

The Annapolis Times

Vol. 24 No. 7 December 11 - 17, 2015

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication

Baltimore Globetrotter 'Too Tall' Gives Big Gift to Needy

By Stacy M. Brown

At 5 feet 2 inches, Baltimore native Jonte "Too Tall" Hall has the distinction of being the shortest player in the history of the Harlem Globetrotters. Despite his diminutive stature, teammates, friends and family affectionately call him "Too Tall," in part because of the big heart he displays on and off the court.

Hall and his Globetrotter teammates have formed a partnership with World Vision to encourage fans to give back this holiday season.

World Vision, an evangelical Christian humanitarian aid, development, and advocacy organization, has created a holiday gift catalog that features goats, chickens and more than 100 other humanitarian gifts that are used to help fight poverty.

"Giving a goat to a child or a family in underprivileged and impoverished countries can really make a difference," Hall said. "Being involved with World Vision, I'm excited because there are so many families who struggle with food and other needs and if we can get them a goat which can provide needed milk and food or other animals, it really helps."

Hall explained that just one goat can provide up to 16 cups of milk a day and families can produce cheese and yogurt.

Also, fertilizer from the goat can increase the amount of vegetables grown in a family's garden such as carrots, lettuce, and corn and any surplus milk, cheese and yogurt can be sold to buy essentials such as school supplies for children.

Additionally, a healthy goat can produce two offspring a year, which are often shared with neighbors and ultimately make a better life for an entire village.

"I'm from the McCulloh Projects in West Baltimore, so I've seen a lot and I understand what people are going through," Hall said. "Working with World Vision helps us to make a difference and I really appreciate doing it."

Since its launch in 1996, the World Vision Gift Catalog has steadily grown in popularity as a leading holiday gift-giving alternative for generous Americans wanting to make a difference in the world, organization officials said in a news release.

In 2014, more than 822,000 individuals and their families benefited from the items purchased in the catalog.

Continued on page 14



Harlem Globetrotter Jonte "Too Tall" Hall and his teammates formed a partnership with World Vision to encourage fans to give back this holiday season. World Vision, an Evangelical Christian humanitarian aid, development and advocacy organization, has created a holiday gift catalog that features goats, chickens and more than 100 other humanitarian gifts used to help fight poverty. Hall explained that just one goat can provide up to 16 cups of milk a day and families can produce cheese and yogurt. To order from the World Vision's Gift Catalog, visit: www.worldvisiongifts.org or call 855-WV-GIFTS. Courtesy Photo

Unified Voices of Johns Hopkins presents Ursula V. Battle's New Stage Play

Advance Ticket Sell-Out Prompts Addition of Friday Show

Baltimore— A quick sell-out of advance tickets has prompted the addition of a performance on Friday, December 18, 2015 of Ursula V. Battle's new stage play "My Big Phat Ghetto Fabule\$\$ Wedding."

The highly-anticipated production presented by Unified Voices of Johns Hopkins (UV) is centered around what happens when a reversal of fortune causes a couple's expensive wedding plans to turn into a beer bucket budget nightmare, setting the stage for the most unforgettable wedding you have ever attended. Through ministry, song, and riveting drama, the play illustrates that love truly conquers all.

My Big Phat Ghetto Wedding features a powerful cadre of some of Baltimore's most talented musicians, singers, actors, actresses, and other performers. The stage play follows the highly successful DisChord in The Choir, which was presented by UV in March 2015. Written by playwright Ursula Battle, and directed by Dr. Branch, the sold-out production drew rave reviews.

In addition to DisChord in The Choir, Dr. Branch has also directed multiple stage play productions including The Teachers' Lounge, A Raisin in The Sun, Dreamgirls, Spelling Bee, Steel Magnolias, Ain't Misbehavin' and Little Shop of Horrors. Dr. Branch also serves as the director of Health and Human Services of Baltimore County.

In addition to My Big Phat Ghetto FABULE\$\$ Wedding and DisChord in The Choir, Battle's stage play productions include The Teachers' Lounge, The Crown of Glory & The Agony of Deceit, and For Better Or For Worse.

Battle is a journalist, public relations



(Left) "My Big Phat Ghetto Fabule\$\$ Wedding" Director, Dr. Gregory Wm. Branch and Playwright, Ursula V. Battle have teamed up for another production. (Right) The Hawthornes (front left side) meet The Jacksons (right side) in this matrimonial stage play comedy. Dravon James (left) portrays "Catherine Elizabeth Hawthorne," while Tanya Brown-Iyesi plays the bride's mother "Evelyn Champagne Jackson."



professional and CEO of Battle Stage Plays. She is also a staff writer for The Baltimore Times.

Founded in 1993, UV is a gospel choir that consists of a diverse group of people with different personalities, lifestyles and backgrounds working together to bridge the gap between the medical institution and the historic East Baltimore community. Under the direction of Dr. Branch, who is executive director and co-founder, the choir has remained a goodwill ambassador singing songs of hope, health and healing through harmony at Hopkins.

Show times for "My Big Phat Ghetto FABULE\$\$ Wedding" are Friday, December 18, 2015 (7 p.m.) Saturday, December 19, 2015 (2 p.m. and 7 p.m.); and Sunday, December 20, 2015 (5 p.m.) in Turner Auditorium, located in the Johns Hopkins Hospital Ross Research Building, 720 Rutland Avenue in Baltimore.

