

The Annapolis Times

Vol. 38 No. 39

July 19 - 25, 2024

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication

Anne Arundel County Mother Graduates from Unique, Online GED Program



Opportunities Industrialization Center of Anne Arundel County, Inc. held a graduation ceremony at Annapolis City Hall on July 8, 2024 to celebrate April Dorsey's GED completion. Dorsey, a mother of six, completed the program in the shortest time ever of any student at OIC of AACo. The 501(c)(3) non-profit provides free services to adult Anne Arundel County residents. (L-r): OIC Director of Operations, Sandy Alston; OIC Board Member, Ken Baughman; OIC Executive Director, Jesse Raudales; Adriana Lee, Director of Immigrant Affairs at Maryland Governor's Office of Community Initiatives; April Dorsey, OIC graduate and honoree; OIC Board Member, Alva Y. Sheppard-Johnson; Annapolis' Mayor Gavin Buckley; Vincent Moulden, Director of Community Engagement & Constituent Services at the Anne Arundel County Executive's Office; OIC Board Member Veronica B. Williams; and OIC Board Member David Brown. (See story on page 9)

Photo courtesy of OIC of AACo



Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for New Welcome Center

Pennsylvania Avenue Main Streets Opens its Doors to the Community

Tuesday, July 16, 2024—Baltimore, MD—Pennsylvania Avenue Main Street hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 16, 2024, for its new office and welcome center at 1829 Pennsylvania Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21217. The ceremony was open to all community members who wished to celebrate and learn more about revitalizing historic Pennsylvania Avenue.

The new office and welcome center will serve as a hub for community engagement, providing resources and information about ongoing and future revitalization efforts. The space will also support small business development and growth along the corridor. It aims to be a place where residents, business owners, and visitors can come together to support the neighborhood's growth and development.

Speakers at the event included:

Hon. Brandon Scott, Mayor of Baltimore City

Charlyn Nader, Director, Baltimore City Main Streets Program

Robert Thomas, Manager, Pennsylvania Avenue Main Street

Darroll Cribb, Board Chair, Upton Planning Committee

Kelly Little, Development Consultant, Upton Planning Committee

Jennifer Goold, Executive Director, Neighborhood Design Center

Dean Harrison, Harrison Development

“The revitalization of this historical community is our primary focus as we strive to build capacity. This landmark will stand as a cornerstone for the future of the Pennsylvania Avenue Main Street corridor, and as the Director, I am privileged to witness its transformation into reality,” said Charlyn Nater, Director of Baltimore Main Streets.

Pennsylvania Avenue Main Street is one of nine main streets in Baltimore City. The Baltimore Main Streets Program uplifts local businesses, provides them with developmental resources, and spotlights neighborhoods throughout the City. The Baltimore Main Street program follows the Main Street America approach centered around transformation strategies organized into four points: economic vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization.

“Our partners at Pennsylvania Avenue Main Street represent a commercial corridor that reflects the deep African American history in West Baltimore. The intentionality of their work will continue to facilitate change,” explained Chris Lundy, Director of The Mayor's Office of Small and Minority Business Advocacy and Development. “This new space will serve as a beacon and inspire the community to join them in their vital community revitalization efforts.”

Main Street programs have a proven track record of revitalizing neighborhoods by leveraging local assets to promote economic development and community engagement. Pennsylvania Avenue Main Street is part of a nationwide initiative aimed at transforming historic districts and commercial corridors into vibrant centers of commerce and culture.

Historically, Pennsylvania Avenue was a bustling commercial and

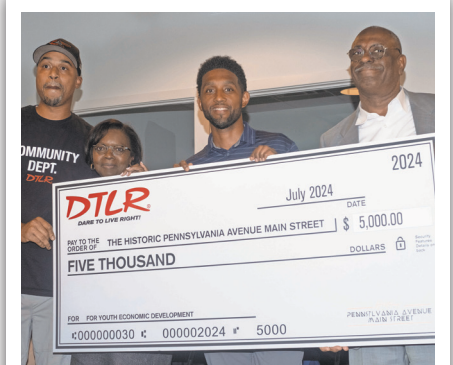


Mayor Brandon Scott joins Upton Community leaders at the opening of Baltimore's Historic Pennsylvania Avenue Mainstreet Welcome Center. Photos: Ian Harpool

entertainment district. It was the place to be for the latest in music and nightlife, often referred to as Baltimore's version of Harlem. The corridor was also home to numerous businesses and social clubs that catered to the African American community, fostering a strong sense of identity and pride.

“This project is a shining example of how reinvestment and collaboration can breathe new life into historic districts while honoring its rich cultural heritage. The Pennsylvania Avenue Welcome Center will not only enhance the cultural fabric of the area but also stimulate economic development. We are proud to be part of this initiative that celebrates Baltimore's storied past while paving the way for a bright future,” said Jen Goold Executive Director of Neighborhood Design Center.

“It has been an honor for Harrison Development to have worked with the Upton Planning Committee in the development of the Historic Pennsylvania Avenue Main Street Welcome Center,” said Dean Harrison of Harrison Development. “This



Downtown Locker Room presents a check to support the Pennsylvania Avenue Mainstreet Welcome Center housed in their former location donated to the community. (Left to right): Treymaine Lipscomb, Downtown Locker Room; Wanda Best, Upton Planning Committee; Mayor Brandon Scott; and Darroll Cribb, Upton Planning Committee.

new project will enhance the vibrant, positive energy along the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor.”

“Opening the welcome center represents a significant milestone for the Upton community. Our commitment to the Pennsylvania Ave., Main Street program spans several years but now we are on the verge of providing services on a whole new level.

We welcome the support that Mayor Scott and his team are providing as well as the contributions of corporate and banking partners that are celebrating this achievement with us. However, none of this would be possible if not for the generosity of Downtown Locker Room in its donation of this building. “What once served as a symbol of despair in our community now stands as a symbol of hope.”

