
THE BALTIMORE TIMES

Vol. 35 No. 5

December 4 - 10, 2020

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication

Cahoots Brothers keep the spirit of partnership collaboration alive amid pandemic



The Greater Remington Improvement Association and its partners— Johns Hopkins University and Seawall Developers launched the Remington Storefront Challenge in 2019. Participants in the challenge were evaluated and narrowed down by a panel of judges made up of Remington residents, anchor institutions and local business owners. Two winners were selected, one of which was the Cahoots Brothers. The prize — a pop-up retail store. Photo: Cahoots Brothers— (left-right): Kyle Johnson, Warner Blak, Greg Morton, Alexander Bell, Arvay Adams. (See article on page 9). Photo: Alex Andro

T. Rowe Price wins U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation 21st Annual Citizen Award for work in West Baltimore

By Stacy M. Brown

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation has named T. Rowe Price the winner of the 21st Annual Citizens Awards.

The Baltimore-headquartered global investment management firm earned recognition in the category of “Best Community Improvement Program.”

The award highlights T. Rowe’s multi-year philanthropic efforts and support in West Baltimore following the 2015 civil unrest and ongoing work to address community key challenges, including food insecurity and racial equity, according to officials.

After the unrest following the death of Freddie Gray, the T. Rowe Price Foundation made a \$1.3M multi-year commitment to West Baltimore. Since 2015, the foundation has increased funding to advance equity and support of minority-led organizations by 150 percent and partnered with over a dozen local corporations, which collectively raised more than \$1 million to combat hunger in communities hit hardest by the pandemic.

The awards announcement is part of the U.S. Chamber Foundation’s three-day rollout of the 21st Annual Citizens



John Brothers, president of the T. Rowe Price Foundation (left), speaking with Troy Stanton (right), an Open Society Institute Baltimore fellow.

Courtesy Photo/T. Rowe Price

Awards winners at the Corporate Citizenship Conference, titled, “Business Solves.”

According to a news release, the awards recognizes the most innovative and impactful corporate citizenship

initiatives raising the bar on social responsibility and spearheading the transformation to a strong, healthy, and sustainable future.

For more than 20 years, the Citizens Awards have showcased how businesses

lead the charge in making the world a better place and leverage their resources, expertise, and talent to make a positive impact.

The awards are handed out in eight categories, including Best Commitment to Education Program; Best Community Improvement Program; Best Community Resilience and Disaster Response Program; Best Economic Opportunity and Empowerment Program; Best Health and Wellness Program; Best Sustainability Program; and Best Corporate Steward.

“This award is a culmination of years of work in the Baltimore community. Our approach has been to listen to community members and let them be our guide for how we can be helpful in improving the lives of Baltimore’s residents,” said John Brothers, the president of the T. Rowe Price Foundation. “We’re proud to be recognized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and are humbled to partner with so many amazing nonprofits and community members, who are working relentlessly to strengthen Baltimore.”

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The Baltimore Times

(USPS 5840) is published every Friday by *The Baltimore Times*, 2513 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218. Subscriptions by mail \$60 per year. Standard bulk postage paid at Baltimore, MD 21233. Postmaster send address changes to:

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

Cheer, Brightness and Hope

By Dr. Glenn Mollette

When I was a child, I thought Christmas would never come. The weeks dragged by while I wore out the toy section of the Sears and Penny's catalogs hoping Santa might stop by. I always looked for Santa Claus and tried to stay awake on Christmas Eve just to catch a glimpse of the jolly big guy. Typically, I would see him at the five and dime store or G.C. Murphy's. I always had a list longer than Santa could carry and he typically managed to show up with something on Christmas, thanks to hard working parents who loved Christmas and giving as much as they could.

The anticipation of Christmas was an adrenaline boost as a child. The hopes and dreams of what might come or be always were exciting. The downtime came when late on Christmas day I had to reconcile that Christmas wouldn't happen again for another year. I dreaded seeing the Christmas tree and the outside lights come down. Christmas was always a good winter mood boost. My dad didn't put a lot of Christmas lights up outside but the ones he did put on the house always seemed beautiful and filled the outside air with cheer, brightness and hope.

America is ready for some cheer, brightness and hope and it's coming. Santa Claus won't be dropping this down the chimney but it's coming soon via your local medical care provider. This one is on its way via pharmaceutical company Pfizer and biotechnology company Moderna, millions of doses of a vaccine for Covid-19 are ready to be released. This vaccine is not coming too early for a country that has been paralyzed by sickness and death.

While the release of these vaccines is coming in record time it's still too late for many. Millions of Americans have been blindsided by this ugly disease that took their lives. People are sick today and desperately need this medicine. For all of us it cannot come soon enough. Business owners, restaurants, schools, churches, families, factories, the travel industry and old fashion family gatherings are more than ready for these miracle drugs that will hopefully save us from Covid-19.

Americans are living in anticipation of a lot this December. Millions are hoping for a job, an unemployment check, and a roof over their heads. They are hoping Congress will get its act together and approve one more stimulus package. Many Americans this year are dreading Christmas because they don't have any money and life is filled with worry and uncertainty. For them, life is dragging by and better times can't come quick enough.

We will get through this in America and our vaccines will not only turn America around but will help millions in other nations as well. While this Christmas is still going to be tough there are some lights burning. The lights are going to get brighter for 2021. Some real cheer, brightness and hope are coming. Let's get through this safely and plan one big Christmas celebration for next year.

Dr. Glenn Mollette is an author and syndicated columnist. To contact him, email: GMollette@aol.com or visit his website: www.glennmollette.com.



"SO WE WENT AHEAD AND HAD A HUGE THANKSGIVING DINNER WITHOUT FACE MASKS OR SOCIAL DISTANCING AND NOW WE NEED TO SCHEDULE OUR NEXT BIG FAMILY EVENT."

