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# *The Annapolis Times*

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**CELEBRATING**  
**Martin**  
**Luther**  
**King, Jr.**



*Image Credit: Market Me Design Studio*

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# Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service, Events 2024

Compiled by Dena Wane and Andrea Blackstone

*Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, January 15th is designated as the National Day of Service in which Americans are encouraged to volunteer in the community. An ideal way to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and legacy is by serving others or by honoring Dr. King by attending an event. Numerous opportunities have been noted below. Please confirm event details with organizers.*

**January 12, 2024, 12 - 1:30 p.m.**  
**Johns Hopkins' 42nd annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 2024 Commemoration**  
Location: Chevy Chase Auditorium, East Baltimore Campus, 700 N. Wolfe Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21205

Mae Jemison, an engineer, physician, and former NASA astronaut and the first African American woman to travel in space will speak. This year's theme, Where Do We Go from Here—Chaos or Community? is based on King's final book, according to details. Faculty, staff and students can attend. See <https://hub.jhu.edu/events/2024/01/12/2024-mlkjr-celebration-mae-jemison-jan-12/>.

**MLK Jr. Day Celebration by Unique Robinson**  
**Saturday, January 13, 2024, 2:00 - 4 p.m.**  
**Location:** The Walters Art Museum, 600 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD  
Event Contact: 410-547-9000  
Registration required. Free.

**Sunday, January 14, 2024**  
**Recital & Evensong for the Feast of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**  
4:30 – 6:00 p.m.; St David's Church, 4700 Roland Ave., Baltimore, MD

**Monday, January 15, 2024**  
**MLK Dare to Dream Day**  
**10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.**  
**Location:** American Visionary Art Museum, 800 Key Highway, Baltimore, MD  
**Free — FREE museum admission and festivities all day!** Join in a celebration honoring one of history's greatest visionaries. Open Mic, art-making, music, dance, and more! The museum and festivities are FREE and open to the public all day. View the full schedule on the event page!  
**Event Contact:** AVAM Staff; [info@avam.org](mailto:info@avam.org); or (410) 244-1900

**Monday, January 15, 2024**  
**10:30 a.m.- 1 p.m.**  
**Location:** 9385 Gerwig Lane J, Columbia, MD 21046

Howard Chamber staff and volunteers will donate their time to the Howard County Community Action food bank to help unload and sort food items.

**More Info.:**  
<https://business.howardchamber.com/events/details/2024-martin-luther-king-jr-day-of-service-5050>

**Monday, January 15, 2024**  
**MLK Day Watershed Makeover 2024**  
**12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.**

**Location:** Howard EcoWorks, 9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD  
Cleanup of Howard County involving litter, invasive species, and other environmental activities/education.

**More Info.:**  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mlk-day-watershed-makeover-2024-tickets-781035045847>



**Monday, January 15, 2024**  
**Special MLK Tribute Concert: Baltimore Symphony Orchestra at B&O Museum**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Location:** B & O Railroad Museum, 901 West Pratt St., Baltimore, MD  
Symphony in the City 2: A Free Community Concert Featuring Wordsmith and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra  
The B&O Railroad Museum is proud to present Wordsmith and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Freedom Seekers on the Underground Railroad. An original song and composition directly inspired by the powerful narratives found in the B&O Railroad Museum's Underground Railroad exhibit will be debuted. The concert will

include selections by prominent African-American composers such as Florence Price, Duke Ellington, and Carlos Simon, as well as the world premiere of "Network to Freedom" by BSO artistic partner, Wordsmith. Free. Visit [www.borail.org](http://www.borail.org)

**Event Contact:** Tom Yorke; [tyorke@borail.org](mailto:tyorke@borail.org); or (732) 600-7089

**Monday, January 15, 2024**  
**MLK Inspiring The Dream Young Ladies Summit 2024**

**10:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m.**  
**Location:** Druid Heights Community Development Corporation  
2140 McCulloh Street, Baltimore, MD  
Join us for the MLK Inspiring The Dream Young Ladies Summit, where we'll empower and uplift young women to dream big and make a difference

**More Info.:** Visit Baltimore Charity & Causes Eventbrite. [https://www.chesapeakefamily.com/events-calendar/?\\_escaped\\_fragment\\_=%2Fshow%2F%3F-start%3D2022-09-20%2F/details/MLK-Inspiring-The-Dream-Young-Ladies-Su](https://www.chesapeakefamily.com/events-calendar/?_escaped_fragment_=%2Fshow%2F%3F-start%3D2022-09-20%2F/details/MLK-Inspiring-The-Dream-Young-Ladies-Su)

**Monday, January 15, 2024**  
**2024 MLK Holiday DC Annual Peace Walk & Parade**  
2:30 – 7:00 p.m.  
2500 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE, Washington, D.C.  
**More Info.:** [mlkholidayparadedc.org](http://mlkholidayparadedc.org)

**Monday, January 15, 2024**  
**Location:** Montgomery County's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service 2024  
12:30 – 2:30 p.m.  
Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Rd, Rockville, MD  
**More Info.:** Montgomery County's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service 2024 Tickets, Mon, Jan 15, 2024 at 12:30 PM | Eventbrite

**More Info:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/montgomery-countys-martin-luther-king-jr-day-of-service-2024-tickets-775402237967>

**Monday, January 15, 2024**  
Annapolis, Maryland  
10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.  
MLK Day of Service: Assemble care packages for The Annapolis Lighthouse Shelter  
**Location:** The Y in Arnold at 1209 Ritchie Highway, Arnold, Maryland  
Bedding, backpacks, and other supplies can also be dropped off between January 1-15. Families can volunteer. Call 410-544-2525.

