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Growing Girl Empowerment Nonprofit Offers Open Enrollment, Women Invest in Emerging Leaders



(L-R) Cortney Robertson, founder of the Baltimore-based I Believe in Me Girls nonprofit (IBIM Girls); Kori Campbell; Gabrielle Francois; Amiya Hinton; Londyn Yancey; Sydney Oliver; Kalea Jones; Kendra Moore; Kendall Robertson; and Maya Scott visit the Georgia Aquarium during a weekend retreat hosted by the Steve & Marjorie Harvey Foundation in 2023 through IBIM Girls. The nonprofit empowers girls ages 8-18 through mentoring and leadership. I Believe in Me Girls' nonprofit has served over 160 girls to date. Open enrollment for IBIM ends on August 31, 2023.

(See article on page 8) Photo courtesy of IBIM

Still on the Job For the City of Baltimore

By Ursula V. Battle

Part Two of a two-part series on YouthWorks. Founded in 1973, this year marks the 50th Anniversary of YouthWorks.

An aspiring engineer, Saneru Williams shared his thoughts about YouthWorks, which recently kicked-off its Baltimore Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) to help address youth poverty and unemployment in the city.



YouthWorks provided aspiring engineer Saneru Williams with an opportunity to work with Hazen and Sawyer, an engineering consulting firm.
Photo Courtesy of YouthWorks

“For me, I like having an opportunity to work in a field I’m interested in,” said Saneru. “For example, I’m interested in engineering. I get to practice and be around people who are in that same field and are actually actively working in that field full time.”

Saneru, 17, is among the thousands of youths who have participated in the program since its inception. Founded in 1973 by the late former mayor of

Baltimore William Donald Schafer, YouthWorks was formerly known as Blue Chip-In and changed its name in 1987.

Now in its 50th year, YouthWorks offered summer jobs to nearly 7,900 youth across almost 600 Baltimore City employers in various industries. YouthWorks officials says the number represents a 16% increase in jobs offered compared to 2022.

YouthWorks provided Saneru with the opportunity to work at Hazen and Sawyer, an engineering consulting firm that focuses on the planning, design and construction oversight of environmental infrastructure.

“I’m establishing a relationship,” said Saneru. “So far, I’ve only been working for about two weeks. Everyone around me are engineers who have been working there for a few years now. They graduated from college so I can see what their experience is like and see what they’re doing. It makes me more interested in the field because I can see exactly what work they do.”

YouthWorks is a program within the Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, Youth Services Division. The program provide a five-week job opportunity to thousands of Baltimore City young people between the ages of 14 to 21. This year, summer employers range from Johns Hopkins University to the Baltimore Orioles, and students earn \$13.25 per hour.

Jayzanay Blessett is also employed through YouthWorks. The 16-year-old is employed with the Baltimore City Police Department and works within its Records Management Unit. Asked what’s been the most valuable information she has learned through her employment, Jayzanay said, “For me, it’s learning how to adapt to certain things. I had to adapt...getting



Jayzanay Blessett, 16, is employed through YouthWorks.
Photo Courtesy of YouthWorks

a job placement in something that didn’t interest me at all. I didn’t think I was going to like it, but I actually ended up enjoying it. Adapting to certain situations is the greatest thing I have learned.”

Blessett shared this advice to other youngsters who are provided with job opportunities.

“Ask around and see if there’s more to do,” she said. “Whoever your supervisor is at your job, ask if they do this or that just to get extra experience. That’s mainly what I see as an opportunity to get more experience in the field.”

The program’s partners include JP Morgan Chase, who have made a \$150,000 grant donation to the program. A leading financial services firm based in the United States, JPMorgan Chase has been supporting Baltimore YouthWorks’ Summer Youth Employment program for more than five years.

Nadine Duplessy Kearns is Vice President of Global Philanthropy for JPMorgan Chase.

“We’re proud to be returning as a supporter, particularly this year as YouthWorks marks 50 years of commitment to the youth of Baltimore,” said Duplessy Kearns. “We’re also proud



Nadine Duplessy Kearns is Vice President of Global Philanthropy for JPMorgan Chase.
Photo Courtesy of JP Morgan Chase

that every young person that wants an opportunity with YouthWorks is able to get placed in and explore careers to find out what it’s like to work.”

She added, “I think this is an important part of preparing for the world of work and preparing young people to be able to learn more about what it’s like to gain access to jobs that they find meaningful. It also helps them reach their own goals.”

Dr. S. Rasheem, Senior Program Manager for YouthWorks shared an exciting YouthWorks development.

“This year, in a landmark achievement, we will be launching the Youthworks year-round program for the first time ever,” said Dr. Rasheem. “This program is designed to extend our support beyond the traditional summer employment period, offering continuous opportunities for growth, learning and development throughout the year.”

She continued, “By embracing this new initiative, we will empower even more youth to excel, thrive and become the leaders of tomorrow.”

For more information about YouthWorks, visit www.youthworks.oedworks.com.

Now and Later® and La La Anthony Team Up to Spotlight Self-Care Companies for National Black Business Month

The candy brand launches 'Pause Now, Hustle Later' awarding a total of \$50,000 in grants to five emerging Black-owned self-care brands

Chicago, IL, July 24, 2023 – Now and Later® candy with its bold flavors, hard-to-soft chew, and long-lasting eating experience recognizes that with the hustle of the daily grind, there is a benefit in taking a much-needed pause for self-care. In continued support of go-getters and changemakers in the Black community, the brand is launching 'Pause Now, Hustle Later' in partnership with media personality, entrepreneur, and candy lover La La Anthony, to spotlight five emerging black-owned businesses in the self-care space and to encourage fans to take a pause NOW, so that they can reset and reenergize for their daily hustle LATER.

Kicking off on July 24, 2023 in honor of International Self-Care Day, Now and Later and La La are encouraging everyone to take a pause in their day for a moment of self-care. To help fans celebrate, La La has unveiled a hand-picked list of Black-owned self-care

businesses with products and services that can be added to any self-care routine.

Leading into National Black Business month in August, Now and Later is also committing \$50,000 in financial support to the selected small businesses through the 'Pause Now, Hustle Later' Grant. Each business will receive \$10,000 that will help fuel their hustle and aid in their continued growth.

"As a mom and businesswoman, the hustle is a part of my daily grind. I'm always on the go but at the same time, I have to pause and prioritize self-care so that I can show up as my best self," said La La Anthony. "One of my favorite ways to unwind is to enjoy a sweet treat like Now and Later, and now I get to encourage others to take a pause while also shouting out some of my favorite go-to Black-owned companies."

La La's selected self-care brands include:

Buttah Skin, is a line of highly effective products for both women and men, formulated to target everyday skin conditions leaving skin glowing, healthy, and renewed.

Fancy Homebody, celebrates the idea of embracing a low-key lifestyle, inspiring women to achieve their own version of

luxury. The lifestyle brand offers a wide variety of loungewear and other casual essentials that are as chic as they are comfy.

I See You Wellness, is a Brooklyn-based wellness and lifestyle brand that exists to empower communities of color through accessible wellness and radical self-care, specializing in handmade apothecary products and community healing experiences.

Natural Radiant Life, is a clean, organic and vegan brand that harnesses the power of 100% whole-food ingredients to replace toxic chemicals in skin care and slow down the visible signs of aging.

Kimberly New York, is a niche fragrance house featuring artsy, long-lasting scents safe for sensitive skin.

"Now and Later is dedicated to supporting Black leaders and entrepreneurs who are making a positive impact in their communities, which is why we launched the 'Pause Now, Hustle Later' Grant during Black Business Month," said Dave Foldes, Director of Marketing at Now and Later. "According to the Small Business Association, 50 percent of small businesses fail within the first five years due to lack of financial resources. In recognition of the hustle of entrepreneurship,

we're proud to help amplify these small businesses, and to partner with an advocate like La La who not only shares Now and Later's Brooklyn-born origins, but also embodies the brand's bold and vibrant spirit."

