

The Annapolis Times

Vol. 37 No. 47

September 22 - 28, 2023

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication



THE BALTIMORE TIMES

**BEST OF
BLACK**

BALTIMORE

OUR NEW READER'S POLL KICKS OFF

SEPT 27TH

Baltimore Center Stage Introduces Baltimore's Own Tanea Renee As 'Billie Holiday' in *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*

BALTIMORE, MD: Baltimore Center Stage (BCS) is pleased to announce that Baltimore's own Tanea Renee will return to the stage this September as Billie Holiday in a new production of *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*. Directed by Pulitzer nominee Nikkole Salter, the show opens BCS' 2023/24 season starting September 14. The exclusive limited engagement runs through October 8; opening night for reviewing press is Friday, September 22 at 8PM. The show is sponsored by Miles & Stockbridge.

"As a proud Baltimorean, Tanea Renee has had a love of performance from a young age, which led her to a rich variety of roles across New York and regional stages," notes Interim Artistic director Ken-Matt Martin. "It is such a thrill to

welcome Tanea back to her hometown as the title character in Nikkole Salter's incredible new production of "*Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*." I am certain that Baltimore audiences will cherish this local legend at Center Stage."

In March 1959, four months before her passing, Billie Holiday gave an unforgettable performance at Emerson's Bar & Grill in South Philadelphia. However, her songs are just one part of the show. In between renditions of some of her greatest hits, like "Strange Fruit" and "God Bless the Child," Billie shares the triumphs and heartbreaks of a life and career like no other in this immersive cabaret experience that marks the directorial debut of Pulitzer nominated artist, Nikkole Salter.



Tanea Renee
Photo courtesy of Baltimore Center Stage

Tanea Renee's love of music began as a soloist in the children's choir of her baptist church. On the heels of her high school graduation, she would go on to spend her freshman summer touring and singing as a gospel soloist in Rome, Italy. As a graduate of Towson University's Acting Conservatory, Tanea was fortunate to perform the role of 'Cordelia' in Shakespear's *King Lear* alongside fellow alumni/director Charles S. Dutton. She was excited to launch her professional career soon after her move to New York City in local stage plays and regional musicals such as *Little Shop of Horrors* (Ronnette), *Smokey Joe's Cafe* (Brenda), and *The Beat Goes On*, a 70's musical review. Tanea would go on to expand into television by way of a day player on *The Chappelle Show* (Rick James, Charlie Murphy) and a contestant on *The Ultimate Coyote Ugly Search Season 3* (CMT).

Before moving on to perform in the National Tour of *Smokey Joe's Cafe* (swing BJ/Pattie), Tanea spent an exhilarating year performing with

a pioneering female theater company 1+1=ONE, which afforded her the rare opportunity to hone her skills through original plays and one woman shows around the city and surrounding boroughs. Tanea has spent some of her downtime away from the acting stage singing in New York City bands like Starlight Orchestra and relishing her other passion, private coaching kids in children's theater. In addition, Tanea has also had the honor of sharing her performance knowledge with other budding artists as a musical theater judge for NAACP ACT-SO achievement program.

Currently, Tanea Renee is wholeheartedly enjoying her time as the musical director of the Sunbeams Children's Choir in Baltimore, Maryland. She is also looking forward to curating/producing her first Christmas concert, a children's book, and recreating the annual *Everyday Christmas Project*.

Tanea will be joined onstage by a band of local musicians, including Terry Brewer as the bandleader "Jimmy" on piano, Eliot Seppa on bass and guitar, and Francis Carroll on percussion. Baltimore School for the Arts alum Brittani Arlandis Green will understudy the role of Billie Holiday.

The creative and production team for *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* includes Nikkole Salter (Director), Nolan Williams, Jr. (Musical Director), Sydney Lynne (Scenic Designer), Moyenda Kulemeka (Costumer Designer), Jorge Arroyo (Lighting Designer), UptownWorks (Sound Designer), Kacey Bradshaw* (Stage Manager), and Alexis E. Davis (Assistant Stage Manager). Casting is by JZ Casting/Geoff Josselson, CSA and Katja Zarolinski, CSA.

Single tickets are currently on sale by visiting or calling 410.332.0033. Patrons can also visit the box office, located at 700 North Calvert Street.

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THE BALTIMORE TIMES



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Unlock Financial Assistance for Farmers, Ranchers, and Forest Landowners

Are you a farmer, rancher, or forest landowner who has faced discrimination in USDA farm lending prior to January 2021? You may be eligible for financial assistance through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP).

What is DFAP?

\$2.2 Billion in Financial Assistance: Thanks to Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act, USDA is allocating \$2.2 billion in financial assistance to eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs.