**More Info.:**  
<https://ymaryland.volunteermatters.org/project-catalog/1046> for more information.

**Monday, January 15, 2024**  
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
**Location:** 700 Fallsway Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
Chili Bowl Monday MLK Day of Service Feed & Clothe Our Homeless Neighbors presented by Inge Benevolent Ministries dba Muslimat Al Nisaa Shelter & Souls In Harmony. Cold weather clothing and toiletries provided. Prior to the event day, donations should be dropped off by appointment at 3708 Liberty Heights Avenue in Baltimore, Maryland 21215. Call (410) 466-8686 or email [chaplainasmahanif@gmail.com](mailto:chaplainasmahanif@gmail.com) to sign up to volunteer or bring supplies.  
**More Info.:**  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/chili-bowl-monday-mlk-day-of-service-feed-clothe-our-homeless-neighbors-tickets-783466648837?aff=erelexpmlt> for details.

**Wednesday, January 17, 2024**  
5:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Maryland Impact Hub Baltimore, located at 10 E. North Ave Baltimore, MD 21202  
Art In Motion: Paint & Learn.  
Discover the powerful messages behind MLK's "Letters from Birmingham"; paint a portrait of Dr. King; connect with members of the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights; and hear about where to find help with your civil rights needs. Limited tickets are available.  
**More Info:**  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mlk-day-art-in-motion-paint-learn-tickets-781430428447?aff=ebdssbdstsearch>



# WINNERS LIST!



Best Art Gallery	The Black Genius Art Show	Best Vegan Restaurant	The Land of Kush
Best Author	Janella McRae - Every King and Queen	Best Childcare/Preschool	Labourers For Jesus Excellent Childcare LLC
Best Dance Group/Ensemble	Fearless Dance Empire	Best Event Planner	Global Flair Events
Best Dance/Individual	Fearless Dance Empire	Best Florist	Fleurs dAve
Best Museum	Reginald F. Lewis Museum	Best Funeral Home	Wylie Funeral Home
Best Solo Instrumental Artist	Craig Alston	Best Nonprofit Organization	Creative Nomads
Best Theatre Company	Arena Players Incorporated	Pet Services	The Blvck Gypsy Mobile Grooming & Holistic Care
Best Visual Artist	Poncho Brown	Best Air Conditioning/HVAC Service	Luhvac and Properties LLC
Best Accounting Firm	A Little Faith Accounting & Tax Services LLC	Best Plumber	Sewer Slayer
Best Financial Services Banks & Credit Unions	The Harbor Bank of Maryland	Best Remodeler/Contractor	She Nailed It
Best Insurance Company	Baltimore Insurance Network	Candles and Aromatherapy	Flourish Baltimore
Best Tax Prep	Joan M. Pratt CPA & Associates	Best Barbershop	Conscious Heads
Best Black Radio Station	WEAA	Best Day Spa	Zen and the City
Best Event Space	Reginald Lewis Museum	Best Hair Salon	Affordable Styles Hair Salon
Best Live Performance Event	Baltimore MET Gala	Best Hair Stylist	Affordable Styles Hair Salon
Best All-Around Restaurant	BLK Swan	Best Lash Tech / Lash Salon	Baltimore LASH Bar
Best Bakery	Crust by Mack	Best Make-up Artist	Honey Cosmetics Mondawmin Mall
Best Bar & Grill	Capital Lounge Inc.	Best Nail Salon	Autumn OG
Best Bartending	Bar 51	Best Skin Care Products	NKVSkin
Best Breakfast	Teavolve Cafe	Best Cigar Shop	The Cigar Diva
Best Brunch Spot	Home Maid	Best Jewelry Store	Flourish Baltimore
Best Catering	H3irloom Food Group	Best Mens Clothing Store	WaaaH LifeStyle Brand
Best Cookies	Aunt Kellys Cookies	Best Mens Fashion Designer	DIFFERENTREGARD
Best Cultural Cuisine	Island Quizine	Best Place to Buy a Unique Gift	Flourish - A Lifestyle Boutique
Best Dessert	Sistahs Sweets	Best Pop-Up Market	Blkass Flea Mkt
Best Fried Fish	Terra Café	Best Urban Retail	From Baltimore With Love
Best Ice Cream	Taharka Brothers Ice Cream- R.House	Best Womens Boutique Shop	The Doll House Boutique
Best Lunch Spot	Our time kitchen	Best Womens Fashion Designer	Jody Davis Designs
Best Roastery	Black Acres Roastery - Open Works	Best Auto Body Repair	Dare-It Auto Center
Best Seafood	The Urban Oyster	Best Auto Dealership	Exclusive Motorcars
Best Specialty Cocktails	Los Hermanos Tequila	Best Auto Service Center	Dare-It Auto Center
Best Specialty Non-Alcoholic Drinks	Niecys Fabulous Juice Bar	Best Full Service Car Wash/Detailing	Steves Extreme Vacuum Clean & Detail LLC
Best Tea Barista	Curlies Tea House	Best Dental Practice	Innovation Dental Center
		Best Fitness Class	Michele Blu Yoga
		Best Massage	Sacred House

## We are MORE in 2024 - Part I of a Three-Part Series

By Karen Clay

Clay Technology and Multimedia, L.L.C.

