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JPMorgan Chase Deepens Commitment to Baltimore with \$8.45 Million Investment



On Tuesday, June 4, 2024, citizens joined community leaders and Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott at the Center Club in downtown Baltimore for the announcement of JP Morgan Chase's \$8.45 million philanthropic commitment to nonprofit organizations and programs across Baltimore City to support economic and community development. (L-r): Shelonda Stokes, president of Downtown Partnership of Baltimore; Scott Canuel, Head of J.P. Morgan Private Bank in Baltimore; Mayor Brandon Scott; Jay Nwachu, CEO of Innovation Works Baltimore & Ignite Capital; Bree Jones, founder and CEO of Parity Homes; Tim Berry, Chase's global head of Corporate Responsibility and Chairman of the Mid-Atlantic region; and Alicia Wilson, Head of Regional Philanthropy for North America. (See article on page 2)

Photo credit: Karanja Gaçuça

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JUNE 19-22, 2024

JPMorgan Chase Deepens Commitment to Baltimore with \$8.45 Million Investment

By **Karanja Gaçuça**

On Tuesday, June 4, 2024, citizens joined community leaders and Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott at the Center Club in downtown Baltimore, as Tim Berry, Global Head of Corporate Responsibility at JPMorgan Chase, unveiled the latest in the firm's overtures towards under-invested communities in the Black and Latino community.

The announcement at The Center Club is the latest in the global financial services firm's \$20 million, five-year plan to drive inclusive economic growth across underserved communities in Baltimore.

Tim Berry announced an \$8.45 million investment in the city's small businesses and affordable housing initiatives.

"We are thrilled to grow our commitment in the great city of Baltimore with new funding to help strengthen the community through homeownership, commercial corridor revitalization, and small business growth," Berry said.

The \$8.45 million investment will be split between two core focus areas:

Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization (\$6 million)

This allocation will stabilize the housing supply and increase affordable homeownership opportunities by funding nonprofits engaged in neighborhood stabilization, wealth-building for underserved communities, and affordable housing development. JPMorgan's approach follows its "What Works" report analyzing strategies to tackle persistent residential vacancies.

Small Business Growth & Commercial Corridors (\$2.45 million)

Grants totaling \$1.45 million will go to groups like Innovation Works, Ignite Capital, Revolve Fund and The Harbor Bank to provide small businesses

with technical assistance and access to capital. An additional \$1 million will seed the "Vacancy to Vibrancy" initiative supporting entrepreneurship in commercial spaces.

Speaking about what JPMorgan's investments allow Innovation Works and Ignite Capital to do, Jay Nwachu in his address, stated "We're not just supporting businesses, we're bringing new life into these assets and paving the way for job creation and economic growth and an increased sense of community pride, which we cannot understate."

Nwachu highlights that their work goes beyond just assisting individual businesses - it is about breathing new life into neighborhoods, creating jobs, driving economic growth, and instilling a sense of community pride.

These intentional and continuing overtures to the underserved and under-invested Black and Latino communities have come about following JPMorgan's admission of the systemic exclusionary practices within the banking industry. "Systemic racism is a tragic part of America's history," JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon acknowledged in a statement in 2020. "We can do more and do better to break down systems that have propagated racism and widespread economic inequality."

In 2020, JPMorgan Chase made a commitment to invest over \$30 billion to redress racial inequity across the United States. Since then, JP Morgan has declared that they have not only met but exceeded their \$30B goal, announcing that they had already deployed \$30.7B as of December 31, 2023.

The commitments and overtures made by JP Morgan Chase are certainly welcome in a city that has historically borne the brunt of the notorious historic practice of redlining, in particular by the bigger Wall Street behemoths such as JPMorgan and other such financial



Bree Jones,
founder and CEO of Parity Homes
Photo: Karanja Gaçuça



Jay Nwachu, CEO of Innovation Works Baltimore & Ignite Capital
Photo: Karanja Gaçuça

institutions of that caliber.

That said, Baltimore residents would be forgiven for being skeptical about the long-term commitment by banks such as JPMorgan. In speaking with local residents during this and other recent events, there seems to be cautious optimism that the "big banks" may have finally realized that proactively serving all communities is good business. Indeed at a recent event in Washington, D.C., Jamie Dimon, JPMorgan Chase CEO and Chairman responded to The Baltimore Times' question about diversity initiatives pointing out that "diversity is good for business."

The firm employs 1,500 people across the region, serves over 1.2 million customers through 110 local branches, and has invested over \$147 million since 2019 in affordable housing, small businesses, and philanthropic partnerships.

"This work in West Baltimore with the support of JPMorgan Chase, transforming a neighborhood house by house from what we used to see to what we want to see," stated Mayor Brandon Scott. He praised the investment for helping "fuel Baltimore's renaissance."

Bree Jones, founder of Parity

Homes— and a past recipient of JPMorgan Chase's catalytic housing capital— highlighted the potential for innovative solutions and transformative impact. "Although hyper vacancy represents one of Baltimore's greatest challenges, it also represents Baltimore's greatest opportunity," she said. Her optimistic outlook reframes the obstacles facing Baltimore as openings for positive change when approached strategically.

JPMorgan Chase prides itself in having called Baltimore home for 130-years and clearly wants to be seen as a key economic anchor and driver of inclusive growth in the city. The bank is aggressively seeking to cement its legacy, deepening its civic ties to Baltimore through its multi-million dollar investments.

Karanja Gaçuça is the Publisher, President/ CEO of The Baltimore Times. A former Wall Street analyst, consultant, journalist and Pan African activist, he writes on issues of global geopolitics as it pertains to people of African descent the world over, as well as politics, economics, finance and tech! Karanja is a tech founder and CEO of Enkaare LLC.

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Jenenne Whitfield is MCB's First-ever Harborplace Director of Experience

By Demetrius Dillard

When she first visited Harborplace a few years ago, Jenenne Whitfield was fascinated. Subsequently joining a community engagement session this spring reaffirmed her commitment to Baltimore's emerging arts scene.

As Whitfield sat at a jam-packed Maryland Science Center and heard MCB Real Estate Managing Partner P. David Bramble discuss plans to redevelop and reimagine downtown's Harborplace, she was enamored with the idea.

Throughout the year-long community engagement process, MCB heard about the importance of culture, art and experience as a part of a new Harborplace – and with about three decades of experience working in the arts and culture sector, Whitfield stood out as the ideal leader to contribute to the next phase of MCB's massive vision.

Thus, MCB Real Estate officials recently announced Whitfield as the Harborplace's first director of experience. In that role, she will help reimagine the firsthand experience at a new Harborplace.

Born and raised in Detroit, Whitfield relocated to Baltimore in 2022 to take a job as the director of the American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM).