Tickets are \$20 in advance. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door for \$35. Proceeds to benefit Unified Voices.

For additional information or tickets

call Unified Voices at 410-955-8888, or email: uvofhjmi@aol.com or visit www.unifiedvoices.com. You can also call Battle Stage Plays at 443-531-4787 or visit www.battlestageplays.com.



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IN THEATERS DECEMBER 18

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The Annapolis Times

(USPS 5840) is published every Friday by *The Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore*, 2513 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218. Subscriptions by mail \$60 per year. Standard bulk postage paid at Baltimore, MD 21233.

Postmaster send address changes to:

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'Employee first' mentality is good for business

By Dick Resch

Not many companies can boast returns of more than 4,000 percent over the past decade. But Netflix can. The company—or rather the talented people behind it—achieved these returns by revolutionizing the way we watch television and movies. That revolution would have been impossible without Netflix's unique work culture. Codified in a 124-slide manifesto that more than 11 million people have viewed, that culture gives employees huge amounts of freedom in exchange for high performance.

This manifesto is best described as a framework for "social capitalism." And it's required reading for any executive hoping to understand the benefits of a people-first mentality. This model is what the millennial generation is demanding. And research is beginning to show that employers that follow it are more profitable in both the short and long run.

This "cultural revolution" isn't confined to Silicon Valley. Companies from Trader Joe's to Harley-Davidson are shifting from classic capitalism's fixation on the bottom line to social capitalism's focus on people.

They have had to in order to persuade millennials—the best-educated, most technologically savvy, and most populous pool of workers in the United States—to join their companies.

According to organizational culture expert Gustavo Grodnitzky, millennials "work harder for cause than for cash." Indeed, a survey conducted by the Case Foundation discovered that 55 percent of millennials took a job with a company in part because of its cause-oriented activities.

Keeping employees happy, motivated, and engaged in their work is a financial imperative. Replacing an employee who leaves can cost as much as 150 percent of that employee's salary. At companies where workers are consistently rewarded for achievements, employees are seven times more likely to stay put.

The approach just requires some common sense—from compensating employees competitively to allowing them to use social media at work.

Consider the cases of Costco and Sam's Club. The former pays its employees about \$20 an hour and provides upwards of 90 percent of them with retirement plans. The latter reportedly pays around \$11 an hour and offers about two-thirds of its workers retirement plans.

At first glance, Sam's Club would seem to have the better grip on labor costs but according to Harvard Business Review, employee turnover costs Sam's Club more than twice as much as it does Costco. The extra tab for Sam's Club amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Sometimes the key is empowering employees to see the way their work can change the world. At my company, KI Furniture, our workers are turning out products made of recyclable and renewable materials—177 of which have been certified as sustainable.

Moreover, each and every chair we make financially empowers both our company and our employees to improve the lives of others through charitable efforts, whether they're company-sponsored or undertaken personally by our staff.

Employers' investments in their people pay off. Gallup reports that strong employee engagement can bump up a company's earnings per share by 147 percent. According to research from two Harvard Business School professors, companies with strong corporate cultures centered on people—employees, customers, and owners—have four times the revenues and 12 times the stock prices of companies that don't.

The newest generation of American workers is not content with just a job. They want a workplace that cares about them—and about the people beyond the four walls of the office. Instead of simply clicking through Netflix's culture manifesto, it's time for companies to one-up it.

Dick Resch is CEO of KI Furniture in Wisconsin.

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Community Affairs

Governor Larry Hogan, First Lady Host Holiday Open House at Government House

*All Marylanders Welcome for Public
Celebration*

Annapolis— Governor Larry Hogan and First Lady Yumi Hogan invite Marylanders and their families to join them for a Holiday Open House on Saturday, December 12, 2015 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Government House. The event is free of charge, open to the public and no reservations are required.

The First Family asks that guests consider bringing unwrapped toys that will be donated to those in need during this holiday season. On behalf of Toys for Tots, the Marine Corps Reserve will be collecting donations under a tent by the front gate.

The decorations for the open house will include Christmas trees provided by Lowe's Bayshore Nursery in Stevensville, MD, and refreshments will include assortments of holiday cookies, brownies and desert bars

prepared by Government House chefs. Hot Wassail will also be available for guests waiting in line outside of Government House and live music will be provided by Maryland high school groups, with a different performance each hour.

Holiday ornaments provided by the Foundation for the Preservation of Government House of Maryland will be sold inside, proceeds from which will help support and maintain the historical significance of Government House with repairs, remodeling and preservation.

The governor and first lady welcomed members of garden clubs from all 24 Maryland jurisdictions to the State House to personally deliver and decorate a Christmas tree in the rotunda. The governor and first lady presented a certificate of appreciation and Christmas ornaments to each club.

Menorahs have also been placed in the State House and Government House, the first candles of which were lit Sunday, December 6th at sundown in recognition of the beginning of Hanukkah.

The NAACP is broken, members must fix it

By James Clingman
NNPA News Wire Columnist

Having served the NAACP for ten years in several capacities, including branch president, and having donated money to its causes, I take no pleasure in writing this exposé. But it is our responsibility to clean up our own organizations. For example, President Cornell Brooks sends missives on a regular basis, asking for money of course, but also complaining about “voter suppression” by various states. Yet Brooks and Chairman of the Board, Roslyn Brock, accept voter suppression in their own ranks in various branches across the country. My grandmother would call that hypocrisy.

