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REFLECTIONS ON NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY



Chad Colston
Photo credit: Jessica Clark

Christiona Graham
Photo credit: Antonio Hunt



Londyn Curry
Courtesy photo



Tyler Stallings
Photo credit: Andrea Blackstone

CONNECTION TO WELLNESS

App Helps Connect Young People to Mental Health Support, Resources

By Andrea Blackstone

Although the COVID-19 pandemic concerns have nearly faded, it took a toll on the mental health of adults and children. The sting of the impact can still be felt.

Last year, the CDC reported that “according to the new data, in 2021, more than a third (37%) of high school students reported they experienced poor mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 44% reported they persistently felt sad or hopeless during the past year.”

The Prosper app, a tool that aims to improve connecting youth with mental health support, while providing self-care tools, is a timely response. Pew Research Center’s survey findings revealed that 73% of parents felt “it is acceptable for children to have their own phone only after they have reached at least the age of 12.”

Using technology to reach youth through their smartphones may complement strategies to improve their wellness. Providing better opportunities for all populations to experience better health access promotes health equity. Improving the reach inside of diverse homes and neighborhoods is important in addressing health disparities. Utilizing an inclusive, non-invasive approach can synthesize efforts to embrace progressive ideas and improve outreach.

Prosper also gives users freedom to decide how to tailor it to best suit their needs and tastes.

“Prosper is anchored on the feature of a personalized daily mood check-in where the consumer reflects on how they are feeling, can track their emotions, and journal about that moment. Differentiating Prosper from many other self-care apps is that the consumer can privately share their check-in picture with a short caption to Friends in the app that they have invited in order to get emotional support. Additionally, the app offers an array of metrics for the consumer to track how they are doing over time,” Eric Sullivan, CEO of Uneo Health said.

The company launched the Prosper wellness app for youth and young adults.



Adrienne Mickler, Executive Director, Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency, Inc. / Courtesy image: Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency, Inc.



Eric Sullivan, CEO of Uneo Health

“The Prosper app, a tool that aims to improve connecting youth with mental health support”

Sullivan added that specific to self-care, Prosper recommends educational and inspirational video content curated by the Prosper team of experts on various topics including anxiety, self-esteem, sleep, fitness, nutrition and prediabetes.

“There are hundreds of videos embedded in the app. Prosper has mindfulness and relaxation activities in the app to support the consumer,” Sullivan added. “Importantly, Prosper helps the consumer link to regional and national providers and nonprofits to support many health areas as well as resources to support housing, food support, and transportation. There is a moderated public community where the consumer can share their wellness

journey with other users as well.”

Adrienne Mickler, Executive Director, Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency, Inc. said that the partnership between the Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency (AACMHA), the Anne Arundel County Department of Health (AACDOH) and the Prosper app began during the COVID-19 pandemic when brainstorming about ways to support our community in a virtual world was underway.

“We understand that youth engage and communicate in a variety of ways, so offering an additional way to connect with our children and young adults was a great opportunity,” Mickler said. “Prosper launched in January of this

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year, 2023 but a pre-production version was tested in 2022 with high school and college students in Maryland.”

Mickler also stated that “in Anne Arundel County, Crisis Response services experienced at least a 20% increase from July 1, 2020 to June 20, 2022.”

Sullivan pointed out that the Prosper app allows the consumer to customize the in-app educational video content and other resources specific to the consumer.

Sullivan and Mickler noted that the app is not limited to youth and young adult users although the approach is to offer a simple, app-based tool that is more familiar for them to “keep tabs on their day-to-day wellness, build a community of support, and when they need help have an array of in-app and community-based options available for support.”

Sullivan explained that Prosper is available to anyone in the U.S. and already has users in 34 states, although the majority of users are Maryland-based so far. Anne Arundel County residents who use the app can find resources and wellness notifications through it.

Visit www.prosperselfcare.com to download the Prosper app. It can be downloaded by visiting Apple and Google Play app stores.



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'The Best Way to Kill a Dynasty Is to Destroy Their Young'