After working with AVAM for a little more than a year, Whitfield parted ways with the museum. But, she didn't want to leave Baltimore as she had grown somewhat attached to the city's culture, its residents and its uniqueness.

"I have traveled all over the world, but no place has really captured me like Baltimore has. It's really special," Whitfield said.

"When you ask me what is it about Baltimore, I would have to first say it's something very special about its people. When I got let go from AVAM, there was a whole community of people that rallied around me, and really demonstrated that they were glad I was here."

A graduate of Wayne State University, Whitfield began her professional career as a banker. In the process of time, she grew more and more uninterested in that particular line of work. Driving through Detroit one day in 1993, Whitfield took a turn down Heidelberg Street and it changed the course of her life.

Prior to moving to Baltimore, Whitfield was the well-reputed president of the internationally acclaimed Heidelberg Project in Detroit. Whitfield's husband, Tyree Guyton, is the founder of The Heidelberg Project.

Under Whitfield's leadership, The Heidelberg Project emerged as one of the nation's most prominent arts and cultural hubs.

Her expertise underscores her ability to infuse Harborplace with innovative and inclusive cultural programming, MCB officials said.

"I am thrilled to welcome Jenenne Whitfield to our team," Bramble said.

"Her proven background of fostering creativity and inclusivity aligns perfectly with our vision for Harborplace. Together, we are committed to creating a dynamic cultural destination that celebrates Baltimore – even before we put a shovel in the ground. Harborplace has always been the City's gathering place and our commitment through this process is to return Harborplace to that glory in a modern 21st-century way."

While Whitfield is grateful for the

time she spent at AVAM, she said she feels her skills and expertise are more useful in the MCB's director of experience role.

"A museum setting is cool and it serves its purpose, but I think everything happens for a reason. And I don't really think that's where my talent is best suited," Whitfield said.

"So it's not really a surprise to me that I landed now at the Harborplace as the director of the Harbor experience."

From the plethora of seafood eateries, to the waterfront views, to the cobblestone streets, to its diverse communities – Baltimore, thus far, has lived up to its nickname of Charm City.

"Baltimore is such an exciting city with energy that sets new precedents for what a world-class, diverse city can be. I am excited to have been invited to the table," said Whitfield, whose specialty is arts administration.

"I believe I'm actually here in Baltimore to be part of the transition, and the change, and the energy, and the dynamics of what's happening at the Harbor."

In addition to developing dynamic programming on the local, national and international scales, Whitfield will be tasked with building powerful relationships and partnerships with Baltimore's creative community and others en route to creating a more lively Harborplace into an influential hub of creativity, innovation and inclusivity.

"It's all about us making Baltimore great – or I should say greater," Whitfield said. "I'm here because this is a great opportunity."

Since first hearing Bramble speak at a community engagement meeting, Whitfield was struck with Bramble's honesty, transparency and efforts



MCB Real Estate recently announced that Jenenne Whitfield will be the first-ever Harborplace director of experience.

Photo courtesy of Jenenne Whitfield

in connecting with the people of Baltimore. MCB leaders are thrilled to have Whitfield on board.

"This is not just a real estate transaction," Bramble added. "This reinforces our goal of harnessing the power of positive energy to reimagine Harborplace [as] a world-class waterfront destination."

The Reverend James Lawson Jr., Civil Rights Trailblazer, Dies at 95

By Andrea Blackstone

The Reverend James M. Lawson Jr., the United Methodist pastor and civil rights leader who was known as the “architect of the nonviolence movement” in America, and university professor, died on June 9, 2024. He was 95 years old.

Rev. Lawson traveled to India as a Methodist missionary. He was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi’s teachings of nonviolence. While speaking in a United Methodist Communications video, Rev. Lawson once credited his own parents for sowing the seeds of nonviolence that ultimately shaped his views that nonviolence holds power. After he refused to report for the draft in 1951, when he was a college student, Rev. Lawson was imprisoned.

His legacy includes inspiring and training nonviolent activists during the early days of the Civil Rights Movement. He became a proponent of equality who played a leading role in the Nashville Lunch Counter Sit-Ins in 1960 to end racial segregation in the South. Rev. Lawson played a role in strategizing for the Freedom Riders. He also led the Memphis sanitation workers’ strike in 1968.

Many individuals recently reflected on his memorable contributions, including President Joe Biden.

“Jill and I are saddened by the loss of one of our nation’s noblest leaders. His passing before Juneteenth is a reminder that our nation’s journey from slavery to freedom started in the hearts of people like James Lawson spellbound by freedom. We send our condolences to the Lawson family as our nation mourns a man who helped



The Reverend James M. Lawson Jr.

Photo: Joon Powell

valued by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Rev. Lawson, who died at 95, profoundly shaped the Civil Rights Movement, training leaders like John Lewis and Diane Nash. His legacy of nonviolent activism continues to inspire us. Our condolences to his family and all touched by his work.”

Additionally, Rev. Lawson worked as a professor at several institutions. The UCLA Labor Center shared reflections about

redeem the soul of our nation,” said President Biden in a press release.

Rev. Lawson greatly impacted Los Angeles’ labor and academic community. University of California’s college of social sciences, described him as “one of the most impactful social justice leaders of the twentieth-century.”

Rev. Lawson was a close ally and advisor to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center tweeted about Rev. Lawson’s passing on June 10, 2024.

“The King Center mourns the passing of Rev. James Lawson Jr., a leading nonviolent strategist and tactician whose insight was deeply

the icon online while pointing out that in 2018, he was awarded the UCLA Medal, which is the university’s highest honor.

“In December 2021, the UCLA Labor Center’s historic MacArthur Park building was officially named the UCLA James Lawson Jr. Worker Justice Center, in recognition of Lawson’s decades-long commitment to the labor movement of Los Angeles. His unwavering commitment to the fight for economic, social and racial justice was always matched by his work to develop new generations of young people to embark on a journey to advance social change,” the UCLA Labor Center also reported.

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ZingFrog.ai: Cutting-edge AI Technology, Serves Unique Purpose

Black woman-owned startup to be introduced at upcoming NNPA Conference

By Demetrius Dillard

As the world navigates the ever-changing technological landscape, another potential game changer in the artificial intelligence industry has emerged.

ZingFrog.ai, the brainchild of Jayne Hopson and K.C. Hopson, is one of the latest text-to-speech developments designed to provide a more time-efficient alternative to consuming the news and other written material published online.

Through artificial intelligence capabilities, ZingFrog can convert a 750-word article to a one-minute read.