“Our community looks forward to the many businesses and jobs that will be created through the resources this center offers.”

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A 5-Part Primer on Artificial Intelligence: Part Two – Everyday Products

By Karen Clay

Clay Technology and Multimedia, L.L.C.

So, now we know that some form of computational device has been in our lives for millennia. We also now know that we have been explicitly discussing, developing, and/or experimenting with AI since 1956. Here's a look at examples of ordinary tools that use embedded AI in them, illustrating how AI has become an integral part of our lives.

Smartphones: AI powers various features in smartphones, such as voice assistants (e.g., Siri, Google Assistant), facial recognition, and predictive text. These technologies enhance our experience such as enabling hands-free operation and secure unlocking.

Email Filters: Services like Gmail use AI to filter out spam and organize emails into categories such as Primary, Social, and Promotions. AI algorithms analyze email content to identify and segregate spam, ensuring you see the most relevant messages.

Streaming Services: Platforms like Netflix and Spotify use AI to recommend movies, shows, and music based on our preferences and viewing/listening history. They use machine learning algorithms to predict what we will enjoy.

Navigation Apps: Apps like Google Maps analyze traffic patterns and provide real-time traffic updates, suggesting alternative routes, and estimating travel times.

Smart Home Devices: Devices such as Amazon Echo and Google Home use AI to respond to voice commands, control smart home systems, and provide

information. These virtual assistants use natural language processing to understand and respond to your requests or questions. Examples of some of these smart home systems include:

a. Smart Appliances: Smart refrigerators, washing machines, ovens, and dishwashers can make everyday decisions and tasks easier. Refrigerators can monitor the freshness of food and suggest recipes based on available ingredients. Washing machines can optimize washing cycles by detecting the weight/fabric type of your load and adjusting water levels, detergent usage, and cycle duration for optimal cleaning and energy efficiency. AI-powered ovens can recognize different types of food and suggest appropriate cooking times and temperatures. They use cameras and machine learning algorithms to identify the food and ensure it is cooked perfectly. AI-enabled dishwashers can detect the level of dirtiness on dishes and adjust the washing cycle accordingly. They use sensors to measure how cloudy or clear the water is to optimize the wash and rinse cycles for better cleaning and water efficiency.

b. AI-Powered Coffee Makers: Smart coffee makers can be controlled via smartphone apps and voice assistants. They can learn your coffee preferences, schedule brewing times, and adjust the strength and temperature of your coffee.

c. Robotic Vacuum Cleaners: Use AI to clean homes efficiently. They can map the layout of a home, avoid obstacles, and learn the most efficient cleaning paths.

d. Smart Thermostats: Learn your household's heating and cooling preferences over time and adjust settings automatically to optimize energy usage and maintain comfort.

e. Smart Lighting Systems: AI-powered lighting systems can adjust brightness



AI in everyday devices

Graphic Design by Karen Clay

Photos from Unsplash.com

and color based on your preferences, time of day, and activity, learning your habits and adjusting lighting automatically to enhance comfort and energy savings.

f. Smart Security Systems: AI-powered cameras and doorbells use facial recognition to identify people, detect unusual activities, and send alerts to homeowners. Some systems can also differentiate between humans, animals, and other moving objects.

6. Digital Cameras: Modern digital cameras use AI for various photography features, such as scene recognition, autofocus, and photo enhancement. AI algorithms analyze the scene and automatically adjust settings for the best possible shot.

7. E-commerce Platforms: Online retailers use AI to provide personalized shopping experiences. AI-driven recommendation engines suggest products based on your browsing and purchase history, increasing the likelihood of sales.

8. Banking and Finance: Banks and financial institutions use AI for fraud detection, risk management, and



Karen Clay

Clay Technology and Multimedia

Courtesy photo: Karen Clay

customer service. AI algorithms analyze transaction patterns to detect unusual activities and provide virtual assistants to handle customer inquiries.

9. Healthcare Applications: AI is used in healthcare for diagnostic tools, personalized treatment plans, and health monitoring. For example, AI algorithms can analyze medical images to detect diseases or use wearable devices to monitor vital signs and alert you to potential health issues.

10. Social Media Platforms: AI is behind features like content recommendations, friend suggestions, and spam filtering. These platforms use AI to analyze your behavior and tailor content to your preferences.

Whether we know it or even like it, AI is already integrated into many aspects of our daily lives. As advancements in machine learning and natural language processing continue, we will experience a growing reliance on AI to simplify complex tasks, make informed decisions, and anticipate our needs. This will drive a future where AI ultimately is seamlessly integrated into all facets of our lives.

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Dangerous Heatwave

Code Red Extreme Heat Alert Information

Source: Baltimore City Health Department

Overview

The Health Commissioner declares a Code Red Extreme Heat Alert during periods of extreme heat. The decision to activate a Code Red Extreme Heat Alert on a particular day will be made before 6 A.M. of that day, if possible.

Individuals unsure of whether a Code Red Extreme Heat Alert is in effect can call 311 for details. 311 operators will provide cooling center locations, safety tips, and information about warning signs for heat-related illness.

Individuals can also call 311 to report specific concerns about vulnerable neighbors on Code Red Extreme Heat Alert days. Call 911 if you are having a heat-related emergency.

