tia Hamilton: Encouraging Black men, the incarcerated, others to read and write books

By Stacy M. Brown

Tia Hamilton sees her Urban Reads Bookstore as a hub for Black authors, including talented writers behind bars.

She opened Urban Reads late last year, and the Greenmount Avenue location quickly created an atmosphere where residents and others “can feel safe, read, explore, vibe, and their children— our children— can connect with these books.”

“This goal has been made every day since we opened,” said Hamilton, who noted being inspired by her ownership of “State Vs. Us Magazine, which she launched a few years ago to help elevate the voices of those who have served prison time and those still in lockup.

“I tried to get other local companies to place my magazine in their stores, and it never happened. They never reached back out to me,” Hamilton said. “So I decided to open up my own store and sell my magazine, and put prison authors in the store so their work can be seen.”

Hamilton added that she felt discriminated against by Mondawmin Mall after an agreement to have her move into space there was nixed because “someone believed I was too political.”

“I then decided that this was going to be one of those situations where I pull up my own seat and create my own table with other people like me. Now we have Urban Reads,” Hamilton declared.

She offered that African Americans— particularly Black men— enjoy the space on Greenmount Avenue. Baltimore Times Publisher, Joy Bramble noted how impressed she was when happening upon Urban Reads and finding it filled with Black men quietly reading books.

Hamilton says it’s a myth that people read more books online than they do the physical copy. “I travel a lot, and I see more people with books in hand than a device,” she said.

“At Urban Reads, we can place authors, local, indie and prison authors in a space



Tia Hamilton opened Urban Reads Bookstore late last year. The Greenmount Avenue location offers an atmosphere where residents and others in the community can feel safe, read, explore and vibe.
Courtesy Photo

they [have] never been in before. They can finally and proudly say they are on a shelf of a bookstore in their community. It’s a blessing for them and us,” noted Hamilton, herself a formerly incarcerated individual. “To see their faces, smiles and joy is dope to us. We do book signings. We have community events such as first aid and CPR, financial literacy for youth entrepreneurs, free reading classes, creative writing courses, spoken word for our youth, and so much more in the works. We have a cafe with food, Seamoss, soaps, CBD, notary, faxing, copies and Internet cafe. We have our community on our back, and we are ok with that. Serving and saving ours is important.”

An entrepreneur since 2003, Hamilton says she is determined to give back to her community.

“I need [the community] to know that there’s nothing about us without us. We are the buying power and until we real-

ize that we will continue to suffer. Be

patient with most Black-owned companies because most of us never had or will get the opportunity to seek financial help to build a better business or deliver quality products,” Hamilton said. “Our community wasn’t taught that. We are taught to go to school and work for the white man. I’m here to change that narrative. Consumers of Black-owned businesses need to learn how to give constructive and positive feedback. Love the companies you support, help them thrive, and stop blasting them on social media. If you have a resource that you think may help someone in business, give that up to take advantage of the growth. Teach your children finances and stocks. If you don’t know how— then, find someone who does. As a Black community, we need to learn that ‘Pookie’ from the projects cannot show you how to build a business if they never built one. That’s like me telling you how to build a house, and I never have. A lot of this is common sense. Stay humble, stay open, and stay consistent in all you do. And let’s win.”



