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Partnership Between Minority Business Development Agency, Urban Strategies Aims to Strengthen Local Minority Businesses



Eric Morrissette (left), Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for the Minority Business Development Agency shakes hands with Esther Shin, president of Urban Strategies Inc., in celebration of a partnership between USI and MBDA during an event in Baltimore on July 29, 2024. The two organizations will collaborate to strengthen minority businesses in Baltimore. (See article on page 2)

Photo courtesy of the Housing Authority of Baltimore City

Partnership Between Minority Business Development Agency, Urban Strategies Aims to Strengthen Local Minority Businesses

By Demetrius Dillard

Baltimore City is home to one of the most vibrant minority business communities this nation has to offer.

With a new partnership announced between Urban Strategies Inc. and the Minority Business Development Agency, the future may be looking even brighter for local minority businesses. The two organizations celebrated the launch of the new partnership in a brief event at USI's Perkins office located 210 S. Caroline St. in Baltimore, Maryland.

USI, a national nonprofit with the mission of ensuring that all families are stable and thriving, and MBDA, the only federal agency dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of U.S. minority business enterprises, will collaborate to strengthen opportunities and access for minority businesses in Baltimore and throughout the country.

This partnership will also expand awareness of initiatives and resources.

MBDA's Eric Morrisette and USI President Esther Shin were joined by other national leaders and entrepreneurs in the region for the celebratory function on July 29, 2024. Morrisette and Shin substantiated the partnership by signing a memorandum of understanding.

"USI is proud to solidify this partnership with the Minority Business Development Agency to create pathways for families with enterprising aspirations to achieve stability, prosperity, and liberation," Shin said.

"The ability for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other marginalized communities to dream and actualize their economic goals is oftentimes a hard-fought battle."

Morrisette, Shin, an entrepreneur and others shared remarks during the ceremony.

"This MOU partnership solidifies the relationship to expand our network of

work, but perhaps more importantly, to do what Congress sets us out to do—which is to create economic opportunity and truly create wealth for MBEs around the country," said Morrisette, who serves as MBDA's acting undersecretary for minority business development.

"We have a business center based out of Baltimore. And I'm excited about what's happening in the city. There's an erupting vitalization that's real and profound, and I'm excited to help support that work."

As a federally designated Community Development Financial Institution, Urban Strategies' CDFI endeavors to help underserved businesses and communities flourish by offering training and expertise in accessing necessary resources.

Ancill McDonald, a business owner based in Prince George's County, attended the event to share her story about the special relationship she has with Urban Strategies. With the assistance of USI, McDonald was able to access the capital needed to establish her business, Maryland Skincare Institute, and hire employees.

"I was funded by Urban Strategies back in February of this year, and it's a wonderful support for small and minority businesses," said McDonald, a native of Grenada. "It was just a lot of challenges getting financing for my business."

Maryland Skincare Institute, established in 2019, took a major blow when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. The business, which has largely recovered since then, is a robust program designed for licensed beauty professionals. Maryland Skincare Institute also offers courses for entrepreneurs in the esthetics industry looking to expand their businesses.

McDonald has clients from Baltimore, teaches classes to Baltimore residents and even plans to expand her business to



Julian Wyatt (left) director of the USI-CDFI stands alongside Ancill McDonald, founder and owner of Maryland Skincare Institute. McDonald has clients from Baltimore and teaches classes to Baltimore residents.

Photo courtesy of Urban Strategies Inc.

Baltimore within the next year, she said.

"In bringing my expertise and my business to Baltimore, I think it could really reach a far greater audience," McDonald said.

"Southern Maryland is a little saturated and Baltimore looks like it's great waters to tread."

The MBDA's mission is to foster, promote, and develop minority enterprises. The agency's efforts promote the growth and global competitiveness of minority-owned businesses by providing technical assistance and highlighting business development opportunities.

As part of the new collaboration, USI will provide opportunities for MBDA officials to speak and become engaged in USI-hosted events and share information about the agency's programs through its network.

MBDA also offers financial assistance to enable the delivery of a range of services. The agency's work dates back more than 50 years, while Urban Strategies has existed for more than 45 years.

Subira Brown, senior project manager for Urban Strategies-Baltimore, attended



Urban Strategies Inc. President Esther Shin delivers remarks during an event celebrating the partnership between USI and MBDA on July 29, 2024. Eric Morrisette (center), Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for the Minority Business Development Agency and Ancill McDonald (right), owner and founder of Maryland Skincare Institute, were also participants in the ceremony. Photo courtesy of the Housing Authority of Baltimore City

the celebration. Brown highlighted economic mobility as one of USI's five pillars, and the partnership will help the organization better leverage its resources in providing access to capital, specifically for local minority-owned enterprises.