"Pause Now, Hustle Later' is the latest way that Now and Later is staying true to its commitment to celebrate and amplify Black voices through its #RecognizeTheChew program. Through this program, the brand aims to encourage the next generation of changemakers who Champion, Hustle, Empower and Win (C.H.E.W.) in their daily pursuit to make their communities better. Previously the brand has teamed up with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), to celebrate and recognize Black community leaders and entrepreneurs. In 2021, the #RecognizeTheChew program donated financial grants to both the Mass Media Arts department at Clark Atlanta University and the Cathy Hughes Schools of Communications at Howard University. Fans can visit @nowandlatercandy on Instagram to find all of the 'Pause Now, Hustle Later' grant recipients, take a glimpse into La La's self-care routine and learn how she takes advantage of 'the pause' to help fuel her hustle.

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Job Opening For Enslavers: 300 Years Experience Required. Slave Skills Development A Must. Generous Benefits.

By Dr. Joanne Martin,
cofounder of the National Great
Blacks in Wax Museum



*Dr. Joanne Martin,
Courtesy photo*

The banning of books, whether five hundred years ago or today, is grounded in the quest for power and control and is intricately linked to attempts to restrict free speech, control over one's body, civil rights, and more.

Today, the most potent force in the campaign to silence or distort all discussion of slavery begins in the first half of the 19th century with the burning and banning of books expressing anti-slavery sentiments. Literally "incendiary" were books such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," an anti-slavery novel, which was publicly burned and banned by slave holders.

In 1863, books pertaining to sexuality and birth control joined the list of banned books. The Comstock Law made the dissemination of information about contraception, abortion and sexuality a crime. Throughout the 1960s, J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI fought against books and protests that were anti-Vietnam War, and pro-civil rights and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Right in goose step with book challenges and censorship are the loathsome lies touted in such weapons of mind destruction as Florida's new guidelines for teaching African American history. At the core is the narrative that "slavery was not that bad," and "in fact, slavery was quite good for the enslaved" because slaves developed career skills which benefitted them in life.

Perhaps the rape and sexual abuse endured by female slaves gained for them financial benefits from learning about how to have sex, which later led to a career as sex workers. Or could it be that Gordon, a former enslaved man who became the subject of photographs documenting the extensive scars on his back, was able to "parlay" his whippings into a lucrative gig as a keloid research subject? The Florida education policy developers might also want to look at benefits of other atrocities such as the WWII genocide of the European Jews during the Holocaust by Nazi Germany.

Let's call the "benefits" tale exactly what it is, an argument for and justification of slavery. It is to allow slavery to be preserved in other forms and by other names even after the 13th Amendment made slavery illegal. For example, in the early 1900s, a system of forced labor called Convict (or penal) labor was created to allow companies to pay leasing fees to state, county, and local governments in exchange for prison labor. A common ploy was to charge innocent Black men with vagrancy and then rent them out as convict laborers.

One of history's most dangerous justifications for slavery, the Holocaust and other atrocities was scientific racism. This tool was used to prove Black inferiority and white superiority and help lay the foundation for modern eugenics, the idea that race could and

should be purified by selective breeding and the elimination of flawed people.

More essentially, the use of methods such as involuntary sterilization and immigration restrictions could rid society of individuals deemed to be unfit. Samuel Cartwright, an American physician, argued that certain characteristics in people from Africa, such as the small size of their brain, the apelike shape of their head, and the debasement of their minds rendered them unable to take care of themselves. The most common justification for slavery was that

slavery was divine and brought Christianity to the African heathens.

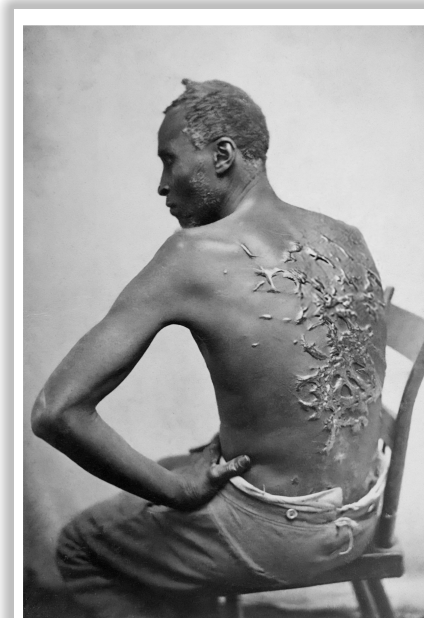
The statement in the Florida Education Policy about the benefits of slavery to the enslaved and their descendants should engender outrage. However, we must be careful not to become so distracted and outraged that this Florida policy statement becomes the bright shiny object. What is even more egregious is that although the DeSantis-approved curriculum prohibits a discussion of the violent nature of slavery, it also paints a picture of African Americans being violent even when they were defending themselves against white mob violence.

For example, W.E.B. DuBois, noted NAACP founder, bought a gun to defend himself and his family from a white mob that charged its way through the thriving downtown Black business district of Atlanta, smashing store windows and killing people. Yet, Florida's curriculum would have us believe that DuBois and the murdered Black people were the ones guilty of violence.

Somehow the survival strategies that the enslaved Africans developed and adapted to the conditions they encountered; the ways they created to sustain themselves; their courage to resist the harshness of a system designed to dehumanize them; the cultural knowledge they brought with them from their African homeland are absent from histories of a nation bent on rewriting history, glossing over ugly truths about slavery and pushing an education policy rooted in bigotry and white supremacy.

It is time for the Department of Education and the Department of Justice to act, to use their legal power to stamp out all efforts to create policies built on lies, white supremacy, racial bias.

Stay tuned!



*Whipped Peter- Photo taken
April 2, 1863, Baton Rouge,
Louisiana, USA. Original caption:
"Overseer Artayou Carrier
whipped me. I was two months in
bed sore from the whipping. My
master come after I was whipped;
he discharged the overseer. The
very words of poor Peter, taken as
he sat for his picture."
(Photo: Public Domain)*

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Editorial

Baltimore Boasts a Billion Dollar Entrepreneur for Black Business Month

By Regi Taylor, Editorial Page Editor

Referred to as "The Jackie Robinson of Wall Street" by Forbes magazine in a 2021 feature article, the late Reginald Francis Lewis earned the distinction as the first homegrown African American Baltimore City entrepreneur to build a billion-dollar corporate enterprise in 1987 with the leveraged buyout of Beatrice International Foods, LLC.

Since Lewis died in 1993 from a cerebral hemorrhage associated with a brain tumor, many younger Baltimoreans may not be aware of his personal roots and legacy, mainly associating him with the museum on Pratt Street that bears his name. The Reginald F. Lewis Museum, which opened in 2005, was endowed with a \$5 million grant from the Lewis' family foundation and is the largest African American museum in Maryland.

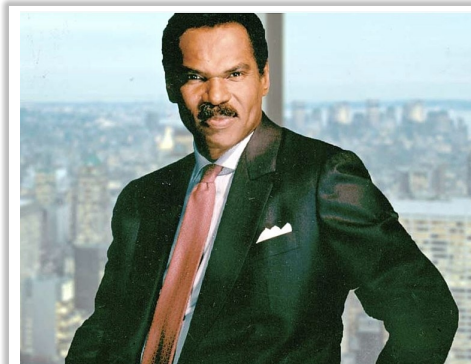
A neighborhood he described as "semi-tough," Lewis spent his early years growing up on Dallas Street in East Baltimore, less than one mile from the Reginald F. Lewis Museum. His family would later move to the 2800 block of Mosher Street in the greater Rosemont community of West Baltimore near Poplar Grove Street.

Lewis has attributed his determined work ethic and drive for success to his family upbringing. His family's mantra was "be the best that you can be." One of six siblings, his mother, Carolyn, is credited with imposing disciplined behavior and ground rules that Lewis followed his entire life. Carolyn demanded the attainment of education as a family priority.

Lewis' maternal grandmother, Sue Cooper, taught him the importance of saving money. As the story goes, she cut and peeled the bottoms of tin cans and nailed them to a closet floor to secure his savings, a critical lesson in personal wealth-building Lewis would not forget.

