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The Baltimore Excel Center, a tuition-free high school for adults opened by Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake, held its grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 28, 2023. From left: Shamar Rice, a Baltimore Excel Center student; Trimiea Cannady, a Baltimore Excel Center student; Sherry DeFrancisci, Director of the Baltimore Excel Center; Lisa Rusyniak, President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake Inc.; Joe Durham, Goodwill Board Chair; DaShawn Archer, Lead Teacher at the Baltimore Excel Center; and Elonna Jones, Baltimore City Regional Director of Sen. Chris Van Hollen's Office. (See article on page 5) Glenwood Jackson

Mayor Scott Launches Fall City Services Sprint

DPW, DOT, BCRP to Implement Traffic Calming Measures, Clean and Maintain Tree Wells, Conduct Rat Abatement, Address Abandoned Vehicles

BALTIMORE, MD (Monday, October 2, 2023) – Today, Mayor Brandon M. Scott relaunched the next iteration of the #BuildBetterBMore 90-day City services sprints for the Fall season. Mayor Scott's city services sprints were originally introduced this past spring.

Over the course of the 90-day sprint, multiple City agencies, including the Department of Public Works, Department of Transportation, and Recreation & Parks, will work to conduct 36,000 rat inspections and provide necessary treatments to address rat infestations, cut and clean 800 tree wells, install 90 speed humps to help

with traffic calming, and address 900 abandoned vehicles. Additionally, the agencies will conduct public education efforts that accompany the targeted issue areas, like strategies to reduce rat populations and options to address disabled vehicles.

“We launched this City services sprints effort to send a message to Baltimoreans that we are committed to delivering high quality services in every single neighborhood across the city,” said Mayor Brandon M. Scott. “This past spring, City agencies exceeded their original goals in record time, prompting us to expand the service goals, while continuing to drive



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service improvements. Our front-line workers didn't slow down, and with this next iteration of the sprints we're tackling even more issues important to Baltimoreans. During these 90 days, I hope that residents join us in this effort by submitting their service requests through 311 and encourage us all to come together to improve our city.”

“The city services sprints have become a critical tool to help us drive improvements to service delivery in neighborhoods across the city,” said Faith Leach, Baltimore City Chief Administrative Officer. “We will continue to leverage data to track progress and to inform service delivery improvements at each step of the process.”

In the initial spring City services sprint launched in April 2023, City agencies were tasked with repairing 9,000 potholes, removing 900 graffiti markings, resurfacing nine miles of city roads,



Mayor Brandon M. Scott

Courtesy Photo

and targeting illegal dumping hot-spots in Baltimore. Ultimately, Within just 60 days, on June 12, 2023, crews filled 19,831 potholes, repaved 10.1 lane miles, removed 1,142 graffiti markings, and cut down on illegal dumping across the city.



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Keep Fighting COVID-19 and the Flu: Protect Yourself

By Andrea Blackstone

The CDC is recommending that everyone six months and older get an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect against the potentially serious outcomes of COVID-19 illness this fall and winter.

“Vaccination remains the best protection against COVID-19-related hospitalization and death. Vaccination also reduces your chance of suffering the effects of Long COVID, which can develop during or following acute infection and last for an extended duration,” the CDC reported in early September. “If you have not received a COVID-19 vaccine in the past two months, get an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect yourself this fall and winter.”

It is important to be mindful that protection from COVID-19 vaccines decline over time.

In today’s world of COVID-19 infection, having a fever of 100.4°F or greater, coughing and experiencing shortness of breath, tiredness, congestion or a runny nose can be a cause of concern. Similar symptoms can also show up in someone who has the flu. It is possible to get a flu shot and the COVID vaccine at the same time.

“COVID-19 is caused by infection with a coronavirus named SARS-CoV-2, and flu is caused by infection with influenza viruses. You cannot tell the difference between flu and COVID-19 by symptoms alone because some of the symptoms are the same. Some PCR tests (polymerase chain reaction) can differentiate between flu and COVID-19 at the same time,” the CDC reminded.

A PCR laboratory-based test is usually given by a healthcare provider to check for genetic material from a pathogen or abnormal cell sample.

Dr. Aubree Gordon, an infectious disease expert at the University of Michigan explained that someone with the flu usually has symptoms one to four days after being infected.

“A person with COVID-19 typically shows symptoms about five days after infection, although this can range from two to 14 days, according to Gordon.

“You can go and get a COVID test at many pharmacies, and your doctor can administer tests for flu,” Dr. Brooke Bozick, an NIH expert on respiratory diseases that affect the lungs, said.

The CDC recommends immediate testing if you have any COVID-19 symptoms.

“If you test negative for COVID-19 using an at-home antigen test, repeat the test again 48 hours after your first test. Also, consider consulting a healthcare provider to see if you need to be tested for another viral infection or illness,” the CDC reported.

Sometimes people are aware they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and have symptoms. In this case, the CDC advises individuals to get tested at least five full days after their exposure. If your test is negative for COVID-19 using an at-home antigen test, the CDC advises an individual to repeat the test again 48 hours after the first test. Even if both tests are negative, the CDC stated that a person should repeat testing after another 48 hours for a total of three tests.