"I'm excited about what this partnership means," Brown said, adding that USI's local office has already started connecting business owners to the organization's CDFI (Community Development Financial Institution) team. "I'm really excited that we're kind of a mediator to help individuals navigate the resources available that they may not have [elsewhere]."

Through the partnership, USI and the MBDA will work as strategic partners to scale access to services and capital for emergent businesses of color, leveraging each organization's capabilities to expand public awareness of their priorities, initiatives, and resources.

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Part II of II

The Risk of Devaluing Your Online Presence: Think Before You Speak and Post

By Andrea Blackstone

The 2024 presidential election countdown clock is ticking. With less than 90 days remaining, presidential campaign messages voiced by hopefuls Vice President Kamala Harris and former president Donald Trump can inspire fiery, online dialogue among voters and the public. Friends, families, and coworkers can be divided by political beliefs. Before showing up at the polls, online political discussions have taken on a life of their own.

Will individuals who decided not to hold their tongues in the digital universe before the presidential election regret freely voicing their opinions?

Genise Thomas, the founder of Be iNPowered, focuses on professional development and personal branding. She provides food for thought about speaking up on the Internet.

“Staying silent on controversial topics can be crucial for maintaining a neutral and professional image, especially for businesses and public figures. I’d always ask professionals their ‘Why?’ Why is this controversial commentary important to you and what do you look to accomplish? A 2018 Sprout Social survey found that 71 percent of consumers think political content increases the risk of offending followers, impacting customer relationships,” said Thomas.

In her view, commenting on a person’s personal pages can still impact one’s professional image, and comments made outside of work hours can still affect one’s job or business reputation.

She also recommends remaining vigilant about the content you share or like. Thomas advised people to consider the potential implications for their



Genise Thomas,
founder of Be iNPowered
Photo: Socially Crafted

reputation and professional relationships. It is important to align your online actions with your values and professional standards.

Negative and positive comments can carry weight when it comes to customer support.

Thomas also said, “Consumers can and do change their minds based on social media behavior. People vote with their wallets, and they’re increasingly looking at value alignment when they make purchasing decisions. A 2017

survey by Weber Shandwick found that 51 percent of consumers were more likely to buy from a company after seeing positive comments about it online, while 67 percent would avoid doing business with a company after seeing negative comments.”

According to Thomas, it is important to note that online legal considerations are often overlooked. Defamation laws, privacy regulations, and employment contracts can all have legal implications for public statements made online. Consulting with a legal professional before making potentially contentious statements is advisable.

“Remember, freedom of speech doesn’t mean freedom of consequences,” Thomas stated.

Unwanted search results can be buried or scrubbed to help someone rebound after a crisis through a combination of SEO, content creation, and legal action, but these remedies do not offer a quick fix.

“This process involves generating positive content to overshadow negative results and utilizing technical SEO strategies. It’s doable, but it takes time, patience, and often, professional help,” said Thomas.

Removing negative content online often involves contacting website administrators, using legal means such as the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) for copyright violations, or hiring reputation management firms.

Thomas added, “In some cases, search engine optimization (SEO) techniques are used to push negative content down in search results.”

Crisis management involves handling a significant negative event or situation to minimize damage to reputation.

“Oftentimes, business, public figures, and brands often need crisis management when facing scandals, public backlash, or any event that could harm their image,” Thomas said. “The cost can vary widely depending on the severity of the situation and the methods used. While basic monitoring tools like Google Alerts are free, professional reputation management services can range from hundreds to thousands of dollars per month, depending on the severity.”

If a person is attacked by a cyberbully who leaves offensive comments, Thomas recommends taking the high road instead of engaging with the individual.

“Report the offensive comments to the platform, block the offender and document the incident. In severe cases, consider legal action or consulting with a reputation management professional,” she said.

Create positive content online. Remember to choose the most appropriate platform for your message while considering the audience and potential reach.

Thomas is a big fan of using Google Alerts (a free tool) when it comes to self-monitoring what is being said about an individual online.

“Google Alerts notifies you whenever your name or specified keywords appear online, allowing you to stay informed and respond quickly to any potential issues. Another technique is to identify and monitor industry hashtags on social platforms. It allows you to monitor any mentions of your business or industry relevant to you,” she explained.