Accepting dysfunction within our organizations only diminishes our capacity to achieve meaningful economic progress. If all they do are 1000-mile marches, pledge allegiance to the Democrat Party, and beg for money, the perception of our organizations will continue to be that of dependence, irrelevance, and impotence. We will be

relegated to an afterthought—a non-threatening group of black folks who can be bought-off for a pittance.

The National NAACP has become a sham and a national disgrace to black people. President Brooks’ latest request states: “we need to raise at least \$300,000 in December to continue our fight for voting rights, justice, and educational and economic opportunity for all.” In addition to that request, there are the ongoing solicitations for \$30.00 memberships.

Ohio branch, Noel Williams, who was also a victim of national NAACP corruption, said, “Today’s NAACP represents only the ‘entitled’ few, comprising representatives of the national board, special contributors, and connected state conference presidents. Local members suffer victimization by the National NAACP personnel who rake in millions of dollars from corporate America but very little, if any, goes to the local units. Our branches are left to scrimp, beg, borrow or use any means necessary to

mony of its principals [National NAACP Staff] has put that doubt to rest.”

Williams continued: “The National NAACP has an internal cancer that was benign, but now the malignancy has spread to once healthy parts of the organization. Units in Ohio, Connecticut, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Florida, to name a few, have all been metastasized and now find themselves in the stream of suspended memberships, manipulated elections, character defamation, and a host of other non-judicious offenses.”

Money and perks are at the root of this cancerous corruption. Roslyn Brock has a milquetoast malleable president in Cornell Brooks, who is just what the doctor ordered for an egotistical self-centered chairman only interested in individual acclaim.

In September 2005, Black Enterprise Magazine interviewed then-NAACP President, Bruce Gordon. Speaking about New Orleans, Gordon said, “Most recently there are a lot of concerns about the way African Americans are treated in the French Quarter. I would say in addition to [marching], we should take our dollars elsewhere. That, to me, is a more significant message than a protest because it has an economic impact on the offenders.”

In March of 2007, in response to Gordon quitting the NAACP, The Washington Post wrote, “In choosing Gordon, the NAACP veered from its tradition of selecting ministers, politicians and civil rights figures. Gordon’s strong management skills as a former Verizon executive factored into why he was selected to run the 500,000-member NAACP.”

Gordon would not be micromanaged. Maybe that’s why he is no longer president of the NAACP. Members, the NAACP is broken; hold on to your money, and fix it!

“Money and perks are at the root of this cancerous corruption. Roslyn Brock has a milquetoast malleable president in Cornell Brooks, who is just what the doctor ordered for an egotistical self-centered chairman only interested in individual acclaim.”

Of those \$30.00 local membership fees, \$18.00 goes to the national office, as well as 25 percent of funds raised by local branches from their annual Freedom Fund Banquets. Here’s the rub: The Columbus Dispatch (September 2013) pointed out, “The NAACP’s most recent filings with the IRS showed the organization ended 2013 with a \$5.7 million operating deficit with \$36.7 million in expenditures and \$30 million in revenue.”

Yet, according to outgoing President Benjamin Jealous, the NAACP doubled its funds from \$23 million in 2007 to \$46 million in 2012. “In the last five years, we’ve had double-digit revenue growth, we’ve spent five years in the black,” Jealous told USA Today in September 2013. What happened to all that money?

Former President of the Columbus,

accomplish our work, many operating on \$2,000 or less per month.”

Williams continued, “The National NAACP is abusive toward its units. The Circuit Court Judge in the West Memphis, Arkansas said it best, ‘The intervener [National NAACP] seems to regard itself as a feudal liege, the member branches, in general its fiefdom.’ The National NAACP considers itself master and the local members their servants. The animus displayed by the National NAACP towards its units, and even a court of law, is evident in the Arkansas case in which the Judge wrote, before issuing a judgement against the National NAACP of \$120,000, ‘If the court had the least doubt about the utter disdain that its orders are held by the intervener [National NAACP], the testi-

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NAACP Awards Scholarships to 32 Students

By Stacy M. Brown

Ayana Williams already sounds like a civil rights leader. The Howard University School of Law student is fervent in her support of prison reform and putting an end to mass incarceration.

More than 800 hundred miles away in Selma, Alabama, Micah Watkins attends Concordia College and hopes to eventually transfer to the University of Illinois with engineering foremost on his mind.

Williams and Watkins both got a little closer to their dreams thanks to the NAACP's annual Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF) Scholarship program, which awarded Williams a three-year, \$30,000 scholarship and Watkins a four-year, \$8,000 grant.

"Because of the scholarship, I certainly feel less financial pressure," said Williams, who recently had the honor of being pinned by her sister in the traditional Howard Law School ceremony as part of her orientation, where she also met the law school's Dean, Danielle Holley-Walker. "Equally importantly, though, I feel much more empowered to pursue my dreams with this opportunity. This scholarship is essentially a pass to the world that I was aiming to be in for the rest of my legal career and I'm extremely grateful for it," she said.

Williams counts among the five individuals who received the LDF's newly revamped Earl Warren Scholarship which targets talented future law students pursuing a career in racial justice and civil rights.