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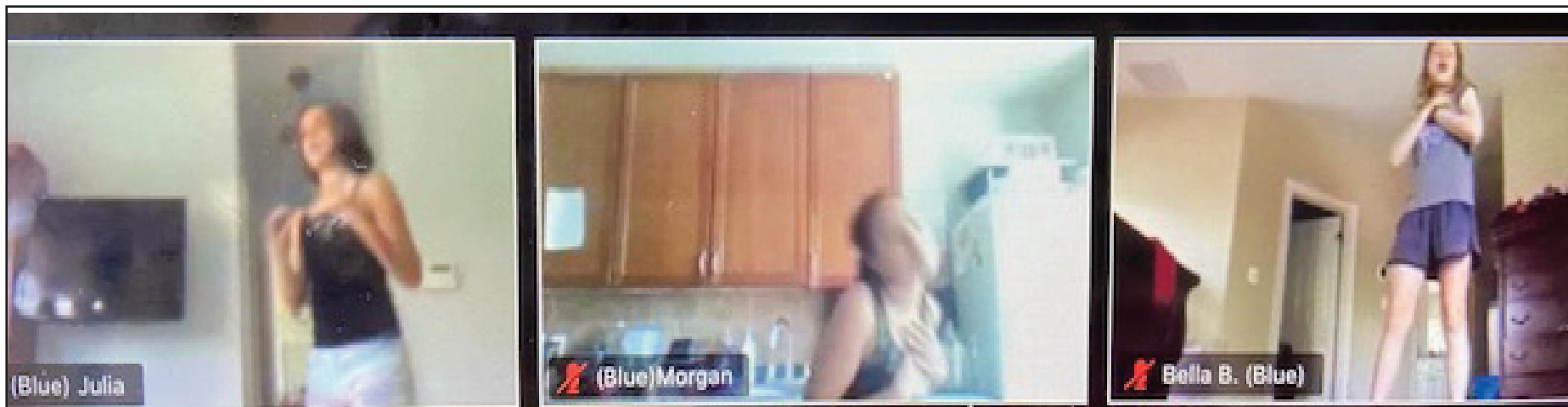


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'The Show Must Go In!'

Camp Hippodrome Holds Performance Via Zoom



Camp Hippodrome participants show off their dance skills during their performance to a Hairspray medley. The live performance took place Thursday, July 9, 2020 from the homes of the campers via Zoom. Photos: Ursula V. Battle

By Ursula V. Battle

Spectators had the opportunity to “Zoom” in to watch this year’s Camp Hippodrome participants as they performed a choreographed dance routine to a “Hairspray” medley. The live performance took place Thursday, July 9, 2020 from the homes of the campers, and epitomized the old showbiz saying, ‘the show must go on.’

Sponsored in part by JP Morgan Chase and the PNC Charitable Trust, Camp Hippodrome offers two, one-week programs every summer. The camp’s second week culminated with the memorable dance routine, which the campers performed via the software platform Zoom.

Leading up to the ‘Grand Finale’ of this year’s Camp Hippodrome, middle school students in Baltimore City and Baltimore County logged into Zoom for musical workshops, choreography training, and career sessions for campers to learn more about future career opportunities in theatre.

Camp Hippodrome is a free program that provides students with the opportunity to receive professional instruction during the summer at the Hippodrome Theatre.

Following the performance, Jeremiah Sutton, Constance Tittle, and Bailey Cordell, talked about participating in this year’s Camp Hippodrome, which could not be held at The Hippodrome

due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“Me and the other kids all have one thing in common, and that is that we all wanted to come to camp,” said Jeremiah, who attends Sudbrook Magnet Middle School.

Jeremiah also talked about “Hairspray,” the Broadway musical based on John Waters’ 1988 film of the same name.

“The message of Hairspray is really good,” said Jeremiah. “People will realize how long ago it was written, and see in real life it is happening right now.”

Constance attends Ridgely Middle School.

“Ever since I was little, I have wanted to sing and reach out to people and connect with people,” said Constance, who is participating in the camp for the third time. “Virtual camp was more than I expected. This is better than being there for me. This virtual camp is just so amazing, and I just thank God for Wi-Fi.”

This year marked Bailey’s first time participating in Camp Hippodrome.

“I have always liked to perform,” said Bailey who attends Pine Grove Middle School. “It’s a great way to connect with people, a great way to communicate through art, and a great way to get your feelings and thoughts across without being super bland.”

She added, “It gives us something fun to do. They [Camp Hippodrome] tell us about unions, we meet special guests, we learn about monologues and things

we are supposed to do. They help us so much and it is a great experience for anyone who wants to be an actor. Despite being miles away, we still did fun things and managed to create this great environment.”

Olive Waxter is the executive director of The Hippodrome Foundation.