Visit www.beinpowered.com to obtain more information about Thomas and Be iNPowered.

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National News

Historic Victory for Black Farmers: \$2 Billion in Relief Payments Announced

By Stacy M. Brown
WI Senior Writer
[@StacyBrownMedia](https://twitter.com/StacyBrownMedia)

This week marks a monumental victory for Black farmers as they begin receiving payments from the \$2.2 billion Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP). After decades of advocacy and struggle, John Boyd, Jr., President of the National Black Farmers Association (NBFA), declared the day "a huge win."

Nearly two years ago, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Section 22007, authorizing compensation for farmers who faced racial discrimination in the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) farm lending practices before 2021. This week, around 43,000 farmers will receive payments of up to \$500,000, with the average award being \$82,000.

Reflecting on this long-awaited achievement, Boyd recounted his journey, which began almost 40 years ago when he first experienced these injustices. "No matter how it is sliced, the \$2.2 billion in payouts is historic," he said. This follows previous settlements, including a \$1 billion payout in 1999 and a \$1.25 billion settlement in 2013.

The NBFA's relentless efforts have also paved the way for similar settlements with Hispanic and women farmers (\$1.3 billion), Native American farmers (\$800 million), and the Cobell case settlement (\$3.4 billion).

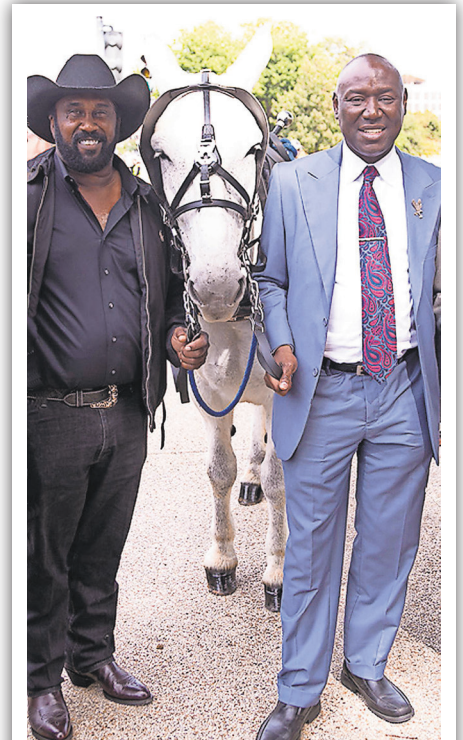
Boyd's dedication to justice has been challenging. He faced hateful phone calls, mail, and even death threats. Despite these obstacles, he remained

steadfast in his fight. "Total restoration is impossible, but for me, the fight was about justice," Boyd emphasized.

Midtown Group, an unbiased third-party administrator, oversaw the DFAP's administration to ensure a fair adjudication procedure for each farmer's case. Although the 40-page application process and long wait times added to the farmers' pain, the payments represent a bittersweet victory. Boyd acknowledged that issues such as banks denying operating funds or farm ownership loans persist, as do recent allegations of racial discrimination against companies like John Deere.

For those denied assistance through the DFAP, there is no appeal or review process, a reality Boyd profoundly regrets. Many Black farmers have died waiting for justice, but today's announcement brings some closure. Boyd reflected on his tireless efforts, from lobbying Congress to protesting with his mules "Struggle" and "Forty Acres," and riding his tractor, "Justice," to Washington. Listening to Senior White House Advisor Stephen Benjamin detail the award notifications and check disbursement made it all worthwhile. "Today is a huge win for the NBFA," he declared.

In October 2022, civil rights attorney Ben Crump announced a class action suit against the United States government on behalf of the NBFA. The lawsuit came after findings that Black farmers lost approximately \$326 billion of land due to discrimination during the 20th century. Crump and the farmers argued that the federal government breached its contract with socially disadvantaged farmers under the American Rescue Plan Act.



(L-r): John Boyd, Jr.,
President of the National Black
Farmers Association and civil rights
attorney Ben Crump.

Photo: Mark Mahoney/NNPA

Despite these challenges, President Biden reaffirmed his commitment to addressing inequities in farming. "Farmers and ranchers work around the clock to put food on our tables and steward our Nation's land. But for too long, many farmers and ranchers experienced discrimination in farm loan programs and have not had the same access to federal resources and support. I promised to address this inequity when I became President. Today that promise has become a reality," Biden stated.