Reginald Lewis demonstrated the values of hard work and determination

his family insisted upon at very early age. His first documented successful business venture was at the age of ten when he established a route to deliver Afro American newspapers. Growing his business from ten customers to over a hundred within two years, Reginald



Baltimore's Black Billionaire Businessman
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Wikimedia Commons

eventually sold his route for a profit. During high school, Lewis worked nights and weekends at a country club to purchase his own clothes and buy a car.

The values instilled in young Reginald Lewis prioritizing education and hard work were exemplified by his performance at Dunbar High School. Besides maintaining academic honors status as a student, Lewis also excelled as an athlete. He quarterbacked the football team, was a shortstop for the varsity baseball team, and played forward on the basketball team while leading as team captain of all three. Lewis was voted vice president of his senior class.

His combined athletic and academic prowess earned Reginald Lewis a football scholarship to Virginia State University. A knee injury sidelined Lewis' football career and he refocused his full attention to scholarship, which upon graduation in 1965, earned him the opportunity to attend a summer school

program at Harvard Law School funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.

The program organizers were so impressed with Lewis that he was offered admission to Harvard Law without applying, the first such arrangement extended to a student in the school's nearly 150-year history. Lewis received an honors grade on his senior thesis topic, "Mergers and Acquisitions," which would be the leveraging technique he employed nearly 20 years later to acquire Beatrice International Foods.

After graduating Harvard in 1968, Lewis was recruited to practice corporate law with a prestigious New York law firm, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP. By 1970, he, and several associates established Wall Street's first African American law firm, Lewis and Clarkson, specializing in business law and structuring investments for minority-owned corporations. During this period, Reginald Lewis was also counsel to the New York-based Commission for Racial Justice where he represented The Wilmington Ten, where he successfully forced the state of North Carolina to pay interest on the Wilmington Ten jail bond.

In 1983, Lewis' desire to "do the deals myself" led him to form the TLC Group, L.P. The firm's first successful venture was a \$22.5 million dollar leveraged buyout of McCall Pattern Company. Within two years he sold the company for \$65 million, earning a 90 to 1 return on his original investment. Four years later, 1987, Reginald Lewis would close his history-making signature business deal when he purchased Beatrice Foods in a leveraged buyout for \$985 million dollars.

Within a year Beatrice Foods was earning over \$1.5 billion in annual sales putting the company on the Forbes 500 list of American corporations and giving Baltimore bragging rights for producing our first billion-dollar Black businessman.

Trailblazer with HBCU Roots Helps Baltimoreans Pursue Mental Wellness

By Andrea Blackstone

Jessica T. Fauntleroy recalls growing up in the 800 block of West Fayette Street near the former Lexington Terrace projects in the 1990s and early 2000s with her maternal grandmother.

“In the 1980s, I lived in Sandtown-Winchester in various places with my mother and younger brother. We were essentially ‘homeless.’ We lived with various family members until eventually my brother and I were placed in the custody of my maternal grandmother,” Fauntleroy said.

Born in 1982, she wears multiple hats as a millennial mom of two teenage daughters and a twelve-year-old son. Fauntleroy persevered and became a licensed social worker who earned her bachelor’s degree from Morgan State University and a master’s in social work

from Howard University. The Southwest Baltimore resident offers individual therapy services including diagnosis and treatment through her company, Restoring Destiny Mental Health Services, LLC (RDMHS).

“We also provide referrals for other supportive services like case management, housing services and psychiatric medication management,” Fauntleroy said, also mentioning that she currently only offers virtual services. “It is important to see professional help if stress is impacting you in your personal or professional life.” Fauntleroy reflected on being reared in a West Baltimore community ravaged by drugs, poverty and violence. The experience inspired her to pursue a career in social work and launch RDMHS in 2018.

“I lost an incredible amount of peers to violence and incarceration between the ages of 18-23 years old. It impacted my worldview and made me want to contribute to improving our community,” Fauntleroy said.

Memory of life in Sandtown of the 1980s until her family moved conjured recollections of love and having access to family and friends. But observing open-air drug markets, seeing family members impacted by addiction and drug dealing are also a part of Fauntleroy’s recollections.

“I struggled with a significant amount of childhood trauma and stress throughout my childhood and youth, secondary to my family and environment,” Fauntleroy said.

Fauntleroy is an example of resilience that is nestled betwixt Baltimore’s streets and the family challenges of some residents. The eminently qualified mental health services professional possesses relatable experiences to a population that can identify with childhood stress and the heaviness of tough, urban life. The importance of working with a clinician that “speaks your language,” enables an individual to

benefit from the knowledge and expertise of the clinician, according to Fauntleroy.

“I created Restoring Destiny to be a safe space for individuals in our communities who have struggled with many of the social issues that have impacted the quality of life of our residents for numerous generations. We provide evidence-based, empowerment-focused, client-centered, trauma-informed mental health services to Baltimoreans,” Fauntleroy said.

Fauntleroy also addresses trauma as an author of three transformational memoirs and one children’s book.

“J’elle Inspires is a multimedia agency that I started in 2017 to release my books, blogs and entertainment-related content through. We create content that assists young people and their families with coping with the impact of emotional trauma in their communities,” Fauntleroy said.

While exhibiting multifaceted talents, a collaborative mindset is a part of Fauntleroy’s wellness approach. Darren Rogers, CEO of his company, Steps 2Wards Success (S2WS) is engaged in a strategic partnership with RDMHS. Fauntleroy added, “I worked with Darren Rogers through J’elle Inspires during the pandemic doing trauma education workshops online for parents of children in his male mentoring program, ‘I Am Mentality.’”

S2WS, a psychiatric rehabilitation program serving youth and adults in Baltimore, Maryland, is a nonprofit organization.

Rogers stated that RDMHS supports his agency “by providing therapy services, and timely therapy intakes for participants



*A children’s book written by Jessica T. Fauntleroy tells the story of a child who learns to navigate through community challenges due to poverty and living in a city.
Photo credit: Nikiea Redmond*

to ensure their needs are met.” Rogers further explained that S2WS shares over twenty participants with RDMHS. S2WS supports RDMHS by providing case management, community-based intervention for rehabilitation goals created by Jessica and her team. The partnership has existed for a little over two years, according to Rogers.

“We see RDMHS as one the best therapy providers in Baltimore City and we deem it a pleasure to work with Jessica Fauntleroy. Steps 2Wards’ mission is centered in ensuring our participants receive relevant, collaborative and person-centered programming. RDMHS’ team has relevant clinicians that collaborate with our teams to ensure that we provide the highest quality of services. Clients can become inconsistent with therapy and PRP (psychiatric rehabilitation program sessions), but due to the collaboration we are able to keep participants stable in both programs resulting in healthier families,” Rogers said.

Learn more about RDMHS and Fauntleroy’s endeavors via www.jessicafauntleroy.com. Find out more about S2WS by visiting www.steps2wardssuccess.com.



Jessica T. Fauntleroy, owner of Restoring Destiny Mental Health Services serves individuals ages 16 and up. Fauntleroy, also the visionary CEO of J’elle Inspires, runs a multimedia agency that creates content for assisting young people and their families with coping with the impact of emotional trauma in their communities.

Photo credit: D Harris Photography

Henrietta Lacks' Family Settles Lawsuit with Biotech Company, Paving the Way for More Claims, Says Attorney Ben Crump

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior National
Correspondent, @StacyBrownMedia

Living relatives of Henrietta Lacks have reached a confidential settlement with Thermo Fisher Scientific, the multi-billion-dollar biotechnology company that has used regenerative cells taken from Lacks decades ago without her consent.

The settlement sets a precedent, potentially leading to complaints seeking compensation and control of Lacks' cells, famously known as "HeLa" cells, the world's first cells capable of replicating outside the human body.

Represented jointly by attorney Ben Crump, renowned for his advocacy for Black victims of police violence, and attorney Chris Seeger, known for leading significant class action lawsuits in U.S. history, the family called a news conference in Baltimore on Tuesday, August 1, which coincides with what would have been Lacks' 103rd birthday.

"The parties are pleased that they were able to find a way to resolve this matter outside of court and will have no further comment about the settlement," Crump and Seeger wrote in a news release.

