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Father Pens Book Celebrating Successful Sons, Young Black Men



Left to right, DeAundre Bumpass, Jamil Bumpass, Duane Bumpass, Natasha Bumpass, Jamar Bumpass, and Ja'Quan Martinez are members of a blended family. Duane's self-published book, "How I Raised 4 Successful Black Sons" officially released on Wednesday, December 7, 2022. Despite having a blended family, the father from Maryland was able to see the fruits of his labor manifest. He is proud to be an example for black fatherhood. Each son that Duane raised with Natasha is successful. The book explores the benefit of a parent and child having a healthy relationship. Duane also hopes that "How I Raised 4 Successful Black Sons" will help other families. Photo credit: Thomas Calhoun Jr. (See more on page 9)

40+ Years Later YouthWorks Still Providing Summer Jobs Applications for Next Year's Session Opens January 3, 2023

By Ursula V. Battle

As Mayor of Baltimore, the late William Donald Schaefer started "Blue Chip-In," a summer job program for youths. More than 40 years later, and now with Mayor Brandon Scott leading the city, the program which is now called YouthWorks is still going strong.

Through YouthWorks, teens and young adults ages 14-21 are offered summer positions with private, nonprofit, and city and state government employers throughout Baltimore City. Participants work in a variety of industries and gain workforce readiness and career-specific skills over a five-week summer session.

The application process for the 2023 session will be opening January 3, 2023, and Baltimore City businesses and youths are encouraged to apply. Next year's session will run from July 10, 2023, to August 11, 2023. YouthWorks will be paying the state's minimum wage of \$13.25 per hour. Participants may work up to 25 hours a week for five weeks and will have the opportunity to earn over \$1,500 next summer.

YouthWorks is offered through the Mayor's Office of Employment Development. S. Rasheem is program manager of the YouthWorks Program.

"Our primary responsibility is to provide a job for every youth in Baltimore City between the ages of 14 to 21," said Rasheem. "We also want their employment to be meaningful for both the youths and the employers. We want youths to walk away with not only a paycheck but also job skills. If anyone works with youths in some capacity, they are probably going to come in contact with the YouthWorks program whether they are a teacher, after school program coordinator, Parks and Recs supervisor, parent, or nonprofit."

In 2022, YouthWorks placed 5,819 youth participants in jobs across over 400 worksites in industries that included technology, design, and finance. According to YouthWorks, many youth workers have gone on to gain full-time employment with their worksite after the summer ended.

"It's a little hard to iron down an exact number because so many youths come back," said Rasheem referring to the number of youths who have been placed in jobs through YouthWorks

since its inception. "For example, if a youth comes into the YouthWorks program at age 14, they still have several years where they can participate in the program until they are 21. But we estimate that well over 73,000 youths have been placed since 2013. That's since 2013 and not dating back to the origins of when the program was founded."

She added, "For a lot of people in the city, it was their very first job. It's their very first experience at having a job, getting a paycheck, and families want to have that experience. Also, families appreciate the additional income. I think that there are relationships that are formed and built. The program has been around for so long because the city and communities support it, and families and youths support it."

Rasheem, who has worked in various capacities with YouthWorks during her seven-year career with the program, talked about its critical role in Baltimore City.



A group of YouthWorkers at their worksite, Paul's Place Baltimore. (Courtesy Photos)

"One of the most quantitative ways to identify how this program helps the city, is the increase in income that is coming into the home for five or six weeks," said Rasheem. "That can help alleviate some of the financial responsibilities in a home. I also believe it's a deterrent for mischief an adolescent would typically get in without other things to really engage them. So, it's a way of gaining income into their family, gaining job skills, and for some folks, it helps them to find out what they want to do in the future. YouthWorks also helps employers to tap into the next generation of talent."

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Mayor Brandon Scott, YouthWorks Program Manager S. Rasheem, Mayor's Office of Employment Development Director Jason Perkins-Cohen, and attendees at the YouthWorks 2022 kickoff event.

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Commentary

Celebrating the Beautiful Messages of Christmas

By Peter Bramble

This week we will take some time to reflect on the rich messages that come with Christmas, messages that everyone, regardless of their religious or non-religious leanings, can and should embrace.

In recent years it has become fashionable to ridicule Christmas. Some, in this modern world, would like to cancel Christmas and its symbols. Some symbols have been viciously attacked. But we need to pause and reflect on the beautiful themes and messages that go with the Christmas season.