Today is not only a new day, but a new year. As with previous years, January can be a month full of hope, promise and intention as we reflect on our accomplishments for 2023 and set goals for 2024. It is fitting then that the title for the January series of articles is “We are MORE in 2024.” MORE is my acronym for “Mining Opportunities for Resilient Employment,” a statement that speaks to the spirit of the current or aspiring Information Technology (IT) professional as we venture into 2024.

In keeping with the promise of the new year, our article title has further meaning in the following ways:

**We Are:** Speaks to an inclusive and community-oriented endeavor, reflecting a collective effort or movement towards a common goal. In the context of the IT industry, it can signify the shared journey of individuals, educators, and employers, towards fostering a robust workforce equipped with the necessary skills and opportunities to succeed in IT.

**Mining Opportunities:** Suggests a proactive and diligent search for opportunities within the IT industry. It reflects the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of IT, where new technologies, tools, and methodologies are continually emerging. By “mining,” individuals are digging deep into the industry to uncover opportunities, be it new roles in fields like Virtual Reality (VR), Cybersecurity, Cloud Computing, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), or innovative ways of working such as remote and freelance work.

**Resilient Employment:** The IT industry is known for its resilience and adaptability, especially evident in how it has navigated the most recent global challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pursuing a career in IT often means engaging in continuous learning and



*Karen Clay*  
*Clay Technology and Multimedia*  
*Courtesy, Karen Clay*

upskilling to remain relevant and resilient in the face of change. Resilient employment in this context refers to job stability, career longevity, and the ability to adapt to and thrive in various economic climates and industry transformations. The IT industry is seen as a land of opportunity, with each specific focus representing a chance to build a career that’s not only thriving but also adaptable and enduring.

This series of three articles will serve as your gateway to understanding how to identify and seize these opportunities: introducing the broad spectrum of career paths within IT. From the foundational blocks of computer support and network management to the entrepreneurial heights of IT consultancy, we will explore how each action contributes to a resilient and fulfilling career journey.

One first step might be to determine your aptitude for and/or interest in specific categories of job opportunities in the IT field. These broad IT categories include (1) Infrastructure and Network Management; (2) Cybersecurity and Assurance; (3) Software and Application Development; (4) Design, Development, and User Experience; (5) Data Management and Analytics; and (6) Strategy, Support, and Innovation.

This may involve simply sitting



*The world of IT is boundless. iStock by Getty Images*

down and taking a personal inventory of your interests, knowledge, and abilities, then comparing that to IT job announcements and/or technical school, or college course descriptions. It might include taking advantage of career development resources available from sources such as the University of Maryland Career Center (<https://careers.umd.edu/explore-careers>), the Maryland Department of Disabilities (<https://mdtransitions.org/career-planning/>) or the Historically Black Colleges and Universities’ Career Center (<https://www.thehbcucareercenter.com/future-of-work>).

If you are or have a child still in middle or high school, it might involve looking into the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) programs sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education and implemented in select school districts in the state. If you are an adult looking for alternative resources, you may find support and advice from one of Baltimore’s One-Stop Career Centers, which partners with local workforce development agencies.

Other online resources that can help you identify a specific IT career path are:

1. CareerOneStop (<https://careeronestop.org>) – a resource sponsored by the US department

of Labor which offers online tools for exploring career options, finding training and education, and/or job searching.

2. The Maryland Department of Labor’s Maryland Workforce Exchange (<https://mwejobs.maryland.gov>) – where you can find the link to the MD Job Genie, a resource for exploring career possibilities. There you can receive “data-driven career recommendations for you to explore new career paths that leverage your skills in a new way, boost your income, or for which there are many jobs available in Maryland. When you find a new career that interests you, you can explore available jobs and training programs within that career as posted on the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE).”

3. The US Bureau of Labor Statistic’s Occupational Outlook Handbook (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>) – another resource for researching occupations and accessing resources related to your area of interest.

The path you ultimately choose will be yours as each path offers a unique convergence of challenge and reward. As technology continues to evolve, so will the roles and responsibilities of IT professionals. Embrace this evolution with curiosity and determination, and you’ll find your potential in this field is as boundless as the technology itself.

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## 2023 Tax Preparation

### Business Owner, Tax Professional Gives Tax Season Tips

By Andrea Blackstone

*Disclaimer: Any U.S. federal tax advice contained in this article is not intended to be written or used and cannot be used or relied upon, to avoid tax-related penalties under the Internal Revenue Code, or to promote, market or recommend to another any tax-related matter addressed herein.*

Now that the New Year has come and gone, 2023 taxes are due for individuals on April 15, 2024. If you reside in Maine or Massachusetts, the upcoming date is April 17, 2024. While deadlines are approaching, taxpayers who may want to avoid tax anxiety may not be comfortable taking a "do it themselves" approach to prepare and file their income taxes online. On the other hand, a skilled human can answer questions, resolve stressful tax issues and make efforts to maximize tax returns.