ZingFrog, in sum, is disruptive technology that offers newspaper publishers an out-of-box conversion of important, text-heavy articles to a concise, under-a-minute “Zings.” Essentially, the technology encapsulates a writer’s words and is presented in audio form that appeals directly to readers.

“Zings,” which is another term for condensed articles, have become prevalent among today’s readers, and is particularly useful for those who prefer succinct stories that can be read or listened to in a minute or less.

Jayne, a veteran health columnist for The Baltimore Times, is a member of the Association of Health Care Journalists.

As part of a 2023 Heritage Fund Fellowship, Jayne was tasked with identifying barriers to minority wellness, which also included researching and publishing weekly articles focused on health care disparities in poor and underserved Black communities.

Similar to Jayne’s first fellowship, her second Heritage Fund Fellowship was

awarded to further investigate whether “Illiteracy is Black Public Health Enemy No. 1.”

After thorough consideration, she came to a striking realization: the troubling illiteracy rate among minority populations.

“Immediately, it became obvious to me that a lot of people cannot read in those [minority] populations. The illiteracy – in my opinion, in my observation – was public health enemy No. 1 for Black people,” Jayne Hopson stated.

If one cannot read or comprehend information properly, that person could never fully leverage the public health and wellness resources at his or her disposal, Jayne added.

“This presentation is a must for publishers seeking a cost-effective way to grow readership and deliver news to a wider audience with diverse needs, time and interest,” she also said.

K.C. is Jayne’s husband and the ZingFrog.ai’s chief technology officer. An accomplished technologist and entrepreneur, K.C. is Cadmium Software’s vice president of data security and compliance. He is also a Java programming expert and holds two software patents.

This new ZingFrog tool, according to Jayne and K.C., is a product of a sincere, urgent need to utilize AI text to speech technology “to deliver accurate print media messages to patients where the lack of medical illiteracy can be life threatening.”

In addition, ZingFrog is fashioned to provide quick access for literate individuals who are hesitant to read text-heavy content of importance, such as prescription medicine precautions, medical brochures and post outpatient surgery instructions.



K.C. Hopson, an accomplished technologist, author and entrepreneur, is the chief technology officer of ZingFrog.ai. Courtesy photos



Jayne Hopson, a veteran health columnist for The Baltimore Times, is the president of ZingFrog.ai.

The Baltimore Times is the first media outlet that is making use of the ZingFrog service, given Jayne’s connection to the publication. She said she’s known Baltimore Times publisher Joy Bramble for nearly 40 years.

“I’ve known Joy a really long time, and I thought The Baltimore Times would be a good platform for us to launch this project,” Jayne said.

According to K.C., every Baltimore Times article published over the last 90 days or so has been “Zinged,” meaning that those stories have condensed, text-to-speech versions. Visitors to the newspaper’s website can now view recently published content in full printed form or a condensed, summarized form.

Zinged articles appear at a sixth-grade reading level and have accompanying avatars that reflect the voice heard reading the stories, K.C. said, adding he and Jayne will soon solicit clients and potential customers – who will initially be Black publications – for the ZingFrog service.

“The analytics are showing that people are really interested in this,” he said.

The minority woman-owned company, officially named ZingFrog.ai LLC, is less than a year old. The technology will officially be rolled out at the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) conference scheduled for June 19-22, 2024 at Baltimore’s Four Seasons Hotel.

Through observation and research, Jayne discovered something else concerning: the lack of cultural and ethnic diversity and representation in the artificial intelligence industry.

“AI is here to stay. What we quickly discovered was most AI is in white voices, and that’s a problem,” Jayne said.

Accordingly, K.C. pointed out that ZingFrog is “going to have minority representation because all the other [services] out there don’t. They have little or none. Even the so-called minority voices sound like white voices.”

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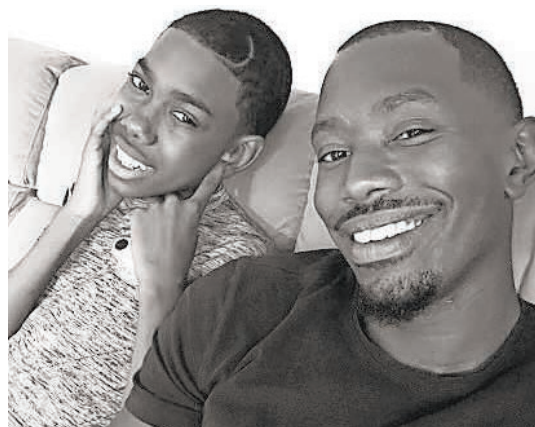
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TO DAD WITH LOVE

By Andrea Blackstone



Donovan Davis and his father, Eric "Buddy" Davis enjoy a joyous moment.



Eric "Buddy" Davis and Donovan Davis relax during a special occasion.

Photos courtesy of Eric "Buddy" Davis

Eric "Buddy" Davis

"Loving, energetic, laid back, busy, family oriented and proud father." - Pamela Davis

Eric "Buddy" Davis, a program specialist at The University of Maryland School of Dentistry and an Annapolitan, is a proud father who helps to raise 17-year-old Donovan Davis. His son was diagnosed with autism at a young age.

"He would be considered Level 3 on the Autism Spectrum Disorder," said Donovan's grandmother, Pamela Davis.

Some of Eric's best traits are his patience and attention to detail, according to his mother. He is an excellent example of fatherhood because he does whatever it takes to make sure Donovan has the best possible quality of life.

"On top of that, he shares with the world what it's like to raise someone who has autism through social media posts. He has never neglected his responsibilities, and when things get tough, he is right there always smiling and never complaining," Pamela explained.

Eric protects his son while trying to elevate his quality of life. He pushes him to achieve more independence, but there are many challenges Eric

faces while raising and co-parenting Donovan.

"When you are raising someone with autism, it can be very difficult to get proper sleep. Donovan can have days where he is up for 24 hours. Eric still must work at a demanding job and still be productive, so finding moments to rest is important and the windows are unpredictable. Donovan also is very strong and when he has moments of frustration my son has to calm him, which can be a difficult task, but he manages," said Pamela.

Black fathers who step up to take great care of their children like Eric do exist.

"I would like the world to know that there are plenty of strong, loving, caring, emotionally intelligent, protective, and proud Black fathers who prioritize family and build their life around it," said Pamela.

Eric has also coached youth sports and organized events and discussion panels to give parents dealing with autistic children a platform to express and connect with other families.

"Continue to pray and be your authentic self. I love you Bud and my breath is your breath," Pamela said, while sending her son a Father's Day message.



(L-R): Seneha Speaks, Damon Speaks, Sonia Speaks (center), and Simrin Speaks. Courtesy photo

Damon Speaks

“He leads by example, showing us that with dedication and effort, we can achieve our dreams.” – Simrin Speaks

Damon Speaks, a real estate investor who resides in Baltimore County, raises the bar for his family and others who encounter him.