What are some of those themes that go with the celebration of Christmas?

Among them are the following: peace on earth; goodwill to all men; joy to the world; light shining in the darkness; gift sharing and the incarnation of the God of goodness into a world of chaos and evil. Which of these concepts would our culture benefit from if they were cancelled? And which would enhance the culture if they were truly embraced and broadly practiced?

Let's do a brief analysis of each of the Christmas themes listed above.

"Peace on earth," a great theme of Christmas, is needed across the nations of the world more than ever. Wars and conflicts are everywhere as nations, tribes and factions continue to engage in conflicts and war over religion and territory. Would it not be wonderful if humans embraced the theme of peace on earth and set it as a universal goal? We think so.

"Goodwill to all mankind!" When I hear those words, especially when they are combined with 'peace on earth,' the Jewish wish of shalom comes immediately to mind. That concept as best understood contains a wish or blessing that the recipient receives all things good. This wish, as it were, is intended to cover the recipient from head to toe with all good and pleasant experiences. Who in their right mind can reject the offering of peace on earth with goodwill towards all?



"Joy to the world," is certainly one of the most prevalent themes of the Christmas holidays. Just think if we can bring joy to the many people who are sad, lonely or suffering across the world. At Christmas time we can proactively work to bring 'joy' into the lives of others. Who can really work to cancel a festival with such a message? Only the real grinch!

"Light shining in the darkness," is another theme that is so appropriate for this time of the year when the darkness of night is actually longer than the light of the day. Remember that the winter solstice which falls on December 21, four days before Christmas, is the shortest day, with the longest night. All the lighting that goes with Christmas from Christmas trees to other lighted decorations, remind us that there is hope in the midst of darkness. The night, where we stumble in the darkness will be pierced by the light of the world. The light dispels the darkness and all the evils that come with it.

"Gift-giving" comes with the season also. People sometimes demean the season of 'gift giving' on the grounds that it fosters commercialism and materialism. Those who make this argument against sharing gifts at this time of the year seem to forget that the Christmas story is not complete until the wise men of the east arrive, bearing gifts. One beautiful hymn says: 'sacred gifts with

mystic meaning.' In some parts of the Christian world, Epiphany, January 6, the 12th day of Christmas, is celebrated highly as the day when the three wise men, Kings of the east, arrived with their gifts of gold (money,) frankincense and myrrh. So, sharing gifts, with meaning, is a very important part of the season.

But while these themes of 'peace on earth,' goodwill towards all humankind,' 'joy to the world,' 'light shining in the darkness,' and 'gift sharing' are key themes of Christmas, the one theme least understood and celebrated is the fact of the 'incarnation.'

Most people do not realize that in Christian thinking, Christmas is celebrated as The Feast of the Incarnation. What does that mean? Well, the essence of Christmas with all its loveable themes resides in the concept of the Incarnation. The simplest way for explaining the incarnation is to understand that God who according to Christian belief resides in his heavenly home, decided to become man, for a season, to show humans how they ought to live.

The story goes something like this. God, the father of all things good, made man and commanded him to be good, resisting all things evil. Man, over time showed an inability to lead the life of God, which is essentially the life of being good. Man thought it was just too difficult to do good all the time. Man

thought that the good God in his high heaven could preach this 'being good stuff,' but he did not really understand how hard it is for man here on earth to model his goodness. So, the God of Christianity decided to incarnate himself in human form, by becoming a man himself, so that he could show us humans how to live by the code of goodness: love, peace, goodwill, mercy and forgiveness et al.

According to the Bible, 'when the time was right, God sent his son' to do a demonstration that would prove that, though difficult, humans can live a good and moral life. The Feast of the Incarnation, known popularly as Christmas, in commemorative of the time when God, the father of all things good, decided to incarnate in human form—God becoming man for a season, to show us how to lead good lives, lives that will bring peace and goodwill to all humankind. What a thought!

Think about this for a moment. God, in the English language is closely connected to all that is good. All things good: peace, love, forgiveness, longsuffering, truth, patience et al. All things good are associated with the God. And all things evil, are associated with the (d)evil. Got it yet? So, the God of goodness, love and mercy, chooses to become human (incarnating himself in human flesh) to show us how we ought to live.

And that is the entire meaning of Christmas. That is why its themes are universally good for humanity, even for atheists who should want good and goodness to be incarnated into the human race.

And so, We wish you all a Happy, Merry Christmas and a Bright and Prosperous New Year!