Community Affairs

Allied Chemicals, Procter & Gamble workers diagnosed with cancer secure cash benefits from multiple private trusts

Federal Courts Require Asbestos Manufacturers to Compensate Cancer Victims



Baltimore— Plant workers employed before 1981 diagnosed with various cancers are entitled to special benefits. Lung cancer, esophageal cancer, laryngeal cancer, pharyngeal cancer, stomach cancer, colon cancer, rectal cancer, and mesothelioma are frequently caused by asbestos exposure. Asbestos-laced products were used for decades at both Allied Chemical and Procter & Gamble. Neither employees nor management were aware of the asbestos risk.

Asbestos is a mineral that in its natural state is harmless. It becomes harmful when it is pulled apart or ground up into flexible fibers. Then, when inhaled or swallowed, microscopic asbestos fibers may be permanently affixed to body tissue. Over many years, these fibers may cause genetic changes that can lead to cancer. According to the National

Cancer Institute, "It can take from 10 to 40 years or more for asbestos-related cancers to appear."

To compensate cancer victims and the families of deceased cancer victims, Federal Bankruptcy Courts have required asbestos manufacturers to set aside hundreds of millions of dollars in private trusts. Through these trusts, cancer victims can receive money damages by the filing of timely, detailed, and accurate claims.

Norris Injury Lawyers has announced a specific initiative to assist Allied Chemical and Procter & Gamble employees in recovering money set aside for them in these asbestos trusts.

Cancer victims or the families of deceased victims who worked at either plant before 1981 may call 800-478-9578 for a free evaluation of their claim. Additional information is available at getnorris.com/ash.

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Exhale. Inhale. Roll Your Sleeves Up

*By Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Newswire Contributor*

It took five days for the 2020 election to be called for former Vice President Joe Biden. Five days with me peeled to the television and the Internet. Five days holding my breath. Five days, meditating and praying for strength. I could not imagine four more years of Trump. I actually started going through my belongings, trying to decide which one would make the cut for my move to Ghana (yes, if the Chump had won, I was seriously considering a transcontinental move).

At 11:34 a.m. on Saturday, November 7, the good news trickled down. Biden won. Kamala Harris is Madame Vice President (MVP). People were sending funny and smart text messages. From one friend— ‘ladies keep your shoes on, there is glass on the floor. Exhale. Savor the feeling. Kamala’s win is a “dancing in the street” victory for Black women, for all women, for our nation.

From Psalm 30:5, “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning.” Well, on November 7, 2020, joy came in the morning, the afternoon, the evening. All around the country, people celebrated. Some of us were buoyed by the celebrations, especially their intergenerational, multicultural, masked participation. But as horns

enforcement” officers. Inhale the macro and micro aggressions that impact our lives.

I will not be pessimistic in this optimistic moment, nor will I ignore the amazing history we experienced in this election. I will simply say, as I often do, that voting is not the most, but the least we can do. This election reminds us that

And then just roll your sleeves up and get to work. Yes, there is much work to do. There are two elections for Senate seats in Georgia, which will be decided on January 5, 2021. If Democrats can pull both off, President-elect Biden will have the Senate he needs to make policy changes.

Meanwhile, 45 has seventy-days to wreak havoc on our nation. He can randomly fire folks, mismanage agencies (more so than he already has), develop harmful executive orders. As of this writing he has yet to concede the election, even though he has no possible chance of winning. His refusal to smell the coffee slows the transition process, but since this is about him, not about our nation, he really doesn’t care. Yes, we have work to do. We need to roll up our sleeves and get to it. Civic engagement is not a seasonal thing— it’s an all the time thing. We get the government that we choose to participate in.

So, kudos to the folks like Melanie Campbell (National Coalition of Black Civic Participation); LaTosha Brown (Black Voters Matter); Stacey Abrams (Fair Fight); and the many others who raised awareness, got the vote out, and then protected it. Inhale. Exhale. Get to Work!

Dr. Julianne Malveaux is an economist and author.

“At 11:34 a.m. on Saturday, November 7, the good news trickled down. Biden won. Kamala Harris is Madame Vice President (MVP). People were sending funny and smart text messages. From one friend— ‘ladies keep your shoes on there is glass on the floor.’ Exhale. Savor the feeling. Kamala’s win is a ‘dancing in the street’ victory for Black women, for all women, for our nation.”

honked, people hollered, and people hoisted “you’re fired” signs outside the White House, some of us wondered how much change, exactly, we could expect from Biden-Harris. Inhale.

Inhale the fact that Donald John Trump was an extreme symptom, but not the cause, of the structural inequities that plague our nation. Inhale the fact that all the executive orders in the world can’t fix the racism that is baked in the cake we call the United States. Inhale their names, the disturbing roll of Black folks killed by white so-called “law

Black Votes Matter, that Turnout matters, that, in the words of Rev. Jesse Jackson, “the hands that picked peaches can pick presidents.”

There was no blue wave. This was a scrappy contest, with margin, in some cases, less than one percent. There was no takeover of the Senate (yet); Democrats lost seats in the House of Representatives; and more than 70 million people affirmed Donald Trump, which reveals the stark division in our nation.

Exhale (relief). Inhale (recognition).

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Kamala Harris Life Story Gets Comic Book Treatment

Los Angeles— TidalWave Comics is proud to announce the addition of Kamala Harris comic book to its popular “Female Force” series focused on female empowerment. “Female Force: Kamala Harris” was released on October 21, 2020 in time for her birthday.