The Lacks family's lawsuit addressed a problem that had persisted for 70 years following the unlawful removal of Henrietta Lacks' cells while she was receiving cervical cancer treatment at Johns Hopkins Hospital. The family argued that the cells rightfully belong to

Lacks and that companies like Thermo Fisher Scientific should pay for using them in research and product development.

In a 2022 interview, Crump called the situation "indicative of the Black struggle for equality and respect in America.

"Because it's a racial justice issue when you think about it in the purest form," Crump asserted. "The

Johns Hopkins discovered that the cells sampled from Lacks' cervix could regenerate outside the human body.

They shared those groundbreaking cells, which were instrumental in developing polio and COVID-19 vaccines and the world's most common fertility treatment.

Crump has noted that other companies besides Thermo Fisher

to award Lacks a Congressional Gold Medal posthumously.

The lawmakers said the goal is to ensure her contributions are honored and acknowledged for generations, as the cells she unknowingly provided continue to benefit millions worldwide.

Lacks' story has since become a best-selling book and, in 2017, Oprah Winfrey starred in the big screen biopic, "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks."

"It's a real honor to have a family member that's genetic makeup is that important to the world," Lacks' grandson, Ron Lacks, said in an earlier interview.

"When people are profiting from her, and some of my family members can't even afford proper medical [care], you know, it's like she's on the auction block," he said.

"You know, as loving as my grandmother was, she would have definitely said, 'Well, what about her family?'"



Henrietta Lacks
Photo Courtesy of nnpa.org

children of Henry Ford, they're able to benefit from his contributions to the world."

Thermo Fisher Scientific, in its defense, contended that Lacks' descendants waited too long to take legal action and that other companies worldwide also use HeLa cells without the family's consent.

Lacks' cancer treatment in 1951 was unsuccessful, and she tragically succumbed to the disease a few months after her diagnosis.

Following her death, researchers at

Scientific sell Lacks' cells, and biotech companies and labs globally use them for various types of research.

The family has signaled that they also may act against those companies.

For decades, Lacks' contributions to science remained unrecognized. However, Maryland Democratic Rep. Kweisi Mfume and fellow Maryland Democrats U.S. Sens. Chris Van Hollen and Ben Cardin have introduced legislation seeking

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Growing Girl Empowerment Nonprofit Offers Open Enrollment, Women Invest in Emerging Leaders

By **Andrea Blackstone**

Cortney Robertson, founder of I Believe in Me Girls (IBIM Girls), possessed an unwavering desire to create a safe space for girls to learn, grow and be themselves without judgment. In 2018, the Baltimore resident answered the call. Robertson is an ambitious mother who also balances volunteering to fulfill her mission and working full time.



*Cortney Robertson, founder of the nonprofit, I Believe in Me Girls
Photo credit: KFinch Photography*

“I started IBIM Girls because I noticed that so many of our girls were dealing with depression and anxiety, dying on the inside and nobody was paying attention to them,” Robertson said. The nonprofit leader explained that IBIM Girls’ mission “is to empower girls ages eight-18 to B.E.L.I.E.V.E (Become Emerging Leaders Inspiring Excellence and Values Everyday) through group mentoring and leadership training necessary to become responsible, productive and successful

members of our community.” She feels that resources for girls are less than what is available for boys, especially when it comes to organizations.

Robertson, who attended Woodlawn High School, was raised by a mother in a single parent household in Baltimore. She knows the immeasurable benefit of having access to caring women who are a part of a girl’s village.

“I always say that I have the heart of my mother, because she is the one that always displayed an abundance of unconditional love; the spirit of my grandmother, because she is always willing to be of service to others; and the drive of my aunt, because she is the one that showed me that through hard work and discipline, I could accomplish anything,” Robertson said.

Programs offered through IBIM Girls include: “Free to Be Me,” a 10-month mentoring and leadership development program that incorporates weekly sessions. “Healthy Harvest Heroes,” a community garden project that provides access to fresh produce, encourages healthy eating habits and infuses STEM education. “Soaring for Success,” provides a college readiness and career development workshop series. It was designed to support IBIM’s mentees with post-secondary and college preparation and career development. Robertson added that academic goals are addressed through the nonprofit’s partnership with STEMcx. The organization provides after school tutoring in math and science. “Our goal is to empower our mentees and their families to be prepared to move on to the next level after high school,” Robertson said.

Enrichment Workshop is an annual all-day workshop. It helps participating girls to explore and nurture their own passions and spark new interests.

“Dynamic women in different industries are invited to share their passion and purpose by facilitating hands-on workshops for the girls,” Robertson said.

Robertson said that IBIM’s program participants have a chance to participate in community service activities. They give away backpacks filled with school supplies, help provide 50 Baltimore City students and 50 Baltimore County students with a meal for Thanksgiving and host a literacy night with K-3 through kindergarten classes.

Twelve mentors volunteer their time to support IBIM. Talisha Sessoms serves as a mentor and board of directors’ treasurer. She reflected on the reasons that she lends a hand to community youth.

“For me, as a Black girl who grew up in Baltimore City, it is important for me to support the youth in the community to give back in ways I wish I had as a kid. To be a positive role model and to share my experiences, my challenges, my successes and my shortcomings affords me the opportunity to pour into the youth and back into the communities that helped to shape who I am today,” Sessoms said. Brittaney Major is the mother of 14-year-old Londyn Yancey. Londyn has been a IBIM Girls member for five years. After participating in a college tour of Morgan State University a few months ago, Londyn is now “considering her future.”

“IBIM Girls is giving the young ladies opportunities to see women succeeding in positions we’re so used to seeing men in — which is building their self-confidence. The mentors in IBIM Girls have become like big sisters to my only child,” Major said.

More girls like Londyn will have a chance to participate in IBIM Girls’ mentoring and leadership development program during weekends from September through June 2023. Meeting locations will be at the Sollers Point Multi-Purpose Center in Dundalk and the Randallstown Community Center.

Open enrollment for the nonprofit’s mentoring and leadership development ends on August 31, 2023. A limited number of spaces remain. Interested parents can register their girls for the



*(L-R) Cortney Robertson, Chardonay Stanfield, Crystal Brice, April Hurst, Sydney Oliver, Latasha Oliver, Monet McQuay and Kendall Robertson participate in IBIM Girls' Healthy Harvest Heroes Produce Distribution Day for community residents.
Photo credit: Jae Sipp Photography*

program via www.ibimgirls.org. A nominal \$25 registration fee is required for each participant. Monetary donations and a variety of volunteers are needed to support IBIM. Email info@ibimgirls.org to obtain details.

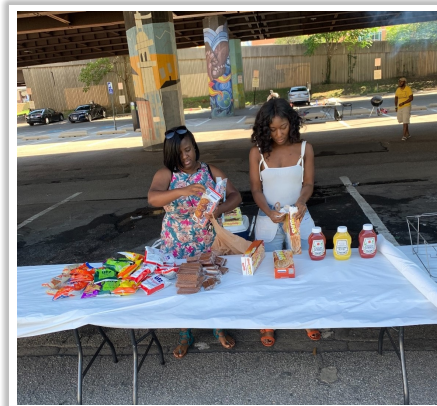
Back-to-School Event Comes to Baltimore's Potee Street

By **Andrea Blackstone**

Summer is in full swing, but the reopening of school doors is just around the corner in late August.

Ja'Nai McKinney, a professional daycare teacher and events manager who gives back to the community, will be teaming up with partners to host a "Back to School Give Back" in Baltimore.

"I want to help bring light back to the city. With all the negative things going on, I still want Baltimore to have hope," McKinney said.



Ja'Nai McKinney (left) and Hannah Konteh setting up at a parking lot under I-83 bridge to help the homeless. Courtesy photo

The Annapolitan wants children who are ages three to 17 years old, residing on Potee Street and in the surrounding area to receive free book bags, school supplies and snacks. A moon bounce, face painting, music and games will offer a chance to have a little fun.

She also said that "she still wants Baltimore to know that people care and have their back."