Commentary

Biden Administration Announces Plans to Drastically Reduce Homelessness Nationwide

By Stacy M. Brown
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In major U.S. cities, officials have either ramped up or dialogued about efforts to reduce homelessness, with New York City Mayor Eric Adams announcing plans to place the unhoused with severe untreated mental illness into hospitals among the strategies employed. Now, the Biden-Harris administration has decided to roll out a national push to reduce homelessness by 25% in two years. Titled “All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness,” the initiative, announced on Dec. 19, would mandate federal officials to intervene. Various government agencies would work with states and cities to target unsheltered homelessness. In addition, the administration would expand housing and services and strengthen efforts to prevent people from being unhoused before they turn to the streets.

“Many Americans live each day without safe or stable housing,” Biden stated.



Courtesy photo: nnpa.org

“Some are in emergency shelters. Others live on our streets, exposed to the threats of violence, adverse weather, disease, and so many other dangers exacerbated by homelessness.”

The White House called the plan the “most ambitious effort by any administration to prevent people from becoming homeless, address inequities that disproportionately impact underserved communities, including people of color and other marginalized groups, and help cities and states reduce unsheltered homelessness.” The “All In” plan outlines new strategies to prevent homelessness and increase the housing supply with supportive services to reach that goal.

Administration officials said these strategies build on the proven “Housing First” model – an approach where housing is the first step to a better, safer, and healthier life and serves as a platform for providing services so people can stay housed.

“All In” also sets the foundation for new initiatives, including one to reduce unsheltered homelessness in a cohort of geographically diverse communities. Biden called on state and local governments to set goals for 2025 and use “All In” as a blueprint to address homelessness in their communities.

“My plan offers a roadmap for not only getting people into housing but also ensuring that they have access to the support, services, and income that allow them to thrive,” Biden asserted.

“It is a plan that is grounded in the best evidence and aims to improve equity and strengthen collaboration at all levels.” White House officials said “All In” builds on the Obama-Biden Administration’s efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness, including using proven strategies that led to a significant drop in homelessness between 2010 and 2016.

Officials contended that some of those gains were reversed between 2016 and the pandemic’s beginning due to a lack of focus on evidence-based strategies, officials contended.

The number of people experiencing homelessness increased by 6%, officials stated.

New data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) shows that further increases in homelessness were largely avoided despite the economic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic – in large part because of the Biden administration’s robust response, including critical assistance in the American Rescue Plan and a historic economic recovery.

According to HUD data, 582,462 people were experiencing homelessness on a single night in January 2022 – a slight .3% increase since 2020.

The unsheltered homeless population, including encampments, has increased by more than 3% since 2020. In addition, chronic homelessness, including those with disabilities, increased by 15%. In New York, 65,633 lived in shelters in

October 2022, compared with 57,341 in October 2020, according to the Coalition for the Homeless.

The Los Angeles region, which recently counted 69,144 people experiencing homelessness, has realized recent increases, including a 25% jump from 2018 to 2020.

Homelessness has reportedly decreased by 47% in the District of Columbia since 2016.

Because the Biden-Harris administration kept the national eviction moratorium in place until August 2021 and with support from the American Rescue Plan, evictions were prevented, and many vulnerable families could stay in their homes, officials insisted.

The Emergency Rental Assistance program from the American Rescue Plan delivered over 8 million payments to provide rental or utility assistance to individuals at risk for eviction or housing instability.

And the expanded Child Tax Credit helped drive child poverty to record lows in 2021. As a result, eviction filings remained more than 20 percent below historic averages in the 12 months following the expiration of the national eviction moratorium.

Despite overall homelessness remaining relatively flat, the administration noted that the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness—including people living in cars and tents – rose by 3%.

“Ending unsheltered homelessness will require a coordinated effort to promote healthy and safe communities where all can live in dignity,” administration officials wrote in a fact sheet.

“Effective practices, such as using an emergency management approach to resolve encampments by rapidly moving people into housing with services and supports, are starting to emerge as national models.

“Although each community is different, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution, these practices could be successfully replicated in communities facing the growing challenge of unsheltered homelessness.”

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Getting to Know Anne Arundel County's First African American Sheriff

By Andrea Blackstone

Anne Arundel County's 121st sheriff, Everett Sesker, was sworn in on December 6, 2022. He was raised in Edgewater, Maryland and resides in Anne Arundel County. Sesker's term is four years. The Anne Arundel County Office of the Sheriff provides law enforcement and public safety services including service of warrants and civil processes. Protection of the circuit court, enforcement of court orders, handling prisoner detention and control and engaging in community outreach are additional aspects that the office handles.