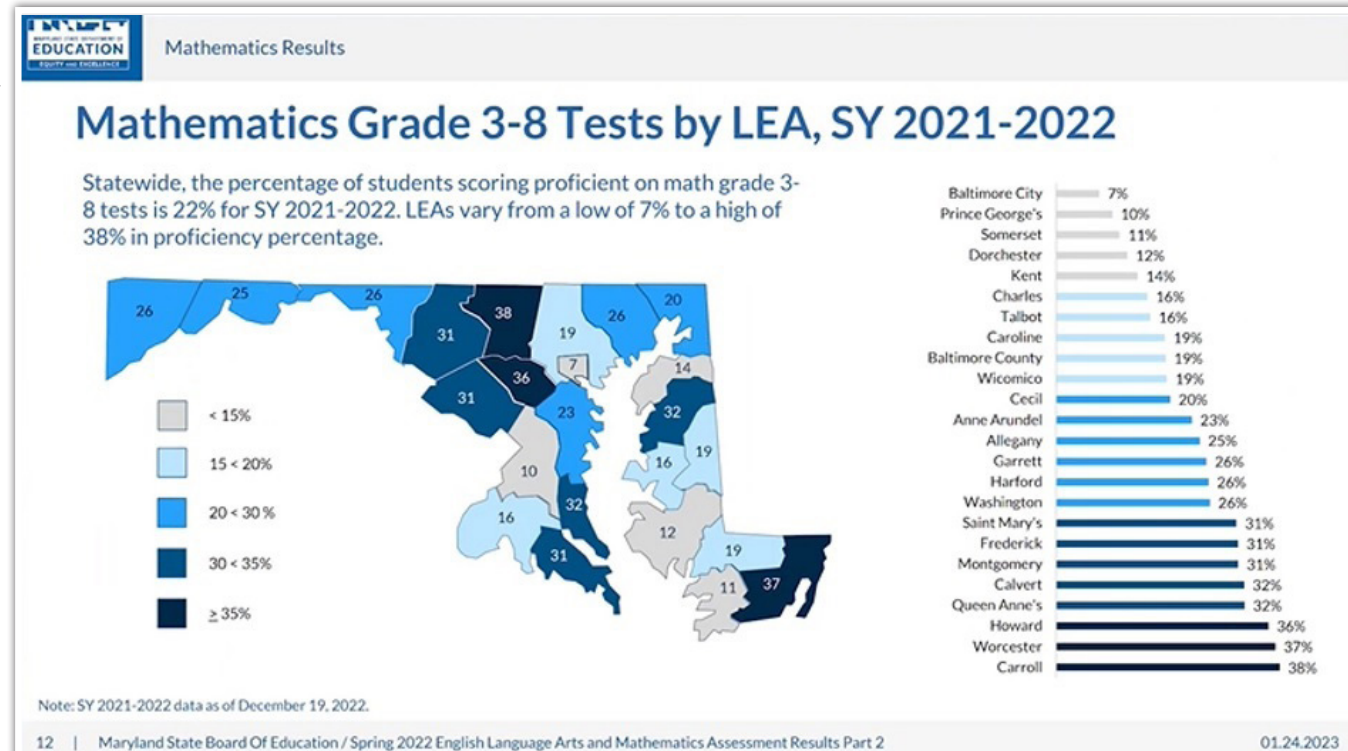
By Regi Taylor, Editorial Page Editor

In a recent televised wildlife documentary about a life-or-death confrontation between lions and a pack of hyenas battling for supremacy in the bush of an African game preserve, the narrator described how the advantage favored the big cats due to their strategy of killing the youngest members of the hyena clan. To mitigate the impending larger threat the hyenas would pose were they allowed to grow into maturity, becoming strong and formidable future foes of the lions, the narrator interpreted the lions' tactic by observing: "the best way to kill a dynasty is to destroy their young."

This lesson from nature on how to eliminate others perceived as competition, or perhaps in the case of humans, simply as undesirables, is a metaphor for what is currently happening, intentionally or not, to African American young people in Baltimore. Unfortunately, four centuries of United States history is rife with episodes of powerful elements within American society whose agenda has been to exploit, marginalize, suppress, and in some cases terminate African American ascendance through lynching, mass military conscription into war zones, mass incarceration, mass narcotization, assassinations, economic deprivation and miseducation.

A well-documented case in point is the FBI's COINTELPRO scheme under J. Edgar Hoover from the 1950s into the '70s. COINTELPRO, Counter-Intelligence Program, was an espionage campaign conceived by FBI director Hoover designed to emasculate the burgeoning civil rights movement, especially the leaders and financial backers, whom he equated as dangerous subversives simply because they opposed the Jim Crow status quo.

Mr. Hoover was very clear about his motives: "it should...be a goal of the Counterintelligence Program to pinpoint potential troublemakers and *neutralize* them..." However, like the lions described by the narrator of the wildlife documentary who destroyed the hyena's young so they would never



Baltimore City Public School students' math proficiency dead last in state at 7% Source: Maryland State Board of Education

mature to become a more powerful menace, J. Edgar Hoover considered the biggest threat to the nation to be young Blacks.

In an official memo detailing the goals of COINTELPRO personally dictated by Director Hoover to FBI field offices nationwide, Mr. Hoover stated: "A final goal should be to prevent the long-range GROWTH of *militant* black organizations, especially among youth. Specific tactics to prevent these groups from converting young people must be developed." Despite Mr. Hoover's death 51 years ago, there are still elements in high positions of power and authority in America who continue to share his sentiments as they relate to Black people in general and Black youth in particular.

This doesn't mean that everyone who doesn't subscribe to an agenda that most Black people might view as in our best interests is necessarily against us. America is a nation of diverse, competing interests. The goal of Democracy is to seek common ground and consensus wherever possible. However, there are very vocal cohorts who vehemently oppose any degree of equity for African Americans, period. It

is not hyperbole to submit that there are those who would celebrate our demise.

This is why the current state-of-affairs in Baltimore City relating to juveniles and young adults, besides the obvious malpractice of the system to adequately educate them, is so devastating. Baltimore City Public Schools is an unwitting enabler of the school-to-prison-pipeline by miseducating tens of thousands of students per year that statistics clearly demonstrate will mostly become ensnared in the criminal justice system or otherwise lives of poverty and subsistence.

According to operating budgets adopted by the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners for the public school system covering eight fiscal years, 2015 through 2022, the citizens of Baltimore have gotten a worthless return-on-investment for the nearly \$10.5 billion spent, when currently only 7% and 16%, respectively, of BCPS students are proficient in math and reading.

Is the failure with the students or the educators? The ramification of this abysmal educational performance is clear. Untold thousands of education-deprived Baltimore students who passed through

city public schools in recent years when ten billion dollars was being spent on their educations are continuing to feed the mass incarceration beast. Another generation is repeating the cycle. The cause and effect of Baltimore City's crime and violence epidemic is viscerally apparent.

If Baltimore's youth is its future, youth who are grossly impoverished, traumatized and undereducated, then what is the outlook for Baltimore City's future. Are leadership at City Hall and North Avenue consuming this disturbing trending data?

According to published reports it is costing less than \$20,000 annually to *educate* a Baltimore youth and more than \$200,000 a year to incarcerate one at the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (nearly doubling to \$400,000 per bed at a State of Maryland-sponsored facility) based on a 2021 study by former president Barack Obama's foundation, My Brother's Keeper.

The best way to kill a dynasty is to destroy their young.

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Mailing Address

The Baltimore Times
2530 N. Charles Street, Suite 201
Baltimore, MD 21218
Phone: 410-366-3900
www.baltimoretimes-online.com



HEALTH BEAT



By Jayne Hopson

The phone rings bringing sad, unexpected news from one friend telling you another, seemingly healthy friend or acquaintance has died from a massive stroke. In the Black community, the details of death by stroke are far too familiar. But it is no less heartbreaking when you get the call: the deceased complained of a headache, saying they did not feel “well.” Robbed of the ability to speak of their life-threatening discomfort, your friend or family member expired, gone forever.

According to the American Stroke Association (ASA), stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States. The ASA, a division of the American Heart Association (AHA) describes a stroke as is a “brain attack that occurs when blood that brings oxygen to your brain stops flowing and brain cells die.”