In early July, two individuals were killed and 28 were wounded in a mass shooting at a block party that was held on Potee Street. The unfortunate melee made national headlines. McKinney happened to be working at Gargolas Lounge, located at 3720 Potee Street, the night that the incident occurred. She

stated that she could hear gunshots. McKinney and various Back to School Give Back volunteers are embracing the idea of bringing positivity to area youth.

"On August 12, 2023, we have a lot of community businesses and promoters coming to help with the back-to-school give-back. We would love to extend an invitation to some of Baltimore's city officials to come out," McKinney said.

She stated that one of the biggest issues these days is local officials speaking about helping the community but not getting involved in doing the actual groundwork.

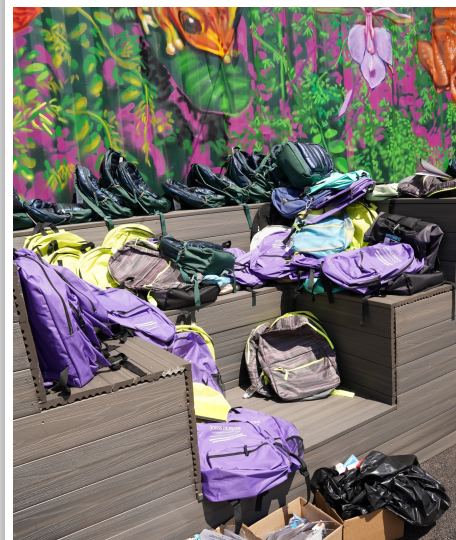
"If some local officials show up, that will show actual change," McKinney said.

The upcoming event will be underway at Gargolas Lounge in Baltimore, Maryland from 12-3 p.m. on August 12, 2023. Tied In Cares; Dream Mega Lounge; Flourishing Minds Wellness Center; Fadam Got Da Juice; Dj pro2col; Peace and Love Queens LLC; and Lor Z are among partners who are pitching in to help. McKinney states that a host of party promoters are participating by doing everything from donating supplies to posting flyers and spreading the word about the community event.

Additionally, Gargolas Lounge will provide the venue, DTLR will assist with supplying prizes such as gift cards and DJ QuickSilva is helping out. He is known as an on-air personality and DJ who currently works for 92Q in Baltimore n, D.C. The well-known musical industry personality is also a national DJ and brand ambassador for DTLR. Giving back remains on his list.

"I got involved with the event through seeing the need and working with Ja'Nai. I will be sponsoring the event, donating and helping to promote it. I've collaborated with Ja'Nai many times in the past for community work in Baltimore," DJ QuickSilva said.

He added that turkeys have been given away during previous holiday seasons. He and McKinney have fed the homeless and lent a hand during other back-to-school drives and community giveaways.



Ja'Nai McKinney led a Back to School event in 2022 at Euphoria Night Club in Baltimore. This year, a Back To School Give Back will be held on August 12, 2023 at 3720 Potee Street in Baltimore, Maryland from 12-3 p.m. at Gargolas Lounge. Photo credit: Catch This Flash

DJ QuickSilva stated that youth will benefit from their next back-to-school event giveaway by receiving school supplies and by "also seeing that they are cared for and loved by the city."

He added, "It's very important to support them to give them hope especially after the horrible act that occurred there."

Hannah Konteh, managing Partner At United Metropolitan Group explained that Dream Mega Lounge is a client. United Metropolitan Group serves as the general business manager.

Dream, which is in the heart of Baltimore's Inner Harbor at 10 S Calvert Street, strives to give back by uplifting the community and

encouraging inner city youth to use school as a resource to aim for a better future, according to Konteh.

This is one of many projects that the venue has participated in for the sake of reintroducing positivity during trying times in Baltimore.

"The owners Lamont Macey, Justin Hunt and I, are board members to many nonprofits in the area," Konteh said.

"We need jobs, educational programs, resources, affordable housing, healthcare, opportunities and schools without disparities due to area code. Dream is taking the initiative to do the groundwork with other community leaders. That's why we chose to partake in this event to bring good energy back to the community."

Prior registration is not required for the free event. For more information, contact McKinney by calling 443-454-4847, or reach @gargolaslounge through Instagram. School supply and book bag donations will be accepted until August 11, 2023.



Local music artist, Money Jake; community volunteer, Ja'Nai McKinney; and radio personality, DJ QuickSilva during an annual turkey drive for less fortunate families hosted by McKinney. Hot food is also given to the homeless. Courtesy photo



Warm Weather Wellness for African Americans: 12 Ways to Avoid Heat-Related Illnesses

By Jayne Hopson



Jayne Hopson
Courtesy Photo

It's August, and the hot, so-called dog days of summer are here. Now is an excellent time to review our warm weather wellness needs and ways to practice preventive health care measures that may save a life.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), more than 600 people in the United States are killed by extreme heat every year. "Some people are more at risk of developing a heat-related illness, including adults age 65 and older, those with chronic medical conditions, people who work outside, infants and children and athletes.

Among the "some people" the CDC refers to, are the millions of African Americans who have pre-existing health conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney disease, asthma and other chronic respiratory illnesses. To ensure wellness when the heat is high, special care and precautions are required.

Anyone who participates in summer sports or supervises outdoor activities should know and recognize the symptoms of heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The latter is

a very serious, life-threatening condition.

The American Red Cross advises when "a person is experiencing heat cramps in the legs or abdomen, get them to a cooler place, have them rest, lightly stretch the affected muscle, and replenish their fluids with a half a glass (about 4 ounces) of cool water every 15 minutes."

If someone is exhibiting signs of heat exhaustion (cool, moist, pale or flushed skin, heavy sweating, headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, exhaustion), the Red Cross recommends "moving them to a cooler place, remove or loosen tight clothing and spray the person with water or apply cool, wet clothes or towels to the skin. Fan the person. If they are conscious, give small amounts of cool water to drink. Make sure the person drinks slowly. Watch for changes in condition. If the person refuses water, vomits or begins to lose consciousness, call 9-1-1."

Heat stroke is a far more dangerous condition. Untreated heat stroke can result in death, says the Red Cross. "Signs include hot, red skin which may be dry or moist; changes in consciousness; vomiting and high body temperature. Call 9-1-1 immediately if someone shows signs of heat stroke. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the person's body by immersing them up to their neck in cold water if possible.

Otherwise, douse or spray the person with cold water, or cover the person with cold, wet towels or bags of ice."

The World Health Organization which offers global recommendations for staying healthy during summer heat waves, advises the following:

1. **Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day, even if you don't feel thirsty. Dehydration can occur quickly in hot weather.

2. **Avoid excessive outdoor activities:** Limit your time outdoors during peak heat hours, typically between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Postpone activities in extreme heat.
3. **Dress appropriately:** Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothing to help your body regulate its temperature.
4. **Seek shade:** When outdoors, find shady areas or use an umbrella to protect yourself from direct sunlight.
5. **Wear sunscreen:** Apply sunscreen with a high SPF to protect your skin from harmful UV rays.

heavy, hot meals that can raise your body temperature.

10. **Limit caffeine and alcohol:** Both can contribute to dehydration, so consume them in moderation.
11. **Use fans and/or air conditioning:** If you don't have access to air conditioning, use fans to circulate air and create a cooling effect.
12. **Be mindful of medications:** Some medications can make you more susceptible to heat-related issues, so consult your doctor if you have concerns.

Two final reminders as the mercury soars and hovers around 100 degrees:



Photo credit: Shutterstock.com

6. **Use a hat and sunglasses:** Wear a wide-brimmed hat to shield your face and neck and protect your eyes with sunglasses.
7. **Cool off indoors:** Spend time in air-conditioned places like shopping malls, libraries, or community centers.
8. **Take cool showers or baths:** Refresh yourself with cool water to lower your body temperature.
9. **Eat light meals:** Opt for light, easily digestible foods, and avoid

First, hot cars can be deadly. Never leave children or pets in your vehicle. The inside temperature of the car can quickly reach 120 degrees. Secondly, check on family, friends and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, and spend much of their time alone or have pre-existing health conditions that make them more likely to be affected by the heat.