Q: How does it make you feel to be the first African American sheriff to be elected in Anne Arundel County?

A: Well, you know what, when I was running, that wasn't what I was running on. I just heard other people talking about it, but I didn't talk about it because I was running on my experience, my background, and what did I want to do for the community. So it hit me pretty much, I guess I would say, after I won.

And how does it make me feel? I feel very proud to be the first African American sheriff in Anne Arundel County. And what I want people to get from this is that we have come a long way. We still have a way to go, especially in dealing with law enforcement, but we have come a long way and for any little kid out there, little girl, little boy, I don't care what your race is or whatever. LGBTQ, whatever. If you set your mind to something, you can do it. You just have to work hard at it, and you can do it. So, am I proud? Yes, I am very proud of my accomplishments as being a sheriff and also being the first African American, but I'm even more proud that I'm setting an example for those that come after me.



Sheriff Everett Sesker

Photo courtesy of Anne Arundel County Sheriff's Office

Q: Speaking of your experience in law enforcement, can you tell me a little bit about where you gained most of it and what you were doing?

A: I started in Prince George's County because Anne Arundel County wasn't hiring at the time, so I put an application with Prince George's County and they called me back, and that's where my career began. But it was just like a process. When you're in the academy, you think of law enforcement as, you know, you've got to lock people up. That's how you prove yourself. Then as you go on, you get a little wiser, you get a little older, and you realize

that you still have to lock people up, but it's not just about that. It's about the people, especially young people and trying to change their course of direction. They might be on the wrong path. And then when you become a commander, you realize not only are you you're dealing with the community, you're trying to deter crime, hopefully through talking with people and speaking with them. But now you've got a young group of officers that are coming out that you have to mold, so now you've got to share this wisdom and knowledge with them.

Q: What are a few of your key objectives that you want to improve or make the sheriff's office in Anne Arundel County more effective? Do you have any plans for that?

A: Well, yes, I do. But first of all, what I'm working on right now. I had a meeting today with my command staff. And I said 'Look, the sheriff's office has been in existence since 1650. I said and a lot of good work has been done here, but for some reason nobody knows about it. It's like everybody knows about the county police. They know about the Annapolis Police Department and the Maryland State Police but very few people know about the Office of the Sheriff. So what I said to them is, 'We have got to show people your value. We have got to show people that you are a valuable part of the law enforcement fight in Anne Arundel County, and only way we can do that is if we engage the community.' So as the sheriff, I'm going to lead by example. I just

put a young deputy into a community relations position. She has already started working. I think she's been doing a wonderful job. Her name is Deputy Angie Hines. So that's part of it right there. We're going to engage the community. We're going to be at different events. We're going to let the community know exactly what we're doing.

Next week, read Part II, a Q & A with Sherriff Everett Sesker.

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Dishing Up Caribbean Goodness is a Family Affair

By Andrea Blackstone

Sometimes the path to entrepreneurship is not always a straight one. Kamica Moore—owner of KM Island Cuisine, LLC—located at 110 West 25th St. in Baltimore, Maryland knows that the right timing can lead to the highest reward. The Anne Arundel County resident knows that conversation over a flavorful plate of Jamaican food never goes out of style. Appreciation for her customers leads her to offer them the best she can daily.

“No matter how I might be feeling down and out, love for my customers drives me to put out the extra effort to see that smile on their faces. Serving delicious food to happy customers is our motto,” Moore said.

Moore has roots in the United States and Jamaica. Although she has lived in the United States for 18 years, the tradition of entrepreneurship and cooking was handed down to her from her mother, Elsa “Sue” Reid. Moore has been cooking since she was 11 years old.

“I always loved cooking because my mom owned a restaurant,” Moore said.

Before Moore tried her hand at the restaurant business, she worked in healthcare for 21 years. Her journey included working as a nurse, manager, and director.

“I cooked one time, and everyone loved the food. They always told me ‘You have to open a restaurant,’” Moore said. “However, I’m very passionate about helping people so I stayed in healthcare for a long time. I lost my job just when COVID started.”

Moore explained that she cooked at home for former coworkers and doctors. Sometimes she cooked free of charge for them during the pandemic. It was her way of donating her time to support people who worked 15-18 hours a day.



