

Notre Dame of Maryland Graduate Awarded ALSF Grant



Fidelia Asomani has been named one of Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation's 2021 Pediatric Oncology Student Training (POST) Program grant recipients. Through the program, Asomani and 11 other students across the country received grant funding to join a lab research project focused on pediatric oncology. (Story on page 11)

Courtesy Photo/Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation

Four tips for better digital parenting during new school year

Pinkston News Service— In 1970, the average American child began to watch television regularly at age four, and today, children begin interacting with digital media at the age of four months. More than half of U.S. children now have a smartphone by age 11.

With the shift to remote learning during the pandemic, technology use by the young has only increased. Remote learning nearly doubled demand for Chromebooks, and put millions of children in front of computer screens for their classes, homework assignments and after-school free time.

Parents of kids today are facing an unprecedented challenge of keeping their children safe online while helping them navigate the technology they'll need for their education, future careers and more.

Sean Clifford, the founder and CEO of the digital parenting company Canopy (canopy.us) and a father of four, is on a mission to create a world of healthy tech users— starting by helping parents block pornography on their children's devices.



By helping your children overcome the challenges of the digital world, you can build healthier relationships and healthier futures for them.

Photo Credit: ClipArt.com

The underlying technology was developed in Israel and already protects more than two million devices worldwide.

“Technology can be a good, wonderful

thing,” Clifford said. “But parents have to be proactive and involved to ensure their children stay safe and healthy online.”

With the right guidance, every child can develop healthy tech habits to last a lifetime. Here are Clifford's four tips for parents worried about how their kids are using technology this year:

1) Protect them— Putting a filter on your child's device doesn't mean you don't trust your child. “You don't leave guns on the kitchen table, so why take a chance that your kids will be exposed to something harmful online?” said Clifford.

Too many kids today are exposed to pornography unintentionally. Seventy percent of children seven to 18 years old have accidentally encountered online pornography, often while doing homework. Give them the space to be kids and learn to navigate the digital experience positively by using a filter to protect them from explicit images and videos.

2) Be honest with them— Tell them about how their digital experiences have been designed to manipulate them. Companies are battling for their attention, leveraging every trick in the book. “It is your child versus a team of neuroscientists and behavioral psychologists,” Clifford says. “Parents— not advertisers or Big Tech— should decide what their kids see online. And they need to be open to having conversations with their kids about the addictive realities of online use.”

Screen time, pornography and sexting have all been linked with mental health ramifications in kids. Talking through the consequences, especially as children get older, can be particularly helpful. If they don't perceive any negative effects, they won't understand *why* they can be

dangerous and may think that there's no reason to be cautious or concerned.

3) Let them know it's OK to be different— Kids want to fit in and be liked. They want to use social media and online video games because their friends are using them. But when it comes to issues like smoking, drugs, pornography and sexting, parents especially need to emphasize to their kids that “doing what seems normal” can really hurt them both now and in the long run.

Have discussions about *how to* say no to requests for photos, and know that installing a filter may be just the “excuse” they need. It's difficult to respond to unexpected and inappropriate questions, and so teenagers may need coaching on what to do and say more than you think.

Lastly, brainstorm alternative ways for them to be with their friends without going online. Support their efforts to be *with* their peers, in-person when you can and create spaces where they want to spend time with others.

4) Be an example— As with most things in life, parents need to lead by example. Show your kids that devices have a place in their lives, and that place has limits. Don't always be on your phone. Put it away for mealtimes, and don't keep your phone in your room at night. Find other parents who adopt similar safeguards with their kids, and begin discussions about how you can work together.

Technology can bring parents and children closer together by encouraging trust and transparency. By helping your children overcome the challenges of the digital world, you can build healthier relationships with them and healthier futures for them.



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Guest Editorials/Letters

After rapper launches anti-mask, anti-vaccine rant, Black doctors speak out

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Contributor

In a culture that worships celebrities and amplifies their words and actions, the coronavirus pandemic has presented an opportunity for some to apply and others to confuse.

Even after over 635,000 have died in the United States as a result of the coronavirus, some celebrities have continued to loudly protest against the advice of doctors and other medical professionals. Over 4.5 million around the world have died as a result of the pandemic.

This week, anti-mask and anti-vaxxer celebrity Eric Clapton wrote a song entitled “This Has Got to Stop” to express his dissatisfaction regarding government mandates on masks. “I’m used to being free,” Clapton sings in his new track.

A week before Clapton’s song dropped, rapper Busta Rhymes, whose real name is Trevor Smith, had something to say about COVID-19 on August 24, 2021.

“It’s called the God-given right of freedom, right? No human being is supposed to tell you that you can’t even breathe freely. F*** your mask... some of y’all might feel differently, but f*** your mask,” he said.