BLACK BUSINESS SHOWCASE

Featuring up and coming and
established Black Businesses
in Baltimore!

12:00pm - 5:00pm, Sunday, August 13, 2023

Reginald F. Lewis Museum
830 E Pratt St, Baltimore, MD 21202

For more information email, HopkinsLocal@jhu.edu
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Rambling Rose



BALTIMORE'S UNKNOWN DRUMMER, TIMOTHY FLETCHER BECAME AN OVERNIGHT SENSATION ON "AMERICA'S GOT TALENT" TV SHOW LAST WEEK

By Rosa Pryor

Well, hello everybody,

Man-n-n-n-n-n! Do I have some juicy stuff for you this week. Not that I haven't had juicy stuff for you every week, but this week is special. Look, I am going to get right into it. I am very excited about meeting and talking to an artist by phone named Timothy Fletcher. Last week after I saw him on the TV show "Americas Got Talent" (AGT). Not only did I discover along with the rest of the country that he was from Baltimore, but I found out that he is also a gifted and talented drummer. I was truly mesmerized when I saw this 26-year-old march out on the stage with a single drum and drumsticks in his hands as well as in every pocket in his pants and shirt. He smiled on his face and wore a large drum medallion on a chain around his neck.

After speaking to the judges, Sofia Vergara, Howie Mandel, Heidi Klum, and Simon Cowell, the background music started. This young man took off. He played a single drum on a stand to the selection of popular hip-hop songs with every drumstick that he had tucked away in his pockets and in his hands. He used several sticks at a time with tricks. He flipped them behind his back with one hand, under and between his legs and bounced them in the air. Timothy twirled them in the air and caught them without ever dropping one. He continued to bounce them off his head, shoulder, knees, feet and off the floor without missing a beat. And believe it or not, he started to dance through all of this. You must see it to believe it.

I had the opportunity to speak to him on the phone for a while. I found out that his personality was just as special as his performance. I was just wondering, if he can perform like this on one drum on one stand, what in the hell can he do with a full set of drums? So, my friends, start looking at the "American Got Talent" show on TV if you haven't already. Of course, the judges did put him through to the next round in the weeks to come. You don't want to miss Baltimore's own Timothy Fletcher.

There is a lot going on in the next couple of weeks which I will share with you. There is Jamaica's Independence Weekend on Saturday August 5, 2023 from 12 -8 p.m. called Trinity Fest, Wine, Jerk & Reggae Festival. It will be held at Potomac Polo Arena (Muldoon's Farm), located at 18905 Beallsville Road in Poolesville Maryland. You can go to www.trinityfestdmy.com for more information.

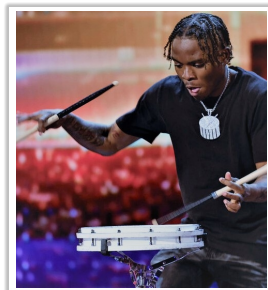
The Ruth Kirk Festival is also the weekend of August 5-6, 2023 starting at noon at Franklin Square Park, located at 1300 W. Fayette Street in Baltimore. It is a community event and open to the public.

"Cabaret Sundays" began in July. It is held the first Sunday of every month. Come hear DJ Mike Jones and Randy Dennis. It is BYOB and BYOF at the Diamondz Event & Catering Hall, located at 9980 Liberty Road in Randallstown, Maryland from 4-8 p.m. For more information, call 443-506-8398 or 410-527-5016.

The "Evening of Soul" show features four of Baltimore's Best vocal groups: Style; J'JAR; Only; and Crosswind. You can hear them at the Next Phaze Restaurant & Café, located at 112 E. Lexington Street in Baltimore. There will be a cash bar and dinner sold on Sunday, August 13, 2023 from 4-8 p.m. For more information, call 410-493-3512.

Well, my dear friends, I guess I have given you an earful this time, but I am out of space, so I've got to go. Remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. Send me a letter by mailing it to 214 Conewood Avenue in Reisterstown, Maryland 21136.

UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.



Timothy Fletcher, Baltimore's previously unknown, gifted and talented drummer is no longer unknown. He impressed me and the judges last week when he auditioned on "America's Got Talent." (Photo by Trae Patton/NBC)



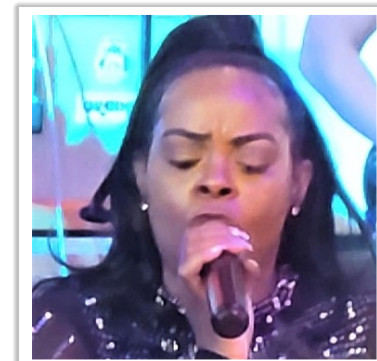
Symphony Black is a collective of musicians with backgrounds in R&B, jazz, funk and fusion styles that all audiences will enjoy. The band members are Roy "Chip" Miller on guitar; band leader; Ron Walker on keyboard and vocals; Nate Stevens playing drums; and Dan Zywan on bass. See them perform at The Avenue Bakery located on Pennsylvania Avenue and Baker Streets on Saturday, August 5, 2023, from 4-7 p.m. It is free and open to the public. Just bring your folding chairs and enjoy the show.



The Rollex Band and the legendary DJ Mike Jones will be at the Pikesville Senior Center, located at 1301 Reisterstown Road in the parking lot of the Pikesville Library on Sunday, August 13, 2023 from 4-8

p.m. The event will be hosted by Jackie Lofton. Admission is free. Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy the show. Vendors are needed. Call 410-887-1245. Tell them "Rambling Rose" told you about the opportunity.

Shay and Co. will be performing every Friday for the month of August at the City View Bar and Grill, located at 6700 Security Boulevard in Woodlawn, Maryland, from 6-10 p.m. Free admission and free entertainment.



Ravens Relish Putting Pads on in Practice

By Tyler Hamilton

The first couple of days of Baltimore Ravens training camp are always exciting because there's a feeling that football is back. That feeling was amplified even more when the Ravens put the pads on for the first time on Tuesday.

The physicality and energy naturally get turned up a notch when the pads go on because it's the closest thing to actually playing a game.

Ravens coach John Harbaugh was pleased with the way practice went on Tuesday. He loved the energy the Ravens played with. Harbaugh said the players did a great job playing fast and physical while not putting each other in harm's way.

"Well, this is the first time – when the pads come on – that it becomes a physical contest, a football contest in that sense," Harbaugh said. "So, you don't have that before you put pads on and get into these drills that are – though they are

not 100 percent live by any stretch – they are still going to be physical contests." Padded practices are always a good opportunity to see what kind of fight a young offensive or defensive lineman has inside of them. The one-on-one part of practice is a test of manhood and pride. Players are going to get beat, but how fiercely they compete comes to the surface.

For others, it's a time to try new moves they've been working to develop. Nose tackle Michael Pierce said he's been developing a few moves with outside linebackers coach Chuck Smith.

"For linemen, especially nose guards and 'D' tackles, the 'shells' as we call them, those soft pads, don't really tell much," Pierce said. "That's where you get to see the young guys who you think can make the team and all that kind of stuff. For me, it's about trying stuff and just making sure I add some different things in my repertoire going into the season. I had a blast today."

Pierce suffered torn biceps in Week 3 and was placed on season-ending injured reserve on September 29, 2022. So, getting the chance to bang around with the pads on was a welcome experience. He's looking to dominate up front and make life easier for those directly behind him like linebackers Roquan Smith and Patrick Queen.

Queen was excited about getting the pads on too. He explained how things change for linebackers when they wear pads.

"You have to be more physical. I think that's the main focus of today. Even if you mess up – mess up 100 percent – being physical," Queen said. "So, everything else we can correct in the film room, in the classroom, but the main focus of today is just come out and get past Day One, set the tone and just look to get better from there."



Photo credit: Scott Taetsch/Getty Images

Fans got to see the Ravens up close as they took part in an open practice at M&T Bank Stadium on Tuesday. Being in front of the fans naturally brings the energy up too. The fans were treated to touchdown passes from Lamar Jackson to Odell Beckham Jr., Nelson Agholor and Zay Flowers.



