

# *The Annapolis Times*

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*‘Green Ambassador’ helping sustain Baltimore community*



*Cathy Allen, known as the Green Ambassador has helped to create Growing Resources After Sowing Seeds (GRASS), a youth and young adult entrepreneurship development program, which is based on the fundamentals of gardening, agriculture and ecology. The program is focused in Cherry Hill and its surrounding community largely because the area is Baltimore’s largest food desert. (Above) Allen with Otis, a barred owl, which is native to Maryland. Otis resides the Carrie Murray Nature Center located at 1901 Ridgetop Road in Baltimore. The Carrie Murray Nature Center is the oldest urban nature center in America. (Story on page 11)*

*Courtesy Photo/GRASS*

# Compassion in her bones!

(NAPSM)—Can you remember what you thought, felt and hoped for 16 years ago? Neither can Altonet Fillmore, a charismatic person with kind eyes and a ready smile. However, then as now, a reservoir of compassion resided in her bones—and compelled her to register as a bone marrow donor with the “Be The Match Registry.”

Today, the 36-year-old woman is a human resources professional with a passion for singing. Her impressive vocals led her to compete in national talent shows, including “Star Search,” “American Idol” and “Showtime at the Apollo.”

In 1996, when Altonet joined the registry, she was still an idealistic college freshman. It wasn’t until 2012—16 years later—that she learned she was a match for a middle-aged woman with leukemia. That’s when she discovered something about herself—time hadn’t altered her call to compassion.

“I felt it was a privilege and an honor to be able to give something that my body makes every day and be able to save a life,” she said.

Around the world, 25 million caring people like Altonet have joined international volunteer marrow donor registries in hopes of being the cure for a patient in need.

A marrow or umbilical cord blood transplant is a potentially life-saving treatment for leukemia, lymphoma and



*Altonet Fillmore  
Courtesy Photo*

sickle cell disease. It can also help to cure more than 70 other diseases, including inherited immunodeficiency disorders and metabolic disorders. “Be The Match” connects patients with their donor match for life-saving marrow or cord blood transplants.

Donors have helped to save a quarter of a million lives but thousands of other patients who face life-threatening diseases are still waiting for their match.

More potential donors are especially needed by African American patients whose chances of finding a matching

donor are only 66 to 76 percent. People are more likely to match someone of their own race or ethnicity.

There are many misperceptions about bone marrow donation, and Altonet heard them all before her donation—

for her more than I prayed for myself or anyone else in a long time.”

Today, Altonet is using her inspired voice and spirit to encourage more people—especially those of African American descent—to join the “Be The

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***“More potential donors are especially needed by African American patients whose chances of finding a matching donor are only 66 to 76 percent. People are more likely to match someone of their own race or ethnicity.”***

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including stories that it’s a painful or dangerous process. However, with anesthesia, Altonet didn’t feel any pain during the procedure. She returned to work just two days after her donation—a common scenario.

“Don’t listen to what you may have heard—speak with people who are able to give you correct information about the process,” said Altonet. “It’s a rewarding experience, and if you are ever selected to donate bone marrow, then you should definitely consider it.”

A few months after her donation, Altonet learned that her bone marrow recipient was doing well and out of the hospital. Although she didn’t know her, Altonet was deeply moved by the woman’s struggle.

“The one thing she taught me was how to love a stranger,” she said. “I prayed

Match Registry” as potential bone marrow donors.

By joining the “Be The Match Registry” as a committed potential bone marrow donor, you could be the cure for someone suffering from a life-threatening disease, too. In fact, you could be a patient’s only chance to survive and it only takes a few minutes to join.

For Altonet, it’s in her bones to care. Knowing that her bone marrow saved a life enriches her own life every day.

You can also contribute to the cure as a financial contributor or volunteer. Be The Match provides patients and their families one-on-one support, education and guidance throughout the transplant process.

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# Guest Editorials/Commentary

## Congress says, “War Powers? What War Powers?”

By Lee H. Hamilton

A few weeks ago, Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia made a small splash in the press when he took Congress to task for failing to authorize our nation’s ongoing war against Islamic militants.

“The silence of Congress in the midst of this war is cowardly and shameful,” he said. “[T]his Congress, the very body that is so quick to argue against President Obama’s use of executive power... allows an executive war to go on undeclared, unapproved, undefined and unchecked.”

Those were strong words, meant to spur Congress to action. Yet after a day or two, they sank without a trace. No one in the media picked up the call. No one in a position to influence the Senate or the House made a move to advance a congressional war authorization.

Indeed, it has been three months since President Obama sent his proposal for an “Authorization for the Use of Military Force” focused on ISIS to Capitol Hill. It, too, met with a brief flurry of attention and then went nowhere.

This is mind-boggling. If you had any question that we’re at war, the bombing runs over Ramadi and the recent Delta Force raid that killed an ISIS official should have settled it. On the most important question government faces— military intervention overseas— Congress seems unable to stir itself to hammer out an agreement with the President. You can blame the President for this or you can blame Congress— each side comes in for its fair share— but inaction only expands the power of the President, leaving him to make hugely consequential decisions by himself. It’s a shocking dereliction of duty on Capitol Hill.

Why do I say this? The Constitution vests in Congress the power to declare war, but should that mean that Congress also has the responsibility to do so?

Let’s start with this: former acting CIA director Michael Morell recently said that the “great war” against Islamic terrorists is likely to last “for as long as I can see.” This is going to be a long and difficult conflict. It raises tough questions about the scope of the President’s powers, the duration of those powers, the definition and identity of the enemy, the extent of the field of battle, the kinds of force that should be used, America’s vital interests, and its fundamental role in the world.

The decision to apply American lives and resources to such a war is momentous, and as a country we need to know how far we’re willing to commit ourselves. The President needs backing for a military campaign, and the discussion about what it ought to entail needs to be open and rigorous.

I understand that this is a lot for Congress to undertake. A resolution authorizing the use of force is tough to draft— Congress needs to make the parameters and goals of military action clear without hindering our ability to respond to a fluid situation or micromanaging the executive branch. And, of course, it’s just as tough politically. Some members will want to give more powers to the President, others less. No one wants to be on the wrong side of a war vote.

However, the difficulty of a task is no reason to avoid it. If we are going to send U.S. forces into dangerous places, they need to go in with the public backing that comes from a formal authorization hammered out in Congress. This does not mean enacting a resolution after we’ve intervened— because then it’s an argument about supporting our troops in the field, and only a few members will vote against that.