Eligibility: Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination by USDA in its farm loan programs prior to January 1, 2021, and/or are currently debtors with assigned or assumed USDA farm loan debt that was the subject of USDA discrimination that occurred prior to January 1, 2021, are eligible for this program.

How Does It Work?

Multiple Ways to Apply: Producers have the option to apply via the e-filing portal at [22007apply.gov](https://www.22007apply.gov) or by submitting paper-based forms via mail or in-person delivery to the program's local offices.

Free Technical Assistance: Technical assistance is available for potential applicants through four regional hubs working closely with community-based organizations.

Local Resources: Local brick-and-mortar offices are being opened across the country to ensure easy access and personalized assistance. In-person and virtual events are also being held weekly, with state-by-state information on the website.

Important Deadline: Don't miss out! The deadline for eligible farmers, ranchers, or forest landowners to complete their application is October 31, 2023.

Learn More:

Website: For detailed information about DFAP, please visit our official website at [22007apply.gov](https://www.22007apply.gov). Our website provides comprehensive information on obtaining in-person or virtual technical assistance, supplementary program resources, and detailed program guidelines.

Call Center: Our call center, available at 1-800-721-0970, operates from 8 a.m. ET to 8 p.m. PT, seven days a week, except for Federal holidays. English- and Spanish-speaking agents are available, ensuring you get the assistance you need, when you need it.

Newsletter: Information about the program, resources, recent office openings, and local events across the country is also available through a weekly e-newsletter, which you can sign up for on the program site.

DFAP is all about giving you the support you deserve. Don't let this opportunity pass you by! Apply now to secure this financial assistance.



Farmers & Ranchers

Have you experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending prior to January 1, 2021? You may be eligible for financial assistance.

The application is free. Technical assistance is free and available in-person and over the phone.

For more information visit website or call:

www.22007apply.gov or 1-800-721-0970

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BEST OF BLACK BALTIMORE BUSINESSES

Campaign Launches September 27th

By Paris M. Brown

The Baltimore Times has been a staunch advocate for the Black community since its inception in 1986. Its unwavering commitment to support Black-owned businesses is a testament to its role as a champion of economic empowerment and community development. The “Best of Black Baltimore Businesses” digital marketing campaign, seeks to showcase, highlight, and celebrate Black-owned and operated businesses in Baltimore City.

At the heart of this campaign lies our dedication to promoting economic empowerment. By featuring and promoting Black-owned businesses, The Baltimore Times not only offers entrepreneurs a platform to reach a wider audience but also contributes to the economic growth and sustainability of the Black community in the region. Economic empowerment through entrepreneurship is a cornerstone of community development, and The Baltimore Times recognizes the importance of uplifting these businesses to foster economic resilience and self-sufficiency.

Community engagement is another pivotal aspect of this initiative. By encouraging the Baltimore community to nominate and vote for their favorite Black-owned businesses, The Baltimore Times fosters a sense of pride and connection within the community. This engagement is critical for building stronger neighborhoods and encouraging residents to actively participate in the growth and prosperity of their own communities.

Furthermore, the campaign serves as a powerful means of shining a spotlight on businesses that often go



unrecognized. Many Black-owned businesses play essential roles as pillars in their communities, contributing not only to the local economy but also to the social fabric of their neighborhoods. By allowing the community to tell the story of these businesses, The Baltimore Times underscores the importance of their presence and their contributions to the economic and cultural vitality of the region.

The campaign’s categories, ranging from arts and entertainment to health and fitness, encompass a diverse array of businesses that have made significant contributions to Baltimore’s Black entrepreneurial landscape. By encouraging nominations and votes in these various categories, the campaign ensures that a wide spectrum of businesses get the recognition they deserve.

Join The Baltimore Times in promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement but most importantly, celebrating our Black-owned businesses. Our commitment to this cause underscores the newspaper’s vital role in championing the Black community’s economic and social progress. This campaign is not just an



awards ceremony; it is a catalyst for positive change and growth within Baltimore’s Black entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Nominate your favorite business beginning Wednesday, September 27, 2023, through October 23, 2023. Voting begins November 1, 2023, and continues through December 2, 2023. Winners will be announced on December 12, 2023, and celebrated at an official party on January 11, 2024. Be on the lookout for more details and opportunities to nominate and vote in and all-around Baltimore!

Opportunities for sponsorship are still available.

We thank and applaud Sponsors who join The Baltimore Times in lifting up and highlighting the businesses that make Baltimore great!

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Baltimore City Homeowners Have Rights When It Comes to Real Property Assessments

With real property taxes constantly on the rise in Baltimore City, many wonder: What's leading to these increases? What are property assessments? And how can incorrect assessments be challenged?