Xavier Epps, CEO and founder of XNE Financial Advising, LLC provides year-round tax preparation and tax analysis. He specializes in tax preparation, bookkeeping and financial plans. Epps, who has been in business for 13 years, typically assists individuals and business owners. XNE Financial Advising, LLC can serve them in all 50 states. Epps provided tax tips to keep in mind.

**Q: What are a few advantages of hiring a tax professional?**

A: One of the most significant advantages of hiring a tax professional is the amount of money that can be saved. When individuals spend more time looking for inexpensive ways to prepare their taxes, I noticed they pay more for not hiring tax practitioners due to missed deductions and inaccurate filings, which leads to more costly outcomes during an audit. Another advantage is time spent is eliminated for the taxpayer, and stress levels are reduced when

hiring a professional. As your situation becomes more complex [because of] children, mortgage, business, real estate investments, and cryptocurrencies, you can rest assured that a true tax practitioner will be up to date with the latest changes in the tax code. The most significant difference between year-round and in-season tax service providers is reachability; year-round is there well after April 15th, whereas most in-season providers close their doors weeks after the April deadline.

**Q: Please provide several tax preparation steps that can help to make filing 2023 taxes easier.**

A: Get organized! Grab your recently filed return (2022), write out everything that should be reported for tax purposes (employment, side-gigs, investments, etc.), and visit each site now to make sure you have the option to download the actual tax documents. Place these items in a secure folder early (January) so you can easily access them all in one place when you're ready to file in February, March, or April.

**Q: Are there any tax bracket changes in 2023?**

A: Each year, the tax brackets are adjusted for inflation. While the top marginal tax rate remains the same at 37 percent for single taxpayers with income exceeding \$578,125 (\$693,750 for married couples filing jointly), the upcoming tax season shows an approximate increase between 5 and 7 percent across all tax brackets. If your income was precisely the same in 2023 as in 2022, and with everything being equal, you can expect your tax liability to be roughly 6 percent higher in 2023 compared to 2022.

**Q: Have any standard deductions increased for individuals or special deductions for business owners in 2023?**

A: Like inflation-adjusted marginal tax rates, a similar adjustment happens for standard deductions for individuals; this increase was approximately 6.6



**Xavier Epps of  
XNE Financial Advising, LLC**  
Photo courtesy of Xavier Epps  
of XNE Financial Advising, LLC

percent across all standard deductions. The standard deduction for married couples filing jointly for 2023 rose to \$27,700, an increase of \$1,800 from 2022. For single taxpayers and married individuals filing separately, the deduction rises to \$13,850, an increase of \$900 from 2022, and for heads of households, the deduction will be \$20,800, an increase of \$1,400 compared to 2022. Business owners who qualify still enjoy the relatively new tax law, QBI (qualified business income) deduction of 20 percent, coupled with the standard mileage rate for business going up to 65.5¢ per mile.

*Coming next week: Part II.*

Find out more about Epps' services via [www.xnefinance.com](http://www.xnefinance.com) and [www.financeguyx.com](http://www.financeguyx.com). Follow him on social media via <https://twitter.com/FinanceGuyX>; <https://www.instagram.com/FinanceGuyX>; or <https://www.facebook.com/FinanceGuyX>. Epps is also the author of "BUDGET IT YOURSELF: Comprehensive Guide to X-scape to Financial Freedom." Find the book on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/BUDGET-YOURSELF-Comprehensive-X-scape-Financial/dp/173697730X>

# Community Leaders, Volunteers Reflect on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Compiled by Andrea Blackstone

**D**r. Martin Luther King Jr, a minister and spokesperson for nonviolent activism throughout the Civil Rights Movement who advocated to end racial segregation, was born on January 15, 1929. Commonly called Martin Luther King Jr. Day or MLK Day, the third Monday of January is a federal holiday that pays tribute to Dr. King and his contributions. Many Americans choose to improve their communities through volunteer service.

The individuals below share their perspectives about Dr. King, his legacy and their community work and volunteerism.



## Miguel Coppedge

*Photo credit: Prestige Photos*

**Location:** Washington, D.C.

**Volunteerism:** Community service projects ; 'I Care Comfort Bags' and I Care Comfort Foundation

"Yes, I do because I believe all people are created equal. I donate to everyone, not a specific race. I've never wanted for others to be without, especially children. Even though I'm a freshman in college at VCU [Virginia Commonwealth University], my mom [Yolanda Coppedge] still helps me with my philanthropy work. I will continue for the rest of my life."

Website: <https://www.miguelcoppedge.com>



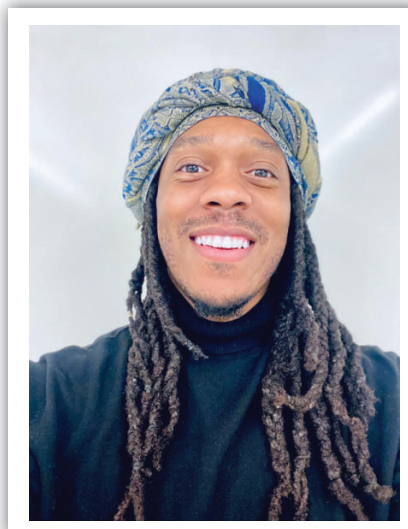
## Jaemellah Jackson

*Photo credit: Anthony Tilghman*

**Volunteerism:** IT TAKES TWO, INC (nonprofit)

Website: <https://ittakestwoinc.org/our-story>

"As a youth development nonprofit organization focused on leadership, IT TAKES TWO, INC aligns with Dr. Martin Luther King's philosophy by ensuring equal access to educational opportunities that help all young people, regardless of their background. We promote education and fair treatment to fulfill Dr. King's vision of a just and equitable society."