His comments went viral and so did the reaction against them. On “Roland Martin Unfiltered,” the daily digital broadcast hosted by Martin, three Black doctors were featured to comment on what the rapper said and anti-vaxxer efforts in general.

“A throat doctor later discovered that there were polyps in his throat, restricting 90 percent of his breathing and he had to have emergency surgery. You’d think Busta Rhymes would be more concerned about a virus that attacks your respiratory system given his history. Dumb ass,” wrote Reecie Colbert from her popular, Twitter account @BlackWomenViews.

“Confirmed: Busta Rhymes is better when he’s rapping too fast for us to really understand what he’s saying,” wrote Brandon Kyle Scott on Twitter.

Then came the medical professionals.

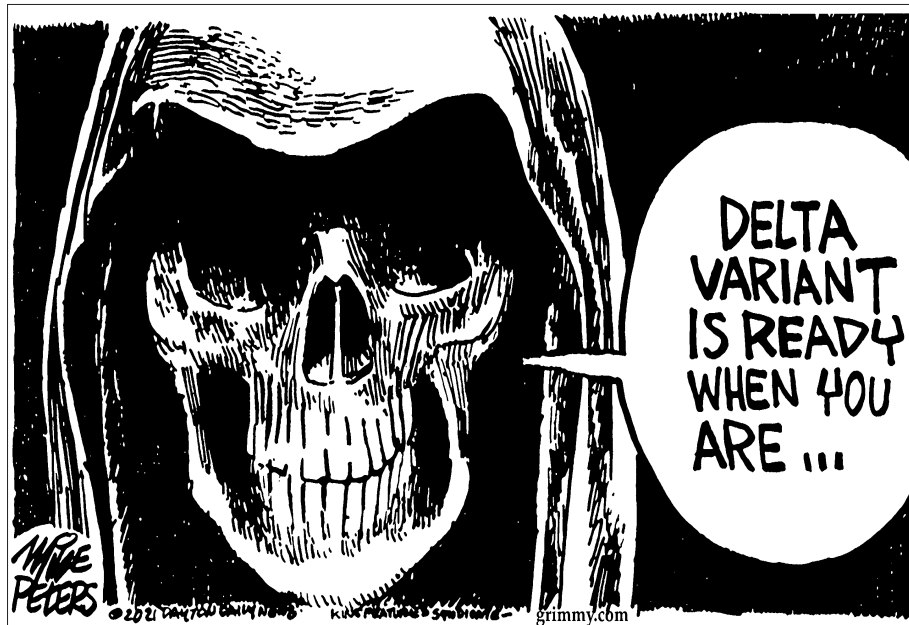
“It angers me, and it vexes my soul when I hear entertainers and other people who have mass followings say ignorant things such as Busta Rhymes. I was telling my students today about wearing a mask and getting vaccinated,” said Dr. Kristy McDowell on Roland Martin Unfiltered on August 24, 2021. “If you don’t get the vaccine you are gambling with your life.”

Dr. Joseph Graves, Jr. said, “It’s one thing to do stupid things that put your own life at risk... It’s an entirely other thing when you take a public platform, and you use your celebrity to get up there to tell other people that it’s OK in the middle of the deadliest pandemic since 1918. Those people who die because they listened to a video.”

Kellen Squire, a Virginia emergency room nurse, wrote on August 29, 2021, “It’s not any easier watching unvaccinated people die. I see people sardonically joke, play stupid games, etc. But they almost all understand the magnitude of their f***up—albeit way too late. The look in their eyes; There’s no peace—it’s just panic until the end.”

Despite misinformation, political discord and political policy changes, 51 percent of the American population is vaccinated.

Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist for NNPA and the host of the podcast BURKEFILE. She is also a political strategist as Principal of Win Digital Media LLC. She may be contacted at LBurke007@gmail.com and on Twitter at @LVBurke



Letters to the Editor:

Editor:

As coronavirus cases surge to levels not seen since last winter, Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen should get serious about preventing the next pandemic, specifically by funding cultured-meat research.

For readers who aren’t familiar with the term, cultured meat is grown from animal cells, without slaughter. It offers important benefits to public health.

Because livestock are removed from the process of making cultured meat, the danger of zoonotic viruses making

the jump to humans is drastically reduced.

While the origins of COVID-19 are debated, the fact remains that animal agriculture greatly increases our pandemic risk.

Legislators concerned with public health should support federal funding for cultured-meat research.

Jon Hochschartner
Granby, CT

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To Labor Day and Labor Days Ahead

By UAW President Ray Curry

In 1882, a union man, Peter J. McGuire, founder of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and an early supporter of the creation of the American Federation of Labor, suggested setting aside a day for a “general holiday for the laboring classes.”