Property assessments are an estimate of the current market value of a property used to calculate annual property taxes. In Maryland, one-third of properties are reassessed each year. And these property owners are sent an assessment notice in late December.

Equity Concerns

In Baltimore, assessors use the mass appraisal and income approach – meaning properties are appraised in groups without going inside individual homes. Such appraisals often are based on such things as sales data, revenue generated by commercial properties and surrounding landmarks like a golf course or waterfront.

Baltimore property taxes are among the highest in the country – ranking 490 out of 3,143 U.S. counties based on the average tax. Since 2016, Baltimore property assessments have increased about 8% each year. Assessors realize the inequities that come with mass appraising homes in Baltimore City, recognizing it's easier to mass appraise in the county where homes are more similar than in the city where homes tend to be more unique. The mix of residential and commercial properties also make mass appraisals unreliable because business owners infrequently report their profit and losses and homeowners are not generating revenue from the businesses in their neighborhood.

Another issue is including attractions in property assessments such as waterfronts, the Baltimore Zoo and golf courses. These attractions often raise community property valuations with no monetary

benefit to homeowners living in the neighborhoods. The Maryland Assessment Work Group recognized such inequity and found that for assessments to be accurate, in-person inspections “are necessary on some periodic basis.”

Appeals Process

For years, the Baltimore City Property Tax Assessment Appeals Board has wrestled with a growing backlog of appeals due to alleged inequities and inconsistencies with property assessments. Despite thousands of appeals being filed each year, only about 30 to 35 percent of these cases win relief at this level, and the percentage would be higher if homeowners knew how to prepare.

Homeowners should not be discouraged if they receive a notice of assessment that they believe does not reflect their actual property value. There are three times when homeowners can challenge their property assessment: (1) at the time of the reassessment notice; (2) during a Petition for Review; and (3) when the new owner purchases the property.

Appeal on Reassessment: When a homeowner receives their notice of assessment in December, they have 45 days to appeal. The notice of assessment includes an appeal form that explains the appeals process with instructions to complete the form. The Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation attempts to complete all reassessment appeals by June 1.

Petition for Review: If the homeowner misses the deadline to appeal or circumstances cause the property to decline, the homeowner can appeal an assessment the following year after receiving the notice of assessment. The appeal must be mailed to the local assessment office before the first business day following January 1.



Adrian-Calinescus-Images via Canva.com

Appeal upon Purchase: An appeal can be filed within 60 days upon a property transfer between the months of January 1 and June 30. However, the new deed must be recorded prior to filing an appeal and the appeal must be filed within 60 days of the transfer.

There are three stages a homeowner can go through when appealing their property assessment. Each stage of appeals is reviewed by an independent agency, which has a different set of requirements. At each stage, the homeowner should consider whether the appraised value reflects the market value of the property and similar comparable properties; and whether any errors have been made in describing the property. When appealing, homeowners can request: (1) a property worksheet describing their home (e.g., number of bathrooms,

condition of the property); (2) complimentary property and area sales listings; and (3) property worksheets of comparable properties (\$1 fee per comparable worksheet).

For more information about property assessment and appeals, visit: <https://sdat.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/Pages/default.aspx>

While very real concerns about property assessments exist in Baltimore City, homeowners do have rights to appeal and can be successful if they know what evidence to bring and how to present their case. For assistance or more information, contact Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service at mvlslaw.org/free-legal-help.


This article was written by Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service Deputy Director Margaret Henn and Legal Intern Kamryn Washington.


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²Additional information about the America's Home Grant program: The America's Home Grant program is a lender credit. Program funds can only be used for nonrecurring closing costs including title insurance, recording fees, and in certain situations, discount points may be used to lower the interest rate. The grant cannot be applied toward down payment, prepaid items or recurring costs, such as property taxes and insurance. Borrowers cannot receive program funds as cash back.

³Additional information about the Down Payment program: Down Payment program is available with one mortgage product. Program funds can be applied toward down payment only. Borrowers cannot receive program funds as cash back in excess of earnest money deposits. Down Payment Grant program may be considered taxable income, a 1099-MISC will be issued, consult with your tax advisor. May be combined with other offers. The Bank of America Down Payment Grant program may only be applied once to an eligible mortgage/property, regardless of the number of applicants. Homebuyer education is required.

⁴Maximum income and loan amount limits apply. Fixed-rate mortgages (no cash out refinances), primary residences only. Certain property types are ineligible. Maximum loan-to-value ("LTV") is 97%, and maximum combined LTV is 105%. For LTV >95%, any secondary financing must be from an approved Community Second Program. Homebuyer education may be required. Other restrictions apply.

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Business Owner Raises Awareness About Alopecia

By Andrea Blackstone

Alopecia remains an underdiscussed autoimmune skin disease, although it is a common one.