“He’s an excellent example of fatherhood because he’s so selfless and he leads with actions. If we have problems he listens with no judgment, and we find solutions instead of dwelling on problems,” Seneha Speaks said about her caring yet stern superhero.

She added, “I always know if I call my Dad, he’s there.”

Her favorite trait is her father’s sense of empathy. He cares for strangers, no questions asked.

She added “His dedication to the community and giving back always keeps me humble and proud to be his daughter.”

Her favorite family activity is traveling together, experiencing new cultures, and trying new foods.



Simrin Speaks, (left), and Seneha Speaks, (right), enjoy time with their father (center) during a trip to Hawaii in 2022. Photo: Sonia Speaks

Seneha mentioned that she would like to tell her father that she appreciates him in every way.

“You’ve shown me a perfect example of what a genuine, caring man is and I’ll always love you forever and ever!”

Seneha’s sister, Simrin Speaks agreed that their inspiring father is hardworking and dedicated.

“He is a successful entrepreneur and real estate investor who has built his business from the ground up. His commitment to both his professional and family life is truly admirable.”

She also said that their father effortlessly balances his demanding career with his responsibilities as a father.

“He is always present, providing guidance and support, and ensuring that his family feels loved and valued. His ability to lead by example and instill strong values in his children makes him an excellent father.”

She feels proud to be Damon’s daughter because he is a role model for his daughter and many others.

“Thank you for being an amazing father, a role model, and a source of strength and inspiration!” she said.



(L-r): Kymmar D. Williams, Ja’el, Noah, Noelle (center), David, and Dr. Veronique Williams Photos: iFX Photography - Kymmar D. Williams

Kymmar D. Williams

“My dad has been an example by simply being in my life and being himself.”

– Ja’el Williams

Kymmar D. Williams, a computer engineer who resides in Howard County, Maryland with his family, is an example of a man who embraces his fatherly role with joy and confidence. His wife, Dr. Veronique Williams; 20-year-old daughter, Ja’el Williams; 12-year-old stepson, David Murphy; 8-year-old daughter, Noelle Williams; and one year old son, Noah Williams are Williams’ family unit.

“I would describe my father as very hardworking, generous, and funny. My favorite thing about my dad is he’s always preparing for the future. He thinks ahead not only for himself, but for his whole family,” said Ja’el.

Ja’el, now a performer, rapper and sound engineer, reminisced about the old days when Kymmar took her to the circus, which was one of her favorite outings with her father.

“I’m not 100% sure what my purpose



Kymmar D. Williams

is yet, but that’s fine because I’m still young. My dad also taught me to go at my own pace as long as I’m not stagnant. My dad has been

an example by simply being in my life and being himself.” She learned that to fulfill her purpose, she needs to focus and work hard.

Ja’el wants her father to know that she truly appreciates him and is proud of how much he has grown as a person.

“No matter what we go through, or what the world throws at us I will always and forever love him,” said Ja’el.

Noelle, Williams’ youngest daughter, described their father as loving, considerate, generous, and encouraging. Kymmar helps her in life with her martial arts and other life components.

“He tells me to always try to walk in the fruit of the spirit to be an example. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control,” said Noelle.

Noelle is already being taught how to build for her future.

“My dad shows me how to save money, invest, get a house, how to love someone and how they should love you, and how to follow in God’s word,” she said.

Noelle added, “You are a great dad. You help support our family. You give us food to eat. You pray for us when we’re sick and all the time. We love you, daddy!”



O’Ryan Te’i Rashard Coleman-El (left) and his father, Anthony Jackson (right) Photo: Antonio Hunt

Anthony Jackson

“He is an excellent example of fatherhood because of the wisdom he brings to the table.”

– O’Ryan Te’i Rashard Coleman-El

Attentive fathers are a blessing to their families who rely on them from day-day for things both great and small. O’Ryan Te’i Rashard Coleman-El, a 19-year-old Annapolitan, reflects on the bond that he shares with his father, Anthony Jackson.

“He gives off a lot of respect and courtesy,” said Coleman-El.

Jackson, a Director of Media Relations, founder of Expedite Vending, entrepreneur, and University of Baltimore student, brings needed wisdom to his son’s life. He taught Coleman-El how to mature, live up to being a man, progress, and establish values, morals and principles in life. He also taught his son about goal setting and completing things from start to finish.

Coleman-El also said, “Without fathers we wouldn’t have that discipline

and we mature slower.”

Jackson and his son share down time, too. Anthony’s son enjoys heading to the mall to look at Jordan tennis shoes with his father.

When it comes to Black father-son relationships, Coleman-El wants the world to know that Black fathers are needed. They help their children to obtain mental stability and development as a “whole person in life.”

He also said, “I love him no matter what happens in life. I’ll always be there when he needs a hand.”

A Local List of Juneteenth Happenings

Compiled by **Andrea Blackstone**

The Juneteenth holiday will arrive on Wednesday, June 19, 2024 this year. Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas to inform people that the Civil War had ended. Enslaved people were finally free. Delivery of the news—in 1865—occurred two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had already abolished slavery. To celebrate Juneteenth's significance, educational and entertaining events will be held to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States.

This roundup may help you to explore community events around the region. Please confirm event details and times which may be subject to change.



Come enjoy a variety of activities on June 15, 2024 in Bowie, Maryland.

Photo courtesy of the City of Bowie

Saturday, June 15, 2024

Bowie's 3rd Annual Juneteenth Jubilee Festival

Attend a Juneteenth Jubilee Festival on Saturday, June 15, 2024, at Allen Pond Park in **Bowie, Maryland** from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Enjoy a Kid Zone, College and D9 Greek Row, over 140 vendors, live music, artists and Bowie Be Healthy Way. Free event organized by the City of Bowie. See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bowies-3rd-annual-juneteenth-jubilee-festival-tickets-917522643927>.

Saturday, June 15, 2024

The Historic Hosanna School



Museum will hold an annual Upper Bay Juneteenth Festival from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Hosanna School Museum, located 2424 Castleton Road, **Darlington, Maryland**. It is the longest running Juneteenth celebration in the Lower Susquehanna and Upper Chesapeake Bay regions. Enjoy music (to include African drummers), dance, crafts, Buffalo Soldiers, a genealogy workshop, book signings, horse rides, a puppet show, lectures, vendors and other fun events. Food will be available. Cost: \$18.65. For details and registration, visit HosannaSchoolMuseum.org.