The five students, who attend Columbia, Harvard, UCLA and Howard, also will have the opportunity to intern at LDF and attend its annual lawyers' training conference.

"I was stunned and in complete disbelief when Kevin Keenan [LDF's COO] told me I was one of the final ten," Williams said. "I started to imagine all of the opportunities that I could have



Ayanna Williams (left) being pinned by her sister in the traditional Howard Law School ceremony as part of her orientation recently. Williams is one of five students who received the NAACP's annual Legal Defense and Educational Fund's newly revamped Earl Warren Scholarship, which targets talented future law students pursuing a career in racial justice and civil rights. Courtesy Photo

working with LDF. He also told me that they received over two hundred applications. I have no doubt that they were all very qualified and so I was honored to learn that LDF thought I could offer something to the organization."

In total, 32 students received LDF scholarships while Watkins was among the 27 to receive the Herbert Lehman Scholarship, LDF's signature award for undergraduates, which provides \$2,000 per year for four years to exemplary students in need of support to complete their degrees.

"The scholarship has changed my life

in many ways," Watkins said. "I was going through financial problems in school and I was threatened with being

sent home because I was short \$1,000. I got a call from a lady that worked for the LDF scholarship who said that I had won the scholarship."

It was the closest thing to a miracle Watkins said he had received.

"Winning that scholarship has given me faith and it has helped me to hold my head up high, because I know I have LDF on my side," he said.

LDF granted awards to students attending such top schools like Brandeis University, Columbia College, Duke University, Florida A&M University, Harvard University, Morehouse College, Smith College, Spelman College and Temple University.

"Both the Earl Warren and Herbert Lehman scholarship programs are transformative tools that help LDF to fulfill its mission to achieve racial justice and expand pathways to opportunity for all people," said LDF President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill.

"The changes we've made to our scholarship programs this year will allow us to provide more substantial support to students in need, and to more directly support the development of the next generation of civil rights lawyers," she said. "This will allow LDF to more effectively support and nurture young leaders who are committed to the struggle for equal justice and inclusion and who exemplify the promise of democracy in this country."

Candidates Forum Baltimore City Election 2016 Hosted by Larry Young & Lou Fields

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Part I: City Council Districts — 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Part II: Mayoral Candidates — 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information, contact: Lou Fields
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Baltimore Gospel Artist in Special Performance

By Stacy M. Brown

Nat Rice has a new album that he says contains music influenced solely by the word of God with an emphasis on understandable lyrics to lift up and motivate.

The Baltimore native plans to perform his "Don't Cry For Me," CD when he appears at Future Care Homewood on North Charles Street for a 2 p.m. show on Friday, December 18, 2015.

"The audience can expect a professional Gospel music performance of all original songs, including some original Christmas songs," said Rice, who began his music career by traveling abroad and managing his younger brother who was part of the famed Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes.

The urban gospel singer whose latest hits include "My God is Real," and "Long time ago the Price was Paid," never considered his own creative side while touring with his brother but he says when the traveling stopped and he returned to Baltimore, he began to write what he called positive and educational poems for the young.

Leaving the road, writing and then performing in local schools to educate children about the dangers of drug use also helped Rice to overcome some personal demons.

Overcoming substance abuse has been among his biggest accomplishments, which Rice says is a testa-



Nat Rice
Courtesy Photo

ment to his love for gospel and his faith in God.

"When God delivered me from abusing drugs over 30 years ago, it was without having to go to any program and that's when my songwriting and singing began. That was the key for me and up until that point I had never written or sang a song in my life," Rice said.

After quitting drugs, Rice started a gospel music ministry and he began performing at self-esteem and anti-bullying musical concerts.

"I consider and attribute these accomplishments to my faith in God," Rice said.

His upcoming show is an exclusive performance for residents and their families at Future Care Homewood, located just south of the Johns Hopkins Homewood campus where residents have access to a wide variety of clinical services and programs that are designed to support them as they heal, recover and return to independence, as well as those who require long-term skilled nursing care and support.

Rice says that regardless of where he performs or who is in the audience in the Baltimore area, it's special because he usually gets to sing in front of friends and family.

While Future Care Homewood isn't a venue like the Hippodrome or Rams Head Live, Rice says it's all part of giving back, looking forward and not peering in the rearview mirror.

"The word of God tells us to take no worry for tomorrow because it's not promised," he said. "So, I just count my blessings for this day."

For more information about Nat Rice and his music and performances, visit:
www.tatemusicgroup.com/epk/artist/20063.

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Justin Tucker performs at Catholic Charities Christmas Festival

By Turrón Davenport

Baltimore Ravens kicker Justin Tucker has come through in the clutch for his team many times and this week he came through for the community. As a practicing Roman Catholic, his faith is a very important factor in his life.

Not many NFL players can sing opera style music and do it well enough to be asked to perform. Tucker sang opera in a Royal Farms commercial that aired earlier this year. He can sing in seven different languages including: English, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Latin and Russian.

Tucker developed his ability to sing when he majored in recording technology at the University of Texas. While there, he studied under Professor Nikita Storojev, a renowned opera singer. His teammates get a kick out of his rare ability and have asked him to sing for them during training camp.

He was required to take voice lessons for his degree and soon after, Tucker discovered it was something he loved to do and was good at. What started as a requirement for his degree blossomed into a form of therapy for Tucker.