Jackie Jackson
Kilwins Chicago

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CERTIFICATION OF PUBLICATION CITY OF BALTIMORE OFFICE OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL - PROJECT NO. 1387 THE UNBUNDLING INITIATIVE MENTORING PILOT PROGRAM – FOR WATER CONTRACT (WC)-1283. WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT AND REHABILITATION AT BALTIMORE ST./ SMALLWOOD ST. AND REISTERSTOWN RD

The City of Baltimore Office of Boards and Commissions (OBC) has been authorized to advertise an *alternative procurement pilot program*. The Unbundling Initiative Pilot (“the Pilot”) Program will transition Baltimore-based Small, Minority and Women Business Enterprises S/M/WBES from subcontractors to Future General Contractors (FGCs). The Pilot is a natural extension of the existing Small Business Development (SBD) Training Program. The first phase of this initiative will include mentoring and job support on a water rehabilitation contract with traditional construction elements, designed to give S/M/WBES Primes actual work on DPW existing contracts to train and employ future GCs as the first phase of the Initiative. For the second phase of this Unbundling Initiative, DPW shall provide appropriately-sized utility contracts for newly trained future GCs to bid.

It is the expectation of the City’s DPW that the selected Prime Contractor will assume the risk of completing work performed by future GCs and subcontractors. The selected Prime must demonstrate how they will assign relevant work, document, mentor, and provide on-the-job training to Baltimore-based M/WBES to become future GCs capable of performing as the Prime Contractor. The Prime will provide mentoring and on-the-job support to S/M/WBES to enhance their abilities to become a future GCs to competitively bid on future Utility Work with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and other City Agencies. The Prime will document ongoing status performances of the assigned tasks; including resources provided (i.e. supplies, equipment) to the future GC; bonding and insurance assistance if needed; etc. to complete the scope of work for WC-1283 for the water main replacement and rehabilitation at Baltimore St./Smallwood St. and Reisterstown Rd. that involves the removal/abandonment and replacement of approximately 26,726 linear feet of three-inch thru 12-inch water mains, 1,487 linear feet of cleaning/lining, and relevant appurtenances.

The Prime will document the training and assistance provided to each Minority Business Enterprise / Women Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) Prime based on the needs of the Prime, assistance provided and the accomplishments and/or issues

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incurred during the performance of the assigned tasks. The Prime will complete a checklist and evaluation of each MBE/WBE’s performance on the completion of each task, which outlines the equipment, supplies, resources, training, etc., provided to each individual contractor. It should be noted that the various MBE/WBE contractors and their respective assignments will require varying degrees of assistance and/or resources based on their experience and exposure.

MBE/WBES must demonstrate their expertise by successfully completing the task assignment on time and on budget in order to receive a passing evaluation. MBE/WBES unable to perform the work, unable to grasp the necessary concepts, or maintain control of assigned task will be referred back to DPW’S / SBD Training Program for classroom enhanced skills.

This is a two-part process being submitted simultaneously: Part A-Response to RFP / Project # 1387 and Technical Proposal for WC-1283 and Part B-WC-1283 Bid Submission / Construction fees/Price Proposals. The selected Prime must demonstrate their **Best Value**, not necessarily the **Lowest Bid**.

The City’s goal is to benefit and increase the following:

MBE/WBE utilization;
Increase local hiring;
Development and capacity building of S/M/WBE; and
Provide viable competition of additional Primes to the City’s contracting process.

One (1) Prime will be selected to manage all services under this Initiative. Upon completion of WC-1283; the selected Prime must document how they have mentored and trained the future GCs to perform all tasks of this Initiative. There must be a minimum of five (5) future GCs (MBEs and WBES) integrated into the completion of utility construction for DPW Utility Contract WC-1283. The Prime shall provide the future GCs individual subcontractor agreements, endorsed by both parties herein.

1. Mentoring and training the required MBEs and WBES, maintaining the required participation and satisfactory evaluations of on-the-job performance for WC-1283.
2. Strategic plan for integrating MBE/WBE FGC of task performance for WC-1283.
3. Preparation of reports, detailed cost estimates, and contractual documents as required by the contract specifications including processing all permits and approvals from regulatory authorities if required.
4. Experience interviewing shop drawings, preparing operation and maintenance manuals, and evaluating potential change orders during construction.
5. Experience in using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and database management.
6. Experience in identifying and using software and methodologies that are applicable to this project

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7. Experience in developing comprehensive reports.
8. Experience in developing knowledge management processes, City staff training, and project repositories.

Prime must demonstrate criteria and experience including, but not limited to, the following:

A. Overview of Team –Members and Structure
* Ability to provide project management, contract administrative services, training on all topics involved in on-the-job training and performance on WC-1283, including skilled personnel, and resources to ensure effective performance and delivery.

B. Capacity Building Plan and Mentoring of Future General Contractor (FGCs)

* Ability to assist with Bonding, Financial and Work Capacity. Propose Mentoring, training methodology, including SBD, other facilitator’s, and outside experts; etc.

C. MBE/WBE Commitment

*Build and grow the capacity of Baltimore-based S/M/WBE. Coordination of a multi-disciplined team including MBEs and WBES

D. Financial Score – Best Value

Best Value, demonstrating your teams’ manpower, competent personnel to complete assigned tasks on schedule and within budget; not necessarily the lowest bid

Future General Contractor’s (FGCs) must meet two or more of the following eligibility requirements:

1. Primary headquarters must be in the City of Baltimore;
2. Must employ 50% of City of Baltimore residence;
3. Must be prequalified by the City’s OBC; or
4. Must have completed DPW’S SBD Training Program
<https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/smallbusinessdevelopment>

The City intends to select the services of one (1) Prime for a period of two (2) years at an estimated fee not to exceed \$18,000,000.00 with an option to extend for two (2) one-year additional term(s).

The City has designated a one-time Mentoring fee of \$500,000.00 which may be used for the duration of contract WC-1283. Funds can only be used by the Prime when mentoring to future GCs has been completed. The Prime must submit all invoices providing proof of how or what, mentoring was provided to the future GCs to receive any payment.

The Prime Contractor will receive a one-time bonus of \$250,000.00 for assisting the City of Baltimore by Mentoring and providing On-The-Job Performance Training to their future partners that is contingent on a minimum of 3 future GCs demonstrating to the City the ability to do the following one year after this project is complete:

* Capable to submit bids and become an awardee as Prime GC on appropriately sized

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contracts based on their prequalification work capacity with OBC, during this pilot or one-year after the end of this pilot.

* Ability to become bonded during this pilot or one-year after the end of this pilot.

DPW encourages all contracting Prime that have the experience and capacity to work on this scope to submit their proposals. All Primes must demonstrate and document their capacity and resources to deliver the required services on time. Should you have any questions regarding the scope of the project, please contact Ms. Nicolette Archie at 410-396-3440 or email Nicolette.Archie@baltimorecity.gov.

The Schedule: The anticipated advertisement schedule of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is intended as a partial timeline for related activities listed below:

*August 4, 2023: Advertisement of Project #1387 (WC-1283)

*August 18, 2023: Pre-proposal meeting 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

*August 25, 2023: Deadline for proposer’s submission of questions by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST)

*September 8, 2023: Responses due to proposer’s questions by 5:00 p.m. EST

*September 20, 2023: **Submittals due to the Board of Estimates (BOE) before 11:00 AM.**

Pre-Proposal Advertisement Meeting: Representatives from the City will be conducting a pre-proposal meeting in person with interested Proposers on **August 18, 2023 from 1:00 pm to 2:30** at the Department of Public Works (DPW) 200 Holliday Street, in the large 3rd Floor Conference Rm. Baltimore, Maryland 21202, or join **TEAMS on your computer, mobile app or room device**. **Click here to join the meeting** The Meeting ID: 297 810 129 490 **Or call in (audio only)** +1 667-228-6519,158749099# United States, Baltimore, Phone Conference ID: 158 749 099#.

The purpose of this meeting is to present and clarify information about the Project and procurement process, and respond to any immediate questions Proposers may have about the RFP. A list of attendees at the pre-proposal meeting will be recorded and made available to all Proposers.