Saturday, June 15, 2024

THE LAST TO KNOW: A JUNETEENTH STORY performance will be presented by The AngelWing Project, Inc. on Saturday, June 15th 2024, 1:00 p.m. and 4 p.m. See the narrative of Juneteenth at Chesapeake Arts Center, located 194 Hammonds Ln #194, **Brooklyn Park, Maryland**. Visit <https://www.onthestage.tickets/show/the-angelwing-project->

[inc/662921c44fb3170e435ec154/](https://www.onthestage.tickets/show/the-angelwing-project-inc/662921c44fb3170e435ec154/) for information and tickets. Appropriate for all ages. Cost: \$5.00. Email: awilson@theawproject.org.

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

A celebration of Juneteenth will be held on Tuesday, June 18 at 7:00 p.m., Enoch Pratt Free Library, Poe Room, 400 Cathedral Street, **Baltimore, Maryland**. Discover the story of Juneteenth during a talk by Bradley Alston, Baltimore's Black History maven. Questions and answers will follow at the end of the talk. Visit https://calendar.prattlibrary.org/event/in_celebration_of_juneteenth for details.



Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Juneteenth Celebration 2024 | Freedom's Voices from Jubilee to Reparations will come to Reginald F. Lewis Museum, **Baltimore, Maryland** through intergenerational and artistic voices expressing freedom, "jubilee" and reparations from 11 a.m. – 5:30 pm. Enjoy a Freedom Quilt Artist Talk on emancipation and create your own Juneteenth quilt block square with story quilter, Dr. Joan M. E. Gaither. The Carter Legacy Singers will perform. Theatergoers can hear today's youth honor Black Woman Genius fiber artists with their monologues co-written by artistic producer wordsmith and more. Visit <https://www.lewismuseum.org/event/juneteenth-celebration-2024/> to obtain more information and directions to register. Free event.

Wednesday, June 19, 2024

The annual **National Harbor Juneteenth Celebration** will be held on

Wednesday, June 19 from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Visit Freedom Day Black-Owned Marketplace in the Capital Canopy. Enjoy a variety of businesses, food vendors, a Drummers Circle on the Belvedere, various performances by Secret Society Band, Eleanor Roosevelt High School step team, the Prince George's Poet Laureate and others. See <https://www.nationalharbor.com/events/annual-events/celebrate-juneteenth/>.

Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Join the Diocese of Maryland Truth and Reconciliation Commission for a Juneteenth Prayer and Celebration Service in **Baltimore, Maryland**. A 5:30 p.m. Cathedral of the Incarnation, Acknowledgement and Procession to Harriet Tubman Grove will be held. A Harriet Tubman Grove at Wyman Park Dell, Prayer and Celebration Service will be held at 6:00 p.m. Learn more via: <https://episcopalmaryland.org/event/juneteenth-prayer-and-celebration-service-2024/>

Saturday, June 22, 2024

Attend the Annapolis Juneteenth Parade and Festival on Saturday, June 22, 2024 from 1:00 - 7:00 p.m., Bates Athletic Complex, Annapolis, 935 Spa Road, **Annapolis, Maryland**. The Annapolis Juneteenth Parade will kick off at noon at Annapolis City Dock. See <https://www.theannapolisjuneteenth.org/festivalhappenings>. Free.

Saturday, June 22, 2024

The 3rd Annual "Juneteenth Entrepreneurship-Q," a Community Small-Business Expo, will be held from 1 - 8pm, 7600 Allendale Circle, **Hyattsville, Maryland**. The outdoor business expo will include small businesses and vendors of all types and ages. Free admission. See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/3rd-annual-juneteenth-entrepreneurship-q-a-community-small-business-expo-tickets-906170068067?aff=erellivmlt> for further information.

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CREATIVELY BLACK BALTIMORE:

CELEBRATING ARTISTRY AT INNER HARBOR LIGHT STREET PAVILION

In the summer of 2023, during a pivotal meeting, Joy Bramble and Paris Brown ignited a vision—one that would celebrate the vibrant artistic community of Baltimore. Their gaze turned toward the city's own Larry "Poncho" Brown, a native artist whose creative spirit resonated deeply.

The initial discussions buzzed with excitement as they explored the idea of a special issue in *The Baltimore Times*, dedicated to showcasing the talent of 100 Black Baltimore Artists. The prospect of this artistic tapestry unfurling across the pages fueled their passion. But it didn't stop there.

History was in the making as *The Baltimore Times* embarked on a groundbreaking endeavor: *Creatively Black Baltimore: Inner Harbor Light Street Pavilion Pop-Up*. Formerly known as Ripley's Believe It or Not, this iconic venue would transform into a vibrant canvas—a testament to the richness of Baltimore's Black creative community. This art initiative transcends boundaries. It unifies emerging, mid-career, and established artists, all hailing from Baltimore. Their collective voices weave a narrative of resilience, innovation, and cultural pride. Participating artists include Adiante; Franzsoon; Aliana Grace Bailey; Alma Roberts; Angelique Scott; Anson Asaka; Anthony Nsofor; Bobby Blazek;



Barber Shop Series #28 Fade **Artist:** Shroeder Cherry

Brandon Lamar Jones; Bria Sterling Wilson; Candice Tavares; Darren Thompson, Jr; Derrick Smith; DJ Da Artist; Dr. Yemonja Smalls; Elijah Trice; Grayson M. Williams, Jr.; Hasani Claxton; James E. Murphy Jr.; Jerome Chester; Jordan P. Jackson; Kibibi Ajanku; Lamar Jones; Larry Poncho Brown; Lenett Partlow-Myrick; Linda L. Gray; Linda Tucker; Mandela E. Brown; Melku Iyosef Tafari; Oliver King Jr.; Ram Brisueno; Rashad A. Muhammad; Raymond Lucas; Schroeder Cherry; Tamera Payne; Tiffani Sahara; Tiffany Harris; Valerie A. Smith; Wendell Supreme Shannon; Yewande K. Davis; and various others. For these artists, this initiative is more than an exhibition—it's a lifeline. Many have felt the absence of robust support within the city's existing art programs. But now, they converge

From June 2024 to December 2024, this space will host one of the largest gatherings of Black artists in Baltimore. The address—301 Light Street, 2nd Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202—will become a sanctuary for expression, dialogue, and celebration. The event isn't confined to static displays. There will also be a schedule of programming, art lectures, forums, panel discussions, guest speakers, etc.