Although at-home tests are available for sale around the U.S. and in pharmacies, four free tests per household can be ordered from the federal government, while supplies last. The rapid antigen at-home tests can be ordered by visiting <https://www.covid.gov/tests>, or by calling 1-800-232-0233. According to the website mentioned above, tests are available for



COVID-19 vaccines decline over time. The CDC is recommending that everyone six months and older get an updated COVID-19 vaccine this fall and winter. It is possible to get a flu shot and the COVID vaccine at the same time. The composition of the flu vaccines has also been updated.

every residential address in the U.S., including Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, U.S. territories, and overseas military and diplomatic addresses. The tests will reportedly be delivered by the U.S. Postal Service through the mail.

Find flu vaccine information via <https://www.vaccines.gov/find-vaccines/>. The CDC also reminded that although “updated COVID-19 vaccines are available to most adults living in the U.S. at no cost through their private health insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid plans,” there are 25-30 million uninsured adults “and additional adults whose insurance does not cover all COVID-19 vaccine costs.” The CDC’s Bridge Access Program fills in the gap by providing “no-cost COVID-19 vaccines for these adults.” Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/bridge/> to obtain more information about it.

As COVID-19 cases rise, the decision to mask up or wear a N95 respirator

in crowded indoor spaces is also back on the table. Newer variants can cause additional concerns, especially if someone is older or if someone lives with autoimmune disease. However, everyone should protect themselves accordingly.

The CDC states that “disposable masks should be thrown away after they’re worn once.” It is important to remember that reusable masks should be washed at least once a day or as soon as they become wet or dirty.

The CDC added, “If you use respirators, check the manufacturer’s instructions to learn how long they can be worn before they should be thrown away.”

If you would like to stay up-to-date about hospital admissions, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>. Plug in your geographical information that can help guide your ongoing COVID-19 prevention decisions.

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Education

Baltimore Excel Center, a Tuition-free High School for Adults, Officially Opens

By Demetrius Dillard

The opening of the Baltimore Excel Center last week was a breath of fresh air for the city's education system — an establishment that has encountered its share of challenges and faced harsh scrutiny in recent years.

Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake officially opened the Excel Center, a tuition-free high school for adults aged 21 and older, which is regarded as a major step toward filling an enormous gap in the local education system.

The grand opening, held on the morning of September 28, 2023 at the Excel Center's site at 222 E. Redwood St. in downtown Baltimore, was highlighted by a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The event was attended by Goodwill executives, Excel Center students and educators, local politicians, philanthropists, community members and others.

According to Goodwill officials, an estimated 80,000 Baltimore City residents did not complete high school. A Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake press release also cites research indicating that adults without a high school diploma earn 70 percent less than their graduate counterparts.

September 28 marked the first day of classes for the Baltimore Excel Center's initial wave of 150 students. The school — now the 38th Excel Center location that has opened in the U.S. — aims to double its enrollment in the coming years, officials said.

"We are proud to offer this first-of-its-kind free high school in Baltimore," Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake CEO Lisa Rusyniak said. "We can't wait to see the success stories that will emerge from this life-changing experience."



The Excel Center is located at 222 E. Redwood St. in downtown Baltimore. Sept. 28 marked the school's grand opening and the first day of classes. Politicians, philanthropists, students, educators, Goodwill executives and others attended the ceremony.

Glenwood Jackson

Goodwill created the Excel Center as a transformative effort that will enable numerous Baltimore-area residents to receive a Maryland State Department of Education-accredited high school diploma along with helping them access post-secondary education and careers in growing, sustainable industries.

During the 30-minute ceremony, Rusyniak shared remarks, along with Excel Center students Shamar Rice and Trimiea Cannady, lead teacher DaShawn Archer, Goodwill Board Chair Joe Durham and a few others. Following the ribbon-cutting, event guests went on tours, enjoyed refreshments and conversed amongst themselves.

Cannady, a mother of three, said she would like to pursue seminary school after graduation. She is also considering going into the pharmaceutical industry.

"This [academic program] is going to make a world of a difference," said Cannady, a native of Northeast Baltimore. "I just want to be an example of what a strong Black woman can do."

Rice is a Baltimore club dancer and actor. He dropped out of high school three times due to distractions and

See Goodwill

Continued on page 14

5 Ways to Build or Rebuild Your Credit

By LaToya Cooper

Baltimore Chase Branch Manager

A good credit score is a critical part of a healthy financial future.

Having strong credit can make it easier to get a car loan, mortgage, an apartment and even some jobs. Because lenders use your credit score to help assess your reliability as a borrower, a high credit score can help you qualify for lower loan interest rates – saving you money over the course of your lifetime.

There's no fast track to building credit or improving your current score, but you can help make the process much easier. These five steps can help:

Find out your current credit score

Most adults already have a credit score that can be obtained by requesting a credit report and reviewing it carefully. You're entitled to one free report each year and can request it at AnnualCreditReport.com. Chase Credit Journey® can also help you manage, monitor and protect your credit.