Cooling Centers

On Code Red Extreme Heat days, staff from several city agencies, including the Office of Emergency Management, the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services, and the Health Department, will coordinate the opening of cooling centers to offer

air-conditioned spaces and cool water for residents

Senior Centers* – open as cooling centers on Code Red Extreme Heat days, Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

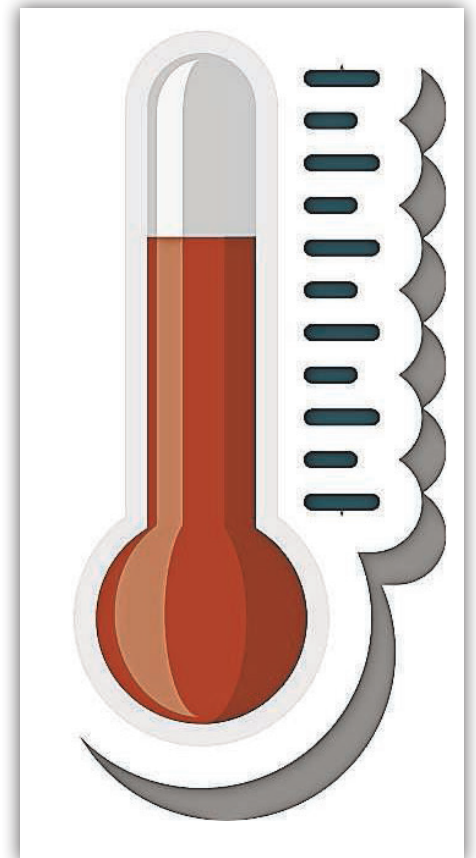
- Hatton Senior Center 2825 Fait Ave. (410) 396-9025
- Oliver Senior Center 1700 Gay St. (410) 396-3861
- Zeta Center for Healthy and Active Aging 4501 Reisterstown Rd. (410) 396-3535
- Waxter Center for Senior Citizens 1000 Cathedral St. (410) 396-1324
- Sandtown-Winchester Senior Center 1601 Baker St. (410) 396-7725

Community Cooling Centers

- Zion Lutheran Church 400 E. Lexington St. Tuesday - Thursday 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- ShopRite of Howard Park 4601 Liberty Heights Ave. Sunday – Saturday 6:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Libraries as Cool Air Spaces

- Residents are also encouraged to visit open Pratt Library locations during normal business hours to seek relief from the heat.



TIPS ON STAYING COOL

During periods of extreme heat, the Baltimore City Health Department recommends City residents:

- Drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Reduce outside activities and stay inside in air-conditioned locations
- Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles, even for short periods of time
- Check on older, sick, or frail neighbors who may need help responding to the heat

Watch out for signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which include:

- Confusion
- Hot, dry, flushed skin or cool and clammy skin
- Lightheadedness
- Nausea

Call 911 immediately if any of these symptoms occur.

Part II

U.S. Army Major, Life Coach, Entrepreneur Discusses Impact of Work, Life on Mental Health

By **Andrea Blackstone**

Stressful living today can greatly impact a person's mental health. However, individuals do not always know where to start when it comes to seeking appropriate services to support their emotional well-being.

Chi Quita Mack, MSW is a life coach, owner and founder of The Chi Quita Mack, LLC, and she currently serves as a Major in the United States Army. Dr. Mack penned "The Beauty in You: A Guide Created to Help You Discover the Best Version of You."

She stated that the workbook will walk women through the essential process of healing and rediscovering the women they were before pain, motherhood, career pursuits, and/or becoming a wife.

Where people can turn when they need hands-on mental health care

"The best approach involves a collaborative effort among these professionals to provide comprehensive care tailored to the individual's needs," Dr. Mack stated.

Dr. Mack described the expertise of professionals who include doctors, therapists, psychiatrists and psychologists.

- **Doctor** (Primary Care Physician): Often the first point of contact, they can provide initial assessments, referrals, and manage physical health conditions related to mental health.

- **Therapist** (Licensed Clinical Social Worker or Counselor): Provides psychotherapy (talk therapy) to help manage symptoms, develop coping strategies, and address behavioral issues.

- **Psychiatrist**: A medical doctor who specializes in mental health who can diagnose mental health conditions,

prescribe and manage medications, and provide therapy.

- **Psychologist**: Specializes in diagnosing and treating mental health disorders through therapy and psychological testing. They typically do not prescribe medications but can work closely with other healthcare providers who do.

According to Dr. Mack, depression, often coupled with anxiety, is a prevalent mental health condition that she has noticed arises frequently in minority clients, including high-school-age students. However, it is "particularly notable among young adults (18-29) and middle-aged individuals (30-50)."

Dr. Mack added, "Depression and anxiety can be exacerbated by factors such as racial discrimination, socioeconomic stressors, and cultural stigmas around mental health, making it crucial to address these issues with culturally competent care."

Cope with Career-related Stress

Healthcare workers, first responders, military personnel, teachers, social workers, corporate executives and creatives are examples of professions that Dr. Mack mentioned who may be diagnosed with a higher percentage of mental health conditions.

Identifying specific aspects of the job or career that are causing stress is a starting point to address the issue.

"This can involve keeping a journal or discussing with a trusted colleague or supervisor," said Dr. Mack.

She advises that individuals who seek to cope with job-related stress can prioritize tasks and set realistic goals by using time management to break tasks into smaller, manageable steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Another recommended strategy is to establish

clear boundaries between work and personal life, including disconnecting from work during non-work hours and prioritizing self-care activities. Individuals can also seek support by talking to a mentor, supervisor, or trusted colleague about work-related stressors; or sometimes by simply sharing concerns to provide relief and expressing their perspective.

Additionally, practicing mindfulness and relaxation techniques such as mindfulness meditation can be helpful. Dr. Mack explained that deep breathing exercises, or progressive muscle relaxation can reduce stress levels and promote relaxation. Incorporating regular physical activity into your routine can be beneficial.

Dr. Mack also pointed out, "If stress becomes overwhelming or persistent, consider speaking with a therapist or counselor who can provide tools and strategies to manage stress effectively."

She further recommended the option of reviewing career goals.

"Sometimes, adjusting career expectations or seeking alternative career paths may be necessary for long-term well-being," she said.

A Message to the Military and Veteran Community

Dr. Mack shared an additional message for the military and veteran community about pursuing mental health support for those who have not, if he or she is hesitant about doing it.