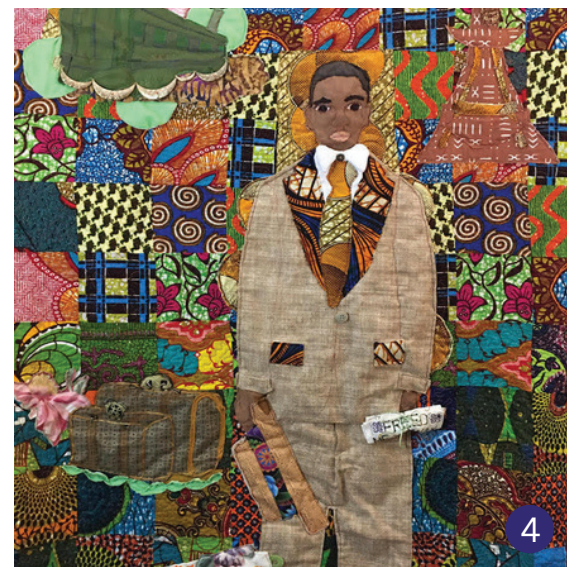
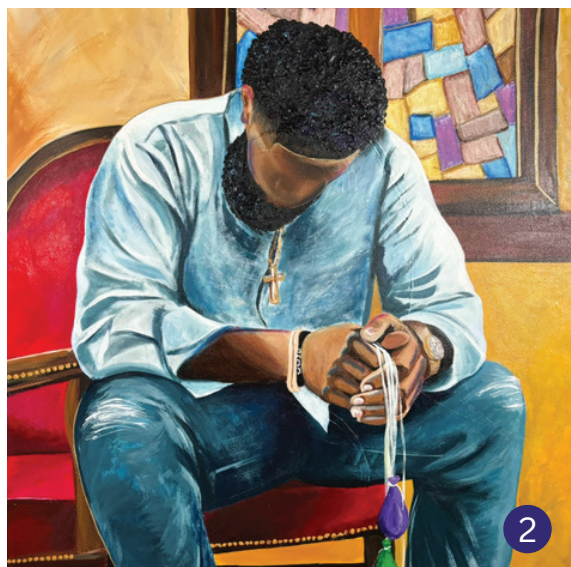


As the sun sets over the Inner Harbor, the pavilion will come alive with stories, brushstrokes, and melodies. Creatively Black Baltimore is more than an exhibition; it's a testament to the resilience of artists who shape culture, one stroke at a time.

Join us at the Inner Harbor Light Street Pavilion—where art transcends walls and becomes a beacon of unity. Let the colors flow, the conversations ignite, and the spirit of Baltimore's Black artists soar.

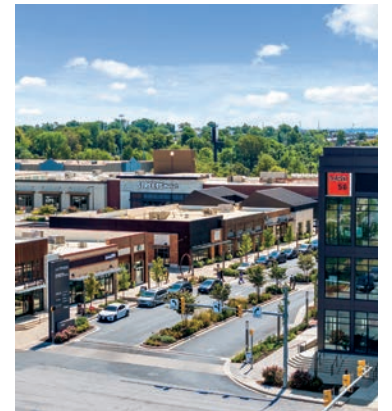
1. Diverge **Artist:** Wendell Supreme Shannon
2. Finally Decided **Artist:** Tiffany Sahara
3. Janelle Low **Artist:** Elifah Trice
4. Ellsworth Declaration **Artist:** Linda Mose Meadows

5. Lady Tempest **Artist:** Hasani Claxton
6. King Vibes **Artist:** Dion Pollard
7. Golden Queen **Artist:** Anson Asaka





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Is Illiteracy Black America's Public Health Enemy #1?



Jayne Hopson
Courtesy Photo

By Jayne Hopson

Illiteracy is a silent, but pressing issue in the United States, particularly within the Black community. This problem transcends educational boundaries and has severe implications for public health. "Health Matters" introductory article, "Medical Illiteracy: Black America's Public Health Enemy #1," outlines the direct correlation between low literacy levels and adverse health outcomes, underscoring an urgent need for systemic intervention.

It is nearly impossible to calculate how many people die each year because they could not correctly read a prescription medicine label or determine the number of patients who became ill after surgery because they could not read or understand critical home care instructions. The Literacy Project has gathered U.S. Census Bureau data to offer a compelling look at illiteracy and the magnitude of the problem:

According to data from The Literacy Project, 45 million Americans are functionally illiterate, unable to read above a fifth-grade level. These statistics reveal the magnitude of the

literacy crisis and beg responsible community stakeholders and leaders for a deeper examination of illiteracy's far-reaching implications. The "face" of illiteracy:

- Currently, 45 million Americans are functionally illiterate and cannot read above a fifth-grade level
- 50% of adults cannot read a book written at an eighth-grade level
- 57% of students failed the California Standards Test in English
- 1/3 of fourth-graders reach the proficient reading level
- 75% of students in California school systems are unable to perform basic reading skills
- 85% of juvenile offenders have problems reading
- 3 out of 5 people in American prisons can't read
- 3 out of 4 people on welfare can't read

The early deficiencies in literacy extend into adulthood, contributing to a myriad of social and health problems. These figures are not just numbers; they represent real individuals whose lives and health are severely impacted by their inability to read proficiently.

The financial costs of medical illiteracy are staggering. It is estimated that billions of dollars are spent annually on the treatment of preventable diseases and illnesses suffered by patients who are functionally illiterate. These individuals, unable to read at a fifth-grade level, struggle to understand prescription medicine labels and hospital discharge instructions, which can significantly increase their risk of making medical errors.

This issue is particularly acute among poor, chronically ill individuals who must self-administer their medications and rely on caregivers who may also have limited literacy skills.

Medical content is generally written to be understood by a wide audience, typically at an eighth grade reading level. However, this standard is often too complex for those with lower literacy levels. To illustrate this point, compare the post-surgery care instructions written at eighth-grade, fifth grade, and third-grade reading levels.

The differences in complexity and the ability to comprehend these instructions highlight the challenges faced by those with lower literacy levels. For example, while an eighth-grade level instruction might say, "Limit physical activity," a third-grade level instruction simplifies this to "You need to rest and get lots of sleep." Such simplifications are crucial for ensuring that patients can follow essential medical advice.

The impact of illiteracy on health outcomes cannot be overstated. It is nearly impossible to calculate the exact number of people who die each year because they could not correctly read a prescription medicine label or who became ill after surgery due to a misunderstanding of critical home care instructions.

The legacy of historical, systemic barriers to Black literacy, such as laws that made it illegal to teach slaves how to read, continues to wield a profound influence on the health outcomes of African Americans today. These historical injustices have created a legacy of educational inequity that persists in modern times, contributing to the racial health disparities observed in the Black community.

Addressing the root causes of illiteracy in the Black community will require years of sustained, consistent programming to increase access to early childhood and adult reading programs. Church or community-based



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literacy programs, tailored to address the needs of adults who are poor readers could ease the social stigma of illiteracy.

Healthcare providers must recognize when health literacy may be limited and ensure that medical information is communicated in a manner that is accessible to all patients, regardless of their ability to read and process written care instructions.