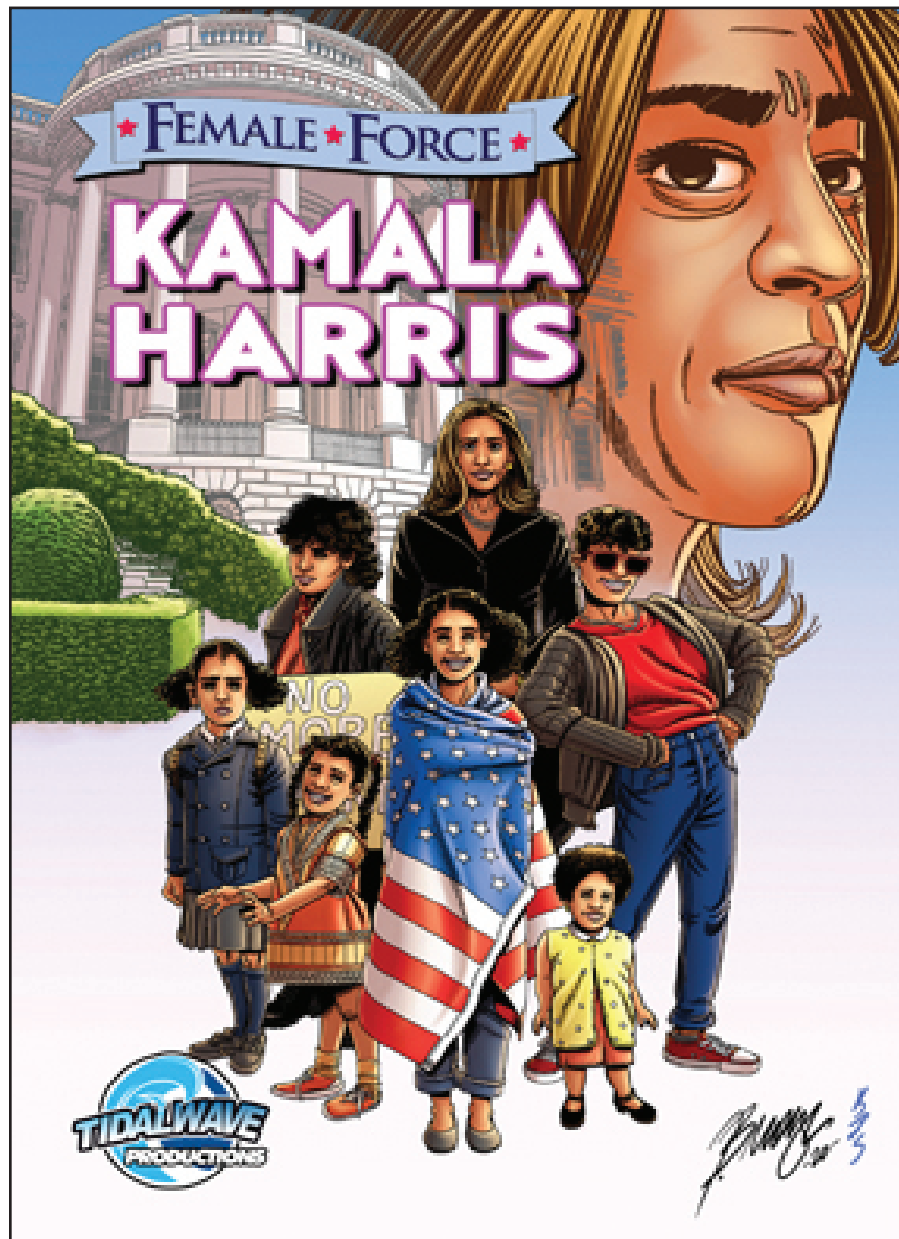
TidalWave has profiled politicians for more than 11 years using the unique storytelling properties of comic books.

Kamala Devi Harris is only the second African-American and first Asian-American Senator from the state of California. A lawyer, prosecutor, and former attorney general, Harris has devoted herself to bettering the lives of her constituents while focusing on social issues that help minorities and women. Full of grit and determination, her no-nonsense approach and bi-racial heritage have made her a popular member of the Democratic Party. She is now presidential candidate Joe Biden’s running mate.

Written by Michael Frizell, drawn by Juan Burgos, this 22-page book is available both digitally and in print and can be found on multiple platforms. Also special hard cover of the comic book will also be available with cover by famed comic book artist Dave Ryan.

“We believe that it is important for readers to have inspiring role models, to learn about extraordinary individuals that have overcome challenges to make a difference in the world. That was the thought process Darren G. Davis went through before creating the comic book series “Female Force.”

“We wanted to showcase the strong women in today’s society that have inspired generations and shaped the culture of today,” Davis said. “Kids and adults alike can look up to these women as great role models. One of the coolest



Written by Michael Frizell, drawn by Juan Burgos, the 22-page “Female Force: Kamala Harris” comic book is available both digitally and in print, and can be found on multiple platforms. The latest biography comic book joins TidalWave’s ever-growing library of more than 200 comic book biographies.

Photo Credit: TidalWave Productions

things about the comic books is that we found schools using them for reluctant readers.”

The latest biography comic book joins TidalWave’s ever-growing library of more than 200 comic book biographies. Previous titles have profiled Angelina Jolie; Hillary Clinton; Sonia Sotomayor; Michelle Obama; Ruth Bader Ginsburg; Condoleezza Rice; and Cher. These biographical comics, written by some of the most talented writers in the comic world and beyond, deliver an informed and illustrated look into the lives of these figures.

“I enjoyed working on this comic. As a public figure, Kamala Harris is a fascinating person. Her historic nomination is a natural progression of her talent as a politician. It will be fascinating to see what happens next. Love her or not, her placement on the ballot is groundbreaking,” said writer Michael Frizell.

“The Kamala Harris comic book helps readers in their connection to the main character on a personal level that the news, for its nature, set distance. Due to that, the goal of this project is to tell people details that most of them previously knew but couldn’t feel related to their lives.” Said artist Juan Burgos.

The biography comic format allows TidalWave writers to delve into the history of newsworthy figures and explore what shaped them. Several media outlets, including CNN, FOX News, “The Today Show” and Time and People magazines, have featured the company’s line of biographical comic books.

Print copies of the biography comics are available on Amazon. Digital versions are available from iTunes, Kindle, Nook, ComiXology, Kobo and wherever e-books are sold.