“We have this incredible, most beautiful resource in the state of Maryland,” said Waxter. “It’s a little frustrating—we all have to be safe and follow the rules. But I am proud of them and they have risen to the challenge. I know they would prefer to be here at The Hippodrome.”

When asked if she questioned whether or not Camp Hippodrome would take place this year,

Waxter said: “I really had doubts about a virtual camp. But, I knew we had to do something. I had doubts about if we

would be able to establish the relationships, and if the intimacy would be the same. But computers, digital and screens are something the kids understand better than we do.”

She added, “It has been quite a surprise. I was a doubter and I should not have been. It has been a fun experience seeing the kids get better and better with their skills. They are all gutsy. My favorite moment is always the finale. I love to see the kids having fun. That’s what this is all about. This year was kind of emotional.”

Barb Wirsing is the Education Director of The Hippodrome Foundation.

“I usually have my Kleenex,” said Wirsing. “They are just incredibly talented youth. It brings me to tears.”

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STOP CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN



Annapolis honors beloved ‘Walking Man’ with heart-warming mural

By Andrea Blackstone

It is unlikely to find a longtime Annapolitan who has never met, seen or heard of an Annapolis legend named Carlester “Buckwheat” Smith. According to sightings, which span decades, Smith stayed armed with a constant supply of plastic bags and a fast walk. Smith had a disability which did not did stop him from faithfully appearing to pick up trash on West Street. The “Walking Man” didn’t just keep the city debris-free, he also inspired people to smile and feel upbeat. Although illness now prevents Smith from continuing his environmentally conscious tradition, fans can now view a representation of his cheerful face on a mural located at Pinkey’s West Street Liquors at 1100 West Street.

Even though many murals have been popping up in public places all over Annapolis—paying homage to individuals such as Breonna Taylor and George Floyd—this particular artistic representation differs because Smith’s mural is not tied to police brutality.

Kevin Lebling, who is also known by the stage name, “Hurricane Kevin,” performs blues and folk-oriented music, while singing and playing the guitar and harmonica. On June 22, 2020, the experienced musician hosted a virtual Facebook benefit concert for Smith called “Walk With Me.”

Lebling says he met Smith in the late seventies and described him as “a beautifully-spirited guy.” Musicians volunteered to perform, during the five-hour live streamed fundraiser. An overwhelming number of Smith’s fans thanked “The Walking Man” for his work and inspiration. Lebling estimated that thousands of supporters stepped up to contribute to Smith’s mural. Lebling added that a core group of six individuals led the charge to do something for Smith, after the question was posed online, about Smith’s whereabouts.

“We were able to raise over \$5,000, just from that (online music) show, and people continued to contribute,” Lebling said, explaining that musicians volunteered to raise money to cover expenses related to creating the mural and produc-



Comacell Brown, Jr. served as the project’s lead artist.