Almost 130 years later, Labor Day continues to celebrate those who did the work and the magnificent job they have done in building what I will always believe to be, the greatest nation on Earth. One hundred and thirty years later, America will again thank those who figured it out; those who pitched in; those who rolled up their sleeves and made this country work. But if this day is a statement about achievement, it is perhaps most importantly a testament to the U.S. worker’s ability to meet change, to adapt to its challenges, and to embrace that change and forge a better America.

Moving it forward— So, with the holiday upon us, this is what I would like to hold up in these complicated times: America is retooling. Climate change and a pandemic have rerouted directions and pathways. But America’s workers — union workers — are ready

working men and women of this nation that are the engine that drives our economy. And any momentous change in our industry must not lose sight of that undeniable truth.

America’s strength— I can tell you that there are no greater consumers of

F-150 Lightning— America’s best-selling vehicle built by America’s best workers at the iconic Rouge facility in Dearborn, Michigan.

This is how it must be.

To this end, I want to make mention of Senator Debbie Stabenow’s measure that works to tie key consumer rebates for EVs to union auto jobs made here. The Stabenow Made in America Provision included in the Clean for America Act, would continue a \$7,500 consumer credit for EVs and add for the next five years, a \$2,500 bonus for autos assembled in the United States and another \$2,500 for meeting certain worker focused labor standards.

What’s more, after five years, a vehicle must be assembled in the U.S. for consumers to be eligible to receive a \$10,000 base credit and an additional \$2,500 bonus credit for vehicles that are union made or apply worker focused labor standards. We at the UAW are committed to passing these provisions into law.

So, I’d like to ask that as you celebrate this Labor Day, take a moment to remember all those generations of Americans that this day was created to recognize. All those workers who have delved into and carved out a country that remains a beacon of accomplishments and as importantly, all those ready for the next big job as we move America forward. As Joe Biden has said, “I believe that the middle class built America, but I know who built the middle class; unions. Unions built the middle class.”

Yes, they did. And yes, the work goes on.

“This is a time of tremendous evolution in our industries. We are on the cusp of a complete transition in mobility. A transition to clean energy and clean vehicles. At the UAW, we have been heavily involved in the national discussion on how we can successfully navigate this transition.”

to meet these new directions and traverse those roads. America’s Labor Day thanks workers for the job they have done. At the same time, we must thank workers for the job they are about to do.

This is a time of tremendous evolution in our industries. We are on the cusp of a complete transition in mobility. A transition to clean energy and clean vehicles. At the UAW, we have been heavily involved in the national discussion on how we can successfully navigate this transition.

It can be done. We know that our workers are the best in the world and as we transition to electric and hybrid vehicles, we must protect our American workforce.

These vehicles and components must be built here by American workers and these jobs must be good paying union jobs. And we all know that it is the

what gets built here than by hard working Americans who put their work into building these products. Let me pause a bit to share some of the comments of President Joe Biden at a recent White House event on clean energy and the clean vehicles that will power us responsibly forward in the decades to come.

Biden, who has always been a friend to labor and to the UAW since his earliest days in government, put it this way.

“Whether or not the jobs to build these vehicles and batteries are good-paying union jobs— jobs with benefits, jobs that are going to sustain continued growth of the middle class. They have to be. They have to be made here in America.”

My brothers and sisters in the UAW are more than ready to build America’s future. This past May we saw the amazing rollout of the all-electric Ford

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Three reasons why communities of color should donate organs

By Stacy M. Brown

Of the 106,000 people in the United States awaiting a lifesaving organ transplant about 60 percent are minorities.

As part of National Minority Donor Awareness Month, experts from the Mayo Clinic are encouraging more people of color to consider organ donations.

National Minority Donor Awareness Month counts as a collaborative initiative of the National Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donation Multicultural Action Group (NMAG) to save and improve the quality of life of diverse communities by creating a positive culture for organ, eye, and tissue donation.

The Mayo Clinic experts say African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans have an increased risk for kidney disease.

According to the National Kidney Foundation, African Americans are nearly four times more likely to have kidney failure than white people.

In addition, higher rates of heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes in communities of color can lead to organ failure.

Joining his Mayo Clinic colleagues, Dr. Tambi Jarmi provided three primary reasons why there is a need for organ donors from diverse backgrounds:

*Some racial and ethnic populations are more likely to need a transplant.

*The need for transplants far outweighs the number of willing donors.



Dr. Tambi Jarmi, a nephrologist at the Gary and Dianne McCalla Center for Transplantation and Regenerative Care at Mayo Clinic Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida. Courtesy Photo

*More diversity among organ donors benefits everyone.

"Communities of color are more likely to live in places with less healthcare resources," Dr. Jarmi, a nephrologist in the Gary and Dianne McCalla Center for Transplantation and Regenerative Care at Mayo Clinic hospital in Jacksonville, Florida, told the Baltimore Times.