Apply for a credit card If you're starting to build credit, credit cards can speed up the process if used responsibly. Since credit card companies report activity to credit agencies, healthy activity can be a huge help when it comes to building your credit. Student and other new-to-credit credit cards are a good option for those who are looking to build credit. Establishing a credit score and history requires having an account open for at least six months, so be patient and diligent about practicing healthy credit habits.



LaToya Cooper
Baltimore Chase Branch Manager
Courtesy Photo

Address debt impacting your score

It's expected for consumers to have some debt, but significant credit card debt and missed loan payments can have a major impact on your credit score. Pay bills on time and don't overspend – maxing out a credit card or coming close to your limit will lower your score. If you're working to rebuild your credit, pay down debt as much as possible and catch up on past-due bills. Also, be careful about searching for new lines of credit while carrying significant debt – lenders could see this as a risk and your score could drop.

Practice good financial habits in other areas

Establishing a savings and checking account, renting an apartment and paying utility and other bills on time are among the activities that help show lenders you're fiscally responsible. While these actions might



Getty Images

not directly affect your credit score, they're beneficial practices lenders will notice when considering your application for a car loan, mortgage or other major life goals.

Help your children build credit

Opening checking and savings accounts for your children can help teach them about everything from depositing your paycheck to easily paying your bills -- the basic building blocks of your financial infrastructure. You can also consider making your teenager an authorized user on your credit card account to assist them in establishing their own positive credit

history. Take this approach if you consistently pay your credit card bill in full and on time, as late payments can also impact your child's credit report, in addition to your own.

Building and rebuilding credit takes time and patience, but the results are worth it. A solid credit history can help you build generational wealth, reach your financial goals and establish long-term fiscal stability for you and your family. For more information on the basics of building credit, visit chase.com/personal/credit-cards/education.



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Celebrate the Next Generation of Teachers

By Andrea Blackstone

October 5 marks the recognition of World Teachers' Day.

"The 2023 celebrations will aim to put the importance of stopping the decline in the number of teachers and then starting to increase that number at the top of the global agenda," according to (UNSECO) The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Haley Taylor Schlitz, 21, is among educators who should be celebrated and appreciated daily.

"I've been wanting to be a teacher since I was 14 years old," the second-year teacher said. "I want to give back to my community."

Her mother, Myiesha Taylor, MD is pleased with her daughter's professional path.

She said, "It is the duty of our schools and K-12 educators to shape the next generation of diverse professionals, whether they be physicians, lawyers, scientists, MBAs, teachers, or beyond. I am proud that Haley is taking time to help be part of that."

Based in Texas, the fifth-grade teacher deeply cares about her impact. Taylor Schlitz's understanding of issues in education begins with her personal journey when she attended public school.

"I had a decent experience up until middle school. That's when I started facing difficulties. I was a gifted and talented student, but I was overlooked, so my education was giving me a disservice," she said.

Her grades started to slip because she was gifted and talented and needed special attention, but she was not being challenged. Taylor Schlitz went from earning straight A's to B's.

Her attentive mother noticed that her daughter was not as engaged in her education. Taylor Schlitz was not pushing herself to do better and try to work for her grades in public school.



Haley Taylor Schlitz, a 21-year-old thought leader, co-author of "The Homeschool Alternative: Incorporating a Homeschool Mindset for the Benefit of Black Children in America" and public speaker currently works as a second-year teacher.

Photo courtesy of Haley Taylor Schlitz

She was not permitted to test for the gifted and talented program because of a loophole. It was also recommended that she be held back.

Taylor decided to homeschool her daughter. She attended a college-style school and learned at home several days a week. Her parents, William Schlitz and Myiesha Taylor had a lot more control over their daughter's education.

"When I was 10 years old, my mother pulled me out of public school, and I graduated high school and I was 13," Taylor Schlitz said, explaining how she began to excel.

Taylor explained that with parental support, their daughter was enrolled at their local community college and thrived. Then, Taylor Schlitz kept going.

"Remarkably, she completed her undergraduate degree in just three years, earning both her A.A. (Associate of Arts degree) and B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) by the age of 16," Taylor said.

Taylor Schlitz initially wanted to be a



Haley Taylor Schlitz graduated from Southern Methodist University's Dedman School of Law in 2022. The gifted student became the youngest Black person and youngest woman to ever graduate from law school in the history of the United States. Photo courtesy of Haley Taylor Schlitz

doctor like her mother until she began thinking about other students.

"So, I switched to major in education and decided that I wanted to be a teacher and a lawyer and go into education policy to change the way our public school system functions, to change the way it works," Taylor Schlitz said.

By 16 years old, Taylor Schlitz was enrolled in law school at Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law in Dallas, Texas. She graduated at the age of 19, becoming SMU's youngest law school graduate, ever.

Taylor Schlitz has plans to someday continue her professional journey.

"I want to be an education lawyer, and to do that, it's necessary to have a foundation in education itself, to experience being in the classroom, to understand when I write this law, I can know based on my experiences how this will impact the classrooms, the teachers, the students, the principals. ...," Taylor Schlitz said.