"About 700,000 people in the U.S. currently have some form of alopecia areata," according to the National Alopecia Areata Foundation.

Alopecia areata produces patches of hair loss; alopecia totalis leaves hair loss across a person's entire scalp; and a third main type, alopecia universalis, results in hair loss on a person's entire body, including eyebrows and eyelashes.

Amanda Hunt, an Anne Arundel County resident, turned to Grace Dennis, owner of Grace and Elegance Beauty Salon, Incorporated, when she needed assistance because she was experiencing hair and skin challenges.

"I met Grace through a colleague of hers that worked in a salon. I was a customer of her colleague, and unfortunately, at that time, the young lady did not really know how to treat issues that I was having with my hair," Hunt said. "Grace just volunteered to take me on as a customer, because not only do I have alopecia now, but then, I still do have eczema."

Hunt explained that a friendship developed with Dennis. She regards her stylist as a "blessing." Their journey spans at least 35 years.

"She literally brought me back from baldness, during the bad time that I was having. I had lost all my hair and everything. She literally, between the treatments, and the caring, and the love and support that she was giving me, she actually got the hair to grow again," Hunt said, noting that her hair bounced back in areas other than where she has alopecia.

Dennis, whose business is located at 228 Obrecht Road in Millersville, Maryland, is a senior cosmetologist and non-surgical hair restoration



Grace Dennis, owner of Grace and Elegance Beauty Salon

Luke Thompson

specialist who has been a licensed stylist for 44 years.

She is capable of providing a host of services ranging from a variety of haircuts and relaxer services to weaves, wraps, interlocking, special conditioning treatments and hair loss services.

Dennis explained that she has noticed that an increased amount of people are coming to her about alopecia.

"I've noticed a lot of people wearing lots of wigs and weaves and they're not taking care of the hair underneath all the covering up. So, later on, they realize they're losing their hairline. They're losing hair," Dennis said.

to determine if hair loss is permanent. Dermatologists send clients to her, too. Sometimes hair grows back if alopecia is the cause. Other times, it does not, or it grows in patches.

"It's different types of alopecia, so you have to know what type of alopecia you have," Dennis said.

The special treatments that Dennis provides may include hair stimulating, massaging of the scalp or steam deep treatments. She customizes treatments depending on the needs of the customer.

"Alopecia is unpredictable," Dennis reminded. "It makes you feel [pretty much] like you're not pretty enough or good enough to wear your hair out. I just advise my clients and do... whatever we can do to build their confidence."

When customers experience hair loss because of a medical cause such as chemotherapy, their insurance may cover a prosthetic. Dennis can skillfully customize a hairpiece using various colors, density and textures.

Dennis, who is known to be understanding and patient, said that she has suffered from alopecia since she was about seven or eight years old. She wore wigs from her early 20s until she decided to openly share her truth.

"So, when I came out three years ago, it was for me, but not only for me. It was to help other people," Dennis remarked. "I said, 'Lord, if I can just help somebody, and let them know that I understand what they're going through, it's worth me doing this.'"

The National Alopecia Awareness Foundation, the Bald Boss Community, American Cancer Society, Look Good Feel Better Society and Alopeciasupportgroup.org are other alopecia resources Dennis mentioned. Find out more about her business and professional services via <https://www.graceandeleganceinc.com>.

She mentioned that wigs can rub around the forehead and affect hairlines. Glued in weaves and lace front wigs, not washing and taking care of wigs that contain germs, or wearing these styles too long can also negatively impact a person's natural hair. Dennis said that adorning hair is possible, but she recommends getting hair treatments.

She further noted that it is natural for hair to shed, then it starts to actively grow again within the stages.

"For instance, [losing] 90 strands a day is normal for hair loss," Dennis said.

In other cases, Dennis may analyze hair and send customers to a doctor

'Young Dylan' Continues to Grow with the Flow

By Andrea Blackstone

Dylan Gilmer ("Young Dylan"), 14, continues to make remarkable strides as a rapper and actor.

"I listened to a bunch of rappers growing up when my father used to turn on the radio and turn on music," Dylan said, reflecting on his early start.

As a young child, he remembered the songs word for word. His father, Damon Gilmer, recorded his energetic flow. Coming from a small town did not dim his shine. Singing Bryson Tiller's "Don't," drew fans and opportunity makers to notice the talented boy from Annapolis, Maryland.

"Ellen [DeGeneres] called me and that's how my whole career started. Going viral, going on Ellen and posting more viral videos, that's how everything got started. That's how I became a rapper and I also turned into an actor. Now, I'm doing both at the same time," Dylan said.