Kenneth Boyd Inspired to Answer the Call to Work, Serve in the Transplantation Field

By Andrea Blackstone

Every eight minutes, another person in the United States is added to the transplant waiting list.

An ongoing need to shorten the transplant wait and save lives of individuals with end-stage organ failure, is an ongoing need. Kenneth Boyd, Vice President and Chief Business Development Officer for Infinite Legacy, answered the call to become interested in the transplantation field in 1993. Infinite Legacy, a nonprofit organ procurement organization, serves individuals in Maryland, Northern Virginia and Washington, DC. Boyd's journey began in another capacity.

"I was working at a hospital. My background was EMS [emergency medical services as an emergency medical technician] before I came here [Infinite Legacy], and through interaction with the organ donor teams, I ended up pursuing a career in organ procurement."

While working as support staff at a hospital, he was afforded his first opportunity to gain awareness about the life-changing work performed by organ procurement teams in the early '90s.

"It was the height of [gun] violence, and the drug epidemic in the [Washington] DC metropolitan area," Boyd explained.

He stated that he had firsthand opportunities to witness families who were dealing with acute losses. However, they were given the opportunity to muster something positive despite painful memories— organ and tissue donation.

Today, Boyd finds himself overseeing Infinite Legacy's business development team, including the Community Outreach Department; a Communications and Marketing Department; and the Hospital Professional Services and Education Department.



Kenneth Boyd, Vice President and Chief Business Development Officer for Infinite Legacy.

Photos courtesy of Infinite Legacy

Boyd makes additional contributions in his field as a Donate Life Maryland (DLM) board member. DLM, a state-authorized nonprofit organization, manages the Maryland Donor Registry. The registry securely and confidentially contains the names of people in Maryland who registered to become organ, eye, and tissue donors, DLM works closely with Infinite Legacy, a federally designated nonprofit.

"As a Donate Life Maryland board member, I provide my expertise to support and offer guidance [to the nonprofit]. I think we are always looking for opportunities to ensure that we are engaging our communities at the highest level; that we are advocating for an environment that allows individuals to receive the information they need to make an informed decision about donation; and avenues for them to act on that through donor registration," Boyd stated.

According to The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, 103, 912 U.S. patients were waiting more for a lifesaving transplant as of July 30, 2024. Kidneys, livers, and hearts were some of the most needed organs listed. Additionally, 3,969 local patients in



Kenneth Boyd speaks to dozens of healthcare professionals from 10 area hospitals during a Donation Resource Specialist Training held at Infinite Legacy in Baltimore, Maryland on July 11, 2024.

DC, Maryland, and Virginia needed a lifesaving organ transplant as of July 2024, per Infinite Legacy.

Boyd also reminded that evidence shows that minorities wait longer for life-saving transplants, which for example, means that a patient would need more time on dialysis treatment as a result of a kidney crisis. Also, minorities such as Black Americans, sign up to become organ, eye, and tissue donors at lower rates than white Americans. Infinite Legacy's community outreach tools help to better understand the issue, according to Boyd. Information is shared with DLM and hospital partners to increase the number of minority donors. Grassroots efforts also examine underserved communities and their barriers to assess how to close donor gaps.

Boyd, fellow DLM members, and other transplantation professionals still have plenty of critical work to do.

"Seventeen people die every day waiting for that life-saving gift. All of us in this industry are committed to trying to end deaths on the waitlist. Our work with DLM greatly enhances that," he said.

Boyd believes that working with elected

leaders is important as they consider how to serve community health needs.

Maryland SB577 (Income Tax - Opportunity for Filers to Register to Make Anatomical Gift) took effect on July 1, 2024. The law requires "the Comptroller to implement procedures to offer an individual filing a Maryland resident individual income tax return electronically the opportunity to register to make an anatomical gift in accordance with the Maryland Revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act through a hyperlink to a certain anatomical gift donor registry SB 577."

Boyd remarked that this new step can be another beneficial opportunity to document and assist with someone's desire to be an organ, eye or tissue donor.

Hearing from individuals who were given a second chance at life because of someone else's generosity is powerful and encouraging.

"I think it has allowed me to do this job for so long because I feel like I'm very privileged and blessed to be a part of life-changing work every day," Boyd said.

Visit <https://www.donatelifemaryland.org> to learn more about becoming a registered eye, organ, and tissue donor.