*Left to right: Chenise Cumberland, server and prep cook; Jerome Reid, server; and Kamica Moore, owner and cook of KM Island Cuisine, LLC.
(Courtesy photos)*

She ultimately decided to open KM Island Cuisine in July of 2022 in Charm City because she spent so many years working in the healthcare field in Baltimore. Many customers currently find out about Island Cuisine through word of mouth. Other stumble across her TikTok videos or social media posts.

Seafood, burgers, pasta and shrimp dishes can be found on the menu although Caribbean food such as jerk chicken, oxtail, curry chicken, brown stew chicken, rice and beans, plantains, steamed cabbage, and various Jamaican dishes are among the restaurant’s specialties.

Moore provides catering services, and she can accommodate 25 people in a seating area with a waterfall that is located inside of the establishment.

But Moore’s journey has included different family members, including her husband, Rohan Moore. He recently resigned from his job to help his wife with her dream of owning a restaurant. A cousin lends a hand periodically, too. Jahmoy Bartley, 19, is Moore’s son who works as Island Cuisine’s cashier. The sophomore at Bowie State is majoring in finance. Participating in the family business is teaching him real life skills.

“What I really learned is kindness and communication go a long way because some days you might have busy days or slow days, but you’ll need a lot of determination and push to keep going,” Bartley said.

Bartley further commented that customers who patronize his mother’s restaurant have remarked about her top tier customer service and display of kindness.

Gaining experience in the family, entrepreneurial setting is humbling for Bartley.

“It just shows me what it takes to grow and be an entrepreneur in the world,” he said.

Although Moore wants her business to thrive, she retains the compassion of a nurse at heart, even when she takes her nightly journey after packing meals in containers to distribute on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. to feed the homeless. She enjoys brightening the lives of the less fortunate and paying customers.

“It’s not just about money for me. I enjoy putting a smile on people’s faces,” Moore said.

Visit <https://www.kmislandcuisine.com/> to learn more information about KM Island Cuisine.



Oxtails with rice and peas and plantains is one dish offered by the restaurant.

Father Pens Book Celebrating Successful Sons, Young Black Men

By Andrea Blackstone

Positive Black males and fathers do exist, but oftentimes mugshots and unsettling statistics about Black men push to the top of breaking news reports.

“You don’t see much coverage of excellence and Black sons. There are young black men out there that don’t get the spotlight on them that are doing good. There are productive black youth in this community,” Duane Bumpass said, mentioning the prevalence of negative images.

The retired UPS worker and business owner who runs Clean Concepts Mobile Detailing and Bumpeasy Entertainment was

encouraged by his customers to pen a nonfiction called “How I Raised 4 Successful Black Sons” to draw more attention to the positive outcome of his fatherhood journey. The self-published book was officially released on Wednesday, December 7, 2022.

“I really didn’t think my kids were special. I just thought it was normal for what I did, and for what me and my wife did in our household,” the Upper Marlboro based author said.

A fascinating aspect of the family’s path is that before Duane united with his wife, Natasha Bumpass, she was raising her son, Ja’Quan Martinez, as a single parent. Bumpass was rearing his son, DeAundre Bumpass.

“He [Duane] was a single dad when I met him, so that kind of piqued my interest and made me realize that he cared about his kids,” Natasha said.

Just as the book suggests, Bumpass played an active role in guiding four young men to sidestep pitfalls and achieve greatness.

Sgt. Ja’Quan Martinez, 27, is among Duane’s sons that he raised. He has



Duane Bumpass, author of “How I Raised 4 Successful Black Sons”
Photo credit: Duane Bumpass

been employed as a United States Marine since he was 19 years old.

Duane taught his stepson how to overcome adversity and to be headstrong.

“Mental toughness is a key trait for young men to have, because once you leave the protection of your parents, you are at the mercy of the rest of the world,” he said.

Martinez believes that the book helps to point out the importance of a father figure.

“Duane was not my biological father, but he stepped in to be the guide that was needed in life. We didn’t see eye to eye much as I was growing up but looking back on all he did I appreciate and respect what he did for me. I’m able to successfully raise my own son from what I’ve learned from him,” Martinez added.

“Hopefully this book can inspire young men as well to not only understand and appreciate the life lessons their fathers are trying to teach them, and also help inspire young men who are fathers to understand the importance of guiding the next

generation of young men so we all can keep continuing to reach our full potential.”