Both the President and Congress are dragging their feet on this, but that only helps the President, not the country. It leaves him— and most likely his successor— with dangerously broad authority to use military force without restriction, in perpetuity. This is not how a democracy like ours should operate.

*Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.*

“The thrill is  
gone . . . I’ll  
still live on . . .”



**B.B. King**  
1925-2015

## *Community Affairs*

### What consumers should know about CareFirst data breach

*State’s largest health insurer was  
subject to cyberattack in or around  
June 2014*

Baltimore— Attorney General Brian E. Frosh is advising customers of CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield about a data breach that the company last week confirmed had occurred in or around June 2014.

CareFirst, Maryland’s largest health insurer has established a website, [www.CareFirstAnswers.com](http://www.CareFirstAnswers.com), where its members and brokers can receive more information. It has also set up a toll-free number that consumers and brokers may call: 888-451-6562.

Although CareFirst has said that there is no evidence that any personal information accessed in the cyberattack has been misused, the company is offering affected consumers and brokers with two years of free credit monitoring and identity theft protection services.



With new data breaches being reported on a near-daily basis, Attorney General Frosh encourages consumers to always be vigilant about their personal information and aware of how it may be compromised.

The Office of the Attorney General Identity Theft Unit offers guidance and assistance for protecting yourself against identity theft and what to do if it occurs. Information can be found at <http://www.oag.state.md.us/idtheft/index.htm>. Consumers who believe they have been harmed as a result of a data breach and want to file a complaint or seek additional assistance can call 410-576-6491.

## B.B. King: Why I Sing the Blues

By Marc H. Morial  
NNPA Columnist

*“The blues has lost its king and America has lost a legend...B.B. may be gone, but that thrill will be with us forever.” – President Barack Obama on the passing of B.B. King.*

As a young boy in 1920s Mississippi, Riley B. King, who would one day come to be known as legendary blues icon B.B. King, was introduced to the electric guitar at Reverend Archie Fair’s church. The introduction soon turned into infatuation, with King deciding he would learn to play a guitar. As soon as King got old enough, he ordered a guitar playbook from a Sears, Roebuck and Co. mail catalog. The first tune he learned to play was “You Are My Sunshine.” Fortunately for us, it would not be the last tune he would coax from his yielding guitar strings.

King was born in 1925 on a cotton plantation in the Mississippi Delta. The future King of the Blues, the son of

sharecroppers and the great-grandson of a slave, worked the fields, first as a picker at the age of seven and then a mule driver. He aspired to be a gospel singer like his mentor, Rev. Archie, but fate had other plans. In a 1993 interview, King admitted to leaving Mississippi in the early 1940s because of the racial violence, lynchings and hangings that were becoming all too commonplace.

King moved to Memphis, playing small gigs and working as a disc jockey

blues, set loose on the guitar strings and growl of one of America’s greatest musicians, spoke of our universal experience of pain and perseverance, tribulations and triumphs. King once remarked that, “Blues music actually did start because of pain.” A pain he experienced at an early age, and like so many influential and groundbreaking figures who came before him, King used his talent to rise out of the dirt of his humble beginnings to live a life as industrious as it was incredible.

which he said, “was bleeding the same blood as me.”

King passed away peacefully in his sleep at his Las Vegas home, and yet, the thrill is far from gone. His notes and innovative sound gave birth to countless blues and rock players, including Eric Clapton, Carlos Santana and Keith Richards, to name a few. His contribution to the blues can be heard, and will continue to be heard, in jazz and rock. King’s outsized influence on blues—on American music—cannot be overstated. B.B. King is to blues what Louis Armstrong is to jazz, Elvis is to rock, James Brown is to funk and Michael Jackson is to pop. Like King, you cannot mention these musical genres without prominently mentioning their names and substantial contributions.

Today, I join the chorus of those celebrating King and his iconic career. He sang his way out of Mississippi’s cotton fields to touch each of us—black or white, American or not—with his talent and insight into our shared human experience. And it is, perhaps, from his brand of soul music that we can learn what found him in that recording studio or night-club almost every day of his life: “Everybody wants to know why I sing the blues. Yes, I say everybody wanna know why I sing the blues. Well, I’ve been around a long time. I really have paid my dues.”

I couldn’t agree more. Rest in peace, B.B.

*Marc H. Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, is president and CEO of the National Urban League.*

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***“B.B. King is to blues what Louis Armstrong is to jazz, Elvis is to rock, James Brown is to funk and Michael Jackson is to pop. Like King, you cannot mention these musical genres without prominently mentioning their names and substantial contributions.”***

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at WDIA, the local blues station. The station manager dubbed King the “Beale Street Blues Boy,” which was shortened to “Blues Boy,” and then to B.B.—and it stuck. It was at this time that King made another momentous introduction, this time to T-Bone Walker singing “Stormy Monday.” King said it was the first time he had ever heard blues on an electric guitar and he was determined to get one. He got that electric guitar in 1946.

What followed was an enduring, influential career that defined and redefined the blues—a quintessentially American art form with roots in African-American slave songs, field hollers and spirituals—King carried its moans and mourning to the four corners of the earth. The

A 15-time Grammy Award winner—the most Grammys ever received by a blues singer—King was also awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1987. In 1998, his most acclaimed song “The Thrill Is Gone” was awarded the Grammy Hall of Fame Award. King also received a National Medal of the Arts award, a Presidential Medal of Freedom and has been inducted in both the Rock and Roll and Blues Hall of Fame. King seemed to always be performing somewhere, playing an average of more than 200 concert dates a year well into his 70s. In 1956, King and his band played an astonishing 342 concerts. He never stopped doing what he loved most: playing the music,

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# Symposium highlights research of future STEM leaders

By **Andrea Blackstone**

Tula Raghavan recommended the use of acriflavine for the treatment of glioblastoma multiforme, which is an aggressive form of brain cancer. The graduating senior from Baltimore Polytechnic Institute (Poly) worked in the Johns Hopkins Hunterian Laboratory, under the mentorship of Henry Brem, M.D., director of Hunterian Neurological Research Laboratory. The treatment for brain cancer that is reportedly showing promising results is currently patent-pending.

Raghavan's research is just one example of the impressive work that was displayed at the 13th Annual Ingenuity Math & Science Symposium at Poly on May 21, 2015. The Ingenuity Project at Poly, which started in 1997, is designed to prepare the next generation of STEM leaders from Baltimore.