“When I sing, everybody just disappears for the moment,” Tucker said. “Everyone looks for that release, that outlet. It’s what I like to do.”

The Ravens kicker can add another performance feather to his cap. Tucker performed at the Catholic Charities Christmas Festival and Concert on Thursday, December 10, 2015 at the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore. Tucker joined the Concert Artists of Baltimore and soloist Lara Bruckmann



Baltimore Ravens kicker Justin Tucker jokes around after practice during training camp at the Under Armour Performance Center in Owings Mills, Maryland.

Photo by Turrón Davenport

on the concert program of what has become a mainstay of the holiday season for more than 20 years.

Funds raised from the Christmas Festival each year benefits a program of Catholic Charities. In 2015 the proceeds will support Gallagher Services, a program for adults with intellectual disabilities.

“Each year, the Christmas Festival offers an evening of beautiful music during the Christmas season, and also helps Catholic Charities raise money to provide care and critical services to our brothers and sisters in need throughout Maryland,” said Bill McCarthy, execu-

tive director Catholic Charities. “We are especially thrilled and grateful to have Justin Tucker as guest performer this year, lending both his amazing talent as a singer and his support for the work of Catholic Charities.”

Catholic Charities is Maryland’s largest private provider of human services, offering assistance to children and families; people living in poverty; individuals with intellectual disabilities; immigrants and seniors without regard to religion; race or other circumstances.

According to their website: “Catholic Charities is inspired by the Gospel mandates to love, serve and teach, the more than 80 programs of Catholic Charities improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of Marylanders each year. Catholic Charities continues a legacy of charity and compassion that began with the establishment of the Catholic Church in Baltimore in 1789.”

For more information about Catholic Charities, visit: www.catholiccharities-md.org.

Watch Night Service

The S.E.E.D. Church located at 400 East 31st Street in Baltimore will hosts a Watch Night Service starting at 10 p.m. on December 31, 2015—New Year’s Eve. Worship service begins at 10 a.m. every Sunday plus an additional early worship service at 8 a.m. the second Sunday of every month. Join us on January 16, 2016 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. for a life-changing workshop, “Change Your Thinking to Change Your Life.” Fee: \$30 per person; a light lunch will be served.

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WRITTEN BY PAULA PELL DIRECTED BY JASON MOORE
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Michael Cryor Tirelessly Working for Baltimore

By Stacy M. Brown

When Michael Cryor says there is still a lot of work to be done, it's prudent that one consider the source.

The ever-busy Cryor who earlier this year was named as the chair of OneBaltimore, usually works tirelessly day and night, seeing a mission to perfection or at least until nothing more can be accomplished.

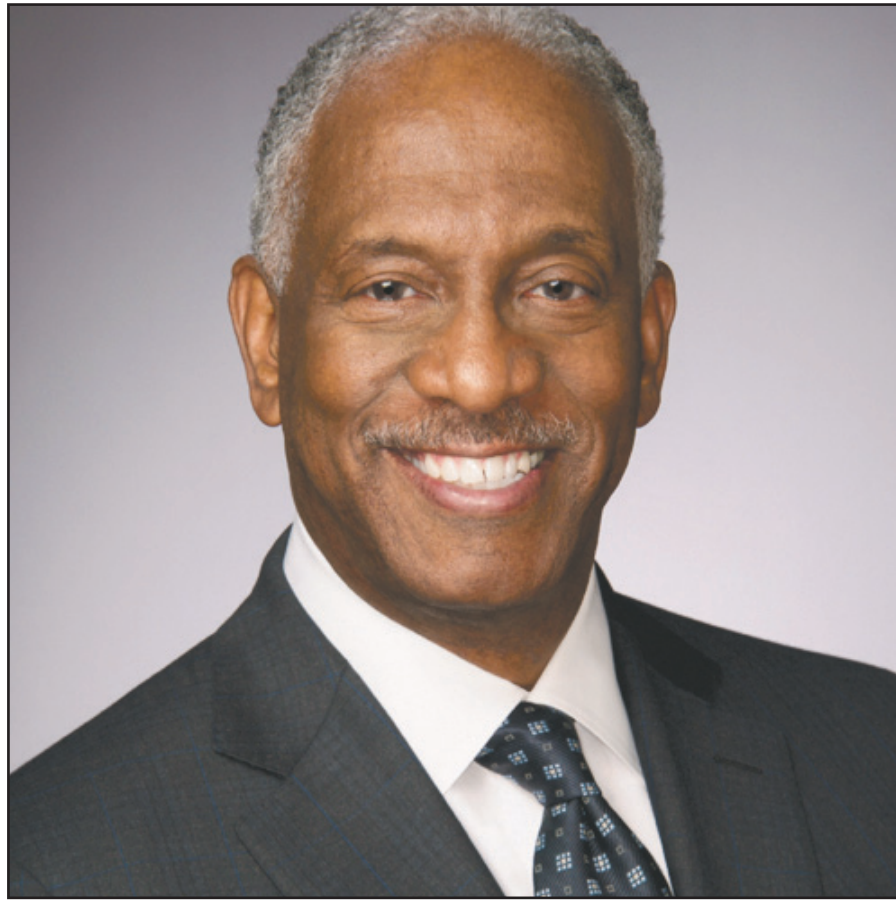
"I'd rather fail trying than not to try," said Cryor, who earned a Bachelor's Degree in Experimental Psychology from Morgan State University and a Master's Degree in Developmental Psychology from Montclair State University. "The people in Baltimore are enormously capable of doing extraordinary things. If we could create a better set of circumstances to cause people to be trained in living wage jobs, that would be good place to start."