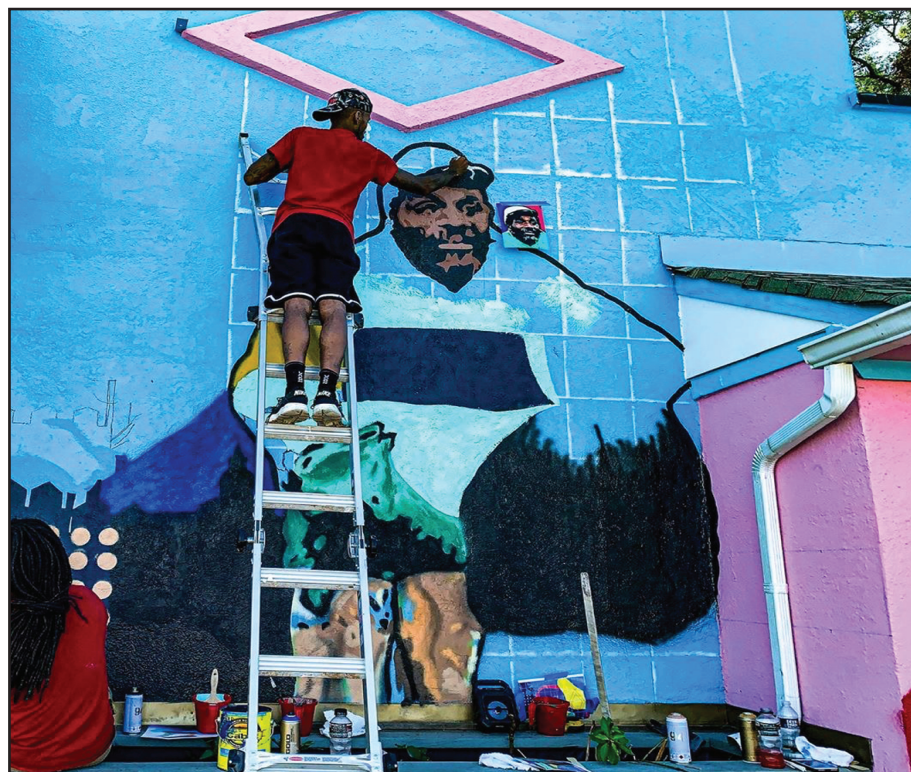
Courtesy Photo/ Dee Ward

ing the show. “One of the real main points of this project—and it is over and about Buckwheat—but it brings the community together. We are seeing all of these murals of people, who were murdered, but with this one, Carlester is still alive, and we’re celebrating him because of his smile, because of the way he did what Cal Ripken did. He showed up to work everyday. He brightened people’s lives, and I think he brought the community, which is a diverse community, I think he brings us all a little more together.”

Lebling added that although Smith’s in-person presence is missed, people will still have the joy of seeing his likeness on West Street.

Comacell Brown, Jr. is the mural’s lead artist who brought the vision to life, along with other artists. Brown, who is the owner of Cell Spitfire Paintings and Designs, LLC, came up with the art work which was approved by Smith’s family.

Brown explained that the creation of



Comacell Brown, Jr. remembered seeing Carlester “Buckwheat” Smith, picking up trash, when he was a child. He along with other artists had the opportunity to lead the charge to celebrate the Annapolis icon by painting a mural, which was completed on July 12, 2020. Courtesy Photo/Brian White

the mural was sparked after someone posting an inquiry on Facebook—had anyone seen Smith? A family member of eSmith responded that he was no longer able to get around, due to a back problems and failing health. A collective idea to do something to honor Smith emerged. Brown, also a teaching artist got to work.

“It (painting the mural) was important to me, because he (Smith) was a legend in my eyes for all of the work that he continuously did day in and day out in Annapolis,” Brown said. “And, he was also one of the rare people who could connect black and white people together, through his hard work, with no bias. You really saw that [while] painting the mural, and hearing the stories—I think that he was pivotal in Annapolis.”

Brown has been a part of six local mural projects. Over 75 people suggested that he should be the one to lead the mural project of Smith.

The artist said that Smith’s family reached out to him and said that they

would be honored if he painted the mural.

The masterpiece was painted July 11-12, 2020. Now, an artistic representation allows individuals who still love Annapolis’s special hometown hero to celebrate fond memories.

“I believe the mural is very important for people who didn’t get a chance to say their goodbyes, being that he is not able to come out anymore,” Brown said. “It gives that same drive and happiness to see this mural of him, right on the same street where they were introduced to him...”

Funds are still being raised for two more murals and Smith’s care. For more information or updates or to make a donation, visit <https://www.facebook.com/Carlester-SmithAnnapolis>.

Rambling Rose

**Avenue Bakery, Home of Papa's Rolls
inspires Upton Community Youth**



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello my dear shut-in friends. Yes, I know exactly how you feel. I know I am not helping the situation by letting you know each week that we have lost someone in the community that you know, especially our musicians. I am truly praying that, "This too shall pass." I will at least start off on a positive note by telling you about a young lady who is inspired to be a baker.