The ASA says, “Black Americans have a higher prevalence of stroke and the highest death rate from stroke than any other racial group. In particular, those who have diabetes and have an ischemic stroke, which is caused by a clot, are more likely to be black.”

“The long-term prognosis for Black stroke survivors is dire. If an African American survives a stroke, we are more likely to be disabled and have difficulties doing daily activities.” This increased risk of stroke begs the question, why are Black individuals at higher risk for stroke?

“Not all the reasons are clear why African Americans have an increased risk of stroke. But over two-thirds of black Americans have at least one risk factor for stroke: High blood pressure – over half of black adults have high blood pressure. It develops earlier in black Americans and is often more severe,” says AHA. Overweight and obesity are known to be contributing factors. “Almost 70% of black men and over 80% of black women are overweight or obese.”

Diabetes is a significant contributing

Stopping the Stroke Calls

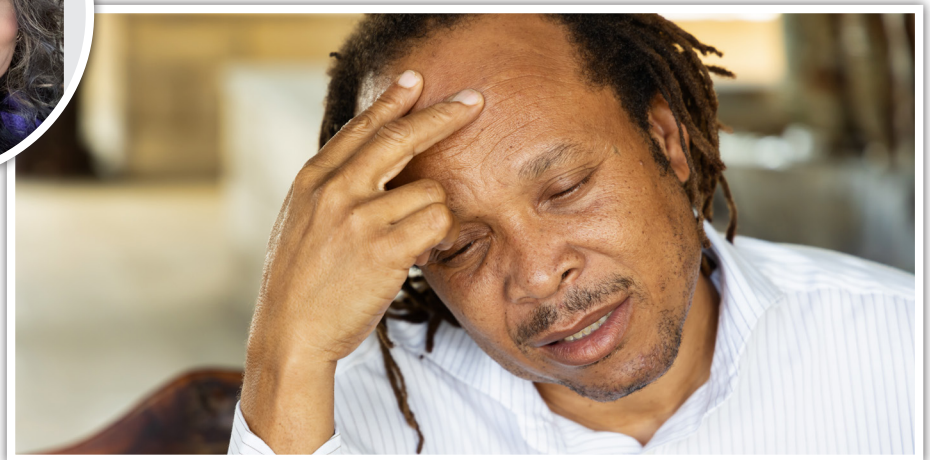


Photo credit: Shutterstock

illness— “African Americans are more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites.” Other diseases disproportionately occurring in the Black community that can increase the risk for death by stroke include high cholesterol, “nearly 30% of black Americans have high levels of ‘bad’ LDL cholesterol. Sickle cell anemia, a common genetic disorder in African Americans is a risk factor for stroke.”

Smoking is what the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) calls a “completely preventable” increased risk for stroke. Despite its total prevention status, “15% of black adults smoke, doubling their risk of stroke,” says the ASA.

The ASA singles out other preventable dietary and emotional triggers for stroke such as, “eating too much salt (sodium).” Their research shows that “African Americans may have a gene that greatly increases sensitivity to salt and its effects.”

It is no secret that stress is one of the best biggest threats to wellness. “African American adults face daily stressors that may increase the risk for stroke,” says the AHA.

Given the high rates of stroke in the Black community, it is essential that each of us is aware of the warning signs of a stroke. The ASA says the “signs and symptoms of stroke can be different depending on what part of your brain is impacted, no matter your race.”

The ASA’s trademarked acronym “F.A.S.T. Spot a Stroke” can help you recognize several common stroke symptoms and remember what to do. “Stroke is an emergency! Call 911

immediately if you see one or more signs of a stroke. Fast treatment can result in better outcomes.”

F is for Face drooping

A is for Arm weakness

S is for Speech difficulty

T is for Time to call 911

The good news is an ASA study has shown that African Americans are more likely to think stroke symptoms are an emergency and to call 911.

There is more good news. The ASA has identified stroke risk factors they say that can be controlled. “Though some stroke risk factors such as age, gender, race, family history and previous stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA) can’t be controlled, up to 80% of strokes may be prevented by making lifestyle changes and managing your medical conditions.

The ASA recommends taking these steps immediately to reduce your risk for stroke:

Eat more fruits and vegetables

Reduce salt in your diet

Increase your physical activity

Quit smoking

Lose excess body weight

Manage stress

Talk with your health care provider about your specific risk factors and how to best manage your individual risk for stroke.

2023 Annapolis Juneteenth Celebration Returns, Celebrating Freedom

By Andrea Blackstone

Juneteenth, which is also known as Emancipation Day, commemorates the ending of slavery in the United States in 1865. President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law in 2021, establishing June 19 a federal holiday.

Celebratory Juneteenth gatherings are becoming more popular in communities around the United States, including Annapolis, Maryland. Phyllis “Tee” Adams was the visionary and founder of Annapolis’ inaugural Juneteenth celebration that was held on June 19, 2021. An educational component was built into Annapolis’ emerging Juneteenth presence.

“One of her [Adams’] supporters has been Bishop Craig N. Coates, creator of “Freedom Way,” the educational exhibit centered around Juneteenth. He served as fiscal agent in 2021 and all-around support to the vision in 2022,” according to details provided on Celebrate Annapolis Juneteenth Corporation’s website.

Coates said that he created “Freedom Way,” a 24-panel visual and audio examining African American enslavement and liberation presentation documenting from 1619 to the present.

“I believe that most people, though they celebrate Juneteenth now, they don’t know some of the details about the road of progress and why the celebration really should be bigger than the Fourth of July. The Fourth of July does not celebrate freedom for everyone in the United States of America,” Coates said.

Coates is picking up where Adams left off. He is now the CEO of the Celebrate Annapolis Juneteenth Corporation.

“For two years, “Tee” Adams, who was the visionary, was the person that was piloting this and last year she decided to retire. She handed over the reins to me, so I formed a nonprofit and am continuing the traditions and just growing it [the Celebrate Annapolis Juneteenth Festival],” Coates said.

In addition to an upcoming 2023 parade and festival, a pop-up shop was added at



Bishop Craig Coates (left) prays before the libation ceremony as a part of the Annapolis Juneteenth Festival in 2021. Coates is the new CEO of Celebrate Annapolis Juneteenth. Phyllis “Tee” Adams, the visionary and founder of Annapolis Juneteenth, (middle) joins Coates and Pastor David Hicks of Faith Impact Church of Virginia Beach, in prayer. The Annapolis Juneteenth Celebration will return on Saturday, June 17, 2023.