She also stated that she did not attend law school to chase big dollars

or cases. The inspiring educator shows her students that people choose to be teachers and that it is a valuable profession. Taylor Schlitz has also sparked some of her students to want to pursue law school.

"If it weren't for my education journey, and the good teachers that I had, especially later on in my education, I wouldn't be where I am," Taylor Schlitz said, crediting teachers for their impact.

William added, I take immense pride in Haley's decision to embark on an impact year dedicated to teaching. This is her second year as an educator and her commitment showcases the significance of giving back in genuine and tangible ways. Through her role in teaching 5th-grade U.S. History, she not only imparts knowledge but also serves as a shining example for her peers in Generation Z, illustrating the importance of actively contributing to the betterment of our communities, nation, and the world at large."

Visit <https://www.haleytaylor Schlitz.com/> to learn more about Taylor Schlitz.

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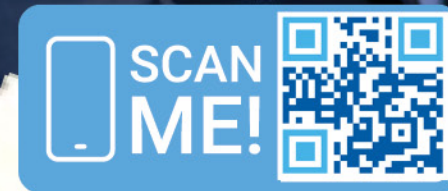
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Lisa Y. Settles, Esq. vs. Breast Cancer: Fighting Her Case and Winning

By Ursula V. Battle

Describing herself as “vigilant” about her healthcare, Lisa Y. Settles, Esq. made sure she received her routine mammograms. So, when Settles received a follow-up letter after a mammogram revealed “suspicious activity,” she followed its recommendations to go for additional testing.

“That was in 2011,” recalled Settles. “I was so nervous when I received that letter which was right before I was leaving for Chicago for a trip with my sister. When I returned from my trip, I had the additional testing done, and there was no cancer. The following year, I received the same kind of letter regarding suspicious activity and to come in for further testing. I’m not going to say I blew it off, but I was not concerned or alarmed like I was the previous year.”

She continued, “I thought it sounded like I was okay, but knew I still needed to go. However, when I went in and got tested, they said they needed to do more testing.”

The native Washingtonian said she underwent a battery of tests, screenings, sonograms and more. Settles was in her kitchen one unforgettable 2012 day when her phone rang.

“It was about 11 o’clock that morning when I received the call. I was told that cancer cells were found and I needed to make sure I received treatment. It happened to also be about six weeks after my mother had a recurrence of uterine cancer.”

This would be the beginning of Settles’ breast cancer journey, which

she would embark on with her mother who had been diagnosed with uterine cancer five years earlier.

“My mother and I kept a picture dictionary of my journey. She suggested I start one. She and I were both were going through chemotherapy at the same time.”

Settles, whose full head of bouncy, lengthy hair would never give any indication she had gone through a period where she lost all of it, said her picture dictionary forever captured both the difficult and triumphant moments of her journey.

“I have photos of when I started losing my hair, when my hair started growing back, and when it all came back. Keeping that picture dictionary was therapeutic for me. Few people knew what I was going through at the time.”

Settles’ extensive legal career includes working as a law clerk and legislative assistant for the late Elijah E. Cummings when he served as Speaker *Pro Tem* of the Maryland General Assembly.

She also worked in private practice at Pessin Katz Law, P.A. While fighting for clients in the courtroom, she was also fighting her own personal battle with breast cancer.

“When I received the news about my diagnosis, I sat at the kitchen table, finished a cup of coffee and was about to write a brief. I got up from where I was, walked to my living room to the bistro table and sat down. I just started writing. I said, ‘Lord, I don’t know why.’ I asked in that moment that He make me a showcase of His glory.”

Settles has been a glowing

showcase. She said she followed her recommended treatment plan and that her breast cancer is in remission.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), in 2023, about 297,790 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women and approximately 43,700 women will die from the disease.

“Being a showcase to God’s glory was what I kept in the forefront of my mind. It helped me focus when I was going through a lot. For me, when I looked in the mirror and didn’t see myself looking back, it was very hard.”

Settles’ team of doctors included Lauren A. Schnaper, MD, a nationally recognized breast surgeon at the GBMC Sandra and Malcolm Berman Comprehensive Breast Care Center.

“Dr. Schnaper showed me images I had taken the year before in 2011, the ones I had taken the following year in 2012, and the difference. Early detection was the key.”

Settles was recently installed as president of the Baltimore County Bar Association (BCBA) and selected ACS as the organization’s partner charity. She is a member of Delta



Lisa Y. Settles, Esq., President of the Baltimore County Bar Association, is a 11-year breast cancer survivor.

Photo Courtesy of Lisa Y. Settles

Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and serves as First Vice President of the Sorority’s Baltimore County Alumnae Chapter.

“For me, this was a very personal spiritual journey,” said Settles. “There are times when God requires us to walk our talk. It’s one thing to say you’re a Christian...it’s one thing to say that you have faith...but it’s another thing to have to walk it out. For me, my cancer journey required me to walk out my faith.”

Pay Attention to Self-Exams, Overall Wellness

By Andrea Blackstone

Breast Cancer Awareness Month began in October. Screenings are recommended every other year, beginning at age 40, according to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

“Most breast cancers are found in women who are 50 years old or older,” per information provided by the CDC.