Timothy J. Regan, CEO of Whiting-Turner, a Baltimore-based contracting company, welcomed students, parents, research mentors from various universities and other guests to the symposium. Whiting-Turner led construction projects such as the second span of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, Harborplace, M&T Bank Stadium, Meyerhoff Symphony Hall and the National Aquarium. Regan's successful career demonstrates the talent of Poly's alumni who were once students like Raghavan with innovative ideas. The civil engineer graduated from Poly in 1973.

"When I made the decision to come to Poly, my life changed that day," Regan said. "Poly and the Ingenuity Project are amazing places and institutions for people to grow."

Ingenuity Project students who participated in the symposium exhibited the drive to contribute to breakthroughs in fields including medicine, technology and mathematics. At just 16 years old, Sydney Worsham has been exploring whether brain cancer treatment in humans can be improved. This summer, the student will start researching in a lab with her mentor, Dr. Betty Tyler.

"We're basically treating rats that have brain cancer with chemotherapy. We've been working on this maybe a year now. We haven't actually started researching directly [but I have been doing research] on the Internet and talking with my mentor," said 10th grader Sidney Worsham. "Originally, I wanted to research dementia, so I started off learning about the



**Timothy Regan, CEO of Whiting-Turner, welcomed attendees of the 13th Annual Ingenuity Math & Science Symposium at Poly. The Poly graduate offered insight about his life and journey to become an engineer.**

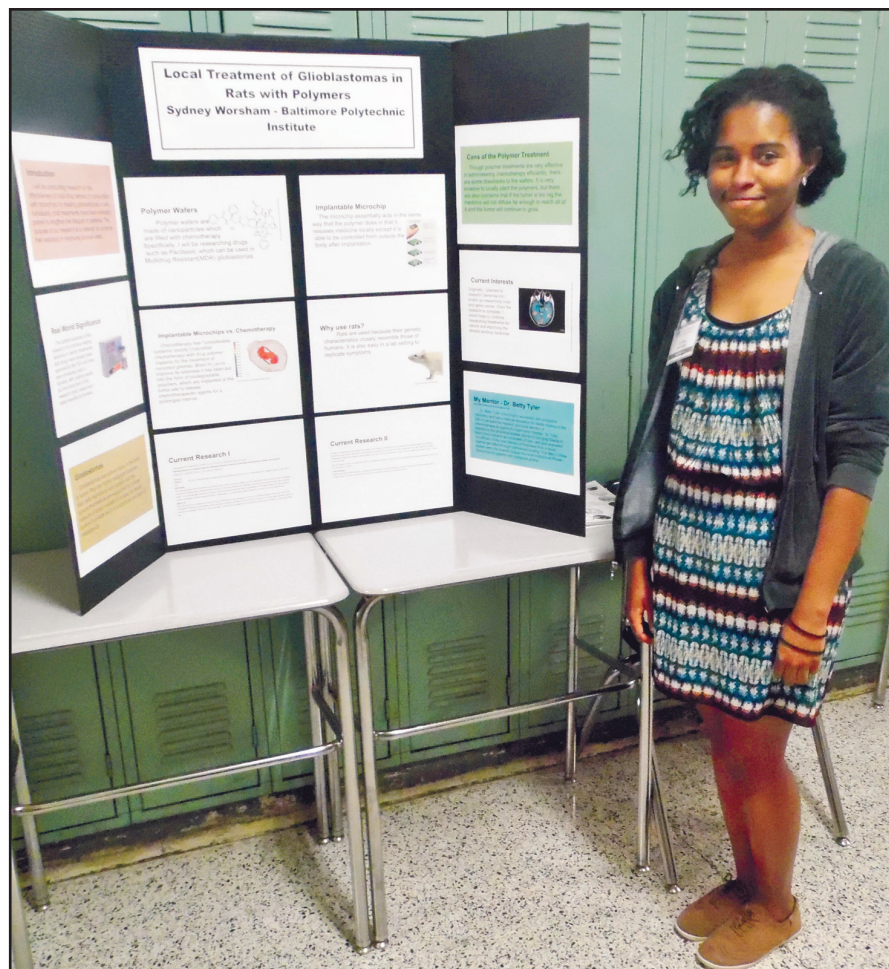
brain and its mysteries and things that go wrong, but I ran into cancer. Cancer itself is a whole new mystery, especially when found in the brain."

Phoebe Sandhaus was the 2015 grand prizewinner in Physical Science during the Baltimore Science Fair.

"Even though she is graduating and going to UMBC next year, she is going to be continue to do work with the planets in the Space Telescope (Science) Institute," said Lisette S. Morris, executive director, Ingenuity Project.

Morris explained that the Annual Ingenuity Math & Symposium at Poly is intended to honor the work that students are doing in scientific research.

"We have a pathway here at Poly in Ingenuity where students can opt to pursue independent research. They decide on an area of interest as they are going through their high school science classes and math classes. They hone in on a topic and then we have a research coordinator who works with mentors and scientists in labo-



**Sydney Worsham, 16, shows her poster presentation about treating rats that have brain cancer with chemotherapy. She will be working with her mentor, Dr. Betty Tyler. The goal will be to determine if they can improve the efficacy of two medicines and treat brain cancer in humans. Photos: Andrea Blackstone**

ratories all across Baltimore, but many at Hopkins and the Hopkins medical institutes," Morris said. "He matches them up with mentors that he has been working with now for many years who really understand what it means to take students into their labs, and give them meaningful experiences, so our students spend about 15 months working in a laboratory. During their junior year, they go off-site to those laboratories many days during the week."

The Ingenuity Research Curriculum is a three-year program that spans from sophomore to senior high school years.

"The goal is that they are really starting to learn what is happening in that lab and starting to create their own project to contribute to the research of that laboratory. Much of their work is some aspect of original thinking around scientific re-

search. That's the goal of what we're trying to do with all of them," Morris said.

Math also had a presence at the symposium. Seventeen-year-old Benjamin Aladejebi, and his 18-year-old partner, Omar Mahmoud solved advanced calculus problems from the JHU (Johns Hopkins University) Future Scholars program's math examination.

"Solving this has definitely given me a good understanding of math, and maybe some of the problems that I might face in more advanced courses," said Mahmoud, who plans to study Physics at UMBC.