Photo credit: Luke Thompson Photography

1910 Towne Centre Boulevard, suite 103. The Annapolis Towne Center is a sponsor this year. Coates remarked that through the pop-up shop, the Celebrate Annapolis Juneteenth team can increase awareness about the event, sell Juneteenth tee shirts and showcase the Freedom Way Exhibit ahead of the festivities. Coates said that

it is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m.- 7 p.m. and on Sundays from noon to 8 p.m.

The third annual, formal Annapolis Juneteenth VIP Gala will be held on Friday, June 16, 2023 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Annapolis, Maryland. The ticketed event will offer entertainment, dancing, a buffet,

a celebration of culturally rich history and a chance to honor minorities in the community.

Annapolis Juneteenth Celebration will return on Saturday, June 17, 2023 with a free, public event that will include a parade, over 175 vendors, food for sale, a hair fashion show presented by the Bald Bosses, entertainment and a chance to see Coates’ “Freedom Way” exhibition.

“The festival itself will kick off at roughly 1:30 p.m. with a battle of the bands on the field following the parade, and then at 2 o’clock the big stage will have entertainment— every genre from jazz and gospel to R&B and a special 50-year tribute to hip hop featuring Rakim from out of New York,” Coates said. Rakim will perform in addition to Le’Andria Johnson, a gospel artist and Grammy Award winner; Beverly Crawford, another well-known gospel singer; Vivian Green, a R&B sensation; Bela Donna Band; Lil Syxx, a positive lyrics only rapper from Baltimore; and other performers will grace the stage this year.

Several new additions have been added to the day’s schedule, according to Coates.

“This year we are launching a village called Watoto Children’s Village. Watoto is Swahili for children. Watoto Children’s Village will have resources for children to thrive. So, we will have kid’s businesses; we will have schools rallying to support our kids; mentoring programs; fraternity organizations and sororities; game makers; and entertainment. You name it, we’ll have it,” Coates said.

The parade will kick off at 11:45 a.m. at the Annapolis City Dock with a libation ceremony at the Alex Haley Memorial. At 12 p.m., the parade will make its way up Main Street and down West Street to the festival at 1:30 p.m. at the Bates Athletic Complex, located at 935 Spa Road in Annapolis, Maryland. Fireworks will close out the event at 9:00 p.m.

Volunteers are still needed to help with setup and break down of the Watoto Children’s Village. Email info@theannapolisjuneteenth.org to send a message about volunteering. Visit www.juneteenth.org to obtain more event details.

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Reflections on National Children's Day

By Andrea Blackstone

June 11, 2023 marks a time to remember that America's children need more attention, protection, advocacy, hope and love.

National Children's Day, also known as International Children's Day, honors children worldwide. It is recognized in the United States on the second Sunday in June.

The genesis of it in America dates to the Methodist Conference of 1868 when The Methodist Episcopal Church recommended that second Sunday in June be observed annually as Children's Day, per information provided by www.nationalchildrensday.us. By 1883, The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church designated the "the second Sabbath in June as Children's Day."

The National Council of Congregational Churches, in addition to mostly "all the state bodies of that denomination in the United States passed resolutions commending the observance of the day." Other church denominations adopted similar recommendations.

Four children—Christiona Graham, Chad Colston, Londyn Curry and Tyler Stallings reflect on childhood and living positively.

Christiona Graham

Twelve-year-old Christiona Graham ("DJ Princess C") is already making her mark as a DJ. Christiona is the oldest of three children in her family who resides in Southern Maryland. She said that family can take you far in life. Her father set the stage for Christiona to embrace her talents, despite her young age. He is someone who inspires her because he first introduced her to DJing and turntables.

"My proudest business accomplishment is DJing at the White House for the Annual Easter Egg Roll twice. In the most recent Easter Egg Roll event, I was able to introduce First Lady Jill Biden to the stage," she said.

Away from the turntables, the Grahams show love to each other by traveling, watching movies at home and cooking together.



Christiona Graham ("DJ Princess C") has been a performing DJ since she was five years old. /Photo credit: Antonio Hunt



Chad Colston participates in an elementary school band concert by playing the tympani, xylophone and drums. /Photo credit: Jessica Clark

Christiona said that going to different places to DJ and spreading the word about it is one way that she is making a difference in the world. Her confidence to pursue her dreams began when she was just five years old. When school is in session, she completes her homework and chores first, before taking a break, then practicing her musical skills four times a week. The kid entrepreneur serves as an example for her fellow youth to pursue their heart's desire.

"It's teaching them that they can be anything that they put their mind to, and it teaches them that there's a variety of

jobs that they can do mainly in music," Christiona said.

Chad Colston

Chad Colston is a 10-year-old Baltimorean on the move. He likes to draw, paint, write poems, play games and is a fan of some sports. Chad has been interested in art since his Pre-K years. A still life self-portrait art piece that he created was featured at the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) as a part of the 17th annual Student Art Showcase earlier this year.

"I can do anything that I put my mind

to," Chad said, mentioning something that he learned and remembered. "I want to be an artist and the president."

His positive outlook, even down to knowing that he is a loving person, reminds us that his demeanor strengthens his path to excellence.

"I'm kind, I'm helpful and I want to help people as much as I can," Chad said.

Showing respect is also important to the creative child. Chad recalls advice that he received from his mother to "just believe in yourself." He already understands the value of being around positive people like his mother, even when he is not having a good day. He knows he should turn to loved ones to receive help staying on track.

"Family can help whenever I need it," Chad said.

Londyn Curry

Londyn Curry, 8, is another young Baltimorean with a bright future. Her perceptive mind is sharp yet endearing. She believes that people should believe in what children can do.

"We are the future," Londyn said.

She started a conversation explaining why family is important to her because when she was a little baby, they took care of her. In today's world, Londyn represents youth who can thrive because of growing up feeling empowered with love.

"I'm grateful that they see me and they're kind to me," Londyn also said, explaining why she enjoys spending time with family.