Dylan aspires to be a top kid rapper in the world who has career longevity. However, he shared that his parents always keep him grounded. The ambitious boy who is the son of DeAundra DeJesus and Damon Gilmer, received the key to the City of Annapolis in 2019. Since that time, Dylan has continued to grow from a pint-sized social media phenomenon to a young man. He is steadily carving out niches for himself in the entertainment industry.

Dylan had been busy making music like "BET IT," "I Just Wanna," with Jermaine Dupri and his most popular song, "Get Litty." He filmed music videos before school doors opened and began working on more tunes.

"I released a lot of projects this year," Dylan said, mentioning that more singles will be rolled out. "I don't ever want to fall off."



Dylan Gilmer ("Young Dylan") can be seen on "Tyler Perry's Young Dylan" and "NFL Slimetime." Latisha Mariee, DBR Creatives

Dylan's acting and hosting career has picked up. He stars in "Tyler Perry's Young Dylan" comedy series on Nickelodeon every Wednesday at 7 p.m. Additionally, Dylan also can be spotted on NFL's "Slimetime" sports show Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.

When cameras turn on, Dylan knows that he is in a work environment. It is not a time for fun.

"I'm getting paid to do this. I love what I'm doing and I don't want to lose it," Dylan said.

He added, "It's very, very hard, but I just feel like you have to have a great



Dylan Gilmer ("Young Dylan"), 14, went viral online singing at the age of six. The Annapolitan raps and acts. Cam Kirk

support system. You have to have your parents and people around you that you trust, and they know what you can handle. They know when it gets stressful for you. So yeah, it's very hard to balance, but I feel like as of right now, we're doing pretty good," Dylan said.

Dylan, now a high school freshman who balances work and school, remarked that social studies is his favorite subject.

"I love history," Dylan said, also mentioning that he likes gym.

Dylan said that school personnel

sent work when he would be away, but most of the time his parents unenrolled him from school and homeschooled him until he finished work obligations.

Growing up in the public eye requires Dylan to maintain a healthy perspective of being himself.

"I try not to listen to the critics. If people are doing that and criticizing me, I'm growing up but I'm still a kid," Dylan said, mentioning that he feels like he is doing something good.

Dylan wants to continue making more music and acting, but he has more goals and dreams.

"It might be hard to go to college, if I'm still doing the same stuff that I'm doing right now, but college is definitely a dream. I want to invest in different businesses," Dylan said, mentioning wanting his own business, too.

Dylan remains proud to be an Annapolitan.

"I feel like you always should love your hometown because they built you. It takes a village to build somebody up," Dylan said. "Annapolis— they helped me grow up. All of my family members are in Maryland and most of my family members are in Annapolis, so yeah, that's why I love Annapolis so much and the people out here."

Dylan said that he feels like his hometown already helped by promoting him during the start of his career, when he had less of a fan base. He offered advice to other youth who might not believe that kids can do amazing things.

"Anybody, any age can do amazing things. I just feel like you've just got to be yourself throughout the whole thing. Don't change. Keep the right support system. Keep people around you that you trust," Dylan said.

Get updates about Dylan's endeavors via <https://www.instagram.com/officialyoungdylan/>.

Truist Supplies the “Green” to Create “A New Kind of Blues” to West Baltimore

Partnership of Neighborhood Residents and Black Farmers Brings “Cash Crop” of Indigo

By Adrian Harpool

A few weeks ago, on September 8, in the final days of this summer’s record-breaking heatwave, residents of West Baltimore’s Upton Community gathered to welcome regional officers of Truist Bank to celebrate a critical investment in what is known as the **Natural Dye Initiative (NDI)**. The \$300,000 grant is in support of the purchase, renovation of a building owned by the **Upton Planning Committee, Inc.** as well as the adjacent fields on formerly vacant lots where indigo plants are farmed for processing and subsequent sale for a wide range of commercial and artistic uses.

As part of this collaborative public-private partnership, additional support from Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development funds, NDI is purchasing indigo processing equipment and programming activities will be funded by the Maryland State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Natural Dye Initiative will create job opportunities in addition to training and symposia for fiber arts professionals. Recently, the group hosted the first in a series of “Indigo Arabber” Community Dye Events, at which participants learned the history of indigo and were able to design and dye tee-shirts in vats mounted onto a horse drawn Arabber cart.

Wanda Best, Executive Director of the Upton Planning Council noted, “We are so glad to leverage Truist’s support to build on our efforts in revitalizing West Baltimore. Upton Planning Committee has long been dedicated to finding innovative



(Left to Right) Jay Turakhia – Regional Market President Truist, Wanda Best Executive Director - Upton Planning Committee, Shay Patterson – Executive Assistant Truist, Natasha Horton – Senior Vice President-Regional Development Manager Truist

IAN HARPOOL/Harpool Media

approaches for inspiring reinvestment in this community. We are ever encouraged by the support of our government and now private sector partners.”