Dental Tips, Facts to Know, Remember

By Andrea Blackstone

Dr. Arlene A. Asante knows what it takes to achieve a first-class smile. The dentist, motivational speaker, life coach and businesswoman attended Howard University College of Dentistry in Washington D.C. After completing dental school, she attended an Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) program located in Bangor, Maine. Later, she worked as an Associate Dentist.

Dr. Asante has a great passion for Implantology, Invisalign®, and cosmetic dentistry. The dentist and owner of First Class Smiles of Bethesda, which is Bethesda, Maryland-based, lends her expertise as a cosmetic and family general dentist. However, recent research from the American Dental Association (ADA) found that a mere 3.8 percent of U.S. dentists in the United States are Black.

According to the CDC, “poor oral health among some groups of people is partly due to health disparities. Health disparities can be described as preventable differences in disease impact or opportunities in a population due to some type of disadvantage, such as limited access to services where they live or ability to afford health care service.”

Dr. Asante, a leader in her field, provided tips on how to maintain oral health, which is part of overall health.

“Oral health is linked to whole-body health, which means that problems with your teeth and gums can lead to other health concerns like heart diseases; diabetes; respiratory diseases; rheumatoid arthritis; adverse pregnancy outcomes; osteoporosis; Alzheimer’s disease; and cancer,” she reminds.

She stated that patients should see the dentist every six months for an oral exam and radiographs. During a dental exam,

your dentist will diagnose your gum health.

“If you have been diagnosed with gingivitis you are required to undergo a dental cleaning every six months, while patients diagnosed with periodontal disease are required to undergo scaling and root planing treatment [deep cleaning] every three to four months,” Dr. Asante explains.

Drinking plenty of water can help decrease the risk of cavities and gum disease, but soda and juice contain high-yield fructose and sugar products that create dental caries, which can lead to irreversible dental issues, according to Dr. Asante.

She added, “Soft drink consumption is one of several leading causes of tooth decay. Carbonation, sugar and acids in soft drinks weaken tooth enamel and encourage the growth of bacteria that contribute to tooth decay. Dentists recommended a decreased intake of sodas and high fructose juices.”

Smoking is another habit that can have a detrimental impact on dental health and contribute to a wide range of oral health issues.

“Smoking releases chemical toxins in the oral cavity that can irritate your gums and the lining of your mouth. These toxins can rapidly develop the progression of periodontal disease. Gum disease progresses more rapidly in smokers compared to non-smokers. The nicotine and tar in tobacco products cause teeth to become yellow or brown over time, leading to significant staining. Smoking causes bad breath due to the inhalation of tobacco smoke and the buildup of tar and chemicals in the mouth. Smoking is the number one risk factor for oral cancer. One in 59 for men and one in 139 for women have oral cancer, according to Dr. Asante.

Individuals who want to improve their



Find a dentist you can trust and build a rapport with. According to Dr. Arlene A. Asante, dentist and owner of First Class Smiles of Bethesda, oral health is a big part of overall health.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Arlene A. Asante

smiles with braces may do so at the age of six and above.

“It is never too late to get braces. Today, I have patients in clear aligners in their 50s. I commonly recommend clear aligners for adults. Clear aligners, such as Invisalign and other similar products, offer several benefits compared to traditional metal braces,” Dr. Asante explained.

Veneers—thin, custom coverings placed over the front surfaces of teeth to conceal cosmetic flaws—are currently a popular cosmetic dental treatment that can significantly enhance the appearance of your teeth and smile.

“Within one to two months someone can have a smile makeover, that can change their whole life and self-esteem,” Dr. Asante said.

The top three things adults can buy or do to invest in their oral health are using an electric toothbrush, flossing, and using mouthwash. Proper oral hygiene care can also prevent dental issues.

“Dental caries can be stopped by decreasing sugar intake, fluoride treatment, flossing, and using an electric toothbrush two times a day. Maintaining good oral hygiene, using fluoride products, and visiting the dentist regularly are essential practices for preventing the progression of cavities and supporting overall dental health,” Dr. Asante also explained.

Visit <https://firstclasssmilesbethesda.com/> and <https://www.instagram.com/drarleneasante?igsh=MWM0bWkwZWVhbmcmxNw==> to learn more about Dr. Asante and her dental services.

Get Ready to Learn

Upcoming, Local Back-to-School Events

By Compiled by Andrea Blackstone

Before school doors open soon, parents and guardians may want to take students to back-to-school events. Free community events offer chances to save on back-to-school items, have fun, and enjoy spending time with family and friends. Below is a list of local events. Check details to confirm times, addresses, and attendance requirements.