Whether it's going on vacation, or heading to the mall, Londyn enjoys being with special people in her world. She enjoys doing science experiments in school, playing on her iPad, playing tag, running around, hip hop and modern dance in her free time. But Londyn also holds words of advice close to her heart.

"Be respectful, be kind and listen," Londyn said.

Londyn sorts her clothes that are donated to help other children, after she has outgrown them, with the help of her mother. She is overjoyed about the little things, including now being able to ride her bike without training wheels.

"I want everybody to do the right things," Londyn said.

She added that she may be interested in becoming a policewoman someday.

KIDS SPEAK UP



May 30, 2023



Londyn Curry places second in a second-grade science fair. /Courtesy photo



Tyler Stallings sits in a military truck. He has helped veterans in Baltimore and across the United States. / Photo: Andrea Blackstone

“Four children— Christiona Graham, Chad Colston, Londyn Curry and Tyler Stallings reflect on childhood and living positively.”

Tyler Stallings

Tyler Stallings, a 12-year-old author and advocate for veterans, enjoys science, math, taking road trips, acting, playing games, tossing around a football, basketball, reading and building LEGOS.

“I like to help veterans and pack things for them, so that way they can live a good life and have a better well-being,” Tyler said. “Giving back to the community is important to me because I can help other people. That way they feel good and honored.”

Tyler added that he does not want them

to feel like they get left out of things just because they are homeless veterans. The co-founder of the Give Back to Veterans project has been lending a hand to assist elderly and homeless veterans since he was four years old.

Staying connected to people who matter has benefits.

“Family is important because you can make a lot of great memories with them and have good days and love them,” Tyler said. “Spending time with children is important because they can give you lots of good ideas, and also they might

surprise you with some of the things they can come up with an active imagination.”

One of the best pieces of advice that he has ever received is: “One no is closer to a yes. It was my mom who told me.”

He added that when he grows up, he is interested in pursuing a career as a scientist or mathematician.

“Getting an education is important because you can grow up and be a really high ranked person if you just focus on your studies,” Tyler said.



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Entrepreneur Introduces Inner City Youth to Equestrian Sports

By Andrea Blackstone

Miguel Wilson is known in fashion circles as a men's celebrity fashion designer and owner of Miguel Wilson Collection. The Washington, D.C. native, is also the founder of Atlanta Fashion & Polo Classic, which is a premier luxury event that benefits the Ride To The Olympics Foundation (RTO), an Atlanta-based nonprofit that Wilson founded. RTO's mission is to increase awareness and community engagement through horse-related sports, fashion and leadership development by introducing inner city youth to equestrian sports.

"The kids don't pay [any fees to participate]. We raise money for them. These are kids whose parents don't have the resources to be able to do this on their own," Wilson said.

Wilson, who actively plays polo, reflected on his memories of why it is important to invest in leadership and development of inner city youth.

"I grew up in Washington D.C., and fell in love with horses at a camp, and that camp exposure led to me getting jobs at barns, cleaning and getting riding lessons. It helped to expose me to something that wasn't common for kids in our neighborhood, but another thing that was great about that whole experience was that it gave me something to do," Wilson said.

He recalls that his grandfather helped with transportation to get to the barn and back. The trip was approximately 45 minutes away in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Wilson also started riding horses around eight years old. His great-grandmother would even "spend her last dollar" to put him in a horse show. Wilson felt relaxed while enjoying fresh air and running atop green grass, getting away from a rough environment.

"My weekends and free time were spent at a barn cleaning horses and working, not getting in trouble and doing other things," Wilson said.

Wilson added that his passion for horses helped to improve his confidence

level and pursue a college path. He attended Bowie State University and Wilson earned his U.S. Army commission there before transferring to Clark Atlanta University. He holds a bachelor's degree from Clark Atlanta University and an MBA from Campbell University. Wilson served as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserves.

Additionally, the nonprofit founder mentioned that in 2019, RTO helped to form and fund The Morehouse College Polo Team in the first year of its existence.

"It is the only Black college polo team in history," Wilson said.

Wilson's leadership development plan was reignited by his son, Miguel Wilson, who is now a 24-year-old PhD candidate at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, according to Kimberly Winston-Lewis, CEO of RTO, the Atlanta Fashion & Polo Classic and human resources director of Miguel Wilson Collection.

The elder Wilson further explained that in 2013, young Miguel rode horses and aspired to head the Olympics. The father did not have the means to support his son at that level.

"I told him that I think it would be a good idea for us to start a foundation to not only pursue his dream of riding, but also to introduce and expose other kids that don't have opportunities to do this," the father said.

Today, the visionary uses horses to help youth to network with people who can make a difference in their lives.

Winston-Lewis said that RTO targets middle schoolers and high school students, although some programs are offered to youth who are eight years old and up. She added that RTO will be coming to Prince George's County, Maryland in August 2023 as a part of a two-day summer camp for 50 children with the County Executive of Prince George's County, Angela Alsobrooks' summer youth Passport Experience program. Wilson explained that youth will observe a polo game, learn about basic horse care and get introduced to horsemanship, in hopes of interesting



Miguel Wilson, owner of the Miguel Wilson Collection and founder of the Ride to the Olympics Foundation, plays polo at the Atlanta Fashion & Polo Classic.

Photo credit: Paul Biagui



(L-R) Nadia Jackson; Ms. Sara, a volunteer coordinator; Layla Stafford; Danielle Head; LaKeshia Head (parent of Danielle); and Tavian Whitehead at Chastain Horse Park in Atlanta, Georgia.

Photo credit: Dr. Deetra Poindexter



Jaiden Phillips and Layla Stafford, both four years old, are participants of Ride To The Olympics program at Foundation Farms in Atlanta, Georgia.

Photo credit: Dr. Deetra Poindexter



Layla Stafford spends time with a horse at Chastain Horse Park.

Photo credit: Dr. Deetra Poindexter

some of them to take horse riding lessons.

RTO is open to bringing more events to the D.C., Maryland and the Northern Virginia area. RTO's founder feels that youth in Baltimore could benefit from participating in the nonprofit's activities.