DeAundre, 26, is another successful son. He earned a Doctor of Pharmacy and is employed as a pharmacy manager at Walgreens in Texas. DeAundre recalls that his father told him that “you have to pay to play.”

“I always interpreted that as if you want to be successful and enjoy life, you have to first put in the hard work, dedication, and effort,” he explained. “That piece of advice repeatedly comes to mind not just when spending money on the fun things in life, but also when I would be met with challenges in my undergraduate years, professional education, and life.”

Natasha and her husband, Duane were also blessed with 19-year-old twins, Jamar Bumpass and Jamil Bumpass. They currently attend Colby College in Maine. Jamar reflected about what he learned from his father.

“My father has taught me how to take care of myself and manage my money effectively. He has helped take my focus away from things that don’t matter,” Jamar said.

Jamil benefits from lessons Duane imparted about staying out of trouble in his youth. He also defines success from a personal perspective.

“Success in my opinion is having everything you worked for from the beginning and being able to live comfortably and happily, meeting the desired expectations you set for yourself and not the ones others set for you,” he said.

Natasha described herself as a nurturer who introduced civility to the boys while Duane was more of a disciplinarian for them.

“It’s a lot of things that a mother

can’t teach your child that only a father can teach your child,” she said.

Duane explained that he would like blended families, parents, and children who are ages seven and up to read his book.

“Instead of always demanding things from that child, give that child a voice to tell you what they want to do, and where they want to be, not what you want them to be,” Duane said. “You definitely need open communication with your children.”

Autographed copies of “How I Raised 4 Successful Black Sons” can be ordered via <https://square.link/u/VvlBryKr>. The book can also be purchased from Amazon and other mainstream retailers.



Ja’Quan Martinez graduates from Frederick Douglass High School located in Upper Marlboro, Maryland in May of 2013.

Top row, left to right, Duane Bumpass, Ja’Quan Martinez, Natasha Bumpass, DeAundre Bumpass.

Bottom row, left to right, Jamil Bumpass and Jamar Bumpass.

Courtesy photo

The U of M School of Pharmacy and Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church Nurtures a Community Seed that Continues to Flourish

By Ursula V. Battle

This is Part 2 of a 2-Part Series highlighting the partnership between Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church where the Rev. Franklin Lance is Senior Pastor, and the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy's PATIENTS Program is headed by Dr. C. Daniel Mullins.

The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy and Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church (MLBC) planted a seed in the community through The PATIENTS Program. An interdisciplinary research team of community partners and researchers housed at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, The PATIENTS Program works to change the way we think about research by creating a path for health equity in West Baltimore. More than 10 years later, their seed has taken root, sprouted, grown and flourished in the community.

The newest blossom on the branch is COMMIT (COmmunity Mistrust and Measures of Institutional Trustworthiness). The COMMIT Project seeks to co-design a sustainable model for trustworthy Community Engaged Research (CEnR) partnerships to address Social, Ethical, Behavioral Indications (SEBI) of COVID-19 testing.

C. Daniel Mullins, PhD, is a professor in the Department of Practice, Sciences, and Health Outcomes Research (P-SHOR) at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy.

"COMMIT deals with COVID-19 and has a specific focus on health equity," said Dr. Mullins who is the Executive Director of The PATIENTS Program. "I do believe that what we're



Pastor Donald L. Wright Jr. is the Executive Pastor of Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church and is heavily involved in The COMMIT Project.

doing here has application to other funding agencies. That will help us to continue to do work at the core of advancing how we engage patients and community stakeholders in a more trustworthy manner in research."

He added, "It will also allow us to continue to look at how we can work together to advance health equity through research in true partnership with communities. That's at the core of what The PATIENT Program does. So while this particular grant can't be renewed, I'm very confident we'll continue to get federal funding and funding from other sources to continue to advance our mission which is to advance health equity in our city and across the country."

The COMMIT Project also created a Memorandum of Commitment (MOC)

template for CEnR partnerships for COVID-19 testing to advance trust through trustworthiness, transparency, and respect.

"We believe that we can help others to build a roadmap of how you can have successful partnerships, where all members of the partnership feel respected," said Dr. Mullins. "Not only do we have something in writing, but we're calling it a Memorandum of Commitment. So it goes beyond the Memorandum of Understanding, because it really explains the commitment between the two parties. It also provides a roadmap for other community partners and other academic institutions across the United States to learn how to have better conversations so that community partners don't feel abandoned."