"To the military and veteran community, I would say: 'Pursuing mental health support is a sign of strength, not weakness. Your service has placed you in challenging and high-stress situations that can impact your mental health. Seeking help is a courageous step towards healing and



Dr. Chi Quita Mack, MSW

Photo: Danielle Finney:
DC Lifestyle Photographer

maintaining your overall well-being. Untreated mental health issues can affect not only your mental state but also your physical health, relationships, and daily functioning. Professional support can help you manage symptoms like anxiety, depression, PTSD, and more, improving your quality of life."

They should remember that they are not alone. Many of their fellow service members and veterans have sought help and found it beneficial.

"Resources are available specifically for you, such as VA mental health services, military support groups, and specialized therapists who understand the unique experiences of military life. Taking care of your mental health is a vital part of taking care of yourself. Don't hesitate to reach out for the support you deserve," she said.

Visit <https://www.thechiquitamack.com/> speaker to learn more about Dr. Mack.

THE BALTIMORE TIMES

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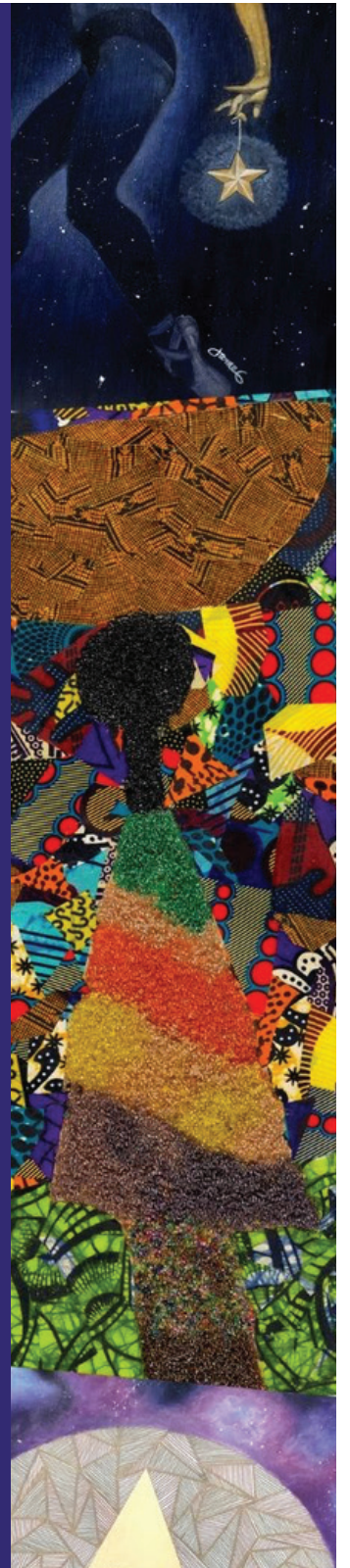
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Keisha Wade Chips Away at Hard to Crack Beauty Supply Market

By Andrea Blackstone

NielsenIQ, the world's leading consumer intelligence company, reported that "in 2023, Black consumer spending on beauty products amounted to \$9.4 billion, with dollar, unit, and household growth outpacing growth for the US at large."

Despite the big dollars that Black consumers spend on beauty products, non-Black-owned beauty stores often thrive in neighborhoods where African Americans live and spend money.

Keisha Wade, an entrepreneurial Baltimorean and senior cosmetologist, represents a small segment of Black-owned beauty supply owners who are trying to chip away at a hard-to-crack market. She will soon celebrate the anniversary of her beauty supply store, KeepItCute Beauty, located at 4602 York Road in Baltimore, Maryland, on August 1, 2024.

"We carry everything that an average, basic beauty supply would carry," said Wade. "Our goal has been and remains focusing on customer service for everyone who walks in."

Tonya Briggs, a Pasadena, Maryland resident, patronizes both Wade's salon, KeepItCute Creations by KMW, and the new beauty supply, KeepItCute Beauty.

"Everything is so serene. She's [Keisha's] about peace. She's about harmony. She's about woman-building, [and] haircare," Briggs said, emphasizing Wade's high level of professionalism.

Briggs stressed that Wade cares about what she sells to her customers beyond just making money.

She added, "If it's not good for your hair type or any type of issues that you may be having with your hair, she's [Keisha's] completely educating you on it."

Briggs stated that Wade stepped outside of the box and faced challenges to purchase beauty supplies as an African American woman, participating in an industry "that's mostly not dominated by our people."

Same-day delivery, seven miles or less from the store, is a unique feature of KeepItCute Beauty. According to Wade, the current delivery fee is \$1 per mile. A \$35 minimum purchase is required. The entrepreneur strives to keep the website, keepitcute.net, up to date. Customers may call 443-708-2182 to discuss and place their orders.

Robert LaPrade started the journey with Wade, providing hands-on support. The master plumber by trade helps his fiancée build the brand. He works a job at night and volunteers in the beauty supply store, to support Wade's dream hands-on, helping her to expand a community presence

Before entrepreneurship became her calling, Wade's childhood roots in Northeast Baltimore were speckled with challenges and ultimately resilience.

"I wound up going to Charleston Job Corps [Center in West Virginia] where I was able to get my... GED, and go to college from there," Wade said. Wade became a mother and wife, and held different jobs after returning to Baltimore.

"Bank of America laid me off, probably in 2009 when they were going through the bank crisis," Wade said. "I took my 401(k) and my retirement. That's when I decided to go into business for myself. I went to trade school for cosmetology." Wade earned her cosmetology license in 2012. She began learning more about business and customer service. She worked in different salons, trying to find her niche while becoming more independent.



Keisha Wade, left, and her fiancé, Robert LaPrade. Wade is the proprietor of KeepItCute Beauty supply and KeepItCute Creations by KMW, a hair salon offering full service. LaPrade assists Wade in the beauty supply store.

Photos courtesy of Keisha Wade

Wade taught cosmetology school. She prided herself on building her business around customer service, consultation, and understanding clients. KeepItCute Creations by KMW's brand grew. Next, Wade thought of opening a beauty supply store.