Illiteracy is indeed Black America's public health enemy number one. The inability to read proficiently not only limits educational and economic opportunities but also has dire consequences for health outcomes. By addressing the systemic barriers to literacy and ensuring that medical information is accessible, we can begin to mitigate the impact of medical illiteracy and improve the health and well-being of the Black community.

Jayne Hopson is a 2024 Commonwealth Health Care Performance Fellow. The special series "Illiteracy: Black America's Public Health Enemy # 1 is funded by Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) and supported by The Commonwealth Fund.

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Black Wall Street

Ticker Tracks Black Spending with Black-owned Businesses, Makes Every Dollar Count

By Andrea Blackstone

Dr. Charles Walker, CEO of Friends of the Movement Global, started a social data analytics company dedicated to building a conscious economy, empowering consumers to vote with their wallets, and supporting merchants that align with their values.

“Our goal is to promote economic empowerment and social justice within Black communities. The inspiration came in 2020, following the tragic death of George Floyd. I wanted to address the systemic racism and economic inequality that have plagued our communities for so long,” the social advocate explained.

Dr. Walker also said that he noticed 80% PERCENT of the protesters were non-Black, young and global. Thereafter, he felt inspired to create the movement.

“The idea was to create a platform that unites Black consumers and ally businesses, amplifying their combined economic impact to foster real change,” Dr. Walker added.

Additionally, the Black Wall Street Ticker is a key component of Friends of the Movement Global’s mission.

“Our purpose for creating the Black Wall Street Ticker is to promote economic empowerment and celebrate friends of the movement in a way that has never been done before. Unparalleled transparency and accountability. We need to know who our friends are,” said Dr. Walker.

He further explained that The Black Wall Street Ticker is the first of many conscious spending tickers designed to connect, track, and report spending, giving, and investing in other communities and groups, which he calls Conscious Spending Groups (CSGs).

“Currently, it’s displayed at the Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurship



Dr. Charles Walker, CEO of Friends of the Movement Global and creator of the Black Wall Street Ticker.

Photos: Jazmine Brimmer

(RICE), a hub that fosters innovation and entrepreneurship within the Black community.”

The Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurship (RICE) is the largest Black business incubator in the United States, according to Dr. Walker. The ticker is also displayed on FotM Global’s website.

He added, “This ticker aims to unite the spending of Black and allied communities, capturing it in real time. The Black community spends \$1.8 trillion annually, and combined, we spend \$7 trillion. The ticker helps us leverage this massive economic power to close the wealth gap. It reports our progress as we support Black businesses and celebrate and reward friends of the movement.”

The Black Wall Street Ticker was launched to enhance the visibility and support of Black businesses. It tracks and reports the spending, giving, and investing activities of consumers, organizations, government, and corporate entities.

Dr. Walker also stated that the digital



The Black Wall Street Ticker concept displayed during the announcement of the partnership between the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce and FotM Global Community on Black Wall Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

platform can be accessed and integrated into websites and apps, providing real-time data on economic activities that support Black businesses.

The ticker can display advertisements, such as logos, from Black and ally small businesses and corporations. It showcases the aggregate spending of Black consumers, educates them about where their money is making a difference and fosters a more informed and intentional spending community.

“For example, Reach TV is a media partner that will be displaying the ticker in 90 airports on all of their television screens, reaching 158 million travelers per month, and are in 500 bars and hotels,” Dr. Walker added.

Media companies and newspapers can add the ticker to their websites and apps, register merchants to become part of the Black Wall Street Ticker, sell advertising space, and serve as media partners to promote the initiative. Dr. Walker stated that over 4,550 businesses are using the ticker.

“Half are located in Atlanta while we are in a six-month pilot period at Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurship (RICE). Atlanta is the first official conscious city. We are loading up cities one by one and adding businesses

nationally as we partner with Operation Hope’s IMBB Program,” he added.

Black and allied merchants can register to be part of the ticker to increase their visibility, revenue, and customer base.

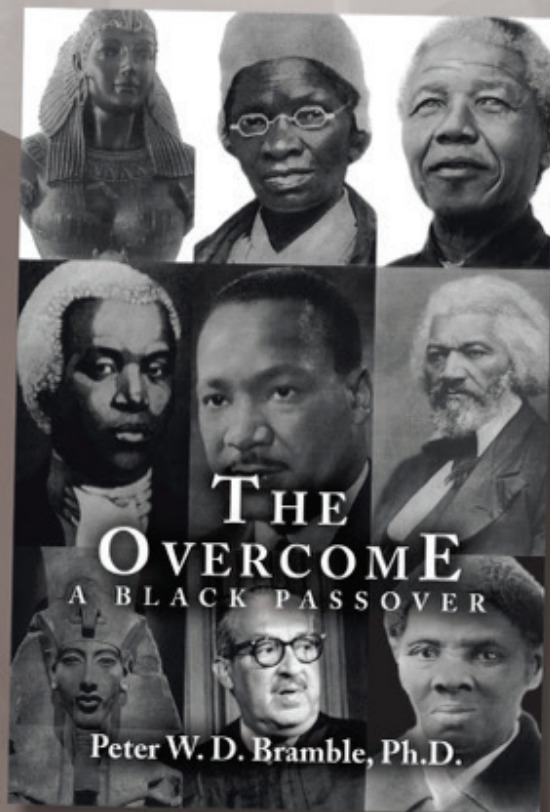
“By participating, they tap into a network of conscious consumers and benefit from increased support. Merchants also receive education to improve their operations through FotM’s Impact Central,” said Dr. Walker.

Impact Central is an educational and support hub where members rate companies for their social impact, spend consciously, communicate with other conscious consumers, and promote tools to empower their community.

The entrepreneur explained how Black spending is tracked through the Black Wall Street Ticker.

“When a consumer registers to become a friend of the movement, they also register their payment methods within the platform. Whenever they spend, if a merchant offers a reward, we provide it and report their purchase amounts. The reported data protects individuals’ privacy and does not include specific products or services purchased or merchant details,” Dr. Walker added.

Visit FotMglobal.com for further details.



The proposed ritual, The Overcome: A Black Passover, is the concept of a yearly celebration of and by African Americans commemorating the significance of overcoming slavery, Jim Crow, and institutionalized racism to ascent as leaders in all walks of life. This proposed ritual has been compared to the yearly commemorated Jewish Passover. The book *The Overcome: A Black Passover* delineates the logical explanation of a celebration. *Overcome: Rite, Liturgy & Songs* outlines the actual celebratory ceremony. So, like those of Jewish ancestry, ***there is no going back to Egypt and for African Americans, there is no going back to slavery!***

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By Rosa Pryor

Hello everyone,
How are you doing? This is the beginning of a special weekend. So, treat that man to something special this Sunday, or the whole weekend, depending on how special you think he is and if he deserves it. I believe many of you will be going to a grave-site to place flowers on your loved one's grave. Some of you celebrate by going to church or having events in memory of Father's Day. Well, I would like to give you a little help in that category.