An inspiring youth in the Upton Community in Baltimore, Sade Robinson says she has been working with James Hamlin, the owner of the Avenue Bakery for 10 years. She said "Time flies when you are having fun. Over the years Mr. Hamlin has been a role model, mentor and a friend to me." She continues to say: "We have learned so much from each other that it's ridiculous, and still learning. He has always considered me as an artist and he has always pushed me to my potential. I don't feel like his employee, he makes me feel like family. I'm grateful to be a part of the Avenue Bakery. It's a miracle that I haven't gained my weight back." The Avenue Bakery is located at Pennsylvania and Baker Streets and because of COVID-19, the bakery is only open for carry-out at the window from Friday through Sunday until 2:30 p.m.

Ladies and gentlemen, my girl, Pamela "Miss Maybelle" Leak is at it again, bless her heart and I mean that literally. She wants you to know that she is teaming up with Brova and Urmar Marvin McDowell for a weekly "Food Give-Away" at 12 noon on the corner of North Avenue and Druid Hill Avenue, every Wednesday. She will be giving away fresh fruits, vegetables, bread and water. The food is absolutely free. No cash accepted. She says that she is honored to help her city.

On another note with a smile, Baltimore's own and internationally renowned saxophonist, Kim Waters released a new

album titled "Shakedown." This is his 24th album. I am so proud of him. This jazz saxophonist is also a composer, pianist and music producer ranked among the top five instrumentalists in jazz. He now resides in Georgia. Congrats my musical son and friend! To learn more about Waters and his new album go to: www.KimWaters.net.

I also want to mention that the Lexington Market may not be open for your fresh veggies and meats, but the Northeast Market is open and has fresh meat and vegetable vendors, as well as other food vendors— open every day from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Well my dear friends, I have to go, but I want to remind you please keep your face mask on if you are going out. Stay safe.

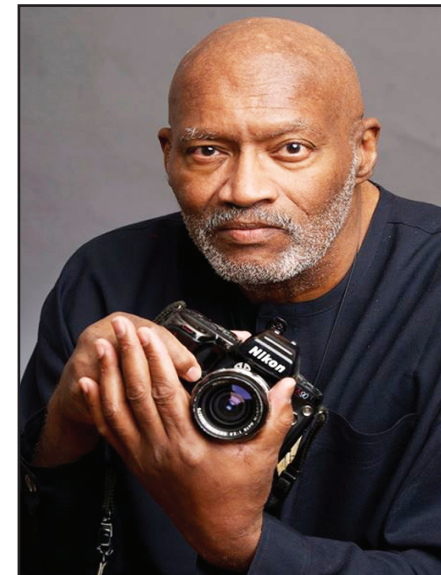
You know what to do: if you need me, just call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. **UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.**



Happy Birthday to "Shorty" Trusty, my beloved Boo-Boo and the love of my life, childhood sweetheart and my husband turns 80 years old today.



William Emerson, better known as "Abu the Flutemaker" performs with his "plumberphone." Abu the Flutemaker is a Baltimore native who has been making musical instruments from found objects for the past 43 years and you will find him now on Sunday mornings playing down at the Baltimore's Farmer's Market.



Vernard Raymond Gray's family held a Virtual Memorial Service for him on Saturday, July 11, 2020 via Zoom. Family, friends and musicians joined Har-East River Jazz, the East River Jazz Festival and BeMo Jazz in celebrating the life and work of Vernard R. Gray. May my dear friend finally Rest in Peace. He passed away while he was in vacation out of the country in January 2020.



Inspiring youth, Sade Robinson in the Upton community at the Avenue Bakery on Pennsylvania Avenue and Baker Street with the owner, James Hamlin has a story to tell. Hamlin and Sade are holding their famous lemon cream cake, coconut cake, chocolate iced yellow cake and cinnamon raisin buns.



Marvin Brown, a lead singer and one of the original members of the Soft-ones passed away at age 66 on July 3, 2020 from COVID-19 at Medstar Harbor Hospital. The viewing is being held Sunday, July 19, 2020 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Vaughn Greene Funeral Home, 8728 Liberty Road in Randallstown. Wearing a mask is mandatory.