"The beauty supply store was really designed for more of the community who could not afford the hair salon prices, but they still needed items from a beauty supply store. We're kind of in the middle and probably like about two miles give or take from the next beauty supply store," Wade said, referring to KeepItCute Beauty.

A building divides her two businesses. The beauty supply offers human hair, wigs, ponytails, products, shampoos, color, shirts, and more.

"A lot of people come with gratitude for being able to come somewhere close. They don't have to catch the bus," said Wade.

Wade lives approximately six minutes from her businesses. She wants to give



Customer Tonya Briggs holds a bag of beauty supply items that she purchased from KeepItCute Beauty. The beauty supply store will celebrate its first anniversary on August 1, 2024.

back through, stuffing book bags with grooming supplies for neighborhood school children to help them prepare for back-to-school. The entrepreneur would like support from the community by receiving book bag donations.

In another year, Wade aspires to achieve specific growth in her beauty supply business.

"I would like to see myself bringing in at least 15 clients a day with a minimum ticket of \$30," Wade said, speaking about her desire to attract more neighborhood foot traffic.

Briggs made a case for Wade's dream to come to fruition.

"It is overwhelmingly awesome!" Briggs added, speaking about Wade's business acumen.

Visit <https://keepitcute.net> to learn more about Wade's beauty supply store, or to follow up about the future bookbag drive benefiting local youth.

Adult Services for Anne Arundel County Residents

Anne Arundel County Mother Graduates from Unique, Online GED Program

By Andrea Blackstone

Apriel Dorsey, a mother of six from Odenton, Maryland attended Annapolis High School in 2006, until she gave birth to her daughter, Eriyelle.

“Then I was introduced to an alternative school that would allow me to take my daughter to school with me, but breastfeeding was a bit much for me, so I ended up dropping out [in 2010],” 32-year-old Dorsey explained.

Dorsey never let go of her dream to finish high school. She decided to earn her GED through a quality, virtual learning program provided by Opportunities Industrialization Center of Anne Arundel County, Inc. (OIC of AACo), a 501(c)(3) non-profit providing free services to adult Anne Arundel County residents.

“I wanted to show my kids that education is very important, and it was my time to do so. I’ve tried three times before and was unsuccessful,” Dorsey said. “The process [of earning my GED] took two and a half months.”

Dorsey, who passed her GED on April 24, 2024, completed the program in the shortest time ever of any student at OIC of AACo. She noted the convenience of OIC of AACo’s program. It allowed her to tend to her motherly duties and take classes from the comfort of her home. The new graduate felt very determined to earn her GED by completing the program. She stated that her lovely teachers helped and pushed her each step of the way.

OIC of AACo addresses the needs of individuals and families in low-income and public housing communities who strive to achieve new levels of education, employment, and personal growth. The nonprofit’s clients include vulnerable Anne Arundel citizens; English language learners; unemployed and underemployed individuals; and former felons who are seeking to acquire marketable skills to help them find gainful employment, enhance their qualifications, or consider alternative career paths.



Apriel Dorsey, a 2024 OIC of AACo GED graduate.

Photos courtesy of OIC of AACo

Jesse Raudales, OIC of AACo’s executive director, stated that Kirkland Murray, president and CEO of Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation, played a big part in AACo’s success as one of the major funders in the nonprofit’s Career Pathways program.

“We believe in improving our community by empowering people to help themselves,” said Raudales.

Raudales further explained that if a participating student does not have a computer, a free Chromebook is provided. Lesson plans are uploaded to Google Drive. OIC of AACo’s programs run from July 1 to June 30, year-round.

Sandy Alston, the director of operations and lead instructor, leads a team of retired teachers who love helping the community.

“We are 100 percent virtual, and our instructors are in Bolivia, Australia, North Carolina, and Texas,” Raudales explained. “Virtual learning eliminates the number one barrier in all nonprofits, which is transportation.”

Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) was founded by the Reverend Leon Sullivan in Philadelphia in the sixties. It ultimately grew into a national and international movement that trained millions of workers from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. The OIC of AACo



Apriel Dorsey, an Opportunities Industrialization Center of Anne Arundel County GED graduate, received an Executive Citation from Anne Arundel County Executive Stuart Pittman at City Hall on July 8, 2024 to celebrate her graduation. She also received a citation from Annapolis Mayor Gavin Buckley. (L-r): Adriana Lee, Director of Immigrant Affairs at Maryland Governor's Office of Community Initiatives; OIC graduate Apriel Dorsey; Vincent Moulden, Director of Community Engagement & Constituent Services at the Anne Arundel County Executive's Office; and Annapolis Mayor Gavin Buckley

was founded October 4, 1977, by George Phelps and his wife, Marion Phelps.

“The founding of OIC of AAC stemmed from the concern of our citizens about the plight of unemployed and otherwise economically disadvantaged persons. There were 150 OIC’s at its highest,” Raudales said, adding that only 24 are still running. “For over 46 years, the OIC has always been a committed and supportive partner in working to lift Anne Arundel County families out of poverty.”

Raudales served as the acting executive director of the OIC of Wilson, North Carolina from 2015 to 2018 before leading OIC of Anne Arundel County, Inc. He has worked for OIC for nine years. Additionally, Raudales was the first Latino Olympic artist to represent the United States for the 2006 Olympic games alongside fellow artists Jane Seymore and Peter Maxx.

Raudales knows the value of OIC, firsthand. His history with the nonprofit dates back to growing up in Wilson, North Carolina when his family and other community members turned to the OIC there to receive food and assistance for other family needs. Raudales was later

instrumental in keeping the doors of the OIC of Wilson location open. Like many other OIC locations, it was at risk of shuttering because of low grant funding.