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MDH reminds Marylanders free HIV home testing available for all who need it

Baltimore— The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) marked World AIDS Day on December 1 by encouraging Marylanders to take advantage of the HIV home-testing kits offered through the Virginia and Maryland Home HIV Testing Program. To help address a decline in individuals seeking HIV testing and care during the COVID-19 pandemic, the program now makes HIV home-testing kits available to all Maryland residents who request them for free.

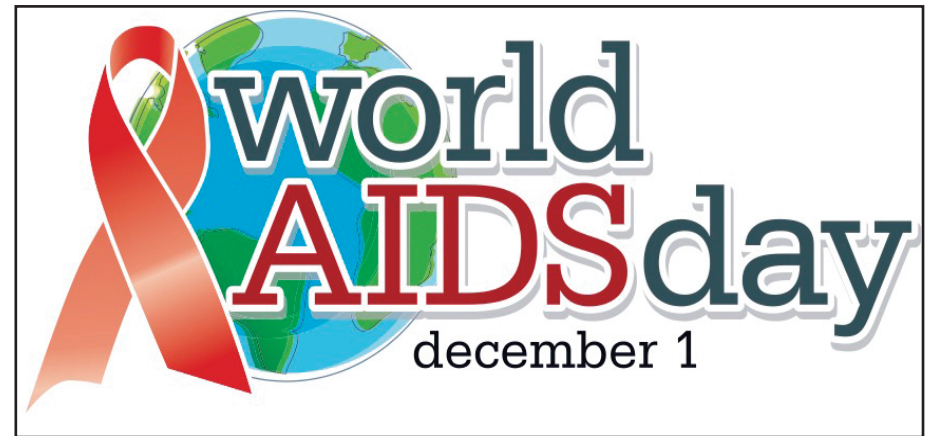
“When the COVID-19 pandemic began, people in need stopped getting tested for HIV,” said MDH Secretary Robert R. Neall. “By partnering with the Virginia Department of Health to expand the *Virginia and Maryland Home HIV Testing Program*, we have been able to make more free HIV home-testing kits available to those who need them during this challenging time.”

In addition to HIV home-testing kits, the program connects participants with information on HIV and care resources. It also provides an opportunity to

increase awareness of HIV for people who may not otherwise seek testing or care.

HIV testing in Maryland dropped by more than 31 percent in July 2020 when compared to July 2019 according to MDH’s Center for HIV Surveillance, Epidemiology and Evaluation (CHSEE). This trend is highlighted in CHSEE statistics showing that overall lab testing from January through October 2020 was 25 percent lower than expected based on a five-year average. Additionally, 29 percent fewer new cases were added to the HIV registry than expected during the period.

Using the Virginia and Maryland Home HIV Testing Program’s confidential online portal— which is also available in Spanish— any Maryland resident can request an OraQuick brand rapid HIV test kit to be delivered to their home completely free of charge. Every 90 days, participants may request a new test package that includes one test kit and instructions for accessing health and social services, which participants are



encouraged to use whether their test result is negative or positive

The program supports strategic community health goals that include diagnosing at least 90 percent of Maryland residents living with HIV and placing 90 percent of those individuals in HIV care with the help of new approaches to care, including non-clinical HIV screening. The initiative also expands messaging and links patients to resources that can help them initiate or sustain prescriptions for HIV

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, otherwise known as “PrEP.”

“As we continue to deal with COVID-19 in Maryland, it is vitally important that people take care of all aspects of their health,” said Acting MDH Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services Dr. Jinlene Chan. “Home testing for HIV is effective, free, and available to anyone in Maryland who needs it. We encourage everyone who needs this free program to take advantage of it.”



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A FUNDamental Boost for Baltimore's Social Enterprises

Innovation Works Launches Ignite Capital

By Ursula V. Battle

A pioneering new fund is providing just the “spark” historically underserved entrepreneurs need in order to jumpstart their communities.

Innovation Works, an innovative, collaborative resource network, has launched Ignite Capital, a \$4 million social impact fund. Monies from the fund are offered as small grants or loans with low-interest rates so that social entrepreneurs can receive the necessary support to grow their businesses without the burden of extreme debt.

“We are raising money to support mission-driven businesses looking to help neighborhoods where there is blight and need economic activity to make them thriving,” said A. Jay Nwachu, CEO of Innovation Works, and President of Ignite Capital. “The entities we support are the ones looking to bring change to those communities. The beautiful thing about this fund is that monies raised are going through our portal into those businesses.

“Most have not had success with banks, and we want to provide them with capital. We understand the hard work they are trying to take on, and want to support them. This is a source of capital that understands their needs and mission, and provides patience and support. Quite frankly, this is something Baltimore needs. Capital is essentially earmarked for certain businesses, and those are the folks seeking to bring about solutions.”

Ignite Capital is subsidized by grants covering the fund's operating expenses, which allow grants to pre-revenue enterprises and support the loan loss reserve for the fund's lending activities. An individual or organization can support these impact-driven efforts as a co-investor.

“This is a phenomenal opportunity,” said Nwachu. “Entrepreneurs can come to a place that understands them, what they are trying to accomplish, and wants to help them achieve those goals with



Bree Jones is the founder of Parity, an equitable development company that acquires and rehabilitates abandoned properties to create affordable homeownership opportunities. Courtesy Photos



A Parity-sponsored home buying collective prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

money, support and training. For them, this is a gamechanger.”

Innovation Works connects neighborhoods, entrepreneurs, social innovation assets, and investors to build sustainable neighborhood economies in Baltimore.

“The fund is a reorientation in how we think about money and community,” said Nwachu. “We live in a capital-driven society. If you don't have access to capital, it's hard to do much. This fund is helping us to reimagine the relationship of money and its meaning in Baltimore. We are taking first steps in undoing the disinvestment in communities.

“There have been decisions not to put money into certain communities. The longer you're not putting money into

these communities, the bigger the problems. The fund seeks to reverse generations of how we do business.”