"My goal is to create polo teams from kids composed of inner-city situations through partnering with Boys & Girls Clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters and 100 Black Men. These organizations serve kids that we also want to serve," he said.

The trailblazer added that he wants

these youth to have opportunities to play against each other in Atlanta and the D.C. area. Winston-Lewis further explained that RTO wants to connect with executives and business owners who are willing to partner in the D.C., Maryland and the Northern Virginia area to support RTO's programs and become sponsors.

Visit www.ridetotheolympics.org to learn more about RTO and www.ridetotheolympics.org/contact_form to connect with Winston-Lewis.

SMALL BUSINESSES RISE

Comcast RISE to Award 100 Small Businesses in Baltimore

On May 9, 2023, Comcast announced a new round of 100 businesses in Baltimore City who will receive comprehensive grant packages that include business consultation services, educational resources, a \$5,000 monetary grant, creative production, media schedule and a technology makeover.

Comcast RISE is committed to supporting the growth of all small businesses, while advancing the objectives of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as community investment. The program was created to help businesses and their communities thrive with a focus on economic growth. During its initial two-year program, 13,000 small businesses were awarded over \$110 million in monetary, marketing and technology grants.

“This is a great day for Baltimore City’s small business community,” said Baltimore City Mayor Brandon M. Scott. “Small businesses are the backbone of our city and local economy, and I’d like to thank Comcast for its continued commitment to small businesses in Baltimore and beyond.”

The application period began June 1, 2023 with a Comcast RISE and Baltimore City Chamber of Commerce small business celebration at the Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park Museum. The Baltimore Times, a Comcast RISE 2021 recipient, was acknowledged along with other past recipients during the celebration. Senior leadership from Comcast along with city officials joined the celebration which included Maryland Senator Antonio Hayes; City Council President Nick Mosby; Christopher R. Lundy, Esq. Chief, Minority & Women’s Business Opportunity Office Baltimore City Department of Law; and Lenora Henry, Executive Director, Baltimore City Chamber of Commerce.

Through June 30, eligible businesses in Baltimore, Detroit, Memphis, Philadelphia and Portland, can apply for a grant package at www.ComcastRISE.com. A total of 100 grants per city, or 500 grants overall, will be announced in August and awarded in September 2023, bringing the total number of recipients to date to 13,500.

“The support from Comcast RISE was a major boost during a challenging stretch for small businesses,” said Dasia Kabia, a former Comcast RISE recipient and founder of Ice Queens in Locust Point. “The TV commercial we received from Comcast helped us build brand awareness, differentiate from competitors and reach new audiences across Baltimore.”

Comcast RISE stands for Representation, Investment, Strength and Empowerment. It was created in November 2020 to help small businesses hardest hit by COVID-19, from bakeries and barber shops to childcare centers and cleaning services, by providing the grants needed to survive and recover. The program will evolve from helping businesses survive the pandemic, to helping businesses and their communities thrive with a focus on economic growth.

- **CONSULTATION** – Assessment of business and tactical planning; business to business coaching; and mentorship to advise on how to grow business.
- **EDUCATION RESOURCES** – Educational content and resources tailored to individual companies based on where they are in their business lifecycle.
- **MONETARY GRANT** – \$5,000 monetary grant to invest in growth and sustainability.

- **CREATIVE PRODUCTION & MEDIA** – Turnkey production of a 30-second TV commercial, plus a media strategy consultation and 180-day media placement schedule.

- **TECHNOLOGY MAKEOVER** – Computer equipment and Internet, voice, and cybersecurity services for 12 months. (Taxes and other fees may still apply for tech makeover services.)

In addition, any small business owner can visit the Comcast RISE destination on the X1 platform featuring aggregated small business news, tips, insights and more. Just say “Comcast RISE” into the X1 voice remote.

“Supporting small businesses and

providing them with digital tools to help them thrive is at the core of the Comcast RISE mission and something I’m passionate about,” said Michael Parker, Senior Vice President of Comcast’s Beltway Region. “We’ve seen just how impactful Comcast RISE can be for entrepreneurs and we’re excited to deepen our commitment to the small business community in Baltimore.”

Comcast RISE is part of [Project UP](http://ProjectUP.com), the company’s comprehensive initiative to advance digital equity and help build a future of unlimited possibilities. More information is available at www.ComcastRISE.com.



Mujahid Muhammad, CEO of KEYS Enterprises and former Comcast RISE recipient



Lenora Henry, Executive Director, Baltimore City Chamber of Commerce, co-sponsored the event.

Photo Credit: The Baltimore Times



(Left to Right) Kristie Fox, Vice President of Communications for Comcast’s Beltway Region; Misty Allen, Vice President of Government and Regulatory Affairs for Comcast’s Beltway Region; Tracy Pitcher, Senior Vice President of Comcast Business for Comcast’s Northeast Division; Michael Parker – Senior Vice President of Comcast’s Beltway Region; Loren Hudson, Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer for Comcast Cable; Faith Leach; Chief Administrative Officer, City of Baltimore; Dawn Kirstaetter, Director of Government and Community Affairs for Comcast’s Beltway Region; Regan Yeldell, Executive Director, Program Management, Comcast RISE for Comcast Business; and Aimee Metrick, Vice President of Public Relations for Comcast’s Northeast Division /Photo Credit: Donovan Eaton Photography

ENTERTAINMENT IS ON THE MENU FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE



First, I want to say hello to everyone. Next, I want to tell you to hold on to your britches and get ready to take notes. I have so much to tell you in a very limited space.

Have you heard about the 2023 Black Music Festival? Well, honey child, let me tell you what I know. The Black Music Festival is a celebration of music through dance. It was created by the Dance & Bmore Ensemble under the leadership of artistic director CJay Philip. It includes Everlea Bryant, Winston Philip, Alisha Tatem, Peri Walker, Timothy Johnson-McCoy, DeMerris Russell and CJay Philip. They will perform four shows from June 10-11, 2023 at the Motor House. The show will feature a live band, singers, dancers, DJ Sole and an open dance floor. For more information, call 410-871-8322.