## Brian Sessions

*Photo credit: Courtesy photo*

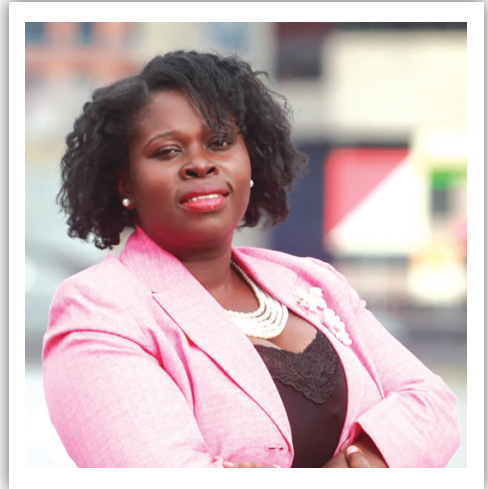
**Location:** Baltimore City

**Volunteerism:** community initiative to promote literacy

Website: [www.pagestowages.org](http://www.pagestowages.org)

"Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sacrifice is more than worth mentioning as being inspirational in the work I do locally, regionally, nationally, and globally, for the liberation of Africans, wherever we may be found on the planet. While Dr. King and I may share some ideological differences regarding the practical paths

we deem necessary to trot for the complete social, economic, and political advancement of our people, his intentional sacrifice of time, resources, and literally his life, for this goal is beyond heroic. I emulate this sentiment in my social activism and organizing via programs like Pages To Wages, where we incentivize, in order to revolutionize, young people in urban and impoverished neighborhoods, using literacy. Other initiatives I embark on share this sentiment, like the planting of fruit trees and training residents to grow and trade food, in order to combat food deserts. In my regional, national, and global political efforts, I am a member of the African People Socialist Party, a global revolutionary political organization, seeking to liberate and empower Africans globally. In support of my brothers and sisters abroad, I directly organize with and sponsor extremely impoverished children in Uganda to assist indigenous fellow organizers in their goals toward economic mobility. Dr. King is an activism ancestor whom I appreciate for his efforts toward self-determination for people of color."



## Leticia Ababio Nortey

*Photo credit: Randy Opong, Simply Supreme Photography*

**Location:** Carroll County

**Volunteerism:** Expanding Boundaries International, Inc. empowers future generations to have equitable access to cross-cultural and technological education through Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (S.T.E.A.M.) activities

Website: [www.expandingboundaries.org](http://www.expandingboundaries.org)

"Martin Luther King Jr. once said, 'If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way.' As a small grassroots organization empowering youth in Baltimore, Carroll County, and Ghana, Africa, we are always instilling in them the need to be part of the solutions of issues our families, communities, nation and the world face in any small way rather than saying it is impossible or they can't. Each year, our youth present community giveback activities they can do.

This MLK Day, January 15, 2024, our organization is hosting MLK around the world - countries MLK traveled to for his diplomatic missions. Participants, who are students, educators, and parents, will join us on Zoom to travel virtually with Expanding Boundaries International to learn and explore Ghana, India, Norway, and Germany through interactive Google Earth. We will learn about history, what was happening in these countries around that time and why Dr. King was there as an American icon." To learn more, visit: <https://expandingboundaries.org/event/exploration-tour-with-martin-luther-king-jr-virtual-tour-to-countries-mlk-travelled-to/>

## Community Leaders, Volunteers Reflect on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



**Diesha Contee**  
Photo credit: Diesha Contee

**Location:** Annapolis  
**Volunteerism:** Mother and son dance at the Stanton Center; hosting movie nights; community celebrations; and organizer of a back-to-school Braid-A-Thon  
“In my opinion, I feel like the work that I do correlates

to his [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s] because he had a goal and mission and did whatever he had to help his people and make sure it was accomplished. That’s my same feeling for the youth. I have continued to serve the youth, by just understanding everyone has a story and potential. It just takes the right person to pour into them to change their outcome.”



**Ja’Nai McKinney**  
**Location:** Annapolis

**Volunteerism:** Back-to-school events; coat drives for the homeless; provides help for the homeless under the I-83 bridge in Baltimore, Maryland

“I see helping the community as helping my brothers and sisters in need. Dr. King wanted unity in the community. I

don’t look at anyone’s situation or who they are and what they look like. I do everything out of love for people. Love changes the community and makes the community better. If we all stood up like Dr. King and came together with love in our heart, we are one step to making the community better.” Luke 6:38 ESV ‘Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.’”