“I leveraged my new Olympic title and celebrity status to re-establish old partnerships and create new ones in the community and state. I secured several new grants totaling over 1.5 million, and the OIC of Wilson, North Carolina is still open and operating on those grants today,” he added.

According to Raudales, students can further their education, once they obtain their GED. Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) is one of the OIC of AACo’s partners.

Dorsey stated that she is a hairstylist who aspires to become a physical therapist. She plans to attend AACC in the fall.

“When I received my GED, it made me feel better as a person. It felt like I can do anything I put my mind to!”

Visit www.oic-aaco.org for more information about OIC of AACo. Follow <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069342745873> on Facebook.

Baltimore Community Lending Becomes Capital Access Manager for KIVA

Baltimore, MD, July 1, 2024—Baltimore Community Lending (BCL) announced becoming the Capital Access Manager for KIVA's new hub, which will be located at the new headquarters at 309 N. Calvert St. Baltimore, Maryland 21201, and is due to open in late 2024/early 2025.

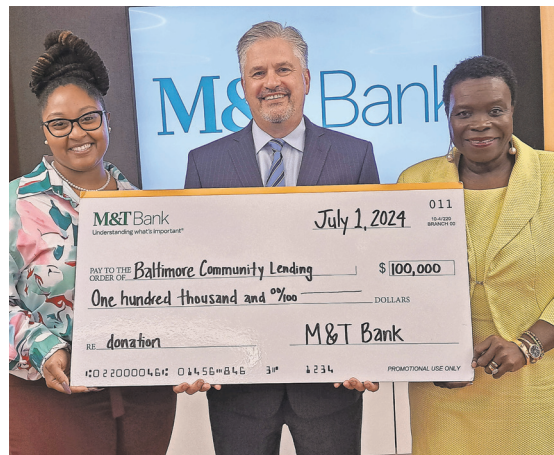
M&T Bank, a supporter of BCL, is donating \$100,000 to BCL's Technical Assistance Program. The funds will be used to support KIVA's online lending platform. The donation will enable the hiring of a capital access manager and cover the Kiva hub fees for the first two

years, greatly enhancing the support infrastructure for local entrepreneurs.

"This M&T donation will support our expanded efforts to provide financial literacy training and coaching to budding entrepreneurs," said Bonnie Crockett, Vice President and Director of Small Business Lending.

The KIVA Hub will allow BCL to assist small businesses in applying for 0% interest loans through the Kiva program. It will provide essential financial support and offer entrepreneurs a platform to engage with crowdfunding and share their unique stories with a broader audience, significantly enhancing the support infrastructure for local entrepreneurs.

"We are proud to partner with M&T Bank on this initiative," said Watchen Bruce, President and CEO of Baltimore Community Lending. "Their support enables us to further our



(L-r): Lyndsaë' Peele-Kiva Entrepreneurial Ecosystem; Brian Walter, Executive Vice President for M&T Bank; and Watchen Bruce-CEO & President at Baltimore Community Lending. Photos: Paris Brown

efforts in empowering entrepreneurs and strengthening the economic fabric of our communities."

Lyndsaë' Peele, Kiva Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Manager, added, "Kiva is excited to expand our ability to provide zero-interest loans and valuable exposure to countless aspiring business owners, helping them to succeed and thrive in a competitive market."

About Baltimore Community Lending

Baltimore Community Lending, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and mission-based lender serving the Baltimore metro area. BCL is 100% dedicated to delivering responsible, affordable lending products to help low-income, low-wealth, and other disadvantaged people and communities join the economic mainstream. BCL makes loans and provides training to



(L-r): Tershea "Shea" Ewell, Interim Chief Operations Officer, Greater Baltimore Urban League; Detra Miller-Regional Manager at M&T Bank; Watchen Bruce-CEO & President at Baltimore Community Lending; Lyndsaë' Peele-Kiva Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Manager; Traci N. Horne, Vice President, Sr. Philanthropy & Community Impact Specialist, Wells Fargo Philanthropy & Community Impact Group; and Paris M. Brown, Publisher, The Baltimore Times.

small business owners and real estate developers committed to developing underserved neighborhoods.

About M&T Bank

M&T Bank Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Buffalo, New York. M&T's principal banking subsidiary, M&T Bank, provides banking products and services in 12 states across the northeastern U.S. from Maine to Virginia and Washington, D.C. Trust-related services are provided in select markets in the U.S. and abroad by M&T's Wilmington Trust-affiliated companies and by M&T Bank. For more information about M&T Bank, visit www.mtb.com.

About Kiva Online Lending Platform

Kiva is a global nonprofit, founded in 2005, with a mission to expand financial access and help underserved communities thrive. Kiva unlocks capital for borrowers through crowdfunded loans supported by individuals around the world. Lenders on Kiva can start with as little as \$25 to support causes that matter most to them, whether that's gender equity and support for women, refugees, climate change, small businesses, agriculture, and more. Since our founding, over two million people have invested \$1.9 billion in real dreams and real opportunities, spanning more than 90 countries and 4.7 million borrowers.

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Serenity House To Be Performed at Harrisburg Fringe Festival

*Performance Dates July 20th & July 21st
at Narçisse Theatre Company*

BALTIMORE (July 15, 2024) – “Serenity House: From Addiction to Deliverance,” penned by Baltimore native Ursula V. Battle, will be performed at this year’s Harrisburg Fringe Festival. The performances will take place Saturday, July 20, 2024 (7:10 p.m.) and Sunday, July 21, 2024 (4:50 p.m.) at Narçisse Theatre Company, located 312 Chestnut Street in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The performance is a production of Battle Stage Plays.

The Fringe performance will feature excerpts culled from the full production— a gripping drama that takes a riveting and thought-provoking look at addiction.

The piece was selected to be performed as part of the Harrisburg Fringe Festival, a visual and performing arts event that takes place across the city of Harrisburg annually in July. Harrisburg Fringe seeks to connect adventurous artists, venues, and audiences by empowering artistic expression in a spirit of community celebration. The four-day theatrical extravaganza features live entertainment, unique theatre experiences at low-cost prices, kid-friendly shows and activities, visual art displays, and more.