My dear friend and entertainment partner, Wilbert Fletcher and WLF Productions from Washington, D.C. will present a Motown Explosion featuring the homecoming of the Motown Hall of Famers including the Dynamic Superiors (“Shoe Shoe Shine”) performing a tribute to many of the Motown families. It will take place on Saturday, June 17, 2023 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, located at 400 I Street S.W. in Washington, D.C. Doors open at 6 p.m. For tickets and information, call 301-350-5019.

Carlos Hutchins’ Father’s Day Cookout will be held at the Fishermen’s Club on Saturday, June 17, 2023 from 1-7 p.m. at St Benedict’s Picnic Grove, located at 4541 Morgantown Road in Mohnton, Pennsylvania. An all-inclusive food and open bar will be provided all day. Take your tents, lawn chairs, outdoor games and enjoy yourself. For more information, call Marguerite Hollingsworth at 410-949-6377, or Carlos at 443-963-5711.

For my die-hard jazz lovers, An Die Musik Live!, located 409 N. Charles Street in Baltimore has a treat for you. On Saturday, June 10, 2023 at 7 p.m., Kahil El’Zabar, Ethnic Heritage Ensemble founder, percussionist, vocalist; and David Murray, Grammy Awards winner and saxophonist, will perform. The Golden Sea Duo Tour follows in a long line of internationally acclaimed shows and recordings as a celebration of both performer’s undeniable chemistry.

Summer is coming, and so is the annual AFRAM Festival on Celebration on Juneteenth weekend from noon to 9 p.m. at Druid Hill Park, on June 17-18, 2023. This is a free, family-oriented celebration. Juneteenth Celebration: Envisioning A New Future will be held at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum on Monday, June 19, 2023 from 11 a.m.- 4 p.m. This year with a free day at the museum, visitors can learn about the origins of Juneteenth while enjoying a musical performance by the Baltimore Symphony Musicians, the Benny Russell Big Band and actor Keith Snipes. Register at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum’s website.

Oh! Before I forget, I received a few calls about my GoFundme.com campaign on my Rosa Pryor Facebook page. Well, that has been set up to help me get the funds I need to publish my third book. If you choose not to donate through GoFundMe, you can always send a check to Rosa Pryor, 214 Conewood Road, Reisterstown, Maryland 21136. Thank you in advance.

There is so much more to talk about, but I am out of space, and this should keep you busy for a minute. Remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474, or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I’M MUSICALLY YOURS.



1 . WLF Productions/Wilbert Fletcher presents a Motown Explosion with The Dynamic Superiors, doing a tribute to the Motown Families, The Temptations, the Four Tops, and the Miracles on Saturday, June 17, 2023 at 6 p.m. The show will be held at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, located at 400 I Street, S.W. in Washington D.C. For more information, call 301-350-5019.



2 . A Baltimore Area Sports Reunion Event will be presented by Cleve Brister, Warren Hayman and Willard Wright at the American Legion Post 122, located at 4424 Painters Mill Road in Owings Mills, Maryland on Monday, June 19, 2023 from noon to 4 p.m. Food and beverages will be served. Bring your folding chairs. For more information, call 444-358-5740.



3 . Lonnie Parker’s Big Father’s Day Gospel Concert will be held on Sunday, June 18, 2023 at 4 p.m., located at Israel Baptist Church, 1200 N. Washington Street and E. Preston Street. Dorothy Norwood, Harvey Watkins Jr., the Canton Spirituals, Swance Quintet, Kenny Davis & The Melodyaires, Lil David & The Bells of Joy and Eric Waddell & The Abundant Life Singers, will perform, just to name a few. For more information, call 443-610-7583.



4 . Eddie B. Tombs IV is the lead Creative Director and founder of EBT4 Productions, also known as EBT4 Music and Art. He has 20 years of experience as an artist and photographer. Tombs is a visual artist. His skills include photography, digital illustration, fine art, video and so much more. Read a story on this young man in my next column. For more information, email him at: ebt4productions38@gmail.com or call 443-835-9404.



Tee Martin /Photo credit: USA Today Sports

SPORTS

Ravens New QB Coach Tee Martin Excited to Coach His Former Position

By Tyler Hamilton

Hall of Fame quarterback Peyton Manning is one of the best to ever do it on a professional level. Manning also had a prolific college career at the University of Tennessee.

However, new Baltimore Ravens coach Tee Martin was able to do something that Manning was never able to do for the Volunteers. Martin led the University of Tennessee to a National Championship in 1998. Following an outstanding college career, Martin was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers in the fifth round of the 2000 NFL Draft. During his six seasons in the NFL and the Canadian Football League (CFL), Martin played for the Steelers, Rhein Fire,

Philadelphia Eagles, Oakland Raiders and Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

Martin is now entering his first season as the Ravens' quarterback coach. The former QB is super excited to coach the position he once played.

"First of all, it's just great being back at my natural position," Martin said. "It's a position I grew up playing throughout my career. I started [in coaching] coaching quarterbacks, so it's like riding a bike."

Martin replaced former wide receivers coach David Culley in 2021 when Culley was named the head coach of the Houston Texans. He served the last two seasons as receivers coach before replacing James Urban as the quarterback coach in February.

One of the big tasks that Martin will have is helping the team make the

transition to new offensive coordinator Todd Monken's scheme. That's a drastic change for quarterback Lamar Jackson.

"The things that we're doing with coach [offensive coordinator Todd] Monken's system is a little different than what we have done here in the past, and so we just adjust," Martin said.

Part of the adjustment has been tweaking drills to utilize Jackson's mobility and assimilate that into Monken's offense. It's a tall order for Martin, but fortunately he's seen things from a similar skill set when he played.

"You're coaching a quarterback [Lamar Jackson] who's different than a lot of different other quarterbacks. [It's] very similar to how I played, but way better," Martin said.

That previous experience is something

that Martin believes will help make the pairing with Jackson a productive one.

"Having someone that played the position that kind of sees the game very similarly, in terms of when you decide to do things like pass or run or decide to do something athletically that is hard to explain unless you have done it," Martin explained. "I think there's a comfort level with that, and when I say something to him or suggest something, it goes a little bit further. The comfort level is there, and the trust is there. [I'm] just looking forward to continuing to work."

It's only minicamp, but so far there seems to be a great foundation. The Ravens have championship aspirations after revamping the offense and adding new wide receivers. Stay tuned.