**Donna Johnson**  
Photo credit: Donna Johnson  
**Location:** Annapolis, Maryland

**Volunteerism:** Donna’s Day of Hope & Giving Healing the Community (nonprofit); feeding the community; providing clothing and various activities

Social media: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100088721854323&mibextid=JRoKGI>

“My dream as a little kid— well, as long as I can remember— was that I always

wanted to help the homeless. I always said that if I ever came into any kind of big money, that would be the first thing I would do before I even do something for myself. At one point of coming up, I really didn’t understand what Mr. King was saying... [about] ‘he had a dream.’ As I got older I began to understand what his dream meant... I know for sure feeding the people, and giving homeless people a place to live, and letting people know that sometimes that it might not be your dream, but it could be someone else’s that succeeds to do it. Sometimes we lack giving ourselves credit, but I think all of us in this world can make a difference if we just put it [our efforts] together.”

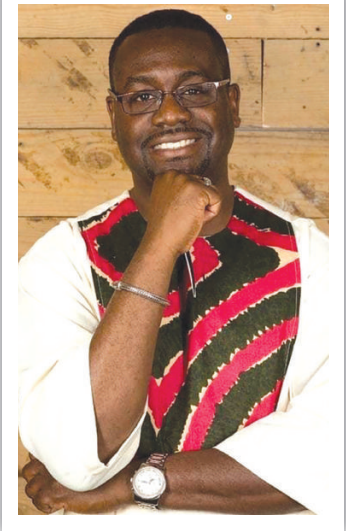


**Vanessa Cain**  
Photo credit: Vanessa Cain  
**Location:** Glen Burnie, Maryland

**Volunteerism:** Supporting youth in the community

“I feel we are living Dr. Martin Luther King’s dream and I quote: ‘I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.’ His speech inspired me since I was a child. Back in 1997, I

was prompted to write an essay about what it meant to me in the 11th grade. I won 3rd place from over 50 schools. I’m from the Newtowne 20 community and have lived this dream by giving back to the community. Every year around August, Mr. Jimmy Powell and I along with other volunteers take the kids from the Annapolis, Maryland community (mainly from the neighborhood in which we both grew up) on a trip, but all kids are welcome to ride the Harbor Queen boat. They explore not only with people from their communities, but others who have different colors of skin. This allows them to know that they are free in a nation as Dr. King dreamed.”



**Haki Ammi**  
Photo credit: Kim Poole

**Location:** Baltimore City  
**Volunteerism:** President of The Teaching Artist Institute and work with the Maryland Black Caucus Foundation

Teaching Artist Institute’s social media: <https://www.facebook.com/teachingartist>

“As the Parliamentarian board member for the Maryland Black Caucus Foundation, our goal is to work on a Black agenda to address issues in Maryland for Black people. What is missing is unity. Dr. King worked with the younger generation that had different strategies than himself but still engaged them. He didn’t allow class and status consciousness of his position to stop him from unifying. Maryland-based organizations should not be gatekeepers. They should support grassroots efforts. Many today that are showing up at breakfasts would not have supported Dr. King. His support was 40 percent in the 1960s and now 80 percent, according to a Pew study. Dr King’s message has been sanitized because Black leaders have run out of ideas. Many simply do not know where we go from here.”

## Mental Health and Care of Black Patients Merge in New Book About Crownsville Hospital

By Andrea Blackstone

Crownsville Hospital, which was once known as the “Hospital for the Negro Insane of Maryland,” consists of more than abandoned buildings, weathered tombstones etched with numbers and a campus that has been the subject of grim stories that unfolded in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

According to Maryland State Archives, “The hospital operated as a segregated institution until 1963, caring for the majority of Black patients within the State.”

The state psychiatric hospital which closed in 2004 is a piece of history worthy of in-depth documenting. Award-winning journalist and author Antonia Hylton accepted the challenge.

“I first focused on Crownsville as my senior thesis at Harvard [University],” Hylton recalls, reflecting on her time as a college student.

During a long process, she researched Crownsville Hospital, a segregated asylum. Local historian Janice Hayes-Williams and various former Crownsville employees are among the people who know about it up close. The budding author built trust. People opened new doors for her. And now, Hylton bravely takes readers behind the walls of the 93-year-old history of Crownsville on paper, while telling a true story. “MADNESS: Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum” is Hylton’s highly anticipated book. It will be on sale January 23, 2024.

“I found out about Crownsville more than 10 years ago. Access to psychiatry has always looked different for Black Americans. I knew that just from my own family stories. And so, I really wanted to learn more,” Hylton said. “I came across a footnote that mentioned

Crownsville and I started researching.”

As Hylton dug deeper, she trekked to the site of Crownsville Hospital when she was 18 or 19 years old. She also met some former employees who kept records in their own homes that she accessed, in addition to archived records. Hylton graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University, where she received prizes for her investigative research on race, mass incarceration and the history of psychiatry. Even after she graduated from Harvard, she did not abandon the burning fire to know more about Crownsville.

She added, “It pretty quickly became clear to me that there was more to be done here, whether that was a book or a documentary or something.”

Although some former patients wanted to rebuild their lives and focus on something different, other people were eager to talk and believed history had to be told.

“The American healthcare system is a reflection of our history and our culture,” according to Hylton.