City View, located 6700 Security Blvd is offering a **"Father's Day All You Can Eat Brunch"** on Sunday, June 16 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For table reservations or more information, call 410-944-4013. Tell them "Rambling Rose" told you.

Another place you can celebrate this special day is by going to the **"Father's Day Gospel Concert"** featuring **Harvey Watkins Jr & The Canton Spiritual; Dorothy Norwood; Wayne Norwood and the Children of God; Kenny Davis & The Melodyires; Lil David & The Bells of Joy; and Eric Wadell & The Abundant Life Singers**. Plus, Pastor E. L. McNair & Covenant; Bishop Earnest Santifu; and MC's Rev. Robert Wilson; and Earnestine Jones. My goodness! Ladies and gentlemen, this will be a great show on Sunday, June 16, 2024 starting at 4 p.m. at the Israel Baptist Church, located 1200 N. Washington Street & E. Preston Street. Food is on sale. For more information, call Parker's Barber Shop at 443-610-7583 or 410-764-5657.

The 14th Annual Youth in the Park

HAPPY DADDY DAY TO ALL THE DADDIES



Father's Day Gospel Concert featuring headliner, Dorothy Norwood on Sunday, June 16, 2024, 4 p.m. at Israel Baptist Church, 1200 N. Washington Street & Preston Street.

Talent Show hosted by R-Block Inc., Terry Tee's Production and Woodlawn Recreation & Parks invites all area schools to participate, singing, dancers, musicians, choirs, spoken word and, soloist. It is free to the public. Vendors are welcome. The event will be held at the Woodlawn Memorial Park, located 1936 Woodlawn Dr. from 12-7 p.m. on June 22. Call Doresa Harvey at 410-370-0098, for more information.

The **"AfroSoul" Festival** is Saturday, June 15, 2024, located 11202 Garrison Forest Road in Owings Mills, Maryland from noon to 6 p.m. The 2nd Annual Baltimore County Afro Soul Festival is a fusion of African culture, Caribbean culture, and African American culture which has resulted in a rich and vibrant tapestry of traditions, art, music, and food. The FREE Afro Soul Festival will celebrate culture through food, music and dancing. The lineup of performers are: African drumming and dancing by **Keur Khaleyi African Dance Company**; all female reggae band, **Strykers Posse**;



The 5 Mile House Reunion is Saturday, June 15, 2024 from 1-5 p.m. at the 5 Mile House, 5302 Reisterstown Road. Some of 5 Mile House Crew; Frank, Wesley, Tink, Harold, Charlie Williams, Warren Garrison, Ronald Spruill, Danny Henson, Regional Thomas, and Clayton Tucker.

Caribbean & Afrobeat fitness with Mr. Big Energy; and Nigerian artist, X-One. There will be food vendors, activities for children, and something for the whole family.

Hey! Do any of you watch the **Antiques Roadshow** on PBS Television? Well, guess what? Antiques Roadshow will be held in Baltimore Maryland Zoo on Tuesday, June 18, 2024 for an all-day appraisal event as part of the series 29th production tour. Guests will receive free verbal evaluations of their antiques and collectibles by experts from the country's leading auction houses and independent dealers. For more information, call 888-762-3749.

Well, my dear friends, I have to go now. I am out of space. Until the next time, I will see you somewhere. In the meantime, you must email me about your event. I will attend only if you send a written invitation to me. Remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. **UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.**



Cleve Brister, Warren Hayman and Willard Wright head up the Juneteenth Celebration, Greater Baltimore Athletic Legacy Project Sports Reunion National Holiday, Wednesday, June 19, 2024 from 12 to 4 p.m. at the American Legion Post 122, 4424 Painters Mill Road in Owings Mills, Maryland. Take your own bag and chair. For more information, call Cleve Brister 443-850-2417.



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Ravens John Harbaugh Excited About New Kickoff Rule

By Tyler Hamilton

Various head coaches are experimenting with ways to take advantage of the new kickoff rule adopted by the NFL this offseason. As a former special teams coach, Baltimore Ravens head coach John Harbaugh has taken particular interest.

“I thought there were other options – I’ll just be clear about that,” Harbaugh said. “But, I was for doing something, and this is something. Basically, at this point, we’re committed to it.”

Per the NFL, the new rule will still have the launch point be from the kicking team’s 35-yard line. The difference is every player on the kicking team other than the kicker will now line up with at least one foot on the returning team’s 40-yard line. At least nine members of the returning team will line up in a “setup zone” beginning five yards opposite on its own 35-yard line. A minimum of seven players must have a foot on what is known as the “restraining line” stretching to its own 30-yard line. No more than two returners can be in the “landing zone” (defined as the zone between the goal line and the 20-yard line).

No players other than the kicker and the returners can move until the ball is fielded by a returner.

Any kick that is caught or lands in the landing zone must be returned. If it falls short of the landing zone it will be ruled a touchback and spotted at the returning team’s 40-yard line.

A kick has to be returned or downed by the receiving team if it hits the landing zone and then goes into the end zone. If it’s downed, it will be ruled a touchback and go to the 20-yard line.

If the ball hits the end zone and stays inbounds, it has to be returned



John Harbaugh

Photo: Doug DeFelice - USA TODAY Sports

or downed – if it’s downed, it is a touchback and moved to the 30-yard line. Finally, if the ball goes through and out of the end zone, it will be a touchback to the 30-yard line.

Harbaugh noted that the new rule basically eliminates the onside kick option but he likes how it will bring on more returns. The new strategy has Harbaugh and the Ravens staff eager to figure out ways to scheme up advantages.

“You just get right to work on how

we’re going to teach it, how we want to coach it. We couldn’t wait to get out here, even in this type of a practice, and run plays and see what the angles look like,” Harbaugh said.

One of the advantages that other teams considered is using a player other than the kicker to handle kickoffs. It’s said to give them an extra tackle and avoid possible injuries for their kickers. In the case of the Ravens, that would make a lot of sense given how valuable Justin Tucker is

to the team. But that’s not something Harbaugh has committed to.

Harbaugh said he’s told the players this new process is a collaboration because they’re learning the rule change together. Right now the goal is to get a feel for the angles and how to approach it. The fun will really come next month during training camp when the pads go on and they’re able to go full speed. Stay tuned for how this evolves especially during the preseason games.

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