The brainchild of the Rev. Franklin Lance, Senior Pastor of Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, The COMMIT Project was made possible through a \$1.2 million grant award from the NIH-National Institute on Minority Health & Health Disparity. Pastor Donald L. Wright Jr. is the Executive Pastor of Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church and is heavily involved in The COMMIT Project.

"My job was to get the information out to the community about what The COMMIT Project is and what it does," said Pastor Wright. "COMMIT seeks to impact the community to become better and to invite people to the table. Part of the responsibility of the Executive Pastor is not just to shepherd people spiritually, but to be involved in it. A church cannot be a church, if it's only operating. God is not only concerned with us spiritually. God is also concerned

with us emotionally, mentally, and physically."

He added, "Our goal is to make our community better and to make people better. We want to make sure the community has resources. The church has to return to a place of being a resource sector. Church is a place where people should be able to come to get help, and a house of prayer that offers tangible resources so people can live life better."

In addition to the Memorandum of Commitment, the project also created the opportunity for MLBC to work with retail pharmacy chain CVS Health for a pharmacy technician training program that will be run out of the church's basement.

"Through our partnership with The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, we have been able to partner with some people with resources to create change to really make the community better," said Pastor Wright. "We are visible here, and I think that we've got to be intentional and come up with creative ways to work with developing partnerships. As a church, we are having an impact. But now, we are getting a chance to make an even greater impact."

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The team here in Greater Maryland recently presented Maryland Food Bank with a check for \$75,000. This contribution is in addition to our long-standing philanthropic support to help fight hunger and food insecurity across the country. We are proud to be able to help our community as we work together to move forward.



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Rambling Rose

**MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY KWANZAA
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR**



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello, everyone and my dear friends,

It has been so wonderful sharing this year with you in words and pictures in my columns. However, it has been a very sad year because we lost so many friends, family and loved ones. I know you share this experience with me, but if you are reading me now, then God has blessed us to see another upcoming year. We will keep readers, followers and families who have lost someone in prayers. I too have experienced loss in 2022.

Now, I will share a few things that are coming up for those who wish to party this holiday. Speaking about Kwanzaa, Christmas, and the New Year's Eve party scene, me, myself, and my Boo-Boo will be staying safe in our home. We will not be attending parties during the holidays. But for many of you who want to party this weekend, then check this out. There is a Kwanzaa celebration that will be held at the Eubie Blake Cultural Center, located at 847 N. Howard Street on Wednesday, December 28, 2022, from 3-7 p.m. An African marketplace, live performances, food, and a Kwanzaa ceremony will be included. Celebrate ujima, otherwise known as collective work and responsibility. This event is free and open to the public.

That is not all. The Waxter Center and the Baltimore Health Department are also sponsoring their annual event and celebration of Kwanzaa on Tuesday, December 27, 2022, from noon until 3 p.m. A mid-day jazz concert with special guests will be held. Come hear Baltimore's

legend, The Derrick Amin Quartet, along with a lot of storytelling at the Waxter Senior Center, located at 1000 Cathedral St. For more information, contact Grandmother Edna at 443-683-4696.

Check out The Soul Centered Band on Friday, December 23, 2022, and the Gerrell & Friends Band on Friday, December 30, 2022. Doors open at 7 p.m. Showtime is at 8 p.m. at Next Phaze Café & Lounge, 112 E. Lexington Street. For more information, call 410-449-3232.

Now, here are a few New Year's Eve events that you may be interested in. As the year comes to an end, and we prepare to say goodbye to 2022, celebrate the great possibilities of 2023. There is the New Year's Eve Fun Run that will be held in Fells Point. You can meet vendors outside their shops after your run/walk and will have drinks and snacks available for you to enjoy.

The Corinthian Restaurant and Lounge will be hosting a New Year's Eve day party at 7107 Windsor Mill Rd. in the shopping center from 1-5 p.m. The event is free.

I am so sorry folks, but I really must go since I am out of space. Remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474, or email me at rosapryor@aol.com.

**HAVE A BLESSED AND SAFE
HOLIDAY FROM ME AND MY
BOO-BOO TO YOU AND YOUR
FAMILY. UNTIL NEXT YEAR, I'M
MUSICALLY YOURS.**



**Randy Dennis, Line Dance King,
and popular radio personality is
presenting a pre-New Year's Eve Line
Dance Party on Friday December 30,
2022, from 6-10 p.m. at the American
Legion Post 122, located at 4424
Painters Mill Rd. in Owings. For more
information, call 410-655-1114.**



**Elaine Simon, president and
founder of the Caribbean Carnival
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one of the nicest people that I know.
My friend is celebrating her birthday
on December 31, 2022.**



Happy birthday to DJ Mike Jones.