Aladejebi will study Mechanical Engineering at Bucknell University. He described his experience as a good introduction to the way of thinking that he expects to use in college coursework.



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## Baltimore Ravens, M&T Bank announce 2015 Touchdown for Teachers winners

By Turren Davenport

Being involved in the community is something that comes naturally for the Baltimore Ravens. The team, as well as individual players have done countless things as a way of giving back to the city of Baltimore and the surrounding area.

Led by Emily Scerba, the Ravens community relations program has put together various programs that have allowed the Ravens to become a fixture in the community.

One of the more outstanding programs is the "Touchdown for Teachers," which honors and recognizes local teachers for their leadership, dedication and commitment to education and for their outstanding service to their school, students and community. The teachers were nominated by way of an on line application.

The Ravens and M&T Bank recently announced their Touchdown for Teachers program finalists and grand prizewinner. The Touchdown for Teachers grand prizewinner was Julie Macro from Mars Estates Elementary.

Macro teaches all subjects to her group of fifth-grade students at Mars Estates Elementary School in Essex, Maryland. In addition to serving as a teacher, Macro has established numerous programs that benefit her fifth-graders. The programs have had a great impact and they include a Math 24 Challenge group, Bloggers Café and Fit Friday. The program consists of over 90 students from third through fifth grade. The students will run a 5K at the end of the term.

Macro will be presented with a check for \$2,000 in grant funds. Additionally, her efforts have earned her a classroom visit by a Ravens' coach or player, accompanied by Ravens mascot Poe and cheerleaders in the near future.

The 2015 Touchdown for Teachers finalists are: Gil Baguio, Eager Street Academy; Sheila Beyer, Timber Grove Elementary; Edwin Perez, Baltimore City College; and Chad Shoales, Highlandtown Elementary/Middle School.

For more Turren Davenport articles, visit us online:  
[www.baltimoretimes-online.com](http://www.baltimoretimes-online.com)



The five finalists each receive a personalized Ravens jersey and an award certificate. The runners-up each receive \$500 in grant funds.

"It's important to recognize the outstanding work our teachers are doing in the community," said Augie Chiasera, President of M&T Bank's Greater Baltimore and Chesapeake regions. "Teachers can literally turn lives around and inspire our young people to reach their potential. The Touchdown for Teachers program is a way to celebrate the positive impact teachers have on our students and the entire community."

M&T Bank also teams with the Buffalo Bills to present a "Touchdown for Teachers" program to the educators in the city of Buffalo and the surrounding area. Last year's grand prizewinner was Jasmine Blanks of Magnolia Middle School. Ravens defensive tackle Brandon Williams visited Magnolia and spent the whole morning there. The school entertained the Ravens by holding a student talent show.

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# BCCC students showcase passion for fashion

By Andrea Blackstone

The Business & Technology Department, in conjunction with the Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) Fashion Design Program presented "The Preview" Fashion Show on May 16, 2015. Models walked down the runway at BCCC wearing student designs during the 36th annual BCCC Fashion Show.

Approximately 16 BCCC Fashion Design Program students pursuing an AAS in Fashion Design showcased their creations in front of family, friends, supporters, fellow students and staff. Students from Fashion Design Concepts, Draping, Visual Merchandising, Pattern-making, Apparel Technology and History of Costume classes submitted diverse garments constructed by hand and machine that were presented in the program. Roughly 20 Fashion Show Production students learned how to promote and showcase their work through the planning and presentation of the mid-May fashion show. The Production Class is typically taken by graduating seniors like Michael Dwightt, who is among five graduating seniors. Dwightt showcased his 11-piece collection.

"I learned fashion show production from start to finish, from ordering of chairs to the lighting, the runway, the promotion, the advertising, the marketing, everything," Dwightt said.

The fashion show's collaborative nature emphasized the value of teamwork. Students who are enrolled in Fashion Show Production, Visual Merchandising and Fashion Design Concept classes set up the venue. Experimental garments displayed on dress forms were created by Fashion Design Concepts students who are taught by professor Valencia James. Professor Roland Douglas and his Fashion Show Production students coordinated the fashion show. Minsu Kim, Fashion Program Coordinator of the AAS in Fashion Design, Fashion Retailing and Fashion Design Certificate program offered a helping hand.

"Some of the garments that were shown tonight are pieces from the Draping II class. There are also garments that

were done for the History of Costume class. There are also some garments that were done in the Sewing class as well," Douglas said.

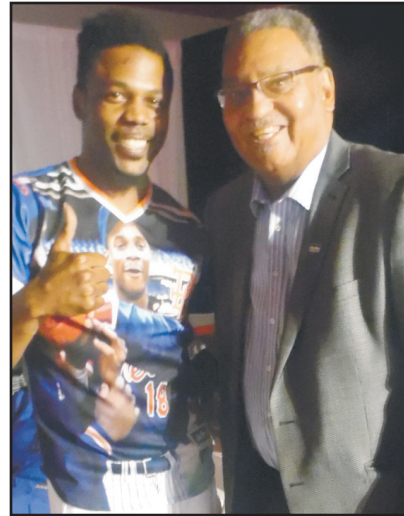
Douglas also explained that some students are simply interested in learning how to sew for themselves. Others desire to open up small businesses, while a portion of remaining students aspire to pursue additional secondary education. The unique two-year Fashion Design Program provides a rare opportunity for area students who are interested in pursuing careers in the field. The business aspect of the fashion industry is heavily integrated into BCCC's fashion program, while giving students critical tools to become successful.

"Fashion is one of the eight programs in my department. It's a growing program. Most of our students that come to the Fashion Design Program have learned to sew typically from their grannies or from their moms, and we teach them how to be marketable, how to be workforce ready (and) how to manage business plans, so it is a full-service program, unique for community colleges. We're the only community college in this region that has a Fashion Design Program," Bryant Elliott Evans, the Associate Dean of Business and Technology said. "They come to us typically knowing how to sew. They just don't know how to sell their product."

Some graduates of the fashion design program have reportedly transferred to the prestigious Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) and Parson's School of Design in New York City. Many later become successful fashion industry entrepreneurs.

Dr. Gordon F. May, president of BCCC, described the fashion show as "totally awesome."

"It was my first one. I have been president here only nine months after 27 years in Michigan. I was invited by the Associate Dean Bryant Evans and I am so glad I came because we have some outstanding students. It is no surprise that they find their way to New York to start a career in New York City in the fashion design industry," May said.