Dominique Jones, a survivor of life’s twists and turns, knows that there are exceptions to statistical odds. The first mammogram that the Severn, Maryland resident ever had in her life revealed that she had breast cancer. Jones was just 37 years old.

“I had a biopsy done on December 5, 2013, which returned a diagnosis of a cancer called dermatofibrosarcoma protuberans of the trunk,” Jones said.

The single mother of five had always been a healthy person, but one day she discovered a lump in her right breast the size of a lemon, after showering. It took her a week or two to take a trip to the doctor. Her daughter’s grandmother urged her to go. Jones feared that she had cancer, but she followed through with seeking medical attention. Unfortunately, biopsy results revealed that she did have breast cancer.

Upon learning about her medical diagnosis, Jones stated that she was confused and devastated.

“I had children and responsibilities to take care of. Mentally, my thoughts were clouded thinking about the fate of my future.”

Jones stated that her parents—Carl and Sharon Jones – responded by informing their daughter that she should not worry about anything. They would step in and take care of

whatever was needed.

“All my family was very supportive, even my siblings,” Jones said.

Destiny was gracious to Jones. “There was no treatment needed. I was diagnosed quickly and immediately was scheduled for surgery. After two surgeries [the first one on January 10, 2014 and the second one on January 24, 2014], the cancer was finally removed from my breast,” Jones said.

Breast cancer had not been Jones’ only obstacle. She had previously been through another life altering event. She endured a period of wanting to take her own life. According to Jones, a portion of her emotional turmoil was rooted in her then nine-year-old daughter informing her that she was molested in 2010. Jones sought therapy for a year.

After situations coming up back-to-back, Jones grew to feel even more that she was living for a reason. Jones decided that a person determines how to finish his or her story. The resilient survivor noted that life can get better. Today, Jones is a small business owner who is the proprietor of YouNiquely Chosen Body Contouring, in addition to working in other professions.

She decided to live and heal, teaching others to speak out and share their story to help the next person. Jones also felt empowered by publishing “Shattered My Silence” in 2016 to share her journey.

“My book is an autobiography of my pain, hurt and trauma becoming my testimony,” Jones said.

She further explained that she shares how she lived through challenging experiences. Fortunately, breast cancer has not returned.

“I’m in great spirits, sharing my

testimonies whenever I can. As for breast cancer, I am in remission and have been since 2014. Thank God!”

She added, “My purpose in life after going through so much was to be a voice and to advocate for people who didn’t have the strength to speak on their own tragedy to healing. In doing so, I could help so many people take steps in healing through their abuse and struggles.”

Jones also explained that she takes time for herself, even if it is just to take a drive and speak to God. Surrounding herself with others who pour into her positivity and healing is also a way that she celebrates the positive strides that she has made over time.

Fear of hearing bad news can hinder people from taking action with health concerns. However, Jones’ story about beating breast cancer is a reminder that going to the doctor and getting regular checkups is very important. It could be a life-saving measure.

“We must be mindful of our bodies. At times it tells us to get checked and we ignore ours. You can



Dominique Jones, an Anne Arundel County resident, is a breast cancer survivor who was diagnosed with breast cancer at 37 years old. Jones is also a published author, mother and small business owner.

Dominique Jones

do your breast self-exams,” Jones said. “Let’s stop and take care of ourselves because who else is going to do it for us?”

Learn more about Jones’ book via <https://lbpub.com/product/shattered-my-silence-by-dominique-jones/> or by searching for the author through www.lbpub.com.

Mayor Scott, BCIT, Pratt Library to Distribute Free Chromebooks to Low-Income Households

Through a grant from the State of Maryland's Connected Devices Program, Baltimore City received 30,000 Chromebooks

BALTIMORE, MD (Tuesday, October 3, 2023) – Mayor Brandon M. Scott—along with Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Secretary Jake Day—announced Baltimore City will distribute 30,000 free Chromebooks to eligible Baltimore City households.

“Closing the digital divide is a one of the most important steps our community must take to improve equity in our city,” said Mayor Brandon M. Scott. “So much of the battle in addressing this issue is access and affordability, and with these 30,000 Chromebooks, our city is poised to help tackle both for so many families. With this technology, we can help these families be better connected and ensure students are gaining the skills they’ll need to be successful in the digital age. I cannot thank our partners enough for their collaboration in this effort and their dedication to closing Baltimore’s digital divide for good.”

The Chromebooks were secured through a grant from the State of Maryland’s Connected Devices program, which is overseen by Maryland DHCD and assists counties and municipal governments in their digital equity and inclusion efforts.

“Across the state, there are hundreds of thousands of Marylanders whose entire economic future will be either limited—or unlocked—by whether or not they have access to affordable internet,” said Maryland DHCD Secretary Jake Day. “The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development is proud to work with Baltimore City and Pratt Library to distribute 30,000

devices to get more Marylanders online—a crucial step in our work to close the digital divide.”

To distribute the Chromebooks, Baltimore City Information & Technology’s (BCIT) Office of Broadband & Digital Equity (BDE) has partnered with Enoch Pratt Free Library to serve as the City’s primary distribution partner. In this role, Pratt Library will assist residents in verifying their eligibility and scheduling a pickup appointment at either its Central Library or Southeast Anchor Library locations. More distribution locations are expected to be added in the coming months.