Legal Notice

CITY OF BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES NOTICE OF LETTING

Sealed Bids or Proposals, in duplicate, addressed to the Board of Estimates of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore and marked for **GS21826 – Ft. McHenry Fire Pier Renovations**, will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204, City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M. on **WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2023**. 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. Bid opening proceedings can be also viewed live at <https://www.charmtvbaltimore.com/live-stream> at 12:00 noon. Bid tabulation sheets detailing the bids received will be publicly posted to the Comptroller's website by COB on the date of bid opening.

The Contract Documents may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **\$50.00** by contacting Azza Rizkallah at azza.rizkallah@baltimorecity.gov as of **FRIDAY, JUNE 09, 2023**.

Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package.

All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be pre-qualified by the City of Baltimore Boards and Commissions. Interested contractors should call 410 396-6883 or contact the Office of Boards and Commissions at 4 South Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. **If a bid is submitted by a Joint Venture ("JV"), then in that event, the documents that establish the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes.** The Prequalification Category required for bidding on this project is **E13004– REHABILITATION OF STRUCTURES**

The Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$1,000,000.01 to \$2,000,000.00** A "Pre-Bidding information" session will be conducted at the site: **2608 Leahy St, Baltimore, MD 21230 on TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.**

Principal Items of work for this project are:

General Requirements

Special Marine, Dock, and Boat Work

The MBE goal is **17%**

The WBE goal is **9%**

CONTRACT NO. GS 21826

APPROVED:

Erika McClammy

Clerk, Board of Estimates

APPROVED:

Berke Attila

Director, Department of
General Services

**To place Legal Notices,
call: 410-366-3900
email: legals@btimes.com**

Legal Notice

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY, MD SOUTHERN KENT ISLAND SANI- TARY PROJECT – Phase 3 SEPTIC TANK EFFLUENT PUMP INSTALLATION INVITATION TO BID

Sealed bids for the construction of a portion of the sanitary sewerage facilities for Phase 3 of the Southern Kent Island service area (consisting of the subdivisions of Kentmorr and Queen Anne Colony), Queen Anne's County, Maryland will be received from qualified bidders by the County Commissioners of Queen Anne's County at the Queen Anne's County Sanitary District, 310 Bateau Drive, Stevensville, Maryland 21666 until 10:00 a.m. local time on **July 25, 2023** at which time they will be opened publicly and read aloud.

This phase is the third of four phases in a failing septic system abatement project which will consist of two construction contract

Contract SAN 22-01 – Septic Tank Effluent Pump Installation

Contract SAN 22-02 – Community Sewer Main Installation

The work of this contract, Contract No. SAN 22-01, consists of the installation of approximately 340 Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) assemblies on private property to service existing homes and businesses. **Each property is unique with its own constraints and challenges, the cost of which to address is to be included in the price bid. Bidders are encouraged to review all available information in order to adequately price in the efforts to address these constraints and challenges in their bid.**

Specifically included is the installation of new 1500-gallon concrete tanks, high-head STEP assemblies, electrical work to power the STEP assemblies from the existing homes' or business' electric meter, plumbing work to intercept the existing homes' or business' sewer lateral to the existing septic system and to connect the existing homes or business' to the new STEP assemblies, abandonment of the existing septic tanks, and full restoration of the yards post installation.

Copies of the Contract Documents may be obtained beginning **June 5, 2023**. Contract Documents will be available at no cost in electronic format (only in .pdf format) on Maryland's Ebid Marketplace and on the County Web Site at:

<https://emma.maryland.gov/page.aspx/en/usr/login?ReturnUrl=%2fpage.aspx%2fen%2fbuy%2fhomepage>
<http://qac.org/Bids.aspx>

Legal Notice

Any Addenda issued shall be issued via electronic posting on the ebidmarketplace.com and Queen Anne's County Procurement websites (see links listed above). **However, it is the Bidders responsibility to ensure receipt of all addenda.**

A pre-bid meeting will be held at the Southern Kent Island Sanitary Project Office – 9410 Romancoke Road, Stevensville Maryland at 1:00 p.m. local time on June 27th.

Bidders on this work will be required to comply with:

1. The President's Executive Order No. 11246 as amended by Executive Order 11375. The requirements for bidders and contractors under this order are explained in the Contract Documents.

2. The facilities to be constructed under this Invitation to Bid will include funds from the Maryland Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund and may include funds from the Maryland Bay Restoration Fund. Bidders will be required to comply with Federal and State requirements pertaining to minority business enterprise and women's business enterprise.

3. The Davis Bacon Act labor standards provisions are applicable to this contract.

4. Use of American Iron and Steel provisions are applicable to this contract.

5. The successful bidder will be required to place both a Performance Bond and a Payment Bond, each in the amount of 100% of the contract price, and a Maintenance Bond in the amount of 5% of the contract price.

Each Bidder must submit a bid security of five (5) percent with his bid, in the form and subject to the conditions provided in the Instructions to Bidders. Bids to remain open for 120 days. No bidder may withdraw his bid within one hundred twenty (120) days after the actual date of the opening thereof.

The Owner reserves the right, in the exercise of its sole judgment, to reject any or all Bids, and to re-advertise and award the Contract in the regular manner, or to waive any informalities, irregularities, mistakes, errors or omissions in any Bid received and to accept any Bid deemed to be responsive to this invitation and favorable to the interests of the County.

The County Commissioners of Queen Anne's County
Danielle Head

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HOT 7s Tripler
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HOT BONUS TOP PRIZE \$50,000!

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Red Hot CASH **MARYLAND LOTTERY**
 DOUBLER
 YOUR NUMBERS
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 GAME 2: 07, 21, 15, 12, 08, 32
 GAME 3: 13, 20, 08, 32
 GAME 4: 01, 31, 40, 14
 GAME 5: 25, 16, 38, 43
 GAME 6: 30, 10, 06, 25
 GAME 7: 18, 23, 39, 36, 42, 05, 26
 GAME 8: 04, 33, 28, 09, 17, 13, 37, 34, 11

\$2 **MARYLAND LOTTERY**
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\$1 **MARYLAND LOTTERY**
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