While Ignite Capital and its network of co-investors anticipates investing in roughly 12 businesses per year, to date, it has invested a total of \$252,000 in four social enterprises. They include Parity, an equitable development company.

“The abandoned homes issue in Baltimore is huge,” said Bree Jones, founder of Parity. “The biggest obstacle is reaffirming this is something we should be investing in, and what it means to heal the city. It will take a lot of capital to dig us out of this hole, and funding sources to do this are scarce. That's what makes Ignite Capital so special.”

Headquartered in West Baltimore, Parity acquires and rehabilitates abandoned properties by the block to create affordable homeownership opportunities.

“Our city is this way because of historic racism,” said Jones. “We can't expect it to heal by pulling its own self up by its bootstraps. It will take investing from institutions that neglected it to begin with, and many are not willing to play that role.”

Jones is 29, and a native of The Bronx, New York.

“What set me on this path were the deaths of Trayvon Martin and Freddie Gray. I delved into social justice and was an activist for many years. I had a background in finance and economics and realized my lane was around housing. Parity reflects my professional experience and my passion for racial justice.”

The launch of Innovation Works came as a result of 15 months of exploration of the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship and similar programs. The Miller Center's mission is to accelerate entrepreneurship to end global poverty and protect the planet.

The goal of Innovation Works is to help launch and grow 250 social enterprises in 10 years that will employ 5,000 Baltimore residents and attract \$100M in capital to Baltimore's under-resourced neighborhoods.

“Patient capital, which is a long-term investment in an early-stage enterprise, is the most important in the entrepreneurship journey, but it's also the most difficult capital to raise,” said Jones. “Innovation Works and Ignite Capital are crucial to the social entrepreneurship ecosystem because they are working to shift systems and remove common barriers that stifle Baltimore's high-impact social innovators—especially Black-owned and women-led enterprises.”

For more information or to invest, visit iwbmore.org/ignitecapital.

Cahoots Brothers keep the spirit of partnership collaboration alive amid pandemic

By Alanah Nichole Davis

If there is anything that we've learned collectively here in Baltimore during 2020, it's that sticking together during the good times and the bad add to the resilient spirit of this charming city.

That spirit of stick-togetherness is one that the co-founders of the Cahoots Brothers, a retail store, which carries art, vintage and repurposed clothing, knitted hats, appliques, toy cars and more in the Remington neighborhood of Baltimore know all too well.

Remington is a vibrant, up-and-coming area with converted industrial spaces and the promise that The Greater Remington Improvement Association and its partners— Johns Hopkins University and Seawall Developers— saw when they launched the Remington Storefront Challenge in 2019. The prize, two pop-up retail stores were up for grabs in the heart of this inspiring neighborhood.

Greg Morton a businessman, art collector and owner of The Historic Frederick Douglass House in Baltimore and one of the co-founders of the Cahoots Brothers, one of the winners of the challenge said, "Collaboration is what we are all about at Cahoots. We are distinctly different individuals with different talents and were already hanging out as friends— and because we were friends we were always talking about doing things together, even before the store front challenge."

By we, Morton is referring to the other brothers and equal co-founders of Cahoots— Warner Blak, a clothing maker; Arvay Adams, an embroiderer and screen printer; Alex Bell, a ceramicist; and Kyle Johnson owner of Bluestone Goldsmithing. The shop is sandwiched between other amazing small businesses like Greedy Reeds; Get Shredded Vintage; and Codex Club the second winner of the storefront challenge.

After a conversation at one of their regular hangouts, they came away and only a few short days later they saw the



The Cahoots Brothers: Kyle Johnson, Arvay Adams, Greg Morton, Warner Blak, Alexander Bell
Photo: Alex Andro

challenge and decided to approach it together.

"It was a good omen," said Morton.

Participants in the challenge were evaluated and narrowed down by a panel of judges made up of Remington residents, anchor institutions and local business owners.

"We talked about the business model and how we would present ourselves, we wanted to reach out and create the connections between Baltimore and it's local artists," according to the group.

The panel of judges saw the benefit of coming together with the *Brothers* to create a unique retail and interactive experience that allows Baltimoreans to interact with their crafts and supports local makers.

The word cahoots usually gets a bad rap because it means "secrecy or conspiracy," but with the name they were merely trying to pay homage to the

original use of the building they now occupy at 2700 Remington Avenue.

"When we were first coming up with the name we wanted that spirit of collaboration to be a part, and not only did cahoots sound cool but we wanted to pay homage to the old car culture since the building, [which] used to be a fueling station plus those cool old company names like Lehman Brothers or Hutzler Brothers that you may have seen in old Baltimore," said Morton.

Collaboration isn't just in the namesake of the store but is in the culture of the business and when you visit the Cahoots Brothers on any Saturday when they are having their weekly garage sales you can see their self proclaimed, "Cahoots Cousins," like Webster Phillips of I. Henry Photo Project a Baltimore based archival photo series; or Lawrence Moore a transplant to Baltimore and founder of Heavy

Paper Co. a custom fabricator and more.

There are a lot of people who are not from Baltimore who see the opportunity from a value perspective to live out their dreams here in a way that they can afford. One of the Cahoots Brothers, Kyle is from Virginia and many of the brothers have traveled but they all find their home right here in Charm City. Following along on their Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/thecahootsbros/>) you can see the spirit of collaboration afoot as they welcome other Black-owned or run initiatives and makers to sell on the sidewalk of their white bricked space in Remington.

They have hopes of getting into e-commerce to help supporters shop from home and even classic cars. Even with the pandemic, these entrepreneurial spirited Black men rise appropriately to the challenge by building a collaborative community lifting others as they climb.

Local sports figure partners with Recreation & Parks to revive recreational facility

By Demetrius Dillard

After being closed for 12 years, West Baltimore's Hilton Recreation Center has begun its path to once again becoming a staple for the community's youth thanks to a partnership between Baltimore City Recreation & Parks (BCRP) and former NFL player Torrey Smith.