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How staying safe by telehealth also means keeping cyber-secure

News & Experts—The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted social distancing as a safety measure across the country. How this new normal affects general health care can be seen in the rise of telehealth services, as people are encouraged to use them to limit in-person interactions with medical staff and help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

But like any online activity, there are security risks involved for patients' personal data and companies' private information. How can patients and doctors ensure each party's information is protected?

"Telehealth was trending upward before the pandemic, and there were already privacy and security concerns," says Stephen Hyduchak, CEO of Aver an identity-verification service. "But those are heightened now as people want the immediacy of care and are ready to accept the exchange of privacy to receive that.

"Medical data is some of the most sensitive information out there. HIPAA and other regulations have long been in place well before more general privacy laws were instituted. Now, needing to share more of your medical history with the telehealth doctors makes the entire communication more vulnerable in a variety of ways. The application could get hacked. Also, IT infrastructure and cybersecurity often aren't up to speed at hospitals."

Hyduchak suggests using these security practices when using telehealth services:

Double-check before downloading the app. "Your healthcare provider may have a preferred app that you can download from its website," Hyduchak says. "That's the safest route. Your company may offer this service, and if so, check with human resources to make sure the information is correct before download-

ing. Otherwise, use a reputable online store to download the app."

Consider online app reviews and recommendations from your network. "Reputable review sites can give you an objective look at apps and telemed services out there, but many reviews focus on capability, speed and convenience, so you may have to dig a little deeper regarding security," Hyduchak says. "That's where your personal network comes in. Query people you know who are using the app you're considering. And if the app is relatively unknown, you don't want to be one of the first to use it."

Beware of phishing, social engineering of telemedicine. "The basic rule for most cybersecurity measures very much applies: Always verify a link or attachment before opening it," Hyduchak says. "There are coronavirus-based phishing campaigns by hackers. Their aim is to get you to click onto a malicious telehealth link."

Learn how the service uses your data. "Look for telemedicine providers that explain their use of data that you share, usually doing this in writing with a code of conduct," Hyduchak said. "You have to make sure the telehealth service is reputable and that it's following all HIPAA rules. Also, only disclose relevant information that is absolutely essential.

"With telehealth services, a patient can see a doctor in isolation from their smart devices, so it's a close to ideal platform during an outbreak like this.

"But having awareness of and using security measures is essential because the stakes are higher."

Stephen Hyduchak is the CEO of Aver, an identity-verification service. He worked in corporate finance for companies such as PRA Health Sciences before finding the entrepreneur bug. For more information, visit: www.goaver.com.



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Madden '21 player ratings for Lamar Jackson and Ravens rookies

By Tyler Hamilton

The release of player ratings on Madden is an annual summer tradition. EA Sports' flagship game has become a staple in the football community. The Baltimore Ravens' roster is stacked with standout players. But they also added plenty of speed via the NFL Draft.