"Such environments cause people to be more ill and increases their need for organ transplantation, but with limited access to adequate healthcare resources.

This vicious cycle leads to negative attitudes toward organ donation and

plays a prominent role in the lack of donor registration among minorities."

He also noted that the number of people awaiting lifesaving transplants far exceeds willing donors in America—a figure that is true for individuals of all backgrounds.

transplant for people of color," Dr. Ty Diwan, a Mayo Clinic transplant surgeon, noted in a statement. "One simple step people can take is to register to be an organ donor."

Dr. Jarmi told the Baltimore Times that multiple organizations provide

"While a third of the total candidates waiting for transplants are African Americans, they comprised of only 12.5 percent of organ donors in 2019. Therefore, it is evident that increased, centralized educational efforts are needed to increase organ donations among minorities." Dr. Tambi Jarmi

An estimated 17 people die in the U.S. while awaiting an organ transplant each day, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Individuals of color comprise most of those awaiting a transplant, but just 30 percent of donors come from communities of color.

"Improving organ donation among minorities requires improving their access to health care and health care education," Dr. Jarmi said.

He added that more diversity among donors benefits everyone. According to the Mayo Clinic, while organs "are not matched based on race and ethnicity, people will generally have a better chance of matching with someone from a similar racial or ethnic background."

Medical experts said that compatible blood types and tissue markers used for making a match are more likely to be found among members of the same ethnic group.

"Increasing the diversity of organ donors will help improve access to

communities of color with related educational resources, but more needs to be done on a national level.

"While a third of the total candidates waiting for transplants are African Americans, they comprised of only 12.5 percent of organ donors in 2019.

Therefore, it is evident that increased, centralized educational efforts are needed to increase organ donations among minorities," Dr. Jarmi observed.

He says that increased efforts to get vital messaging to communities of color remain paramount.

"While the medical community has been stressing the alarming status of limited organ donation among minorities, I think increased efforts within the medical community to collaborate with communities of color through grassroots efforts and local leaders, to provide education and resources, should be considered," Dr. Jarmi concluded.

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Environmental Education: Teach kids how to protect the Earth

(Family Features)— Teaching kids about the environment from an early age starts lifelong habits and creates awareness about the way humans affect the Earth. Connecting those lessons to school is an easy way to reinforce how the whole family can make everyday changes that make a difference.

Lower lunchtime impact— Between brown bags, baggies and other packaging waste, school lunches generate a heap of trash. Instead, encourage kids to pick colorful reusable lunchboxes they can use again and again. Bento-style boxes add kid-friendly fun while keeping food separated so you can skip plastic baggies. Another earth-friendly suggestion for school lunch: instead of single-serve products, buy larger bulk packages you can use to fill reusable containers.

Manage transportation— Getting kids to and from school affects the environment in multiple ways, from energy consumption to pollution. You can reduce your family's impact by having kids ride the bus or carpooling with others in your neighborhood. Avoid idling while at school pickup and drop off and advocate for your school district to use clean energy options, like propane, for its transportation fleet.

According to the Propane Education & Research Council, propane school buses offer multiple benefits for school districts and students alike. Not only do propane buses save school districts' money, but they also reduce harmful emissions, giving students a healthier ride to school.

Find more information at BetterOurBuses.com.

Stop water waste— Over the past year, access to water fountains has been significantly limited to prevent the spread of germs. That means many school districts are more receptive to having kids bring water bottles from home. Sending your little learners off with reusable bottles offers a win-win that reduces reliance on plastic bottles and other single-serve beverage



Teaching kids about the environment from an early age starts lifelong habits and creates awareness about the way humans affect the Earth. Connecting those lessons to school is an easy way to reinforce how the whole family can make everyday changes that make a difference. Photo Credit: Family Features

containers, while also encouraging kids to practice healthy habits by staying hydrated throughout the day.

Skip the supply splurge— While there's something exciting about breaking open a brand new box of crayons or markers, it's not really necessary to buy all new supplies year after year. Reusing what gets sent home at the end of the year saves money and prevents waste of still-functional supplies that would otherwise take up space in landfills.

Encourage resourceful recycling— Get kids excited about recycling by designing and decorating recycling bins using leftover materials around the house. When it's fun and they've had a hand in creating the tools, kids are more likely to remember to put recycling in its place.

Include the whole family— Family time can be a precious commodity while school is in session, so make it meaningful when you can by bringing everyone

together for a cause. Take the family to a local recycling center for an afternoon of volunteering or gather everyone for a pick-up day at a nearby park.

School is often the center of kids' worlds, so bringing lessons about protecting the environment into the education setting is a natural way to introduce them to ideas for protecting the Earth and its resources.