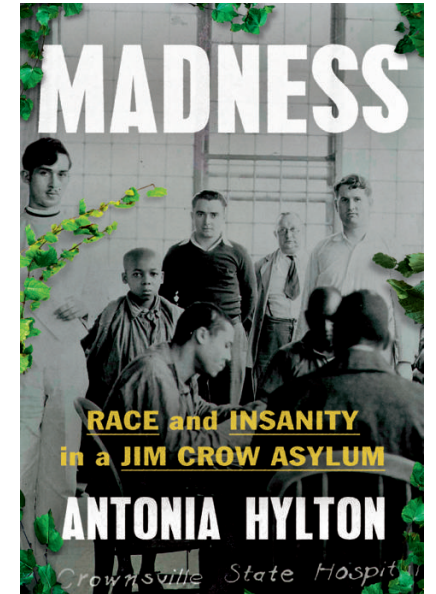
Hylton felt that Black people wanted to talk about mental health, trauma and their history around 2020. Protests, cries for justice all over the United States, and the world shutting down because of COVID-19 were some of the reasons she felt that way.

Hylton successfully pitched the story she explored to Hachette, a leading publisher. By late 2020 or 2021, she realized that she had the responsibility to carry a special story to the finish line.

“This is a story about the way in which racism, and discrimination, and seeing Black people as different helped and was part of the founding of our mental health care system in the United States. And also, part of its dismantling, it’s unraveling. Black people played a critical role in the



*Antonia Hylton, correspondent at NBC News and author of “MADNESS: Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum”*  
Photo by Mark Clennon



*Courtesy photo*

shaping, and in the beliefs of doctors and psychiatrists and therapists. That hasn’t been covered. That hasn’t been told yet,” Hylton said.

She remarked that white patients in Maryland were able to just step foot into much better resourced hospitals. But according to her research, Crownsville is the only hospital in America that forced its own patients to build it from the ground up.

“The first leader of the hospital brought Black men into a forest. They weren’t just carrying some gear around and fetching water. They were clearing roads, moving railways, constructing a foundation, building, working side by side with contractors and electricians. They were building themselves a hospital, day in and day out,” Hylton also explained, mentioning that unpaid labor permeated medicine.

Hylton’s local, book tour appearances include Baltimore, Maryland on Saturday, January 20,

2024 at 3 p.m. at ALA LibLearnX: The Library Learning Experience for library professionals. She will also appear at Jack and Nancy Center for the Performing Arts at Indian Creek School in conversation with Zinhle Essamuah on Friday, January 26, 2024 from 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., located at Anne Chambers Way in Crownsville, Maryland. Doors open at 6 p.m. Digital tickets are available now. The book is \$30 and the seat ticket is free. Books will be signed for event guests. Preordering is recommended. Visit <https://parkbooksmd.com/events/31763> for details. Additionally, an author talk will be held at Discoveries: the Library at the Mall, located at 2250 Annapolis Mall Road in Annapolis on Saturday, January 27, 2024 from 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. See <https://www.aacpl.net/event/author-talk-antonia-hylton-144793>. Books will be available for purchase. You may learn more about Hylton via <https://www.antoniahylton.com>.





Jayne Hopson  
Courtesy Photo

By Jayne Hopson

Creating a fresh start is a powerful way to kick off 2024. In the coming months, you may find yourself healthier and happier in mind, body, and spirit. New year resolutions are a popular way to set improvement goals, but we often set the bar too high and get discouraged when we don't immediately see the expected results of our hard work and sacrifice.

Vowing to go to at least five times a week, you join the gym. A few weeks later you can barely find time in your schedule to go once a week. Or after working out daily, you only lost two pounds and your svelte swimsuit season dreams are fading fast. Lack of progress can make it easy to fall back into old bad habits.

However, identifying and implementing broader wellness goals and doable lifestyle changes can be a winning way to welcome the new year. The month of January is named to symbolize a new pathway to enrichment and fulfillment. In Roman mythology, Janus was the god of doors leading to a fresh start.

These first days of January are an excellent time to reset and refocus attention on your personal well-being, especially if you are a caregiver.

Ways to achieve a fresh start:

**Set Realistic Goals:** Begin by setting achievable goals. Whether it's improving

## Skip the New Year Resolutions: How to Chart and Cultivate Wellness and Fulfillment in 2024

fitness, learning a new skill, or spending more time with loved ones, make sure your goals are specific, measurable, and attainable.

**Develop Healthy Habits:** Incorporate healthy habits into your daily routine. This could include a balanced diet, regular exercise, adequate sleep, and mindfulness practices like meditation or yoga.

**Declutter and Organize:** A clean and organized space can reflect and encourage a clear mind. Take time to declutter your living and workspaces.

**Practice Self-Care:** Prioritize self-care. This means different things to different people – it could be reading a book, taking a bath, or simply having some quiet time alone.

**Learn Something New:** Challenge yourself to learn something new. This could be a hobby, a language, or a professional skill. Learning keeps the mind active and can lead to a sense of accomplishment.

**Build a Support System:** Surround yourself with people who support and motivate you. A strong support system is vital for times when you need encouragement or advice.

**Reflect and Adjust:** Regularly reflect on your progress and be willing to adjust your approach if something isn't working. Flexibility is key to sustainable change.

**Stay Positive:** Maintain a positive mindset. Understand that setbacks are part of the journey and don't define your overall progress.