Baltimore, Maryland

Friday, August 16, 2024, 2:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Bon Secours Community Works Annual Back to School Event will include free haircuts, a backpack and school supplies giveaway, tasty food and snacks, a moon bounce, video game party truck, and more. Distributed items will be available while supplies last. Address: Bon Secours Community Resource Center, 31 South Payson Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21223. Visit <https://allevents.in/baltimore/bon-secours-community-works-annual-back-to-school-event/10000950861039967>.

Glen Burnie, Maryland

August 16, 2024, 2:00 -6:00 p.m.

Walmart BACK-TO-SCHOOL Carnival will provide carnival games, food, and entertainment. Book bags will be filled with essential back-to-school supplies and distributed to registered participants. The child(ren) must be present to receive a book bag. Address: Wal-Mart Stores Inc., 6721 Chesapeake Center Drive, Glen Burnie, Maryland, 21060. Register via <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/walmart-back-to-school-carnival-tickets-965162305437>.

Sunday, August 18, 2024, 2-6 p.m.

Annapolis, Maryland

Donna's Back to School Bash will include a bounce house, school supplies, games, arts, crafts, and more! Address: Harbour House Courtyard Park, 1100 Madison Street in Eastport. Search the hashtag #donnasdayofhopeandgiving on Facebook.



Baltimore, Maryland

Sunday, August 18, 2024, 1-4 p.m.

Hug Don't Shoot & Friends in collaboration with Kwame "KJ" Evans Jr presents a **Back To School Event** featuring food, music, games, prizes, free backpacks and school supplies. Address: 1400 W. Cold Spring Lane, Baltimore, Maryland in the school parking lot. Students must be present to receive items. Follow @HugDontShoot on Facebook and Instagram to obtain more information.



Baltimore, Maryland

Sunday, August 18, 2024 from 2-6 p.m.

The Give Back hosted by Ja'Nai Michelle and 88 Events

Youth ranging from elementary to high school age can enjoy a face painter, moon bounce, live music, a surprise local guest, resources, hair shape-ups for boys, and games. Backpacks and school supplies will be distributed. Students must be in

attendance to receive items. Address: Gargolas Lounge, 3720 Potee Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21225. For more information, call Ja'Nai McKinney at 443-454-4847 or visit @gargolaslounge_baltimore on Instagram.

Baltimore, Maryland

Sunday, August 18, 2024, 3-6 p.m.

Emilie Wall Foundation will present the **10th Annual Back to School Block Party** hosted by S.T.O.R.M and Music by DJ Twizz. Address: 5218 Florence Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21215. Free food, vendors, resources, haircuts (first come, first served), a moon bounce and more. Email info@emiliewallfoundation for more information.

Annapolis, Maryland

August 24, 2024, 11-2 p.m.

A **Back To School Bash** will be sponsored by Bridge Church-Annapolis at 2000 Capital

Drive in Annapolis, Maryland at Monarch Academy Annapolis. Youth will receive free school supplies, hot dogs, popcorn, snoballs, games, and prizes. Enjoy face painting and a bounce house.

See <https://www.facebook.com/events/1699357340873402/?ref=newsfeed> or <https://www.facebook.com/BridgeChurchAnnapolis/Baltimore, Maryland>

Friday, August 23, 2024, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

West Baltimore Back-to-School Backpack and Supply Giveaway will be hosted by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. K9, fingerprinting, light refreshments and more will be provided. Address: Greater New Hope Baptist Church, 2720 West North Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21216.

See **SCHOOL**, page 11



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By Rosa Pryor

Hello, hello, my dear friends,
I hope everything is well with you. For those of you who have lost a friend or family member since my last column, I will keep you and your family in my prayers. So far, it has been a hot, hot summer, which has not been good for some of us who have health issues. Take care of yourself and stay safe.

Now, I want to talk about the Contemporary Arts Inc. celebrating 27 years of its summer activity with music and dance camp programs for youth ages 7-17. They offer instrument and vocal music, dance, chess instruction, and recreation. The instructors are Wayne Johnson, drums and percussion; Eric Kennedy, drums and percussion, Rhonda Robinson, vocals; Blake Meister, piano accompaniment; Greg Tompkins, woodwind; Craig Alston, woodwind/brass; Fred Moss, guitar; Damien Noble, keyboard; and Dawnielle Butler, dance. Craig Alston is the Camp Director. The program is held on the campus of Loyola University Maryland, 4501 North Charles Street in Baltimore, Maryland. For more information, call 410-944-2909.