“Truist’s purpose is to inspire and build better lives and communities and we are committed to demonstrating our purpose in West Baltimore by serving clients and funding programs that will help this community thrive,” said Truist Market President, Jay Turakhia. “Partnering with organizations to bring programs like the Natural Dye Initiative to life will have a tremendous economic impact for West Baltimore, providing job training and creation that can lead to greater financial stability and wealth creation for individuals and families.”

Other partners in this endeavor including Neighborhood Fiber

Company, indigo artist Kibibi Ajanku, the Space for Creative Black Imagination and the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore’s Small Farms Outreach Program. These groups will be instrumental in the development of jobs, farms, small businesses and community and cultural resources.

The group is advised and assisted by African American farmers from Baltimore City, Eastern Shore of Maryland, South Carolina (Low Country), and Piedmont North Carolina that will deliver their leaves for processing and marketing. Members of the Maryland State partners committee include the Maryland Dept of Agriculture, MARBIDCO, Pennsylvania Avenue AME Zion Church; and the University of Maryland Extension Service. NDI



Christopher Myers



has begun consultation with the University of Maryland Environmental Science Center and the University of Baltimore on water quality standards.

The processing and operations facility will be housed in the former Harriet Beecher Stowe School located in the 1300 Block of Argyle Street. Plans for the building are being drafted by the Neighborhood Design Center and Sigma Development will manage the construction scheduled for completion Midyear of 2024.



ALL-ELECTRIC
ESCALADE IQ

Preproduction model shown throughout. Actual production model may vary. Available late 2024.

GBUL & PepsiCo Foundation Launch the Black Restaurant Accelerator in Baltimore!

By Catalina Byrd

On Tuesday, September 12, 2023, The PepsiCo Foundation, National Urban League, and Greater Baltimore Urban League launched the Black Restaurant Accelerator Program at the Baltimore World Trade Center (WTC). The view from Skyline WTC's 21st Floor space was an elegant backdrop to the array of talent displayed by all of the grantees. The culinary tasting included samples from all 24 participants in this year's cohort; everything from desserts to vegan offerings filled the space with things that enchanted all of the senses.

The Restaurant Accelerator Program began in 2021 and showed great success. This is its first year in Baltimore. Twenty-four Black restaurant owners participated and 96 restaurant jobs were created as a result.

National Urban League President, Marc Morial, said, "The Black Restaurant Accelerator Program has been a game changer in Baltimore and the other 11 cities. We have come in and provided support to these businesses after being knocked down so badly by COVID-19."

The National Urban League held their annual national conference in Baltimore in 2016 and knows what a special city Baltimore is. Greater Baltimore Urban League President Tiffany Majors was extremely proud and spoke of how encouraged they all are to see what is next for these business owners. There were brief remarks given, but the night was about celebrating, networking, and most importantly — eating as much as you possibly could.

The businesses that were highlighted at the event were at varying stages of growth. For example, Taste This already had two brick and mortar



Marc H. Morial, President, National Urban League; Charlene Denizard, Head of North America Programs, PepsiCo Foundation; Tiffany Majors, President, Greater Baltimore Urban League; and Ricky Smith, Chairman, Greater Baltimore Urban League, and CEO, BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport

locations prior to participating in the program. However, many of the other chefs did not. Dwayne Benbow Jr. of Funnel Cake King operates his business from a mobile food cart. Oftentimes, it is difficult for small businesses to gain access to programs like these. That was one of the primary reasons that The PepsiCo Foundation, National Urban League, and Greater Baltimore Urban League partnered to launch this initiative.

Charlene Denizard, Head of North America Programs, PepsiCo Foundation, said that "PepsiCo has had a long history working in communities all across the country and we want to support them like they do us, but it takes strong partners like National Urban League to get it done. We can provide the ideas and we can provide funding, but [we] can't do any of the rest of this work and we know that."

Jay Salters, the coach of The Black Restaurant Accelerator Program,

stated that he felt blessed to have had the opportunity to be their coach and that he "knows that these business owners know about the sacrifice that it takes to be successful and the importance of giving back to the community as well." Skyline WTC, which is more commonly known as "The Top of the World," is managed by Dwayne Sherrod. He was appreciative of the intentional decision to hold the launch event, in a Black-owned business as well.

In February of 2023, Governor Wes Moore, signed an executive order to strengthen participation and accountability in minority businesses that contract with the state of Maryland. By law, all state agencies are tasked to get their MBE participation up to or beyond the 29% inclusion. Kevin Anderson, Maryland Secretary of Commerce, who also attended the event, is among those tasked with this mission.