In the wake of the unrest earlier this year sparked by the death of Freddie Gray, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake established OneBaltimore, a comprehensive and collaborative public and private initiative to support efforts to rebuild communities and neighborhoods. She tapped Cryor to lead the initiative and he hasn't stopped working.

"We have taken nine meetings a day," Cryor said. "During what I call Phase I of OneBaltimore, we conducted over 530 meetings and gatherings since May. The pace is not sustainable but we did it because we didn't want anyone in the community to feel their requests were unimportant and our community has often felt like they've been left out of the equation."

"I haven't worked this hard in jobs that I get paid for," Cryor added.

Those paid jobs include being president



Michael Cryor
Courtesy Photo

of the consultant firm, The Cryor Group, LLC, where the Baltimore native has earned respect for his ability to facilitate large complex agreements in both the public and private sectors with clients like Exelon Corporation, Northrop Grumman, Kaiser Permanente, the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and the Baltimore City School System.

Cryor has also worked as psychologist and director of the Department of Consultation and Education at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New

York; an associate dean at Morgan State University and in various executive positions in both chambers of the United State Congress.

In 2007, he was elected Chair of the Maryland Democratic Party and was instrumental in the historic election of President Barack Obama.

Now, OneBaltimore has encouraged the City Council to consider a bill that would fund more Recreation-Tech centers to serve as after school space for children that would provide them with

the necessary technology they may not have at home to complete their homework.

"Children need greater access to technology, and they need to be exposed early on," Cryor said.

Reportedly, in the aftermath of the riots, a lack of recreation centers was cited as one of the reasons that so many young people were involved in the unrest.

Cryor says his group will focus on workforce development because it is essential to the long-term issues in Baltimore.


"Getting your bills paid is one thing, but working in a job and the dignity that comes with that is a whole other thing," Cryor said.

Immediately upon his appointment, Cryor sought local employers who were willing to provide summer jobs to 3,000 city youth. OneBaltimore generated nearly \$3.5 million to go along with those 3,000 summer job placements, according to Cryor.

Such action syncs with the broader goal of the OneBaltimore initiative, which is to address systemic problems, such as lack of employment and educational opportunities, in poor neighborhoods, he said.

"There is a moment now in Baltimore where people in all of our communities are joining together and are insisting on a dramatic and nontrivial change in the direction of our city," Cryor said, adding that he is hoping to soon make an announcement about specific programs in job training, neighborhood investment and education that could spark a renaissance in Baltimore. "We have the eyes and ears of the federal government and the White House."

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Black-led start up capitalizes on natural gas bonanza

By Jared Anderson
Urban News Service

A black entrepreneur's "power move" in the energy sector could create hundreds of jobs in one of the poorest communities in Texas.

Houston-based businessman Phillip Franshaw is building Annova LNG, a multi-billion-dollar liquefied natural gas export facility on the Brownsville Ship Channel along the Texas Gulf Coast. If successful, the project could support more than 650 construction-related jobs and another 165 permanent jobs once completed, at an average salary of \$70,000 a year or more.

Franshaw is gambling on a process called "liquefaction." It supercools and converts natural gas into a liquid and makes it easier to transport via tanker to utilities and other major consumers in Asia and Europe. This technology requires the construction of an approximately \$3 billion plant, a massive undertaking on many levels.

Annova LNG was born as a two-man shop, when president and founder David Chung asked Franshaw to help finance the facility. Chung coined "Annova," a twist on the word "innovate."

The duo took the project to market and soon began collaborating with Exelon Corporation, a major U.S. utility and operator of America's largest fleet of nuclear power stations. Exelon purchased a controlling interest in Annova in July 2014 and maintained Franshaw's management team.

"Having a quality sponsor of that magnitude has given us the leverage to aggressively approach the market and execute through the development phase of the project in a most effective way," Franshaw said.

Yet, Annova faces stiff competition. At least 50 companies have applied for federal permits to export domestically produced liquefied natural gas. Two other plants are headed for the Brownsville Ship Channel.

Annova distinguishes itself from these other ventures, however, by building a facility that can offer buyers more flexibility, Franshaw said. This approach decreases construction costs, limits risk, and can be scaled up if demand eventually grows.



Phillip Franshaw
Courtesy Photo/Urban News Service

"We think the future of the market will be small-scale facilities, and that's how we differentiate ourselves," he said.

Once running, Annova could yield state and local tax revenue exceeding \$60 million annually. More than half of those funds would support local governments in Cameron County, the southernmost in Texas. Those \$30 million could pay the starting wages for about 698 teachers, 850 cops, or 1,029 firefighters every year, according to SalaryGenius.com.

Franshaw's enthusiasm and determination are evident when he speaks about the project and describes the values that have helped him succeed in business.

"We all face a range of different challenges throughout our careers," the Georgetown University graduate

said. "I think, fundamentally, one of the biggest challenges we face is credibility. Who are you? People want to know that."