Cleve Brister and Ruth Kirk Family Heads Up the Celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Ruth Kirk Family Fun Festival

The "Ruth Kirk Family Fun Festival" is celebrating their 30th anniversary in Franklin Square Park, located in the 1300 block of W. Lexington Street in Baltimore on

Contemporary Arts Inc. Celebrates 27 Years of Service to the Community



Dr. Louise Johnson is celebrating her 87th birthday this week.

Saturday, August 10 and Sunday, August 11 from noon until 7 p.m. Before Ruth passed away, she asked Cleve Brister to continue her legacy in her community by keeping the festival going. He has, and in later years her children, Squeesi and Alin Kirk joined Brister to help support their mother's wishes. I got a call from Brister to inform me that this year, the live entertainment will include Crosswinds, The Spindles, Bobby Rucks and his band, and BADD, just to name a few. Yours Truly, "Rambling Rose" will be one of the Mistress of Ceremonies. Ladies and gentlemen, it is free, so come on down and bring your folding chairs; eat and drink your favorites from the vendors and shop for some goodies. I will see you there.

Well, my dear friends, I have to go now, but remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474, or you can email me at rosapryor@aol.com.

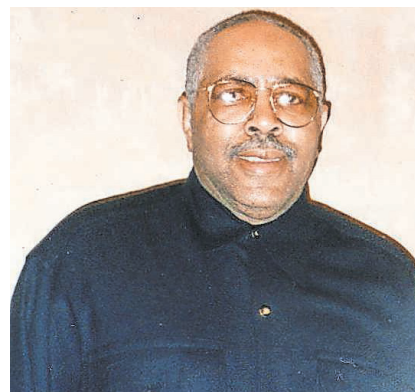
UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.



Iran "Duke" Butts, the son of one of Baltimore's iconic musician, Dr. Phil Butts, passed away on July 27, 2024. The public viewing will be held on Tuesday, August 13, 2024 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. The service will follow at 11 a.m. at Donaldson Funeral Home & Crematory, located 1411 Annapolis Road, in Odenton, Maryland. We send condolences to Dr. Butts and his family for their loss.



City View celebrates "Ms. Maybelle Day Her Way" produced by Tee-Shirt Brian on Monday, August 19, 2024 from 6-10 p.m. Free admission, free parking, free buffet, and great entertainment will be provided by Rickey Shackelford, J'Kar, Style, Palovations, Crosswind, and Shay. City View is located at 6700 Security Blvd.



Cleveland Brister is the Director and Coordinator of the Ruth Kirk Family Fun Festival which will be held on Saturday, August 10, 2024 and Sunday, August 11 from noon until 7 p.m. for both days.



Greg Hatza ORGAnazation will perform at Keystone Korner Baltimore, located at 1350 Lancaster Street in Baltimore, Maryland on Thursday, August 15, 2024. The show will feature Peter Fraize, Brian Kooken, Robert Shahid, and Greg Hatza.



ANNIVERSARY GALA

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28 September 2024

Tickets:

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Show Only - \$65.00 (7:00 pm)



More information
443-393-2109



Visit our website
lightoftruthcenter.org

School

Continued from page 8

Baltimore, Maryland
Saturday, August 24, 2024, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Mayor Brandon M. Scott's Back to School Kick-Off will be held at 100 Holliday Baltimore, Maryland 21202. Enjoy live entertainment, free food, haircuts and hair braiding services, fun activities, community resources and register to receive a free backpack. If your child is unable to attend the event with you, please email a message to childrenandfamilysuccess@baltimorecity.gov. Free haircuts and braiding services will be provided on a first come first serve basis. Register for services. See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mayor-brandon-scotts-back-to-school-kickoff-tickets-951582788737?aff=oddtcreator>.

Baltimore, Maryland
Saturday, August 24, 2024, 2 – 6 p.m.
Attend a **Back 2 School** event hosted by Abundantly Caring Hands & Friends. Enjoy free food, a moon bounce and vendors. Get school supplies. Barbers and braiders will be in attendance. Address: 1501 Gay Street,

Baltimore, Maryland. Call 443-424-7706, or email questions to abundantlycaringhands@gmail.com.