On November 10, 2020, BCRP announced the partnership with Smith's nonprofit, LEVEL82, with plans to revitalize, staff and program the Hilton Recreation Center and its adjacent athletic field.

Programs aimed at youth development, academic support and mentoring, and community recreation will come out of the partnership.

BCRP executive director Reginald Moore said he was excited to partner with Smith to provide community programming and looks forward to reopening the doors.

"I just want to thank LEVEL82 and Torrey Smith for their support and commitment to Baltimore. They could've chosen many places to renovate a rec center but they chose Baltimore and that means a lot to our agency, that means a lot to our community," Moore said. "As we move through this new initiative, this new engagement opportunity, I look forward to the partnership, I look forward to the community improving."

Smith oversees his nonprofit with his wife, Chanel Smith, who was a fourth grade teacher at Dogwood Elementary in Windsor Mill while Smith was with the Ravens.

LEVEL82—formerly the Torrey Smith Family Fund—is guided by five core principles: leadership, education, vision, effort and love. The nonprofit endeavors to "create a gathering space for those who live, work and play in Baltimore City while developing strategically-curated programming to empower the community."

Smith competed in the NFL for eight years after leaving the University of Maryland-College Park where he starred as a wide receiver. The Virginia native played his first four seasons with the



(Left) Former NFL wide receiver Torrey Smith stands outside Hilton Recreation Center, the site of BCRP's and LEVEL82's latest renovation project. (Top right) Chanel and Torrey Smith with Reginald Moore (middle), executive director, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (Above right) Members of the community drive up to receive Thanksgiving meals outside of Hilton Recreation Center on November 24, 2020.

Photo Credit: Alexander Jones

Baltimore Ravens.

Smith said Maryland is where he "became a man," being that it is where he spent most of his collegiate and professional career. Thus, it only made sense for Smith to focus his community efforts in Baltimore.

Following Smith's retirement, he had plans to either purchase a recreation center or partner with one. After learning that BCRP's vision aligned with LEVEL82's mission prompted Smith to pursue a partnership. After being presented with a list of rec centers to lend his services to, Hilton Recreation Center was Smith's No. 1 option.

"We identified that area because there was a great bond with community associations and leaders, a strong school that is very involved in the community

and the need was there," said Smith, who also played for the San Francisco 49ers; Philadelphia Eagles; and Carolina Panthers and won two Super Bowls before retiring in 2019. "It was a great opportunity to enhance what's already happening in that community."

LEVEL82 will offer a variety of much-needed resources to Hilton Recreation Center in addition to revamping the athletic field, building a gym for more recreational opportunities and creating a music studio, forming an enjoyable safe haven to empower local youth.

In celebration of the partnership, LEVEL82 and BCRP hosted a Thanksgiving meal giveaway on November 24—two days before Thanksgiving.

According to Smith, there isn't an estimated date of completion of the

renovation at the moment as the fundraising stage is still underway. Aside from joining forces with Recreation & Parks, Smith hopes to gather support from local businesses, organizations and agencies.

"All we want to do is enhance and give people the resources to maximize their potential. We know the potential that exists there," Smith said. "We believe it takes a village to raise a child and we're trying to create that village there. Create that culture in hopes that it will change that neighborhood and long-term it will change lives."

For more information about the partnership and renovation project, BCRP encourages community members to visit: bcrp.baltimorecity.gov/hilton-rec-center. For ways to contribute to LEVEL82, visit: LEVEL82.org.

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NPR Board of Directors Elects WYPR's LaFontaine E. Oliver as Board Chair

Baltimore— WYPR President and General Manager LaFontaine E. Oliver has been elected by the NPR Board of Directors as its new Chair of the Board. Oliver has been president and general manager of WYPR since 2019 and a Member Director of the NPR Board since 2016.

"I am honored to accept this new role as Chair of the Board," said Oliver. "It has been my privilege to advocate for public radio and for the millions of listeners who depend on it as a source for trusted news and intelligent discussion. I look forward to working with my board colleagues to advance the reach and impact of NPR and its Member stations, especially in the value they bring to local communities."

NPR's 23-member Board of Directors is comprised of 12 Member Directors who are managers of NPR Member stations and are elected to the Board by their fellow Member stations, nine Public Directors who are prominent members of the public selected by the Board and confirmed by NPR Member stations, the NPR Foundation Chair, and the NPR President & CEO.

The NPR Board of Directors is responsible for the governance of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. The Board sets the policies and overall direction for NPR management, monitors the performance of NPR and provides financial oversight.

LaFontaine E. Oliver was named president and general manager of WYPR in Baltimore in July of 2019, after six years at WMFE in Orlando, Florida. During his first year, Oliver helped launch a new health-reporting desk and the weekday podcast, *The Daily Dose*, as a vital source of the most relevant news to the community about the COVID-19 health pandemic and the state's response. Although tumultuous, the year 2020 saw a historic high for WYPR audience ratings, demonstrating the appeal and importance of WYPR's brand of public radio in Baltimore.



LaFontaine E. Oliver
Courtesy Photo/WYPR

At WMFE, Oliver oversaw the expansion of its newsroom and local news coverage, adding beat reporters, expanding its public affairs program, and launching an award-winning health desk. Under Oliver's leadership, major efforts included spearheading community engagement efforts to get the station better connected to diverse and underserved communities, birthing a Young Friends of 90.7 WMFE, an initiative to connect and engage with young and young-at-heart public radio listeners, and spearheading a marketing campaign designed to encourage active listening and civil discourse in the community with 90.7 WMFE acting as the conduit.

In his 20-year broadcast career, Oliver has been involved in several commercial, satellite and public media initiatives to grow service to diverse audiences. Oliver holds an MBA from the University of Baltimore and a BA in business administration from the University of Miami.

NPR is an independent, non-profit media outlet and a membership organization of 266 separately licensed and operated public radio stations across the United States, with annual revenue of \$231 million in the fiscal year ended in 2019. NPR was established by an Act of Congress and will turn 50 in 2021.