A Better Option for Buses: When it comes to schools and education, paying more attention to earth-friendly practices isn't limited to just your home. Switching to propane buses is one of the main ways school districts are updating their transportation plans to ensure every child has a safe, clean, healthy ride to school.

Energy Mix: Electric vehicles make sense for several uses, including the passenger cars parents use to drive their students to school, but propane has a fuel range and performance better suited for school transportation vehicles that

travel long distances at a time.

Energy Equity: Generally, the more affordable energy is, the more equitable its distribution will be. The cost of a propane school bus and its refueling infrastructure is one of the most affordable options for school districts. Propane buses are nearly four times less expensive than electric buses.

Plus, school districts save money throughout the lifetime of propane buses. Propane school buses cost 30-50 percent less per mile to operate than diesel, according to the Propane Education & Research Council, and some districts are saving more than \$1 per gallon, which can add up to thousands of dollars over a single school year. That's money that can go back into classrooms.

Carbon Footprint: In most of the United States, propane school buses are a lower carbon option than electric school buses charged using the electric grid. New innovations in the industry have also led to a renewable propane option for school buses, which ensures low-carbon options well into the future. Because it's produced from renewable raw materials, renewable propane is a lower carbon option than conventional propane and is cleaner than other energy sources.

Harmful Emissions: While diesel exhaust, is classified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a carcinogen, propane buses don't expose students to the same harmful emissions. Propane school bus engines lower greenhouse gases and other harmful emissions to near-zero levels, which improves air quality and eliminates concerns about breathing-related issues.

In fact, propane school buses significantly reduce the harmful emissions that are federally regulated due to their negative impact on human health and are a known trigger for issues like asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory problems.

Source: *Propane Education & Resource Council*

"Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth... these are one and the same fight. We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women's empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all." —Ban Ki-moon

Tips from teachers for choosing quality child care

(Family Features)—As families across the country get ready for back-to-school season, many are also preparing to return to in-person work, which means finding the right program to support their children’s ongoing learning and development. According to “The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects” report, choosing a quality preschool helps children start elementary school prepared for success.

Knowing what to look for when choosing the right childcare provider for your family can be stressful. However, these insights from KinderCare teachers with 40-plus years of classroom experience and Teacher of the Year honorees can help remove some of the mystery.

Make a list of what matters most— Before beginning your search, take some time to think about specific wants and needs for your family and children, whether that’s kindergarten-readiness, social and emotional development or convenient location. Write down the things that matter most to your family and refer to that list when you’re speaking with potential providers and asking questions.

Put yourself in your child’s shoes— When you look around the classroom, be sure to look for child-sized furniture and age-appropriate books and toys within children’s reach. This can help inspire their natural curiosity, encourage independence and build confidence. It’s also important to know how play is incorporated, how it’s facilitated and to see purposeful opportunities for play in each classroom.

“There should be areas set up with enhancements that incorporate toys,



According to “The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects” report, choosing a quality preschool helps children start elementary school prepared for success.
Photo Credit: Family Features

blocks, art materials and dramatic play,” said KinderCare Teacher of the Year Sara Fouriner. “Teachers should share how they’re fostering social and emotional skills, executive function, problem solving, language and regulation skills in children by offering clear examples and putting evidence of learning on full display.”

Ensure safety and quality are priorities— Health and safety took center stage in 2020 and remain top priorities for many families. Ask questions about each potential provider’s safety rules and practices in addition to their curriculum. It may also be beneficial to ask if their programs are accredited by a third-party agency, such as the National Association for the

Education of Young Children. Accreditation means the center’s program is held to high standards and exceeds basic requirements set by state licensing.

“As a mother, grandmother and teacher, I believe families should look for a center that is clean and accredited,” said Dorothy Ellison, an early childhood teacher of 40 years. “Families should also inquire about child-to-teacher ratios, staff training and hiring practices, supervision, emergency prep, illness policies, communication and the quality of caregivers in each program.”

Look for teachers who love what they do— Great teachers have a natural ability to connect with every child in their care. If children love their teachers

and school is a safe, happy place for them, there are typically few limitations on what they can learn.

“High-quality education starts with open, caring teachers who understand the expectations of the age group they represent,” said Dana Davin, a KinderCare Teacher of the Year and center director. “A genuine welcome when children arrive; a clean and engaging classroom; and a culture of inclusion all stem from great teachers who believe in what they do.”

For more tips on choosing the right child care for your family, visit: kindercare.com.

Source: KinderCare

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As schools reopen top Maryland health official expresses concerns about traditional vaccinations

By Stacy M. Brown

The pandemic has led to a sharp decline in routine vaccinations, which prevent diseases like the measles, mumps and rubella.