Projects must comply with the 2006 edition of “The Specifications for Materials, Highways, Bridges, Utilities and Incidental Structures”. City personnel will utilize the City of Baltimore Guidelines for the Performance Evaluation of Design Consultants and Construction Contractors for this contract/project.

Prequalification Requirements

All Primes listed in the specific proposal for the Project **must** be prequalified by the Office of Boards and Commissions (OBC) for each appli-

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cable discipline *at time of submittal* for this Project. *A copy of the prime and sub's current Prequalification Certificate should be included in the bid submittal package.* Information regarding the prequalification process can be obtained by calling the OBC at 410-396-6883. The Federal Standard Form (SF) 255 *cannot* be supplemented with additional pages or any additional information such as graphs, photographs, organization chart, etc. All such information should be incorporated into the appropriate pages. Applications should not be bound but simply be stapled in the upper left-hand corner. Cover sheets should not be included.

Primes interested in submitting a proposal for this Project shall address a **Letter of Interest** to the OBC, 4 South Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland (MD) 21202, or you may submit an email to OBC.contractors@baltimorecity.gov. Letters of Interest will be utilized to assist S/M/WBEs in identifying potential teaming partners and should be submitted within five (5) days of the date of the project's advertisement. The Letter of Interest must provide the Project Number and the Prime's information: (Name, phone number, email, and contact person). Failure to submit a "letter of interest" *will not* disqualify any Prime submitting a proposal for the project.

Only individual Primes (including, for example, individuals, sole proprietorships, corporations, limited liability companies, limited liability partnerships, and general partnerships) or formal Joint Venture (JV) may apply. Two Primes may not apply jointly unless they have formed a joint venture.

Bid Documents

Interested Primes must purchase official bid documents for WC-1283 from Office of Contract Administration.

Bid documents for WC-1283 will be sold for **\$100.00** at the Office of Contract Administration (OCA) located at 4 South Frederick St Baltimore, MD 21202-3rd floor. Prime/Vendors must make an appointment to purchase documents at this location. Primes/Vendors wanting to purchase these documents must email obc.contractors@baltimorecity.gov Tonorah.Houston@baltimorecity.gov and dpw-bidopportunities@baltimorecity.gov The information provided within the requested email will be used for the bidder's list and contact information for the Pre-Bid meeting so information must be current and accurate. A Prime must be currently prequalified with the Office of Boards and Commissions, at the time of bid due date, in order for bids to be officially accepted.

For scheduled pickups: Primes' must not attempt to obtain documents without an appointment. A representative from OCA will confirm to the Prime the proposed date and time by receipt of email. Payment must be made on the day of the scheduled pick up in order for the documents to be released to the vendor. No cash will be accepted.

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For mailing requests: Documents will be mailed at the expense of the requested Prime. Primes' must provide a current active Federal Express account, or other overnight delivery service, account numbers and relevant information. After receipt of request, account numbers will be coned with the Prime with the mail service by a representative of OCA. A cashier's check *made out to Director of Finance*, must be received by OCA, 4 South Frederick St- 3rd Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. Include the Project number on the check. Cost of bid documents must be received before the documents can be sent.

Section 3.5 of the "Rules for Prequalification of Contractors" states: Only contractors prequalified by these Rules shall be entitled to purchase documents for bidding purposes. Any other individual may purchase documents stamped 'SAMPLE - NOT FOR BIDDING PURPOSES.'

Submittal Process

This is a two-part process being submitted simultaneously and follow required specifications and Instructions to Proposers: For both **Part A-Response to RFP / Project # 1387** and **Technical Proposal and Part B-WC-1283 Bid Submission / Construction fees.** Primes/Proposers must submit one (1) original and three (4) duplicate sealed copies with both Part-A and Part-B together as one package for submission. **Primes/Proposers submittals are due to the Board of Estimates (BOE) on or before 11:00 AM, Wednesday September 20, 2023. Proposals/Submissions will not be accepted after submission deadline.**

Part A - Response to RFP / Project # 1387 and **Technical Proposal for WC-1283:** Response to RFP for Project #1387 from each Prime responding to this is required to complete and submit an *original* Standard Federal (SF) Form 255, include certificate of prequalification and technical proposals.

Part B-WC-1283 Bid Submission (includes Construction fees/Price Proposals and Mentoring Pilot Program):

Primes/Proposers must provide a Cost Proposal, which shall include two (2) individual cost components:

Construction fees/Price Proposals: For the Construction Phase, Primes/proposers shall provide the total not to exceed cost for construction phase services for the water main replacement and all appurtenances.

Allowance for the Mentoring Pilot Program: The total allowance shall not exceed \$500,000, as provided by the City for the duration of this contract for fees to mentor future GCs.

ALL ISSUED ADDENDA IN THEIR ENTIRETY MUST BE ATTACHED TO THE ORIGINAL BID WHEN SUBMITTING YOUR BID TO THE COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE—DO NOT REMOVE ANY

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PAGES FROM ISSUED ADDENDA.

MBE/WBE Requirements

It is the policy of the City to promote equal business opportunity in the City's contracting process. Pursuant to Article 5, Subtitle 28 of Baltimore City Code (2000 Edition) - Minority and Women's Business Program, Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) participation goals apply to this contract.

The MBE/WBE goal is **49%**.

Primes must be named and identified as an MBE or WBE within Item 6 of the Standard Form (SF) 255 in the spaces provided for identifying outside key consultants/associates anticipated for utilization for this project.

Verifying Certification

The Prime submitting a SF 255 for consideration for a project is responsible for verifying that all MBEs and WBEs to be utilized on the project are certified by the **Minority and Women's Business Opportunity Office (MWBOO)** prior to submitting the proposal. A directory of certified MBEs and WBEs is available from MWBOO. Since changes to the directory occur daily, Primes submitting SF 255s should call the MWBOO at (410) 396-4355 to verify certification, expiration dates, and services that the MBE or WBE is certified to provide.

Non-Affiliation

A Prime submitting a proposal may not use an MBE or WBE to meet a contract goal if:

1. The Prime has a financial interest in the MBE or WBE
2. The Prime has an interest in the ownership or control of the MBE or WBE
3. The Prime is significantly involved in the operation of the MBE or WBE (Article 5, Subtitle 28-41)

Insurance Requirements

The Prime selected for the award of this project shall provide professional liability, auto liability, and general liability and workers' compensation insurances as required by the City of Baltimore.

Local Law Hiring

Article 5, Subtitle 27 of the Baltimore City Code, as amended (the "Local Hiring Law") and its rules and regulations apply to contracts and agreements executed by the City on or after the Local Hiring Law's effective date of December 23, 2013, which is applicable to all Primes/vendors. The Local Hiring Law applies to every contract for more than \$300,000 made by the City, or on its behalf, with any person. It also applies to every agreement authorizing assistance valued at more than \$5,000,000 to a City-subsidized project. Please visit www.oed-works.com for details on the requirements of the law.

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Additional Information

A Prime submitting as a prime consultant that fails to comply with the requirements of Article 5, Subtitle 28 of Baltimore City Code when executing a contract is subject to the following penalties: suspension of a contract; withholding of funds; rescission of contract based on material breach; disqualification as a consultant from eligibility to provide services to the City for a period not to exceed 2 years; and payment for damages incurred by the City.

A resume for each person listed as key personnel and/or specialist, including those from MBE and WBE Primes, must be shown on the page provided within the application.

Please be advised that for the purpose of reviewing price proposals and invoices, the City of Baltimore defines a principal of a Prime as follows:

A principal is any individual owning 5% or more of the outstanding stock of an entity, a partner of a partnership, a 5% or more shareholder of a sub-chapter 'S' Corporation, or an individual owner.

Out-of-State Corporations must identify their corporate resident agent within the application.

Primes will not be considered for a specific project if they apply as both a sub-consultant and prime consultant.

Failure to follow directions of this advertisement, submittal due date, or other requirements of this RFP may cause disqualification of the submittal.

Deena Joyce, AEAC Executive Secretary
Chief Office of Boards and Commissions

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



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