The Board of Directors helps to set NPR's mission and strategic goals. These are carried out by the President and CEO, who reports directly to the Board.

Rambling Rose

Soul'd out
Saturday Blessing Bags



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello everyone, I hope and pray that all of you who are in the sound of my written words are safe and health. "Shorty," my "Boo-Boo" and I are doing just fine. We are a little bored, and many of you may feel the same way. All I know for what I do to make a living— covering live entertainment in Maryland— is not working out too well for me. Because of the COVID-19, under no circumstances will I be going out to cover anything. I sure hope you understand that. But I do get a lot of invites and information about live entertainment still going on in spite of COVID-19. Look, I understand my musicians have to work and the venues have to make money in order to survive and keep their business going, but honey child let me tell you something, this stuff stinks! This disease is nothing to play with. So you do what you have to do, but my thoughts are "REST AT HOME IS BETTER THAN "REST IN PEACE" AND 6 FEET AWAY IS BETTER THAN 6 FEET UNDER"! I heard that somewhere and it fits for this occasion. I will continue to give you the 411 on any and all entertainment events that come my way. Please do me a favor, keep your mask on and stay at least 6 feet from everyone unless they live with you.

I will start out by telling you about the "Soul'd Out Saturday-Blessing Bags 2020" that is happening at the Horseshoe Casino in Baltimore, GDL Italian by Giada, 1525 Russell Street. It is an event taking place on Saturday, December 19 at 10 a.m. at the Horseshoe Casino to make and give blessing bags to people suffering from homelessness. Volunteers will assemble hundreds of individual bags filled with a variety of personal care items to be distributed to the needy throughout Baltimore leading up to Christmas. Handing out a Blessing Bag

to someone gives you a very real way to meet immediate needs by providing them with some basic supplies such as toiletries, water, food and warmth this holiday season. In order for this to be a huge success in this "Season of Giving," the hope is that they will collect many of the following items (travel sizes, when possible): body wash (no soap bars); shampoo; conditioner; lotion; deodorant; razors; combs; sanitizing wipes; hand warmers; chap stick; Emory boards; men's and women's socks; band aids; feminine care products; and tissues. Cash donations are accepted via PayPal at admin@cityfam.com. For more information, contact Morgan Kimmel at morgan@cityfam.com and tell him "Rambling Rose" told you.

First Friday kicks off in Highlandtown on December 4, 2020 for Art Walk starting at Thames and Broadway Streets featuring live music, art, demos, drink specials, tasty eats and a lot of fun. The theme for December is "Traditions." As always the Art Walk is free to attend, with drink and food specials at restaurants and bars. You can explore their unique array of shops, galleries, landmarks and murals on a self-guided walking tour.

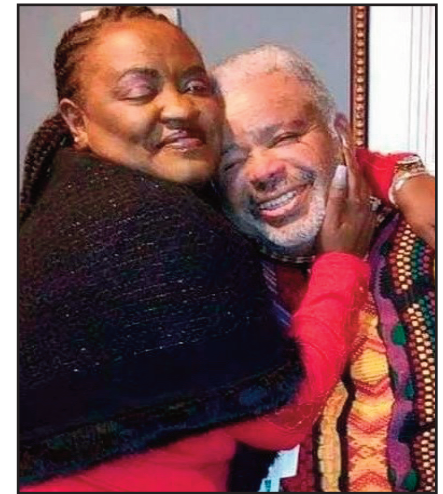
Arch Social Club located 2426 Pennsylvania Avenue is hosting an event called "Arch Talks." it is about Art, History and Culture. It is a facilitated discussion, reparations performance-based dialogue on Saturday, December 5 for 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. So take your art, your poems; your stories and join them with your mask on please. For more information, email Denise at Denisegriffin99@yahoo.com. Until the next time, remember if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474. **I'M MUSICAL YOURS.**



Happy 100th Birthday to Ruth Binsky's Aunt Frances Fisher who is celebrating her 100th Birthday.



The Robinson Trio will perform at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, 400 Cathedral Street in Baltimore. Rhonda Robinson will be on vocals and flute; Justin Taylor on piano; and Blake Meister on bass.



Happy Birthday to Larry Young, popular talk show host on WOLB 1010 AM. Shown here getting a big hug from his little sister Pamela "Ms. Maybelle" Leake and from "Lottie-Dottie and Everybody"



Tia Fuller, saxophonist, composer, and bandleader will set the stage with an electrifying jazz performance at the Keystone Korner Baltimore located 1350 Lancaster Street on Friday & Saturday, December 4 & 5 for two shows 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

Condolences from all the musician and "Rambling Rose" to Tarsha Fitzgerald, Baltimore beloved entertainer/promoter who recently lost her mother and best friend, Brenda Johnson. May her soul rest in peace!

Ravens continue to struggle with Covid-19 Outbreak

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens are dealing with the most extensive Covid-19 outbreak in NFL to date. In total, 22 Ravens players have been placed on the Reserve-COVID list since their Week 11 game against the Tennessee Titans. Not every player placed on the Reserve/Covid-19 list has tested positive. Some were deemed close contacts to others who tested positive so their time to self-quarantine isn't as long.

A player who is deemed as a high-risk close contact must self-quarantine for five days and continue to submit negative tests before returning to practice. Any player who tested positive for COVID-19 must self-quarantine for at least 10 days unless they are not showing signs and return two negative tests at least 24 hours apart.

The Ravens announced last Wednesday that they disciplined a staff member for "conduct surrounding the recent COVID-19 cases, which has affected players and staff." The staff member is reportedly a strength and conditioning coach who violated protocols that helped to contribute to outbreak.

The protocol violations include failing to report symptoms and not consistently wearing a mask or tracking device.



The protocol violations by the Baltimore Ravens include failing to report symptoms and not consistently wearing a mask or tracking device.