Years, decades and in some cases, centuries before Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson developed vaccines for the coronavirus, Americans routinely received traditional vaccinations to prevent common illnesses.

Gene Ransom, the Maryland State Medical Society CEO, says the pandemic has had a tremendous effect on students' regular annual immunizations as they return to classrooms.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant and troubling drop in routine immunization rates because many parents in Maryland, and across the country, were forced to delay or cancel annual health care services and well-child visits in the wake of stay-at-home orders," Ransom told The Baltimore Times.

According to the University of Maryland Medical System, pre-kindergarten immunization rates fell an astounding 76 percent last year.

Ransom says that early childhood vaccinations, such as the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, are critical for stopping the spread of easily communicable diseases.

Children routinely received two doses for those traditional vaccines – the first dose at 12 to 15 months and the second at four to six-years-old.



**Gene Ransom, CEO
Maryland State Medical Society**
Courtesy Photo

"With childhood vaccination rates declining due to COVID, many Maryland children may be vulnerable to other dangerous vaccine-preventable illnesses," Ransom said.

Officials haven't seen the data on how declining immunization rates might prevent students from returning to classrooms, but schools typically require up-to-date vaccines to enroll.

"However, we do know diseases like measles, influenza and rubella spread more easily when those who are unvaccinated are together in close quarters," Ransom explained.

"Our communities are continuing to battle the COVID-19 pandemic as the Delta variant is causing an increase of cases across Maryland," he added.

"Many of our local health systems, hospitals, and urgent care facilities have been stretched to their limits due to the pandemic, with hospitals reaching capacities and health care providers working around the clock on the front lines.

"An outbreak of another vaccine-preventable communicable disease could be disastrous for public health and our state's ability to recover from the pandemic."

Ransom further noted the effect that COVID-19 has had on racial and ethnic minority groups, leaving them at a higher risk of getting sick and dying from the coronavirus.

"Black Americans are three times more likely to be infected with—and twice as likely to die from—COVID-19 than White Americans," Ransom offered.

Black Marylanders make up a significant portion of state resident cases and deaths, with 156,710 known cases and 3,536 deaths, according to Ransom.

"COVID-19 is not the only disease that disproportionately affects African

Americans. For example, we also know that Black Americans have the highest flu-related ICU admission rates," Ransom concluded. "It's imperative that African Americans, along with all communities of color, take the necessary steps to ensure their regular immunizations are up to date to avoid contracting a dangerous communicable illness and safeguard their health."

Finally, Ransom noted that as Maryland continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone must also remain vigilant against the threat of other vaccine-preventable illnesses.

"Many Maryland families are now enjoying the waning days of summer and participating in annual rites such as back-to-school shopping," Ransom wrote. "We urge those families to add to their to-do list a conversation with their physician about catching up on routine immunizations. No child in Maryland should fall victim to serious and potentially deadly illnesses, particularly when safe and effective vaccines are so readily available."

Your Local Red Cross Needs You! September Virtual Open House

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Notre Dame of Maryland Graduate Awarded ALSF Grant

By Stacy M. Brown

Notre Dame of Maryland University student Fidelia Asomani has been named one of Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation's 2021 Pediatric Oncology Student Training (POST) Program grant recipients.

Through this program, Asomani and 11 other students across the country received an undisclosed amount of grant funding to join a lab research project focused on pediatric oncology.

The grant funding comes from Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation and the Northwestern Mutual Foundation.

Northwestern Mutual Foundation officials say they remain dedicated to finding better treatments and cures for childhood cancer and supporting children and families affected by the disease.

Since 2012, the organization has supported the fight against childhood cancer through its Childhood Cancer Program by donating more than \$35 million to support families and survivors and has funded over 455,000 hours of



Fidela Asomani graduated from Notre Dame of Maryland University this past May with a degree in biology. She plans to explore the career path of a physician-scientist. Courtesy Photo/Northwestern Mutual Foundation and ALSF

research with partners like Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation and other nonprofit organizations across the United States.

The funds from Northwestern include

\$60,000 for the POST program to support undergraduate, graduate, and medical students through eight weeks of research with top analysts in the field of pediatric oncology.

It allows students to gain more valuable experience while also helping advance the treatment options and research for childhood cancer.

"The POST Program means so much to me," Asomani told the Baltimore Times. "It has allowed me to gain hands-on lab experience that I had missed during the pandemic and connect with top researchers in the Pediatric Oncology field. The POST Program has taught me so much that will further my career as a future physician-scientist."

Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation officials say they are "fighting childhood cancer, one cup at a time."

The foundation has a mission to change the lives of children with cancer through funding impactful research, raising awareness, supporting families, and empowering everyone to help cure childhood cancer.