Dwayne Benbow Jr, Owner, Funnel Cake King
Greater Baltimore Urban League

Each of the businesses that participated in the program also qualify as MBE's and are afforded additional opportunities to expand and become partners with the state. Greater Baltimore Urban League is also a partner with the state of Maryland in doing outreach to businesses in the community and making them aware of available resources. Greater Baltimore Urban League and Greater Washington Urban League sponsor outreach events targeting business owners to attract more participation with the Maryland Minority Business Counts Initiative.

For more information on The Black Restaurant Accelerator Program, and to apply, please visit www.nul.org. If your business is Black-owned and you need support with growing your business or navigating government contracts, Greater Baltimore Urban League can assist. For more information about becoming MBE certified in the state of Maryland, and learning about upcoming events of the Maryland Minority Business Counts initiative, please visit gomdsmallbiz.maryland.gov.

Suicide Prevention Month: What You Should Know

By Andrea Blackstone

Domenique Harrison— a licensed therapist, small business founder and racial equity strategist/consultant— said that high-risk populations for dying by suicide include queer and trans youth; disabled teens; men; veterans; individuals who are experiencing considerable mental and extensive chronic pain without consistent medical or therapeutic treatment; elderly isolated adults; individuals impacted by substance abuse; and members of indigenous and native communities. She added that additional risk factors of these groups being affected are their experiences with oppression, bullying, being turned away from support/resources and harsh living conditions.

If a person observes signs or symptoms that someone is exhibiting suicidal thoughts that may lead to a crisis situation, an appropriate response should be a direct and thoughtful inquiry about what is being observed. “Are you having thoughts about harming yourself, thoughts about suicide, thoughts about ending your life?” are some of those questions, according to Harrison.

Dangerous objects should be identified and removed from an at-risk person’s environment or home. Harrison answered specific questions that shed a light on suicide awareness.

Q: What are a few reasons why someone may reach the point of considering suicide?

A: A few reasons someone may consider suicide are feelings of hopelessness. For example, folks who have experienced severe abuse and violence; discrimination; oppression;



Domenique Harrison, also known as The Racial Equity Therapist, is a race and relationships therapist and an identity equity strategist.

Leah Huebner, Huebner Headshots

abandonment; isolation; and bullying often feel alone in their struggles and incapable of getting away from harm and danger. Another reason someone may consider suicide is that individuals who live with undiagnosed and unsupported mental health disorders and illnesses can no longer live with the debilitating, disorienting and challenging effects of their experience. Additionally, folks experience intense social isolation, community disconnection and social judgment/ostracization from their peers/partners/families.

Q: What is a suicide-focused treatment plan?

A: A suicide-focused treatment plan is a plan that supports someone at-risk of dying by suicide, attempting

suicide, or who has consistent suicidal ideation to help and improve their well-being practices, safety needs, potential medication adherence and overall quality of life. The plan is, first and foremost, about reducing as many risk factors and symptoms as possible while responding correlatively to the signs of the individual’s crisis experiences. Many suicide-focused treatment plans are created in collaboration with the client or patient and involve identifying social supports, safety measures, crisis mitigation, and coping strategies during moments of emotional overwhelm and distress.

A plan can include specific alternative activities to self-harm. Identify which people in the person’s life are immediate, short-term and long-term resources. Eliminate the person’s access to harmful objects— drugs, guns and knives. Name coping skills to be used immediately. Name the locations of hospitals to support the patient’s care and crisis helplines to call to augment the therapist/counselor’s support.

Q: How important is developing a suicide-focused treatment plan if someone attempted suicide in the past?

A: Completing/developing a suicide-focused treatment plan should be prioritized if someone has attempted suicide in the past, and the treatment plan should be done in the most collaborative and supportive way. Remember, once created, the suicide-focused treatment plan doesn’t just go on a shelf or in your file. It needs to be discussed often, updated as the person’s physical/emotional/mental/social experiences change, and potentially scaled down once the person and therapist see that

suicidality is not as prominent in the person’s life.

Q: What is the official rule about someone being a danger to themselves or someone else? Who makes these determinations?

A: When someone poses a threat to themselves or others, mental health professionals, such as licensed counselors, social workers, therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists, typically conduct one to three sessions to clinically assess their suicidality, suicidal thoughts and previous suicide attempts. They also examine the person’s present and near-future safety, utilizing their clinical expertise, direct communication and written assessments.

During this process, mental health professionals collaborate with individuals in crisis, providing them with a compassionate, non-judgmental, and safe space to express their challenges, fears and needs.

If the person is deemed in immediate danger, mental health professionals may consider initiating an involuntary hold at an inpatient mental health facility and implementing other safety and emergency-oriented measures to ensure the well-being of the person and those around them.