"Often kids go to school and get a great education thinking that's enough for them to sit in the captain's chair and start making decisions," Franshaw said. "But everyone's expected to pay their dues and learn the industry while developing a voice as well as credibility. It's on that basis that people begin to trust you. Your track record is critical. It's important that you buckle in, plan to pay your dues and grow."

Franshaw travels extensively, to recruit customers. In fact, he spoke with Urban News Service right after a business trip to Asia, where he huddled with potential buyers.

"Anyone who knows me knows that when I commit to a project, I'm all in," said Franshaw, who also attributes his success to the team as a whole. "My outside interests largely rest with my family. I have three children and I just hope that I'm working at a pace, and with the appropriate level of integrity to serve as an example of the quality of men that I would like them to grow to become."

He and his wife, Maria, affectionately call their sons "Trouble 1," "Trouble 2" and "Chaos." They study, respectively, at Rice University; University of Texas; and a Houston high school. Chaos aspires to Annapolis.

"I'm currently traveling approximately 75 percent of the time," Franshaw said. "I'm out at least three weeks of every month, and my wife really anchors our family. Without her, I couldn't do what I do."

Annova plans to have its first stage operational by 2020. One key hurdle is obtaining approvals from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. After reviewing Annova's initial 1,670-page application, the commission will spend at least one year reviewing a more detailed filing before it authorizes construction.

While liquefied natural gas sales have climbed recently, the market five years from now is expected to be quite different. "There currently appears to be a glut of LNG in the market, and we think that while there is an oversupply now, much of that will be absorbed by 2020," Franshaw said.

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Super Heroes land in Baltimore for Marvel Universe LIVE!

By Andrea Blackstone

Julie Matolo is a dedicated performer who found her niche, thrilling comic book and movie fans of all ages at venues around the United States and Canada seeking action-packed entertainment.

In April of 2015, Matolo began to help audiences escape from the daily grind, while taking them on an exhilarating journey performing in Marvel Universe LIVE!—Feld Entertainment's newest and largest show.

Along with an assortment of cast members who transform into favorite Marvel Super Heroes such as Spider-Man; Iron Man; Hulk; Thor; Captain America; and Wolverine; Matolo is eager to wow audiences December 10-13, 2015 at the Royal Farms Arena in Baltimore. Matolo currently portrays Marvel character, agent Maria Hill in the show that includes special effects, stunts, motorcycles and martial arts and the most Marvel characters ever assembled in one production.

"All of the characters are true to Marvel as far as their voices, personality, costumes and colors but the storyline is an original storyline for the live show and so it's not repeating any movie that you've already seen. It's its own two-hour story," Matolo said.

The family-friendly adventure is framed by a battle over a Cosmic Cube. Since this source of ultimate power is one of the most feared and coveted treasures in the Marvel Universe, The Mighty Thor shattered it into pieces to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. Super Heroes who make appearances in Marvel Universe LIVE! track the Cosmic Cube, while encountering Loki; Green Goblin; Doctor Octopus; Red Skull; and Electro, as well as additional adversaries who team up on a quest for the same fragments, while seeking to achieve world domination.

Matolo's one-of-a-kind performance job materialized after she auditioned for Disney Live! as a dancer for three or four years in Chicago. The Feld Entertainment casting crew later recommended that Matolo audition for Marvel Universe LIVE! which strongly aligns



Marvel fans of all ages can see the most Marvel characters ever assembled in one production in Marvel Universe LIVE! at Royal Farms Arena in Baltimore, December 10 - 13, 2015. Marvel fans will enjoy watching their favorite Marvel Super Heroes like Spider-Man, Iron Man, Hulk, Wolverine and many more in a comic extravaganza that brings both villains and heroes to life. The action-packed extravaganza full of adventure is the largest and newest show ever produced by Feld Entertainment, the leader in producing live touring family entertainment experiences.

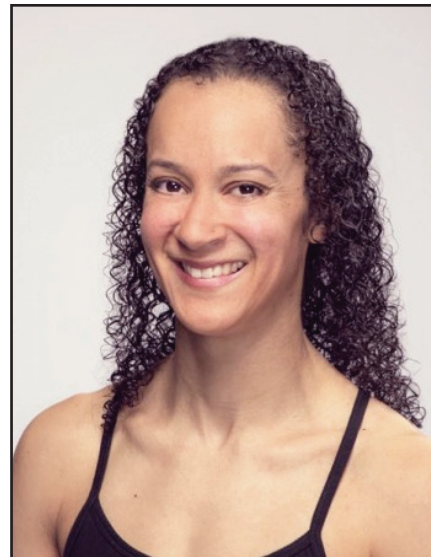
Courtesy Photo

with her tumbling, dance and acting talents.

"I love traveling and performing and meeting people. Every attempt to figure out what career choice I was going to make has prepared me for this," Matolo said happily.

Matolo earned an athletic scholarship for gymnastics from the University of Iowa. She graduated with a B.A. in Journalism and a B. S. in Health Sciences and worked in the journalism and health sciences fields, prior to working as a dancer and children's instructor of gymnastics, dance and acting.

For Matolo, dancing became a hobby in her twenties, before she realized that it was possible to have career in entertainment and the arts. While in Chicago, Matolo worked with a funky jazz company called the Joel Hall dancers. As a freelance dancer, she also opened as a principal dancer for Babyface, Musiq Soulchild, Teena Marie and Toni Braxton. During a period of transition,



Julie Matolo currently portrays Marvel character, agent Maria Hill in Marvel Universe Live!