Since 2005, the foundation has provided more than 1,000 medical research grants to nearly 150 institutions across the United States and Canada. The grants provide students interested in pediatric oncology the opportunity to train under a

research mentor for the summer.

The mentors, who are top researchers in the pediatric oncology field, provide students with hands-on experience in the lab, encouraging them to pursue careers in that field. The students receiving grants work with their mentors at several different institutions across the country.

September represents National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, and foundation officials say they wish to spotlight programs like POST.

Although it's the leading cause of death for children under 19, according to the National Cancer Institute, childhood cancer research only receives four percent of funding from the federal cancer budget.

To continue the search for a cure, Northwestern Mutual, through its foundation, supports the next generation of pediatric cancer researchers through Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation's POST Program.

Asomani graduated from Notre Dame of Maryland University this past May with a degree in biology, with plans to explore the career path of a physician-scientist.

After watching her godmother suffer through chemotherapy, Asomani was inspired to research innovative therapies with less toxicity. Her coursework in college reportedly further ignited her desire to conduct cancer research, participating in student research and volunteering at local area hospitals.

This year, Asomani worked in Dr. Linda Resar's lab at Johns Hopkins University to study HMGA proteins and their role and function in pediatric cancer.

"I believe that the work I have done in Dr. Resar's lab has been impactful in understanding the molecular regulation of aggressive pediatric leukemias. I am happy that my results will contribute to targeted gene therapies that help children and their families," Asomani said, adding that she is thankful for the opportunity provided by Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation and Northwestern Mutual. "I believe the growth I have exhibited throughout the program exemplifies the need for opportunities and programs like this that mentor aspiring researchers."



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Strong Schools Maryland responds to Blueprint Accountability and Implementation Board announcement

Implementation Board is a critical component of successful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future

Baltimore— The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) is the single most critical state-level entity in ensuring Maryland creates world-class public schools for all students in the state. The Kirwan Commission studied and debated for years before finalizing their recommendations for new funding and programs.

"If implemented as intended, in collaboration with students, families, and school communities," said Shamoyia Gardiner, executive director of the organization. "The Blueprint for Maryland's Future could ensure our public schools do more than simply bounce back from the devastating impacts of the pandemic and longstanding inequity—it could be the launching pad that ensures Maryland's students and schools thrive in a constantly-changing world."

Now that the Nominating Committee has completed its work, all eyes turn to Governor Hogan, who has 30 days to select seven AIB members to appoint from the list of nine candidates. The AIB Chair will then be jointly appointed by the Governor, State Senate President Ferguson, and State House Speaker Jones, after which the AIB will hire an Executive Director, who will hire 14 staff, and begin the lawfully mandated work of the Blueprint. The AIB will have to present a comprehensive statewide implementation plan, complete with metrics for evaluation of the law's success, by February 15, 2022.

Strong Schools Maryland advocates, builds power, and shares information with invested Maryland residents to support the co-creation of public schools that produce graduates equipped to thrive.

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Exploring options for Ravens to replace J.K. Dobbins

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens suffered a major setback when starting running back J.K. Dobbins tore his ACL in the team's final preseason game. Dobbins flashed as a rookie last season when he gained 805 yards (6 yards per carry) and scored nine touchdowns.

Ravens head coach John Harbaugh opened up about playing starters in the preseason when asked if he regretted the decision now that Dobbins got hurt.

"We played the whole offense for nine plays; I think it was. Those guys played for no more than 23 plays the whole preseason—that's what J.K. [Dobbins] had," Harbaugh said on Monday, August 30, 2021. "Some teams play their guys a lot. I watched certain teams—you know who they are—[and], they've played their starters every single game extensively. A lot of teams in our division have done that. Great teams in the AFC [and] teams that we're competing against in the AFC have pretty much all done that.

"But there are other teams that don't play their guys at all; they don't play their starters even one snap. We are probably as close to that as we've ever ... I know we're farther down that road than we've ever been; we played our



Seattle Seahawks running back Rashaad Penny has some breakaway ability and can catch the ball out of the backfield. It shouldn't take much to get the Seahawks to part with the back they once thought would be their workhorse.

Photo Credit: USA TODAY Sports Images

guys so little this offseason. It's just been how we've done it. But any time a guy gets hurt, you ask yourself those questions."

Dobbins and Gus Edwards figured to be a potential one-two punch this season. Now the Ravens have to find another back to take his place.

Here is a look at three options to replace Dobbins as well as one in house possibility.

In House: Ty'Son Williams

Harbaugh clearly trusts Williams as an option.

"He's [Williams] good," Harbaugh said. "He's done a good job. He hasn't really dropped any passes out here. He's good in pass protection. He can run routes. Yes, I feel good about him that way."

Williams at 6-0, 220 pounds fits the Ravens preference for big backs. He's also been with the team since camp so

he knows the scheme and should be comfortable being thrown into the action.