Michael Dwightt (left) and Dr. Gordon F. May, president, Baltimore City Community College (right) share a joyous moment after the fashion show on May 16, 2015. Dwightt is among five graduating seniors. He showcased his 11-piece collection in the fashion show, which was coordinated by Roland and Douglas and Fashion Show Production students.



Onlookers applaud as designer, Alida Mouberi (rear) shows designs created by her Alida Coutour brand worn by two models in the show.



Model, Alexis Finney (left) walks the runway with designer, Olivia Rocquemore (right) at the 36th Annual Fashion show that was held at Baltimore City Community College.



Heather Thompson wears a dress designed by Carmen Green.

Photos: Andrea Blackstone

# Award winning actress teams up with foster youth for 'Foster Youth Shadow Day'

By Andrea Blackstone

As a part of the Fourth Annual Congressional Foster Youth Shadow Day, 63 foster youth and foster youth alumni from across the nation convened on Capitol Hill on May 20, 2015, to shadow their Congressional Representatives. In addition to being granted a rare behind the scenes look at the House of Representatives, the youth between the age of 18 and 24 directly shared their personal foster care stories with the policy makers in an effort to improve the foster care system through reform.

"I officially got into my first foster home when I was 14, and I just aged out in November," said 21-year-old Mary Josephine Fuwa, a college student and part-time nanny. Fuwa spent time in foster care mostly in Maryland and was also a ward of the state in the District of Columbia.

Over a three-day period, the National Foster Youth Institute, Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth, Foster Club and Casey Family Programs and other advocates worked together to promote awareness that more than 400,000 children live in foster care.

Representative Karen Bass (D-Calif.) welcomed Foster Youth Voices Luncheon attendees and recognized caucus co-chairs and members. The congresswoman co-founded the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Foster Care in 2011 and is a co-chair along with Tom Marino (R-Pa.), Jim McDermott (D-Wash.), Trent Franks (R-Ariz.), Diane Black (R-Tenn.) and Jim Langevin (D-R.I.). They joined 119 co-sponsors in introducing "H. Res. 251" to recognize May as National Foster Care Month.

In a May 5, 2015 press release, Representative Franks said "Last year over 23,000 children aged out of foster care without a permanent family. We must do more."

Award-winning actress Victoria Rowell delivered an eye-opening keynote speech that stressed the importance of inclusion, advocacy and determination.

"Somebody stood up for you some-



*(Left) Actress Victoria Rowell delivered an eye-opening keynote speech that stressed the importance of inclusion, advocacy and determination at the 2015 Foster Youth Shadow Experience Luncheon in the Cannon House Office Building on Capitol Hill on Wednesday, May 20, 2015. (Right) Mary Josephine Fuwa (left) and Representative Karen Bass (D-Calif.) during the 2015 Foster Youth Shadow Experience Luncheon. Fuwa aged out of the foster care system in Maryland in November. She currently attends Trinity University in Washington, D.C.*

Photos by Andrea Blackstone

where," Rowell reminded foster youth, while reflecting on her own foster mothers and mentors who made sacrifices.

The American Ballet Theatre Ballet alumna, member of the Screen Actors Guild, member of the Television Academy and author spent 18 years in foster care. One of six children, all of different paternity, Rowell said that she has been a foster care advocate since 1991.

Rowell stated that the difference between failing and succeeding in her life was hard work and instinct. The actress took time to answer fan mail from incarcerated individuals.

"I knew that could've been me in that prison cell, if no one had given me access to be at CBS to work for a soap opera," the former Young and the Restless star said.

Rowell spoke about studying ballet on a farm in Maine. Her foster mother

taught her the art form from reading a book. The advocate revealed her sentiments about being a voice for the underserved. She also remains vocal about increasing diversity in soaps but most importantly, Rowell showed foster youth that they too can be a champion for others and accomplish their dreams.

"I'm not here to talk about the statistics. We know what they are," Rowell said. "I'm telling you we are special people."

The NAACP Image Award winner spoke about foster care youth having an ability to connect with underserved individuals. She credited those who gave her courage and taught her self-worth. Rowell's book, "The Women Who Raised Me" was published by Harper Collins and is a teaching tool for social workers.

"I just want all of my foster brothers and sisters to protect your stories. Do

not just give away your stories for a sound bite or a photo op. Your stories need to be registered with the United States Library of Congress" Rowell said, at the beginning of her speech. "I am not saying don't share your stories to promote and advocate for foster care, but your stories are unique and a very special import. They're valuable and they're worth money."

Rowell stressed the need to change the status quo and not being afraid to speak.

"I'm 56 and I just applied for college," Rowell said. "I've gone back to the state of Maine. I am endeavoring to get my college education from a state that denied it to me. I've applied to Bowdoin. So far they are saying no, and also to the University of New England, so we'll see."

To learn more about the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth, visit: [www.fosteryouthcaucus.org](http://www.fosteryouthcaucus.org).

**"When I was growing up, my parents took in foster children. From a young age, I learned that there are a lot of children in need." —Michelle Monaghan**

# 'Green Ambassador' helping sustain Baltimore community

By Stacy M. Brown

Cathy Allen is recognized as the Green Ambassador. She has helped to spearhead efforts to plant trees at city schools, playgrounds, and parks and in Baltimore's urban communities.

Now, the local resident has helped to create Growing Resources After Sowing Seeds— or GRASS, a youth and young adult entrepreneurship development program, which is based on the fundamentals of gardening, agriculture and ecology.

The program tackles hunger and even unemployment in some of the city's forgotten communities, where young individuals learn the value of going green, according to Allen.

"I'm humble and grateful that I'm in this position to bring this type of a program to Baltimore's largest food desert and not only to feed the population a product, but to feed them knowledge that they can create their own enterprises by feeding Mother Earth," said Allen, an award-winning environmentalist. "I have been an ambassador for about five years now. I got into doing this because my children suffer from environmental asthma and I said somebody's got to do something," Allen said.

Allen says it's common knowledge that trees serve to help the environment. She also says that teaching inner-city youth about planting trees and caring for the environment could go a long way in helping them carve out ways in which they can become self-sufficient and, in some cases, self-employed.

"I focused on where the children spend most of their time which is school and this is all about changing the landscape and adding beautification. The children actually plant the trees with volunteers so they can have ownership," she said.