**Financial Planning:** Financial wellness is also crucial. Start the year with a clear financial plan, including budgeting and saving strategies.

**Digital Detox:** Consider taking a break from social media and digital devices.

This can help reduce stress and improve mental clarity.



DALL-E

**Volunteer and Give Back:** Engaging in community service or helping others can provide a sense of well-being.

And last, but not least, **seek professional help if needed:** If you're struggling, don't hesitate to seek help from a mental health professional. There's strength in recognizing when you need support.

Embracing these wellness opportunities can offer profound benefits for your mental and physical health. You may experience:

**Improved Mental Health:** A fresh start can provide a psychological boost. It's an opportunity to leave behind past mistakes and focus on new possibilities, fostering a sense of hope and optimism.

**Enhanced Physical Health:** Setting new health goals, like improving diet or increasing exercise, directly impacts physical well-being, leading to improved fitness, weight management, and overall health.

**Increased Productivity:** A new beginning can reinvigorate your approach to work and personal projects. With renewed energy and focus, productivity often increases.

**Better Stress Management:** Embracing a new start often involves re-evaluating priorities, which can lead to better **stress management and a more balanced life.**

**Growth and Learning:** Pursuing new interests or skills as part of your fresh start can lead to personal growth and a sense of achievement.

A fresh start in 2024 is more than a symbolic gesture. It's an opportunity to redefine the course of your life. By setting realistic goals, developing healthy habits, and embracing positive change, you can improve your overall well-being and embark on a journey of personal growth and fulfillment.

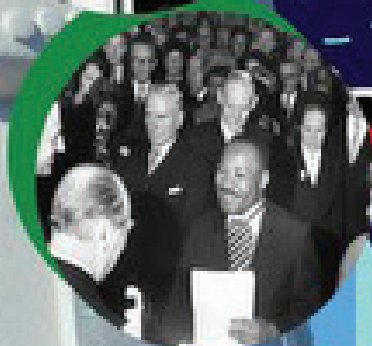
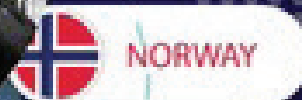
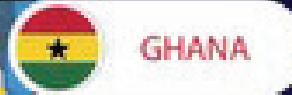
The journey is as important as the destination. Embrace each step, celebrate small victories, and stay committed to your well-being in the year ahead.

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## Ravens Lamar Jackson Should be NFL MVP

By Tyler Hamilton

As the final seconds ticked off the clock to end a Baltimore 56-19 rout of the Miami Dolphins, the fans at M&T Bank Stadium chanted MVP for quarterback Lamar Jackson even though he had already been taken out of the blowout.

“Lamar Jackson’s been showing that to you guys all year long. It’s great to know that he’s finally getting chants of ‘MVP. MVP.’ [It’s] well-deserved and well earned,” Ravens tight end Isaiah Likely said.

The chants started early in the game, perhaps a little too early for Jackson’s liking.

“I was thinking, ‘We need to finish this game.’ I’m not really paying attention to the chants,” Jackson said. “Last year, the score was looking like that at halftime and stuff like that and [in the] third quarter. Then, those guys started making plays, and we didn’t do anything, but the only thing on my mind was to finish the game, and we did.”

Would you expect anything less from a guy like Jackson whose razor-sharp focus is only on winning? One thing was clear. Jackson was the best player on the field once again.

“Lamar Jackson’s performance was even better than last week. He played a great football game,” Ravens coach John Harbaugh said. “He played a perfect football game in terms of the passing game. He was just on point.”

The Dolphins have wide receiver Tyreek Hill, their own MVP candidate. But Jackson showed everyone who the real MVP is. Jackson’s five touchdown passes and 321 passing yards in a game that determined supremacy in the AFC should be enough to earn him his second league MVP.



**Lamar Jackson**  
AP Photo/Nick Wass

Just two weeks ago Jackson led the Ravens to a 33-19 win over the San Francisco 49ers on the road, courtesy of two touchdowns and 252 passing yards from Jackson. The 49ers have two MVP candidates in quarterback Brock Purdy and running back Christian McCaffrey. Neither of them were able to outshine Jackson. Turning in top level performances against top teams like the 49ers and Dolphins now has Baltimore as the team to beat. The road to the Super Bowl runs through M&T Bank Stadium.

The MVP award has a lot to do with

statistics which is an area that Jackson hasn’t turned in results like the 2019 season when he won the MVP award, but Baltimore receiver Odell Beckham Jr. thinks Jackson’s MVP candidacy goes beyond the numbers.

“There is no debating. I think you look too much into statistics and all of that,” Beckham said. “I don’t even know exactly what the numbers are, but we’re talking about a guy that’s up for the MVP candidate. The way that [Lamar Jackson] leads this team. The way that he ... He just always keeps us alive, and the energy that he has

every day coming into work – he’s our general. He’s our leader. He’s just done a phenomenal job this season.”

The MVP award is supposed to go to the player who’s worth to the team is more than any other player in the league. Although backup quarterback Tyler Huntley has been impressive at times, it’s hard to imagine Baltimore being the same without Jackson working his magic on game day.

Ravens defensive tackle Justin Madubuike said it best.

“MVP! Nothing else to be said. Nothing else.”

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