Columbia, Maryland
Saturday, August 24, 2024, 2 – 5 p.m.
A **Back to School Drive & Family Fun Day** hosted by Family Development & Samaritan Foundation will include free school supplies distribution, fun games and activities for kids, delicious snacks and refreshments, and opportunities to connect with neighbors and friends. Address: 9033 Red Branch Road Columbia, Maryland 21045. See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/back-to-school-drive-family-fun-day-tickets-935533585137?aff=ebdsbdestsearch>.

Columbia, Maryland
Wednesday, August 28, 2024, 6 p.m.
Columbia Baptist Fellowship will present a **Back 2 School Expo**. Receive new backpacks loaded with essential school supplies. Biz Kidz will raffle off 10 Dell laptops during the event. Visit <https://columbiabaptistfellowship.org> to request details. Address: 5885 Robert Oliver Place, Columbia, Maryland 21045.

Legal Notice

CITY OF BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS NOTICE OF LETTING

Sealed Bids or Proposals, in duplicate addressed to the Board of Estimates of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore and marked for **BALTIMORE CITY NO. RP24818 – Cab Calloway Legends Park** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M. **September 18, 2024**. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. Bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates in Room 215, City Hall at Noon. The proposed Contract Documents may be examined, without charge, at the Dept. of Rec & Parks at 2600 Madison Ave, Baltimore, Md. 21217 by appointment only on Wednesdays and Fridays, 8:30am – 4:00pm by emailing benitaj.randolph@baltimorecity.gov as of **August 9, 2024** and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **\$100.00**. **Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package**. All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be pre-qualified by the City of Baltimore Contractors Qualification Committee. Interested parties should call (410) 396-6883 or contact the Committee at 4 South Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. **If a bid is submitted by a joint venture (“JV”), then in that event, the document that established the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes.** The Prequalification Category required for bidding on this project is **G90132 – Park Rehabilitation**. Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$1,200,000.00 to \$1,500,000.00**. A “Pre-Bidding Information” session will be conducted **in-person at Department of Recreation and Parks, 2600 Madison Avenue at 10:30 A.M. on August 20, 2024**. Principal Items of work for this project are initial soil remediation, sodded lawn establishment, construction of walking circulation, concrete stage construction, resurfacing of playground, electrical conduit installation, fencing installation, and general landscaping. The MBE goal is 19% and WBE goal is 6%. **APPROVED: M. Celeste Amato, Clerk, Board of Estimates**

Legal Notice

CITY OF BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NOTICE OF LETTING

Sealed Bids or Proposal for the **TR-24015, URGENT NEED CONTRACT, CITY-WIDE** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204, City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until **SEPTEMBER 4, 2024, at 11:00 A.M.** to receive Bids. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. The bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates in Room 215, City Hall at Noon. As of **AUGUST 9, 2024**, the Contract Documents may be examined, without charge by contacting Brenda Simmons at brenda.simmons@baltimorecity.gov or (443) 865-4423 to arrange for a copy of the bid book labeled “**NOT FOR BIDDING PURPOSES**” to be emailed to you. Anyone who desires to purchase a bid book to be used for bidding purposes must do so in person and by contacting Brenda Simmons at the email address or phone number above. The non-refundable cost is **SEVENTY-FIVE DOLLARS AND NO CENTS (\$75.00)**. Department of Transportation 417 E. Fayette Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202 **made payable** to the Director of Finance. **Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package**. All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be pre-qualified by the City of Baltimore Contractors’ Qualification Committee. Interested parties should call (410) 396-6883 or contact the Committee at 4 S. Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. **If a bid is submitted by a joint venture (“JV”), then in that event, the document that established the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes.** The Prequalification Categories required for bidding on this project are **A02602 (Bituminous Paving) and D02620 (Curbs, Gutters & Sidewalk)**. Cost Qualification Range for this project will be from **\$3,000,000.00 to \$4,000,000.00**. A “Pre-Bidding Information” session will be conducted via Microsoft Teams on **AUGUST 23, 2024** at 10:00 a.m. hosted by the Department of Transportation. All Bidders must email your contact information to include your name, company name, phone number and email address to uttam.khadka@baltimorecity.gov to receive an invite to the Microsoft Team (video conference meeting). Principle Items of work for this project are: **Superpave Asphalt 12.SMM and 19.0MM and Various Mix 2,840 Tons; Curbs, Curbs & Gutters 4,000 LF; Sidewalk 24,400 SF**. The MBE Goal is **20%**; The WBE Goal is **11%**. **APPROVED: Celeste Amato, Board of Estimates**





WHERE



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