Allen also has focused her GRASS program in Cherry Hill and its surrounding communities, largely because it's an area that is one of the city's largest food deserts. Statistics revealed that Cherry Hill has a combined unemployment rate of 37 percent.

Allen has also teamed with Karla Owens-Moody, a STEM educator, to



create environmental, ecological and agricultural socioeconomic change for Cherry Hill.

"In order for social change to happen, it has to happen in a urban community and it has to be a trend," Allen said. "It's starting to catch on so that its second nature. Marketing has always been on the outskirts of the urban community, yet here's all of this grant money and nothing is ever in place for sustainability."

She says there has been no one leading the charge and setting the standards.

"That's where I come in and bring everyone together," Allen said. "As an environmental educator and environmentalist, it is my duty and honor to seed the knowledge of how you can grow, eat and prosper just by simply honoring Mother Earth."

On August 22, 2015, Allen will host a "GRASS Garden Party" fundraiser at the Cherry Hill Community Garden located at 900 Cherry Hill Road at Veronica Avenue beginning at 11 a.m.

In 2018, environmental engineer technicians are expected to earn \$40,000 per year and those who go on to higher education in the environmental sciences will make \$74,000 per year, according to the U.S. Department of Labor-Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"My primary goal is to foster growth amongst youth and young adults by providing them with the right opportuni-



*(Top left) Tree planting during a Birthday Party hosted by The Green Ambassador and fellow Master Gardeners. (Top right) GRASS (Growing Resources After Sowing Seeds) Spring 2015 romaine lettuce harvest. (Above) The Green Ambassador hosted a 20 Member Youth Japanese Delegation from Fukushima, Japan in 2012. They planted Cherry Blossom Trees in the historic city of Fredrick, Maryland to celebrate the centennial of the cherry tree in the United States.*

**Courtesy Photos/GRASS**

ties to become self-sufficient," Allen said, noting that participation has been nothing short of phenomenal. "I'm not surprised by the participation," she said. "But, I'm excited, grateful and humbled because I knew it would happen."

For more information about the Green Ambassador or to find out how you help, visit [www.facebook.com/pages/The-Green-Ambassador/129381800453763](http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Green-Ambassador/129381800453763).

## Indie Soul Feature: Founder of the Guardian Angels, Curtis Sliwa Comes to Baltimore

By Phinisse Demps

When the riots broke out in Baltimore City, there was a call to action for community leaders, political leaders and religious leaders to come together to formulate solutions and to help pull the community together. For many in the community, this call to action has been nothing more than smoke screen for personal gain and agendas with no real issues being addressed.

“My coming to Baltimore is not about press, it’s about coming to assist. We have a great chapter in Baltimore. Our goal, since I have been doing this since 1979, is to show communities how to self-police. We have a track record and we are international. Our record speaks for itself. If Baltimore and its leaders are serious about change, they have to [have] a serious conversation about self-policing which means working with the police, which can happen because I have seen it up close and personal,” said Curtis Sliwa, founder of the Guardian Angels.

On Saturday, May 30, 2015, join The Guardian Angels Baltimore Chapter, Jack Baker of the Southern District Community Relations Council to learn about the origin and mission of the largest worldwide volunteer crime watch organization.



Curtis Sliwa, founder, Guardian Angels  
Photo Courtesy

“The community has to be involved on all levels. It has to be a partnership with everyone together. If black lives matter, it can’t just be when crimes that involve whites or police officers [occur]. It should matter all the time. Again, everyone has to work together without personal agendas. It’s not about being in the news or money. The focus should be on the community. Baltimore needs to come together as one,” Sliwa added.

For more information about the event, call 410-916-2215 or visit: [www.baltimoreguardianangels@gmail.com](http://www.baltimoreguardianangels@gmail.com).

## Indie Soul Movie Review: Sugar Babies

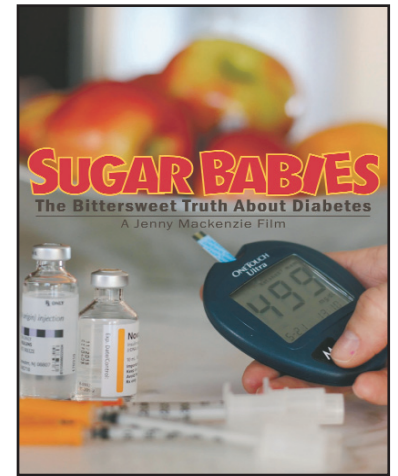
By Phinisse Demps

Virgil Films presents a compelling examination of diabetes in America. In “Sugar Babies: The Bittersweet Truth About Diabetes,” from Academy Award-winning executive producer Geralyn White Dreyfous (Born Into Brothels) and New York Times best-selling author James S. Hirsch (Hurricane: The Miraculous Journey of Rubin Carter), filmmaker Jenny Mackenzie (Kick Like a Girl) reveals the frightening epidemic of both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes and what we can do to address this frightening public health issue.

This is a very serious issue in health and now is the time to look at this seriously. Mackenzie takes on a real life journey with families who are facing diabetes crisis. It’s not a race issue or insurance issue, although if people don’t look at how diabetes is affecting them, it can come down to coverage and cost.

Most documentaries dealing with health issues concentrate on just showing the examples of one or two people and how they cope, but Mackenzie uses a multiple group of individuals, families, and comments from various doctors and what you see, hear, and learn is astonishing.

The film with advocates exercise and



Sugar Babies movie poster courtesy of Virgil Films

eating fresh foods. It’s one of the most honest films on this topic. The documentary will be released as a digital download: [www.virgilmfilmsent.com](http://www.virgilmfilmsent.com).

You can find locations to buy fresh food in Baltimore here: [www.baltimore.org/article/baltimore-farmers-markets](http://www.baltimore.org/article/baltimore-farmers-markets).

Indie Soul welcomes your questions and comments. To contact Phinisse Demps, call 410-366-3900 ext. 3016 or 410-501-0193 or email: [pdemps@btimes.com](mailto:pdemps@btimes.com). Follow on Twitter @pdemps\_btimes.com

## Indie Soul Student of the Week: Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship

By Phinisse Demps

On Wednesday, May 20, 2015, I had the privilege of being a judge at NFTE Business Plan Competition Semifinals. It was truly an honor to give back by giving time to budding entrepreneurs.

Students presented their business plans to various business, professional, and entrepreneurs. Our job was to pick the best presentations. This may seem easy but it’s not. Some students were already running businesses and other students’ ideas already had serious backing.