Q: What is supposed to happen legally?

A: After assessing a person’s crisis level and danger to self and others, mental health professionals should identify voluntary and involuntary measures, such as a short to long-term hospital stay to support the person and their community’s well-being.

Harrison’s website is <https://theraciaequitytherapist.com>.

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Contact/info@lightoftruthcenter.org for



The Light of Truth Center, (LTC) is a behavioral health system supporting women recovering from drugs and alcohol. LTC provides transitional housing, IOP/OP, and other support services and referrals to outside agencies.

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CITY OF BALTIMORE
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OFFICE OF ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION
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 **WATER CONTRACT NO. 1396-Montebello Plant 2-Sedimentation basins 5-6-7 Structural Repairs** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M on **November 1, 2023**. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. Bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates and can be watched live on CharmTV's cable channel 25/1085HD; charmtv.baltimore.com/watch-live or listen in at (443) 984-1696 (ACCESS CODE: 0842939) from City Hall at Noon. The Contract Documents may be examined, without charge, at Contract Administration 4 South Frederick Street Baltimore, Maryland 21202 on the 3rd floor (410) 396-4041 as of **September 8, 2023** and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **150.00**. **Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package.** All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be prequalified by the City of Baltimore Contractors Qualification Committee. Interested parties should call (410) 396-6883 or contact OBC at 4 S Frederick St., 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. **If a bid is submitted by a joint venture ("JV"), then in that event, the document that established the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes.** The Prequalification Category required for bidding on this project is **E13003 – Water and/or Sewer Treatment Plants and Pumping Station**. Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$5,000,000.01 to \$15,000,000.00**.

A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted Virtually. Vendor can access this Microsoft Teams virtual meeting on September 26, 2023 at 10:00 am by utilizing the following ID and Passcode: Meeting ID: 258 186 796 061 Passcode: JanCjR. A site visit to Montebello Filtration Plant 1 & 2 will be conducted on October 2, 2023 at 10:00 am. For any Pre-bid questions, please contact Mr. Farid Sikander at farid.sikander@baltimorecity.gov. Deadline for contractor questions shall be submitted (in writing only) by **October 16, 2023 at 4:30 PM**. Contractor questions shall be submitted via email to torron.coleman@baltimorecity.gov and farid.sikander@baltimorecity.gov.

To purchase a bid book, please make an electronic request at: <https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/dpw-construction-projects-notice-letting-and-dpwbidopportunities@baltimorecity.gov>. For further inquiries about purchasing bid documents, please contact the assigned Contract Administrator Torron.Coleman@baltimorecity.gov

Principal items of work for this contract include, but are not limited to:
Concrete repairs to the three existing Sedimentation Basin at Montebello Filtration Plant 2.

The MBE goal is **14%**
APPROVED:
Clerk, Board of Estimates

The WBE goal is **10%**
APPROVED:
Richard J. Luna
Interim Director
Department of Public Works

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

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Housing Authority of the City of Hagerstown, Maryland, 35 W. Baltimore Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740 will receive bids from qualified, responsible contractors until 1:00PM current time, Thursday, September 28, 2023, for the Deck and Railing Replacement Project, 11-12 Walnut Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740. Walnut Towers is a two- building high rise apartment complex. The "A" Building has 102 apartments and the three story "B" Building has 48 apartments. Anticipate award of contract to successful contractor by mid-October, 2023. Construction period will be discussed once the contract is awarded. The actual construction start date will be established by mutual agreement between the owner and the contractor. Davis-Bacon wages for Washington County, Maryland and Liquidated Damages apply to this solicitation.

Electronic drawings and specifications are available upon request. Contact Dawn Bragunier, Modernization Coordinator, at telephone 301-733-6911 Ext. 168 or email: dbragunier@hagerstownha.com for bid documents.

Sean Griffith
Contract Officer

E.E.O.

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Housing Authority of the City of Hagerstown, Maryland, 35 W. Baltimore Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740 will receive bids from qualified, responsible contractors until 2:00PM current time, Thursday, September 28, 2023, for the Potomac Towers Sliding Glass Door Replacements Project at 11 W. Baltimore Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740. Potomac Towers is a 14-story, high-rise building, housing 326 residential units. Anticipate award of contract to successful contractor by mid-October 2023. Construction period will be discussed once the contract is awarded. The actual construction start date will be established by mutual agreement between the owner and the contractor. Davis-Bacon wages for Washington County, Maryland and Liquidated Damages apply to this solicitation.

Electronic drawings and specifications are available upon request. Contact Dawn Bragunier, Modernization Coordinator, at telephone 301-733-6911 Ext. 168 or email: dbragunier@hagerstownha.com for bid documents.

Sean Griffith
Contract Officer

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