Through music, ministry, an unforgettable story, comedy, and dance, “Serenity House: From Addiction to Deliverance” takes a heart-wrenching, yet heart-warming look at the devastating impact that addiction has on society – particularly

on families that in some cases, span generations.

The piece enlightens and educates about the dangers of drugs while providing encouragement, resources for help, and a resounding message about the transformative power of forgiveness.

The play’s storyline centers around the journey six men and women, who are three months in recovery, take after arriving at the imaginary United in Victory Tabernacle on the Hill Freewill Catholic Baptist and Episcopal Church of God in Christ’s newly opened “Serenity House.”

Written by Battle, an award-winning playwright and journalist, the piece is directed by highly acclaimed director Dr. Gregory Wm. Branch. The excerpts will feature national recording artist Randy “Fruity” Roberts of The Choir Boyz; power soloists Charisse Caldwell-Bowen and Kay Jefferson; actors Leonard Stepney, Jr. and Isaiah Evans; and actresses Tanya Brown, Kenya Chase, and Keona Caesar.

The full production will be performed in Steelton, Pa. later this year.

Tickets for the special FRINGE performance are only \$5 and can be purchased by visiting the following websites: <https://harrisburg.ssboxoffice.com/events/serenity-house-from-addiction-to-deliverance/> or www.battlestageplays.com. For more information, visit <https://harrisburg.ssboxoffice.com> or call Battle Stage Plays at (443) 531-4787.



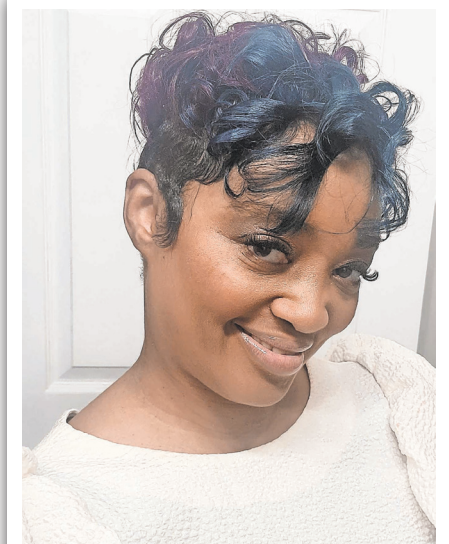
Power soloist C.C. Bowen returns as ‘Mama Jackson.’
Photos courtesy of Battle Stage Plays



Keona Caesar will portray ‘Dancer Hawkins’ in the production.



Isaiah Evans will portray ‘Hank Riley.’



Tanya Brown-Iyesi returns as ‘Sharon Brown.’

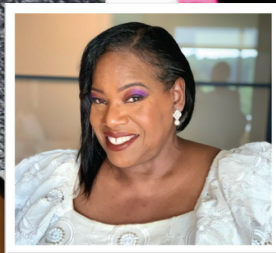
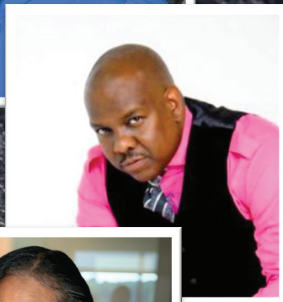
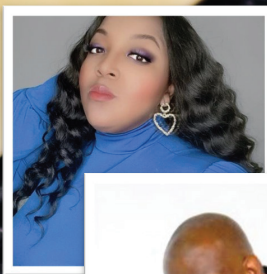
HARRISBURG
FRINGE
FESTIVAL

URSULA V. BATTLE'S

Serenity House

FROM ADDICTION TO DELIVERANCE

THE FRINGE FESTIVAL PERFORMANCES WILL ONLY HIGHLIGHT EXCERPTS FROM THE SHOW.



Featured soloists:
Kay Jefferson
Randy Roberts and
C.C. Bowen

Tickets:

\$5



SCAN ME

#hbgfringe2024 #HarrisburgFringe2024

Saturday, July 20, 2024; 7:10 PM | Sunday, July 21, 2024; 4:50 pm

Narcisse Theatre Company

312 Chestnut Street | Harrisburg, PA 17101

For additional information and tickets:

www.battlestageplays.com | 443-531-4787

<https://harrisburg.ssboxoffice.com/events/serenity-house-from-addiction-to-deliverance>

A Tribute to Former Ravens Jacoby Jones

By Tyler Hamilton

The NFL world was deeply saddened by the loss of former returner/wide receiver Jacoby Jones earlier this week. Jones, at 40 years old passed away in his sleep.

His death rocked many players and coaches whom he drew close to.

“My brother! I thank God for the memories and your impact on this world. You were one of one,” fellow former Ravens wide receiver Torrey Smith said. “Your play on the field and jokes will live on forever! We have Momma Jones and Lil Coby’s back for life! This one hurt me, man! We are going to miss you!”

Jones’ infectious personality showed in his radiant smile that would light up a room. His touchdown dances were always entertaining. Jones’ vibrant personality will be missed.