Appointments to receive a Chromebook can be made online at prattlibrary.org/getadevice, or by calling the Central Library (410-396-5430) and Southeast Anchor Library (410-396-1580) locations. On the day of an appointment, the following is required to receive a Chromebook:

- Photo ID (driver’s license, state ID, work or government ID, passport, etc.)
- Proof of Baltimore City residence
- Proof of one of the following qualifications:
 - Households with an income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines
 - \$27,180 for a household of 1
 - \$36,620 for a household of 2
 - \$46,060 for a household of 3
 - \$55,500 for a household of 4
 - Or, \$9,440 more for each additional household member
 - Households enrolled in the federal government’s Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)



Mayor Brandon M. Scott

Courtesy Photo

- Households participating in government assistance programs, such as:
 - Child receives free or reduced-price school lunch
 - Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
 - Medicaid
 - Pell Grant (current award year)
 - SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit
 - WIC

“We are proud to be working with our state and city partners to make sure these devices get into the hands of the people who need them the most. But we know that providing access is not enough. That is why the Pratt Library also provides

free technology training and support for customers across Baltimore City to help people meet their goals,” said Pratt Library President and CEO Heidi Daniel.

“This is a huge step forward in further addressing one of the major equity gaps experienced by many of our residents...affordability,” said BDE Director Kenya Asli. “With internet assistance programs like the Affordable Connectivity Program and the Maryland Emergency Broadband Benefit subsidy already in place, and now the availability of Chromebooks, residents with the greatest need have viable means of fully participating in a digital society.”

In addition to scheduling an appointment at one of Pratt Library’s distribution locations, eligible households will have opportunities to secure a Chromebook during various distribution events hosted at local community sites throughout Baltimore City.

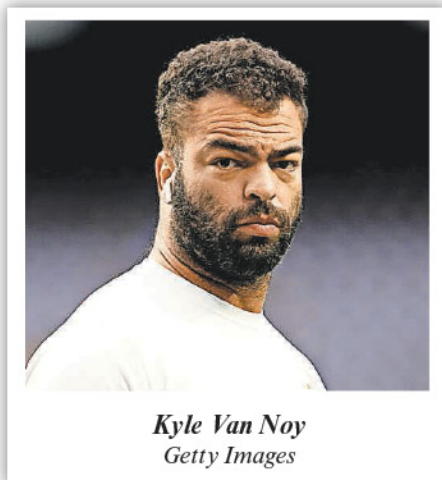
Ravens Excited About Kyle Van Noy Addition

By Tyler Hamilton

We've seen this scenario play out many times before for the Baltimore Ravens. A veteran defensive player with a winning pedigree joins the team and makes an impact. Safety Eric Weddle and cornerback Marcus Peters are some of the recent veterans that come to mind. Linebacker Kyle Van Noy is the latest one.

Baltimore signed Van Noy, a ninth-year veteran to their 53-man roster last week, after placing outside linebacker David Ojabo (knee/ankle) on injured reserve. Ojabo will be out for the next four games. Van Noy made his Ravens debut in their 28-3 win over the Cleveland Browns last Sunday. He came through with several pressures, a quarterback hit and pass break-up.

"He played pretty amazing [with]



Kyle Van Noy
Getty Images

what he did," Ravens head coach John Harbaugh said. "He came in there ... He showed up [on] Tuesday on the red-eye [flight] and was out there taking a bunch of snaps on Sunday in a huge AFC North game, and that just shows you what kind

of player he is. It's a credit to what kind of shape he was in."

The way Van Noy was able to make an immediate impact is a testament to his veteran status. In nine NFL seasons, Van Noy has recorded 33.5 sacks, with at least five sacks in each of the past four seasons, 47 tackles for loss, 10 forced fumbles and nine fumble recoveries.

Van Noy is a proven winner, having been a part of the New England Patriots that won Super Bowl LI and Super Bowl LIII.

He spent last season with the Los Angeles Chargers after signing a one-year deal worth \$2.25 million. He finished the season with five sacks, three pass deflections, a forced fumble and two fumble recoveries.

Adding a veteran like Van Noy this late in the season is a win for Baltimore. Harbaugh was impressed with how Van

Noy understood the defensive game plan and picked it up quickly. Defensive coordinator Mike Macdonald agrees.

"He [Kyle Van Noy] is an impressive guy," Macdonald said. "He's already got third-down thoughts and stuff like that. But it seems like he's been in this defense for however long. Similar to when Roquan [Smith] showed up here; it's like, 'OK. This dude, he knows his stuff.' So, he's an impressive guy all the way around. Obviously, [he's] a great football player from what we've seen already on the practice field, and he has a great track record."

Van Noy had a productive week of practice that led to him playing 33% of the defensive snaps against Cleveland.

With Ojabo on the mend, Van Noy will get more opportunities in the coming weeks.

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Goodwill

Continued from page A5

negative influences, he said. This time around, he is determined to stay the course.