I truly enjoyed myself and will be back again if I am asked. Many thanks to the teachers, volunteers and businesses who

have supported NFTE. For more information call: 443-721-6052 or visit: [www.nfte.com](http://www.nfte.com).

Below is the list of five students who will be headed to New York to compete in the finals:

1. Business Name: Kickies Cookies Student: Carlton Ross (Roland Park Elementary School) Caffeinated chocolate-chip and espresso cookies
2. Business Name: Sotaia’s Accessories Student: Madison Woodward (Calverton Elementary School)— Handmade bow clips and headbands.
3. Business Name: Ozone Hats Student: Onalee Anderson (Roland Park El-



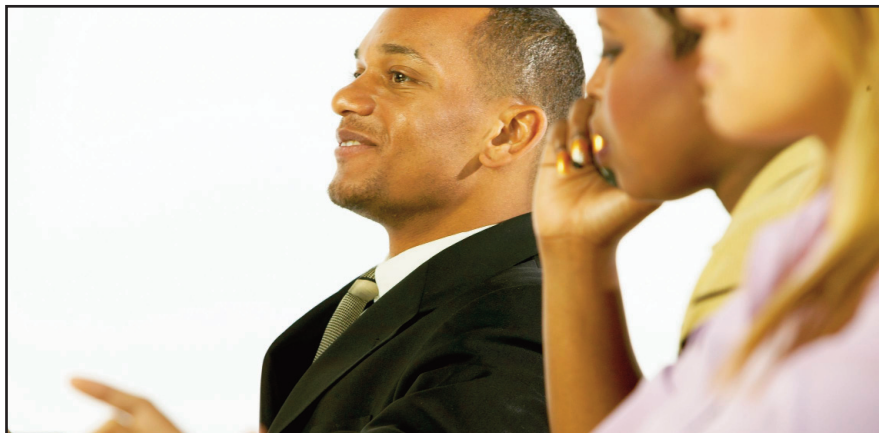
Baltimore students who participated in the NFTE Business Plan Competition Semifinals held on Wednesday, May 20, 2015. Photo: NFTE alum Alayna Alberti

ementary School) Bright and colorful winter hats.

4. Business Name: Power to the PCB Students: Javon Gholston & Michael Heier (Patterson High School)— Printed ergonomic circuit board tool.

5. Business Name: Sweets for the Sweet Student: Noah Tunis (Roland Park Elementary School) Affordable delicious customized cupcakes that are delivered to the customer’s doorstep.

## VA Health Care Enrollment, Eligibility, Veterans Benefits Seminar



Baltimore— The Veterans Affairs (VA) Maryland Health Care System is hosting a VA Health Care Enrollment, Eligibility and Veterans Benefits Seminar at the Baltimore VA Medical Center on Monday, June 1, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in the Auditorium, 2nd Floor of Baltimore VA Medical Center in Baltimore City. The program is free of charge and is designed to provide an overview of VA programs and services for community health care providers, social workers and counselors.

During the seminar, VA representatives will provide presentations about VA health care eligibility and enrollment, in addition to an overview of VA primary, mental health and long-term care. There will also be representatives available during the seminar to talk about VA health care services in the community and VA compensation benefits. Following the seminar, participants will have the opportunity to visit resource tables to get additional information about VA programs and services available to Veterans.

Registration for the seminar will begin at 8:30 a.m. on the second floor of the Baltimore VA Medical Center, which is located at 10 N. Greene Street in Baltimore. Parking for the program will be available for a fee at nearby parking garages.

For more information about the VA Health Care Enrollment, Eligibility and Veterans Benefits Seminar, contact the VA Maryland Health Care System's Community Outreach office at 1-800-949-1003, extension 6071, or register online at [www.chep-inc.org/upcoming\\_events](http://www.chep-inc.org/upcoming_events) and click on 06/01/2015 VA Health Care Enrollment, Eligibility & Veterans Benefits Seminar.

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## Homeownership Initiative for Veterans, Military Families



**Veterans and military families looking to purchase a home in one of Maryland's Sustainable Communities may qualify for special Maryland Mortgage Program rates and significant down payment assistance through the "You've Earned It!" initiative.**

Courtesy Photo

Annapolis— On Memorial Day, Governor Larry Hogan and Secretary Kenneth Holt announced a \$20 million initiative that will give a significant boost to veterans and military families who are looking to buy a home in one of Maryland's 86 Sustainable Communities. Read the release.

The "You've Earned It!" initiative offers a 2.75 percent fixed-rate 30-year loan through the Maryland Mortgage Program and \$10,000 in down payment assistance in the form of a zero interest deferred loan to active duty military, including members of the military reserves and National Guard, and honorably discharged veterans and veterans with a disability.

The first phase of "You've Earned It!" aimed at qualified homebuyers with more than \$25,000 in student loan debt was announced recently. The initiative

is for a limited time until the \$20 million allocation is exhausted.

Maryland's Sustainable Communities program seeks to strengthen reinvestment and revitalization in the state's older communities through state, local and private sector partnerships.

There is at least one designated Sustainable Community in each of Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City. A list of Maryland's Sustainable Communities can be found at [www.mmp.maryland.gov](http://www.mmp.maryland.gov).

If you'd like to see whether a specific property address is in a sustainable community, view this map.

For more information about the Maryland Mortgage Program, as well as other loan specials, participating lenders and homeownership counselors in your area, visit the Maryland Mortgage Program website: [www.mmp.maryland.gov](http://www.mmp.maryland.gov).

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## Baltimore author brings children to Brazil's rain forests in new adventure book

Baltimore, Md.— Author Dawne A. Allette announces the nationwide release of her new children's book, "Wellington Willowby Weeks."