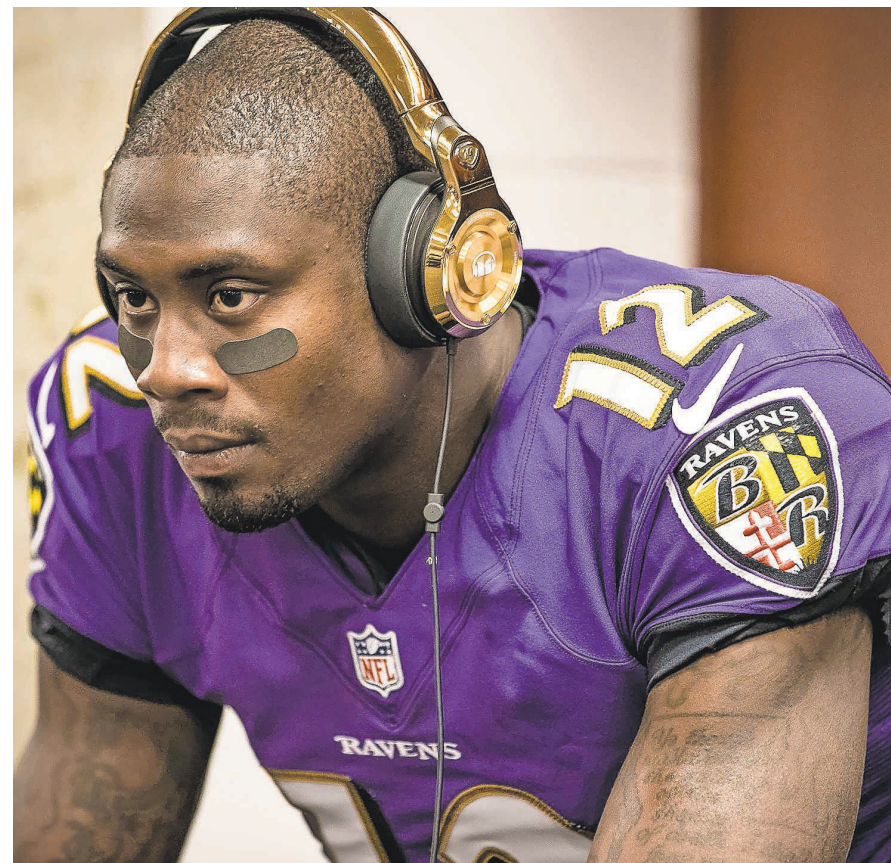
“We are completely heartbroken to learn about the passing of Jacoby Jones,” the Ravens said in a statement. “Jacoby had the unique ability to connect with everyone he encountered. His charisma, joy and love created a one-of-a-kind presence that could light up any room or brighten any dark day.

“Jacoby will long be remembered not just for his success on the football field, but for the lasting personal connections he made with countless people in the Ravens organization, the Baltimore community and every area he called home.

“We share our deepest condolences with Jacoby’s family as we all begin to process this devastating loss.”

Jones spent three seasons with the Ravens (2012-14) and also played for the Houston Texans, San Diego Chargers and Pittsburgh Steelers.

His time with the Ravens was highlighted by a magical run that led



Jacoby Jones

Photo: Baltimore Ravens Photos

to an unexpected Super Bowl win for the Ravens to put a stamp on the 2012 season. Jones’ 70-yard touchdown reception late in the fourth quarter in Denver against the Broncos pushed their Divisional playoff game to overtime. It has affectionately been called the “Mile High Miracle.” The Ravens won the game 34-31.

The Super Bowl was another showcase for Jones. He scored two touchdowns in Baltimore’s 34-31 victory over the San Francisco 49ers, including a 108-yard kickoff return to start the second half.

Jones told a legendary story on

Master Tesfatsion’s Untold Stories series when asked about his Super Bowl return touchdown. He said Ray Lewis touched his chest and told him to do his thing. The way he explained it was super comical. Like many other Ravens teammates, Jones and Lewis were very close.

“My brother, you will truly be missed,” Ravens legendary middle linebacker Ray Lewis said. “They can’t take the memories and the hard work you put in on and off the football field. You always gave back and are always a pillar in the community, a Ravens for life. Love ya.”

Legal Notice

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CITY OF BALTIMORE
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OF TRANSPORTATION
PUBLIC NOTICE

In an effort to educate the community and receive public comment the upcoming project, a community meeting will be held.

**PUBLIC MEETING
FOR**

Old Town Mall Improvements

Saturday, July 27, 2024

10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

420 Aisquith Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

If you have any questions, comments or need special accommodations please contact: via mail
Caitlin Audette, Design Planner
Department of Planning
417 E. Fayette St., 8th Floor, Baltimore,
MD 21202

Or by leaving a voicemail at 410.396.8354.
Accommodation requests should be received
by Wednesday, July, 24, 2024

Comments on the general scope should be
received by Monday, August 12, 2024

Receive regular updates via Facebook,
at Baltimore City Department of Transportation’s project website www.streetsofbaltimore.com/oldtownmall,
or on “X” formerly known as Twitter at
[@BmoreCityDOT](https://twitter.com/BmoreCityDOT).

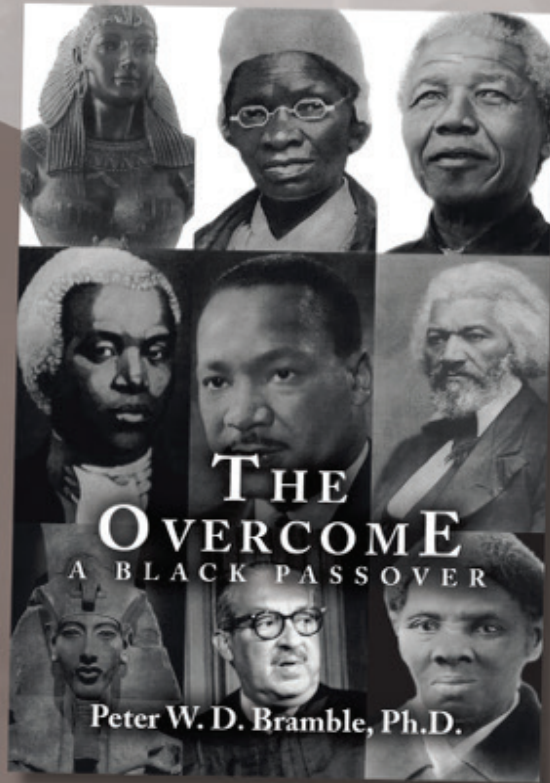
Corren Johnson, DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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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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