**The M C Booze Band featuring
Marshall Booze will be performing
in a Christmas Eve Monday Night
Jam Session at Club 347, located at
347 Calvert St. in Baltimore, Md.
from 8-11:30 p.m. No cover. For more
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**A Kwanzaa celebration will be
underway on Tuesday, December 27,
2022, from noon until 3 p.m. The
annual event and celebration will be
held at the Waxter Center, located
at 1000 Cathedral St. in Baltimore
with Grandmother Edna. Celebrate
with storytellers, a workshop, and
a mid-day jazz concert with special
guest Derrick Amin's quartet. Free
lunch and more is included. For more
details, call Grandmother Edna at
443-683-4696.**

continued from page 2

Ravens Turn Back to Sammy Watkins for WR Help



Sammy Watkins

Photo credit: Julio Cortez/AP Images

By Tyler Hamilton

The latest edition of the Baltimore Ravens never-ending search for wide receiver help circles back to a familiar friend in veteran Sammy Watkins. The Ravens claimed the veteran wideout off waivers and placed starter Devin Duvernay on injured reserve after he was hurt in Tuesday's practice.

Watkins returns to the Ravens where he caught 27 passes for 394 yards and a touchdown last season with Baltimore before joining a new team last offseason. Watkins signed a one-year deal worth four million to join the Green Bay Packers in April. The Packers unsuccessfully tried to work it out with Watkins who only posted 13 receptions for 206 yards this season.

A hamstring injury landed Watkins on injured reserve on September 24. He was activated off injured reserve on October 22. Green Bay reluctantly

released Watkins on December 19 because they had to open up a roster spot for another position where they had a shortage of players.

"I can't thank him enough for the type of person he is, the type of energy he brought to this team," Packers head coach Matt LaFleur said of Watkins.

This second stint in Baltimore won't carry the same value as the one-year, six-million-dollar contract that led Watkins to the Ravens in 2021. The Ravens hope this time around comes with a lot more success. The reunion comes because Duvernay reportedly suffered a severe foot injury during practice earlier this week. Duvernay has started 13 games this season and finished third on the team with 37 catches for 407 yards and three touchdowns, but Baltimore's passing attack has struggled this season.

Tight end Mark Andrews once again leads the Ravens with 709 receiving

yards. Demarcus Robinson's 419 receiving yards leads all wideouts with Duvernay right behind him at 407 receiving yards.

The Ravens also lost Rashad Bateman to injury earlier this season. Bateman, a 2021 first-round pick by Baltimore, caught 15 passes for 285 yards and two touchdowns this season. He elected to have foot surgery last month. Baltimore added Robinson to the roster soon after Bateman's injury and later signed veteran speedster DeSean Jackson to the practice squad.

Watkins figures to hit the ground running since he is only a year removed from playing in offensive coordinator Greg Roman's scheme. Wide receiver coach Tee Martin will be tasked with making sure Watkins is up to par as soon as possible so he can be a contributor on game day.

40+ Years Later YouthWorks Still Providing Summer Jobs Applications for Next Year's Session Opens January 3, 2023

YouthWorks participants talked about the valuable experience they received through the program.

"I want to be an astronaut and YouthWorks has given me awesome resources and amazing people who help me research opportunities!" said 14-year-old Milo.

Semira, 18, is a YouthWorks camp counselor.

"I want to be a therapist," said Semira.

"I'm able to speak with kids here and see how they're feeling through their emotions and words. It'll help me understand kids more!"

Lalia, 17 talked about the most valuable skill she learned through her participation in YouthWorks over the summer months.

"I've gotten more time to spend with my friends which helped me learn new words in English," she said. "My first language is Swahili!"

Carvon 15, added, "YouthWorks has helped me learn how to have a job! I know now how to be more responsible, get up, wake myself up, be in interviews and how to work. I have to be more mature."

Applications open for youths and worksites on January 3, 2023. Baltimore City business and youths can apply for the YouthWorks 2023 session by going to bit.ly/joinyouthworks, contacting the YouthWorks team by calling 410-545-1820, or via email at summerjobs@baltimorecity.gov.



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