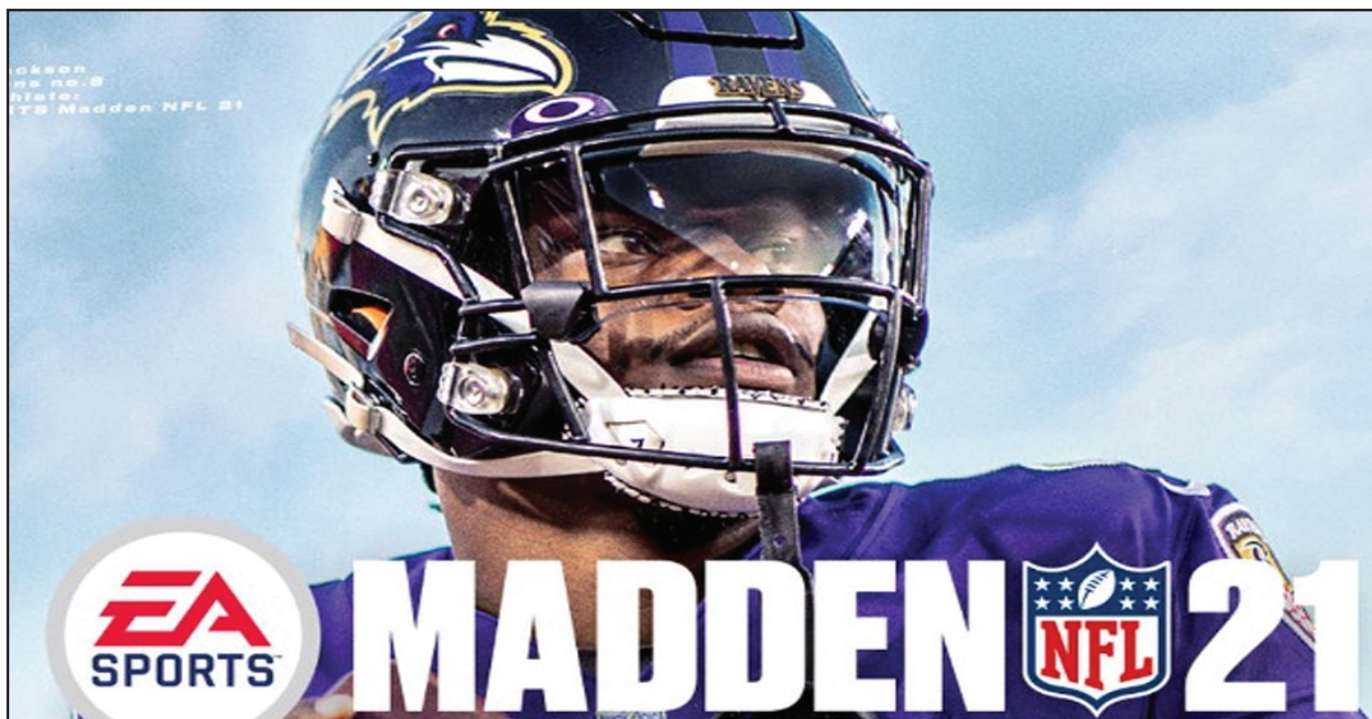
All of the detailed ratings haven't been released yet, so we don't know what Marquis 'Hollywood' Brown's speed will be rated. No rating was released for first-round pick Parrick Queen either.

Lets take a look at a few of their top ratings. It all starts with reigning MVP Lamar Jackson who also appears on the cover of Madden '21. Jackson received a 94 rating which placed him third out of the QBs behind Patrick Mahomes and Russell Wilson. Jackson offered his thoughts regarding the rating recently on Sportscenter.

"A 94? A 94?! Aww. I wish it was better. But hey, it's [better] than last year. I guess we can roll with it until the season starts," Jackson said.

Madden gave Jackson a 96 speed rating which fits his explosive playmaking ability.

Entering the 2019 season, Jackson's rating was a 79 on last year's Madden. His stellar play caused a ratings increase via downloadable updates as the season continued.



Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson appears on the cover of EA Sports Madden 21. Jackson received a 94 rating which places him third of the QBs behind Patrick Mahomes and Russell Wilson. Courtesy Photo/EA Sports

Last season, Jackson proved that he was a legitimate quarterback, dispelling the foolish pre-draft ideas that he should switch to running back or wide receiver.

A few of the Ravens rookies got some love from Madden as well. Second-round pick J.K. Dobbins was the highest rated rookie running back at 75 overall. His 91 speed and 90 acceleration high-

lighted his ratings.

Wide receiver Devin Duvernay was a 71 overall but he came in at 92 for his speed and 91 for his acceleration. Fellow rookie receiver James Proche checked in with an 88 speed and 90 acceleration.

The top 10 Ravens player ratings in Madden '21 are as follows:
Calais Campbell - 95

Lamar Jackson - 94
Ronnie Stanley - 93
Marlon Humphrey - 89
Earl Thomas - 88
Justin Tucker - 87
Brandon Williams - 86
Mark Ingram - 86
Mark Andrews - 86
Sam Koch - 85

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St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission Invitation to Bid (ITB)

St. Clement Shores Water System Replacement, Phase 2 Project #2151WL Bid Number: 21-01-C

The St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission is currently soliciting for bids on the replacement of the St. Clement Shores Water System, Phase 2. The water system within the St. Clement Shores subdivision was originally constructed in the 1950s and requires replacement. The project will include the replacement of approximately 10,400 linear feet of water line with a new water system comprised of 12-inch, 8-inch, 6-inch and 4-inch water mains. Increased depth of pipe burial, ample isolation valves, sixteen (16) fire hydrants, appurtenances and associated restoration are also included in the design to provide a more reliable system.