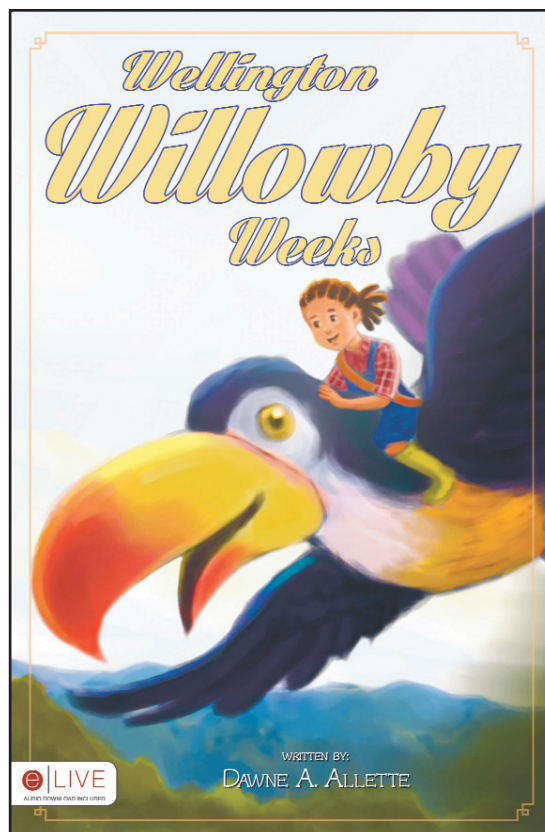
In Allette's new book, Wellington Willowby Weeks uses his magic globe to travel. His first stop is a rain forest in Brazil. He wants everyone to know about how important rain forests are for the survival of everyone and everything on earth. The good thing about his adventures is that he always gets back home before his mother notices that he is gone.

Published by Tate Publishing and Enterprises, the book is available through bookstores nationwide, from the publisher at [www.tatepublishing.com/bookstore](http://www.tatepublishing.com/bookstore), or by visiting [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

Allette was born and raised in Grenada, West Indies. She has traveled and lived in Europe and the Middle East, yet she now resides in the United States. She is the author of six children's books, which are noted for their humor and educational value, and biographies of President Obama and Michele Obama, which are used in various schools in the U.S. Aside from being an author, Allette is also a motivational speaker, a stand-up comedienne and an artist.



*Dawne A. Allette*  
Courtesy Photos



## Deadline extended for local baking competition during Monumental Bicentennial

Baltimore— Calling all bakers! The Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts on behalf of the Mount Vernon Place Conservancy is seeking local bakers to participate in "A Monumental Baking Competition" in the park squares of Mount Vernon Place on July 4, 2015 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The competition is a part of the Monumental Bicentennial, a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Washington Monument in the parks of Mount Vernon Place. The deadline for all interested participants to apply has been extended to Tuesday, June 16, 2015.

In the spirit of George Washington and to celebrate the growing season of corn, cherries and peaches, organizers are asking local individual bakers and chefs to make their best cherry or peach dessert or cornbread.

The entries will be blind tasted and judged by a committee during three separate competitions.

The winning recipe in each category will receive an award, be posted online and have their recipe card available at the Baltimore Farmers' Market & Bazaar. All participants will receive recognition and a treat! Only one entry is allowed per person; a maximum of 20 entries is allowed per category.

For more information and to apply online, visit <http://promotionandarts.org/events-festivals/monumental-bicentennial>.

For information on the Monumental Bicentennial, call the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts at 410-752-8632 or visit [www.promotionandarts.org](http://www.promotionandarts.org). For more information on the Washington Monument and the Mount Vernon Place Conservancy, visit [mvpcconservancy.org](http://mvpcconservancy.org).

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# Study raises alert about teen drivers as '100 Deadliest Days' begins

Towson— Nearly two-thirds of people injured or killed in a crash involving a teen driver are people other than the teen behind the wheel, according to a new report released by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. In 2013 alone, 371,645 people were injured and 2,927 were killed in crashes that involved a teen driver. The results come just as the "100 Deadliest Days" begin, the period between Memorial Day and Labor Day when teen crash fatalities historically climb.

"Teen crash rates are higher than any other age group, and this data confirm that the impact of their crashes extend well beyond the teen that is driving," said Ragina Cooper Averella, Public and Government Affairs Manager with AAA Mid-Atlantic. "Since teens drive more during the summer than any other season, this insight is a timely reminder to everyone— drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists— to be mindful when sharing the roads with young drivers."

The study analyzed data of police-reported crashes of drivers aged 15-19, from 1994-2013 and found that:

\*While the overall number of teen crashes are down, the majority of people killed and injured in crashes involving a teen driver are people other than the teen themselves.

\*Nearly 50 percent of those injured were in another vehicle; 17 percent were in the teen driver's car; and two percent were non-motorists (i.e., pedestrian, bicyclist).

\*Nearly 30 percent of those killed were in another car, 27 percent were the teen's passenger and ten percent were non-motorists (i.e., pedestrians, bicyclist).

AAA is promoting the study findings to raise attention among parents of teen drivers and all road users particularly during the "100 Deadliest Days" period.



Based on a AAA analysis of the government's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), in 2013, an average of 220 teen drivers and passengers died in traffic crashes during each of the summer months, a 43 percent increase compared to the rest of the year.

"Everyone has an incentive to keep teen drivers safe during the summer—and all year long—because it makes roads safer for everyone," said Averella. "Insightful data from this research help to inform parents and policymakers who can push legislation that results in an impactful difference."

AAA has been a decades-long advocate on behalf of teen drivers and their families and has been a leader at the state level in advocating for the implementation and improvement of both

graduated drivers licensing (GDL) laws and quality driver education programs. Additional data from this study point to substantial declines in teen driving and the drop in overall crash rates for teen drivers, which can be attributed to strong GDL legislation as well as other factors including rising gas prices and the economic recession of 2008.

In the last 20 years, non-fatal injury crashes and fatal crashes of teen drivers aged 15-19 decreased by 51 percent and 56 percent respectively. In comparison, crashes resulting in non-fatal injuries and fatalities, including but not limited to those involving teen drivers fell by 25 percent and 17 percent respectively.

"While great strides have been made to improve the safety of teen drivers over the

past 20 years, motor vehicle crashes still remain the leading cause of death for drivers aged 15-19, so advocating on behalf of teen driver safety remains a top priority for AAA," Averella said.

Tools to help parents prepare for the "100 Deadliest Days" of summer driving and other resources to coach teens through the learning-to-drive process including a parent-teen driving agreement can be found on AAA's award-winning website: TeenDriving.AAA.com. Parents have found the online AAA StartSmart program to be particularly useful, helping them to quickly become effective in-car coaches, make informed decisions about access to a vehicle, and manage their teen's overall driving privileges.

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The Maryland Lottery® encourages responsible play. For confidential help or information at any time about gambling problems, please visit [mdgamblinghelp.org](http://mdgamblinghelp.org) or call 1-800-GAMBLER.