“I came to the Excel Center because I wanted to further my education. I didn’t know it was possible for adults 21 and over to receive a high school diploma,” said Rice, adding that he was just accepted into AMDA College of Performing Arts in Los Angeles.

“Being the first male in my family, or anybody in my family period, to get accepted into college or actually went to college... I’m breaking two generational curses so I’m very proud of myself.”

The Excel Center’s academic programs are self-paced and last up to 24 months, including training and certificates for high-growth industries. The school offers free drop-in childcare, transportation assistance, flexible class schedules, life counseling and job training.

Enrollment is open to adults who are at least 21 years old and reside in Maryland. The oldest student enrolled at the Baltimore Excel Center is 80 years old, according to Ari Minyard, the school’s registrar.

“Our impact in Baltimore is going to be huge,” said Archer, who specializes in English and Language Arts (ELA).

“It’s unfortunate that a lot of students have dropped out of school in Baltimore City. However, we are here to give them a second chance. We are here to tell them, ‘hey, this is a new adventure, this is a new journey that you will come to in life and we’re trying to get you to the next level – whether it’s economically, socially, academically, mentally.’ We’re here to get students to the next level in order to thrive and meet their future goals and needs.”

Each term lasts eight weeks, according to Archer. The Excel Center’s building is seven floors, but four floors are being utilized at the moment. The school has six teachers, three life coaches, three administrators and a career readiness counselor.

Ensuring students attend the school free of charge, the Baltimore Excel Center will be funded by an amalgamation of federal, state and philanthropic entities totaling more than \$4.5 million.

Prospective students are encouraged to apply by visiting <https://excelcentermd.org/apply-now/>. For more information about the Baltimore Excel Center, please visit: <https://excelcentermd.org/>.



Trimiea Cannady, 29, is a Baltimore Excel Center student. She wants to go to seminary school or become a pharmacy technician after receiving her diploma. Glenwood Jackson



Shamar Rice, a student at the Baltimore Excel Center, is an aspiring actor. Glenwood Jackson

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Department Of Aging and Disabilities and
The Commission on Disability Issues
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2023 DisAbility Awareness Day

Theme: **Advancing Access and Equity**

Saturday, October 28, 2023

10:00 A.M. TO 12:00 P.M.

**Westfield Annapolis Mall
(Crate and Barrel Entrance)
2002 Annapolis Mall RD, Annapolis, MD**

Anyone needing accommodations must contact Vickie Martin at 410-222-4383 or agmart11@aacounty.org at least 7 days in advance of the event. TTY users, please call via Maryland Relay 7-1-1. An ASL Interpreter and CART reporter will be available for the duration of this event.

**RSVP by October 19, 2023
to Vickie Martin at
agmart11@aacounty.org**

**Or register online at
<https://forms.gle/vyBST8tbM6rXyMSGA>**

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CITY OF BALTIMORE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
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. 1326-SCADA/DCS Water Facilities Design** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M. on **November 15, 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 **October 6, 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 **\$10,000,000.01 to \$20,000,000.00**.

A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted Virtually. Vendor can access this Microsoft Terms meeting on **October 11, 2023 at 10:00 am**. Meeting ID: 263 877 899 38 Passcode: YTYedH. Vendors can attend by Phone with Phone Conference ID: 305 381 677# on 1-667-401-2804. Pre-bid questions, please contact Mr. Farid Sikander at farid.sikander@baltimorecity.gov. Contractor questions shall be submitted (In Writing) by **October 27, 2023**.

A site visit to Montebello Filtration Plant 1 & 2 and Hillen Pumping Station will be conducted on **October 18, 2023 at 10:00 am**. A site visit to Ashburton Filtration Plant will be conducted on **October 19, 2023 at 10:00 am**.

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 Doreen.Diamond@baltimorecity.gov

Principal items of work for this contract include, but are not limited to:

Improvements of the Baltimore SCADA system Montebello Filtration Plants 1 and 2, the Ashburton Water Filtration Plant, and various remote water distributions sites located throughout Baltimore City and the surrounding Counties. Work shall include architectural, electrical, mechanical, network, instrumentation and control, CCTV, fire protection upgrades.

This project includes U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) Loan Funding.

The MBE goal is **12%**

The WBE goal is **4%**

APPROVED:
Clerk, Board of Estimates

APPROVED:
Richard J. Luna
Interim Director
Department of Public Works

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
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. 1408-Substation SS-A/SS-B Replacement at the Montebello Water Filtration Plant 2** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M. on **November 15, 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 **October 6, 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 **F16000 Electrical**. Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$5,000,000.01 to \$10,000,000.00**.

A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted Virtually. Vendor can access this Microsoft Terms virtual meeting on **October 12, 2023 at 10:00 am** by utilizing the following ID and Passcode: Meeting ID: 212 977 678 651 Passcode: cjcZf. Vendor can also attend by Phone Conference ID: 522 246 967# on 1-240-534-3245.