This project is fully funded by the Maryland Water Quality and Drinking Water Funding Programs; therefore Davis Bacon Act, MBE/WBE and American Iron and Steel requirements must be met. Bidders must perform and document their performance of all affirmative steps required by the Maryland Department of the Environment Minority and Women's Business Enterprise program to be considered for the Contract. Bidders are encouraged to break down the work into smaller segments and tasks in order to increase minority subcontractor participation. Documentation must be included in the proposal package and submitted on the date provided herein. Failure to provide documentation with the bid package could result in the bid being declared non-responsive.

A Pre-Bid teleconference will be held on the date and time shown below. Instructions on how to participate in the teleconference to answer any questions concerning the Bid Documents are provided in the attachments section contained herein. Site visits will generally be permitted by the potential bidders after the Pre-Bid teleconference. All potential bidders are encouraged to include a site visit; however, visitors will be required to follow all Governor's Orders and CDC guidelines regarding social distancing. Any contractor who wishes to visit the site for the purpose of evaluation as part of their bid/proposal must schedule a site visit with the Project Manager (information to be provided in the Pre-Bid teleconference).

One original and one copy of all bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope bearing the company name, legal address, the project title for which the bid is submitted and the date advertised for opening bids. Sealed bids must be addressed to Tanya Parker, Procurement Agent, and clearly marked "**SEALED BID for ITB BID NUMBER: 21-01-C, ST. CLEMENT SHORES WATER SYSTEM REPLACEMENT, PHASE 2, PROJECT #2151WL**" and received at the Commission's Administrative Office until the date and time shown below. At that time the bids will be publicly opened and read.

	Date	Time (Eastern Standard Time)
Pre-Bid Meeting (teleconference):	July 28, 2020	10:00 AM
Bid Due Date:	August 25, 2020	2:00 PM

Bid packages are available for distribution on the Maryland Department of General Services website located at <https://emma.maryland.gov> Inquiries concerning Contract Documents should be directed to purchasing@metcom.org.

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State Farm Neighborhood Assist® to provide relief during challenging times

Concordville, PA— A grant funding opportunity from State Farm is being offered at a time when non-profits and the communities they serve need it most. State Farm Neighborhood Assist will award \$25,000 grants to 40 nonprofit organizations to help fund neighborhood improvement projects.

According to a recent State Farm research study, one-quarter of respondents say that they are "extremely" or "very" involved in trying to improve their neighborhood and six-in-ten are trying to improve their neighborhood in some capacity. State Farm Neighborhood Assist can be a catalyst for that change.

Here is how the program works:

***Submission Phase:** Individuals can submit a cause at www.neighborhoodassist.com starting July 15. A submission guide is available on the website. State Farm will accept the first 2,000 submissions. The State Farm Review Committee will then narrow the field to the Top 200 finalists.

***Voting Phase:** Voters will decide which community improvement projects win big. The public will have a chance to vote 10 times a day, every day for 10 days, from September 23 to October 2, 2020, for their favorite causes from the list of finalists.

***Winners Announced:** The 40 causes that receive the most votes will each win a \$25,000 grant. Winners will be announced on November 4, 2020.

"Grant programs that address community needs, like Neighborhood Assist, are more important than ever," said Annette Martinez, State Farm Senior Vice President. "This initiative truly embodies the spirit of being a Good Neighbor."

Last year, 163,000 people cast 4.4 million votes in support of their favorite causes, selecting winners from small towns and big cities. Maryland had three (3) winners in 2019. Since the program began, State Farm has awarded \$8 million in support of more than 300 causes.

To learn more about State Farm Neighborhood Assist, visit: www.neighborhoodassist.com.

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