Rob Carr/Getty Images North America/Getty Images

Here is the list of players placed on the Reserve-COVID-19 list over the last week: RB Mark Ingram II; RB J.K. Dobbins, DT Brandon Williams; LB Pernell McPhee; DE Calais Campbell; G/C Patrick Mekaria; DE Jihad Ward; QB Lamar Jackson; FB Patrick Ricard; DT Justin Madubuike; LS Morgan Cox; OLB Jaylon Ferguson; G/T D.J. Fluker; G/T Will Holden; DT Broderick Washington; CB Tavon Young; CB Khalil Dorsey; TE Mark Andrews; CB

Terrell Bonds; OLB Matthew Judon; and WR Willie Snead IV

The Ravens were originally scheduled to play the Pittsburgh Steelers on Thanksgiving Night but the game was moved due to positive COVID-19 tests from Ravens players. First the game was moved to Sunday then moved to Monday before it was pushed back to Tuesday and finally the afternoon of Wednesday, December 3.

The team has not been in their facility

for almost a week before having a light walk-thru practice that was socially distant on Monday. Then, on Tuesday, the Ravens flew to Pittsburgh for their Wednesday game. While en route to Pittsburgh, two more personnel members tested positive.

One was a player and the other one was a team person. The NFL told the Ravens that people who received the positive tests were previously identified as potential positives and they weren't a threat for further spread. The two personnel members who tested positive were not a part of the group that traveled to Pittsburgh.

The Ravens weren't the only team that was impacted. The Steelers placed starting running back James Conner on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Conner reportedly tested positive and joined defensive end Stephon Tuitt; defensive tackle Isaiah Buggs; and offensive lineman Jerald Hawkins on the list.

The Ravens were short handed but put up a good fight against the Steelers in their 19-14 loss. Robert Griffin III stepped in for Lamar Jackson since he wasn't available for the game. Griffin struggled and was replaced by Trace McSorley, who found Marquise Brown for a 70-yard touchdown late in the game but it was just too little too late.

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phillipsfoods.com/recipe-challenge and don't forget to attach a photograph showing your recipe looking delicious!

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Courtesy Photo/Phillips Foods

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Guinness Brewery Lights Up with Outdoor Holiday Installations

Baltimore— Guinness Open Gate Brewery's Holiday Light Walk with a number of outdoor installations to view as you enjoy a beer or two responsibly is now open at 5001 Washington Blvd in Halethorpe. The installations will feature historic Guinness artwork, such as a toucan, harp, seal and even a Maryland crab. In addition to the lights, the brewery will bring back its Diageo holiday keg tree, constructed from more than 250 kegs. The installations can be enjoyed all December long and are free and open to the general public from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. Visitors must be 21 and over to drink.



Courtesy Photo/Guinness Brewery

Maryland Opera Performs "Home for the Holidays"

Baltimore— Maryland Opera inaugurates "Home for the Holidays," a series of free live streamed concerts on Saturday, December 12, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, December 19, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

These hour-long concerts will be presented from beautifully decorated homes and will be live streamed from the Maryland Opera Facebook page.

The programs will feature holiday selections as well as operatic favorites highlighting renowned and exciting young vocalists. All selections will be accompanied on the piano by Maryland Opera Artistic Director, James Harp.

The December 12 concert will feature Christine Lyons, soprano; and Gabriel Hernandez, tenor. The December 19 concert will feature Colleen Daly, soprano; and Yi Li, tenor; as well as a special guest from the North Pole.

"Although the details of our lives have changed our love for great music and opera remains constant and powerful. We are thrilled to bring musical holiday cheer to our community to keep us connected and to bring to all the much-needed message of hope, peace and beauty. Magnificent private homes will provide a festive and unforgettable backdrop to the beautiful music," said Harp. "Especially during these uncertain times, we recognize now more than ever the privilege and treasure it is to experience a live music performance. We remain committed to providing the grand opera experience to our audience!"

For more information, visit marylandopera.org.



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CITY OF BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NOTICE OF LETTING

Sealed Bids or Proposal for the **TR19007R CURB REPAIR CITYWIDE** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204, City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until **December 23, 2020** at 11:00 A.M. Board of Estimates employees will be stationed at the Security Unit Counter just inside the Holliday Street entrance to City Hall from 10:45 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. every Wednesday to receive Bids. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. The bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates in Room 215, City Hall at Noon. As of **December 4, 2020**, the Contract Documents may be examined, without charge by contacting Brenda Simmons at brenda.simmonso@baltimorecity.gov or (443) 865-4423 to arrange for a copy of the bid book labeled "**NOT FOR BIDDING PURPOSES**" to be emailed to you. Anyone who desires to purchase a bid book to be used for bidding purposes must do so in person and by contacting Brenda Simmons at the email address or phone number above. The non-refundable cost is **SEVENTY-FIVE DOLLARS AND NO CENTS (\$75.00)** to be paid at the Department of Transportation 417 E. Fayette Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202 made payable to the Director of Finance. **Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package.** All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be prequalified by the City of Baltimore Contractors' Qualification Committee. Interested parties should call (410) 396-6883 or contact the Committee at 4 S. Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. **If a bid is submitted by a joint venture ("JV"), then in that event, the document that established the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes.** The Prequalification Categories required for bidding on this project are **D02620 Curb, Gutter & Sidewalk.** Cost Qualification Range for this project will be from **\$500,000.00** to **\$700,000.00.** A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted via Microsoft Teams on **December 11, 2020** at 10:00 a.m. hosted by the Department of Transportation. All Bidders must email your contact information to include your name, company name, phone number and email address to Vijaykumar.parekh@baltimorecity.gov to receive an invite to the Microsoft Team (video conference meeting). Principle Items of work for this project is: **Miscellaneous Curb Replacement and Repairs - 22,250 LF.** The MBE Goal is **36%**; The WBE Goal is **13%**. APPROVED: Joan M. Pratt, Secretary, Board of Estimates

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