A site visit to Montebello Filtration Plant 1 & 2 will be conducted on **October 19, 2023 at 10:00 am**. For any Pre-bid questions, please contact Mr. Farid Sikander at farid.sikander@baltimorecity.gov. Contractor questions shall be submitted (in writing only) by **November 1, 2023**. Contractor questions shall be submitted via email to latonia.walston@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 Latonia.Walston@baltimorecity.gov

Principal items of work for this contract include, but are not limited to:

Replacement of the existing 2.4kV SS-A/SS-B substation, located in the Chemical Building at Plant 2 with new 13.2kV SS-A/SS-B substation to be located outside the Chemical Building including removing 2.4kV feeders from the existing 2.4kV switchgear to the existing 2.4kV SS-A/SS-B substation and providing new 15kV feeders required additional ductbanks from the 13.2kV switchgear located in Montebello Plant to new SS-A/SS-B outdoor substation located in Montebello WFP Plant 2; replacement of the existing 480V switchboard located in the Chemical Building with new 480V switchboard including new ductbanks, manholes/handholes, and pull/junction boxes from the new SS-A/SS-B substation; investigation and providing connectivity of the existing 480kV feeders from the existing switchboard to new switchboard to supply power to the existing loads; site work; and demolition of existing SS-A/SS-B Substation.

The MBE goal is **33%**

The WBE goal is **11%**

APPROVED:
Clerk, Board of Estimates

APPROVED:
Richard J. Luna
Interim Director
Department of Public Works

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
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 **ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION CONTRACT NO. 4055-Urgent Needs Stream, Stormwater, and Drainage Maintenance and Repair Project** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M on **December 6, 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; charmtvbaltimore.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 **October 6, 2023** and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **100.00**. **Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package.** All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be pre-qualified by the City of Baltimore 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 **D02800-Landscaping, F02200-Earthwork and Site Preparation, and G90128-Urban Stream Restoration**. Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$4,000,000.01 to \$5,000,000.00**.

A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted via Microsoft Teams. Vendor can either call 1-667-228-6519 PASSCODE: 116668291# or Join on Microsoft Teams, Meeting ID: 287 732 359 723 PASSCODE: xYUMUp on **October 23, 2023 at 2:00 PM**. Any prospective bidders desiring an explanation or interpretation of the requirements shall submit all questions via email to Cherod Hicks at Cherod.Hicks@baltimorecity.gov and torron.coleman@baltimorecity.gov and RBanks@baltimorecity.gov. Questions will be received until October 30, 2023, at 12:00 pm. Oral questions will not be entertained outside of the Pre-Bidding Information session. All questions and responses will be published as an Addendum to the solicitation on DPW's website under the referenced project title.

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:

Construction services for routine maintenance and repairs of environmental restoration projects and stormwater management best management practices including existing natural stream channel restoration projects, outfall repairs, stormwater management ponds, environmental site design, and emergency repairs of storm drains and ancillary sewer and waterline repair. On-call services may include but may not be limited to excavating, grading, site work, as-built survey, repair, trash, and debris removal, installation of sediment and erosion control measures, landscaping, wetlands, seeding, invasive vegetation management, and other work as required.

The MBE goal is **9%**

The WBE goal is **7%**

APPROVED:
Clerk, Board of Estimates

APPROVED:
Richard J. Luna
Interim Director
Department of Public Works

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CITY OF BALTIMORE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NOTICE OF LETTING

Sealed Bids or Proposal for the **TR-23013, ADA CURB RAMP CONSTRUCTION VARIOUS LOCATIONS CITYWIDE (JOC)** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204, City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until **NOVEMBER 1, 2023, at 11:00 A.M.** Board of Estimates employees will be stationed at the Security Unit Counter just inside the Holliday Street entrance to City Hall from 10:45 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. every Wednesday to receive Bids. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. The bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates in Room 215, City Hall at Noon. As of **OCTOBER 6, 2023**, the Contract Documents may be examined, without charge by contacting Brenda Simmons at brenda.simmons@baltimorecity.gov or (443) 865-4423 to arrange for a copy of the bid book labeled "NOT FOR BIDDING PURPOSES" to be emailed to you. Anyone who desires to purchase a bid book to be used for bidding purposes must do so in person and by contacting Brenda Simmons at the email address or phone number above. The non-refundable cost is **SEVENTY-FIVE DOLLARS AND NO CENTS (\$75.00)** to be paid at the Department of Transportation 417 E. Fayette Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202 made payable to the Director of Finance. **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 the Committee at 4 S. Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 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 Categories required for bidding on this project are **D02620 CURBS, GUTTERS, SIDEWALKS**. Cost Qualification Range for this project will be from **\$1,000,000.00 to \$2,000,000.00**. A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted via Microsoft Teams on **October 13, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.** hosted by the Department of Transportation. All Bidders must email your contact information to include your name, company name, phone number and email address to receive an invite to the Microsoft Team (video conference meeting). Principle Items of work for this project are: **5" Concrete Sidewalk – 40,000; PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT FOR SLOT BACKFILL, MODIFIED MIX NO. 6 - 6,500 LF and CONCRETE CURB, VARIABLE WIDTH AND HEIGHT - 4,000 LF**. The MBE Goal is **29%**; The WBE Goal is **9%**.
APPROVED: Celeste Amato, Clerk, Board of Estimates

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