Trade: Seahawks RB Rashaad Penny Penny was the Seahawks' first-round pick in 2018. Injuries and the emergence of fellow running back Chris Carson have detailed Penny's career in Seattle.

Despite being 5'-11" and 220 pounds, Penny has some breakaway ability and can catch the ball out of the backfield. It shouldn't take much to get the Seahawks to part with the back they once thought would be their workhorse.

Other options are Rex Burkhead from the Patriots; and David Johnson from the Texans

Reuniting: Mark Ingram

Yep. Whoop! Whoop! Why not give Ingram a chance to come back to Baltimore?

Ingram made the Pro Bowl with the Ravens in their magical 2019 season. He finished with 1,018 rushing yards and ten rushing touchdowns to go along with 26 receptions for 247 receiving yards and five receiving touchdowns that season.

Ingram was released by the team in January and picked up by the Texans in March but have a logjam at running back. It's a perfect opportunity for a low-cost trade that would bring a fan favorite back to Baltimore.

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Job-Hunting Tips To Restore Your Hope Despite The Pandemic

News & Experts— This can be an especially frustrating and worrisome time for job seekers. Massive unemployment resulting from the coronavirus pandemic reflects decline and uncertainty in many industries. With fewer companies hiring, some workers who were laid off or furloughed face a more competitive job search.

But while it's easy to get discouraged, employment numbers are creeping back, and retooling the job search method can help them stand out in the crowd and find desirable employers, says Jack Whatley (www.humancodeofhiring.com), a recruiting strategist who specializes in creating employer-branding campaigns.

"Many companies still are actively recruiting and looking for people with the right skill set and mindset to fit these changing times," Whatley says. "People seeking employment not only to pay the bills but also to find work that is meaningful to them can leverage this time to be strategic and nimble."

"While there are factors job seekers can't control, they can choose to equip themselves with more information, skill, and overall preparation, and in the process conduct a successful job search."

Whatley offers five tips to help job seekers navigate their job search during the pandemic:

Gather intel— Whatley says the pandemic can reveal the essence of a company's culture, which is a priority for many job candidates today. In the process of searching companies, pay attention to their social media sites and websites, reviews by former employees, and how they are handling things now, Whatley says. "How are they treating



Massive unemployment resulting from the coronavirus pandemic reflects decline and uncertainty in many industries. While there are factors job seekers can't control, they can choose to equip themselves with more information, skill, and overall preparation, and in the process conduct a successful job search, according to job recruiting strategist, Jack Whatley

Photo Credit: ClipArt.com

employees during this continuing emergency? How have they adapted? Are they working from home? Did they lay off people, and if so, how quickly? Is there a community-mindedness to the business?"

Expand your skill set— With fewer positions or expanded roles in different positions, versatility is key. "This is an ideal time to take online courses to expand your professional toolkit," Whatley says. "Acquiring new certifications will be helpful when applying for new roles. Use online learning modules for platforms such as Zoom and Skype, which help practice interview skills and remote work. Hiring managers want to know you have the

capabilities to navigate the tools and platforms for remote work."

Expand your network— Data shows that networking remains a frequent factor in getting hired. Whatley says this is the time to make new connections and re-establish existing ones. "First, paint a complete, updated picture with your profile on the job search site," Whatley says. "Does your headline create a strong brand, and does your profile highlight your accomplishments and capabilities? Include keywords that might appear in job descriptions. Post content on your social media sites to show you're engaged in meaningful conversation. And challenge yourself to reach out to new people by sending

customized invitations."

Be flexible in career paths— The kind of work one has been accustomed to may not be feasible given the current economic climate and the changes some industries are undergoing. "Research what industries are hiring, those in which you could apply your skills, and consider taking something that may not be on your Plan A list, but rather might be Plan B or C," Whatley says. "Consider temporary opportunities. Search for opportunities in which you can leverage your transferable skills in a different capacity."

Be prepared for the virtual interview— Virtual interviewing is the new normal. "Dress appropriately, as though you're in the company's office," Whatley says. "Make your environment clean, appealing, and well-lit. Treat the video interview as though it were in-person. Be aware of making eye contact through the monitor, your tone, and your mannerisms."

"Be proactive and persistent, but also be patient," Whatley says. "Hiring processes may go slower for some companies, but there is a lot a job seeker can do to be ready when they call."

Jack Whatley is a recruiting strategist who specializes in creating employer branding campaigns that position companies as the employer of choice in their market. He is the author of the upcoming book Human Code of Hiring: DNA of Recruitment Marketing. Whatley is known for creating successful recruiting and employer-branding campaigns and delivering highly qualified applicants. For more information, visit: www.humancodeofhiring.com.

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