Matolo worked full-time during the day and danced full-time at night, before deciding to exclusively pursue an entertainment career.

"I have parents who are immigrants to this country [from Africa and Northern Europe] and the dream and the pressure to get a job where you have stability is the major thing—to be okay in the U.S. I understand that belief and there is just a big transition for me figuring out how I could be an artist and performer, and at the same time survive as far as my adult responsibilities, my financial responsibilities and just balancing it all at the same time," Matolo said.

A rewarding part of her work in Marvel Universe LIVE! is observing children who attend the show light up with wonderment.

"We have to know that the next generation is going to have a growing imagination also, so we can keep telling stories to everyone!" Matolo said.

Tickets for Marvel Universe LIVE! are available from Ticketmaster outlets: www.ticketmaster.com or by phone at 1-800-745-3000.

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Harlem Globetrotters Celebrate 90 Amazing Years!

The 2016 World Tour stops in Baltimore on Saturday, December 26, 2015

Phoenix— Celebrating 90 years of providing smiles, sportsmanship and service to millions of people worldwide, the world famous Harlem Globetrotters will bring their unrivaled family show to Royal Farms Arena in Baltimore on Saturday, December 26, 2015 at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m., during the team's 90th Anniversary World Tour.

Known worldwide as the Ambassadors of Goodwill™, the Globetrotters also announced that they are giving back even more during their 90th year with The Great Assist program. Stars of the team will leave a mark in communities across North America with acts of goodwill during the tour that is set to play over 330 games in 260 cities.

Fans are encouraged to visit GreatAssist.com to nominate a worthwhile cause or a deserving family in need of a smile, and the Globetrotters will help as many fans as possible throughout the tour. In addition to fan requests, the team is planning to bring their bullying prevention program to over 400 schools and community centers, talk to youth about character education and physical fitness, visit children's hospitals and lend a hand to those in need.

On the court, the Globetrotters' 90-year celebration will feature some of the greatest athletes and entertainers on the planet. With a star-studded roster featuring Big Easy Lofton; Ant Atkinson; Hi-Lite Bruton; Thunder Law; Bull Bullard and Cheese Chisholm; plus female stars TNT Maddox and Sweet J Ekworomadu, the Globetrotters' one-of-a-kind show is unrivaled in the world of family entertainment. Every game will showcase incredible ball handling wizardry, rim-rattling dunks, trick shots, hilarious comedy and unequaled fan interaction. After the game, Globetrotter



In celebration of the Harlem Globetrotters 90th Anniversary, the team announced "The Great Assist" program where players will leave a mark in communities with acts of goodwill during the 2016 World Tour. (Above) Players "Flight Time" Lang (left) and "Hi-Lite" Bruton (right) skip with a young fan on the basketball court. Courtesy Photo/The Harlem Globetrotters

stars will sign autographs and take photos with fans.

Tickets start at \$18.00 and are now available at harlemglobetrotters.com, ticketmaster.com, the Royal Farms Arena box office, or by phone at 800-745-3000. Information on group and scout tickets can also be found at harlemglobetrotters.com.

As part of the launch of The Great Assist, the Globetrotters performed before fans in Times Square in New York City on October 6, 2015 and named TV personality Robin Roberts as just the 10th Honorary Harlem Globetrotter in history. Roberts joins the likes of Henry Kissinger, Nelson Mandela and Pope Francis, who was honored at the Vatican this past May. The Honorary Harlem Globetrotter accolade recognizes an individual of extraordinary character and achievement who has made an ever-

lasting mark on the world. Roberts has provided inspiration for millions, as she has publicly battled life-threatening health issues.

The Harlem Globetrotters® are a worldwide icon, synonymous with one-of-a-kind family entertainment and great basketball skills. Throughout their history, the Original Harlem Globetrotters have showcased their iconic talents in 122 countries and territories on six continents, often breaking down cultural and societal barriers while providing fans with their first-ever basketball experience. Proud inductees of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, the Globetrotters have entertained hundreds of millions of fans— among them popes, kings, queens and presidents— over nine thrilling decades.

For the latest news and information about the Harlem Globetrotters, and to purchase tickets and team merchandise, visit the Globetrotters' official website: www.harlemglobetrotters.com.

Baltimore Globetrotter "Too Tall" Gives Big Gift to Needy

Continued from page 1

This year, more than 122,000 donors gave more than 297,000 items from the Gift Catalog helping more than 650,000 people around the world.

"It's worth it to do something about it," said Hall, who was signed by perennial Globetrotters' foil, the Washington Generals, before becoming one of only two players in 20 years to make the transition from Generals to Globetrotters.

Hall was introduced to basketball when he was nine by his uncle Ernest Hall, who played professionally overseas and in minor leagues in the United States. He played recreation ball with basketball superstar and Baltimore native Carmelo Anthony and credits his mother as being his role model.

"This is all still a dream. My family is so proud of me and I'm the shortest Globetrotter in history," Hall said. "I always wanted to play pro basketball and this feels like my NBA."

To order from World Vision's Gift Catalog, visit: www.worldvisiongifts.org or call 855-WV-GIFTS.



*Harlem Globetrotter Jonte "Too Tall" Hall
Courtesy Photo/The Harlem Globetrotters*

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Experience Corps Program Boosts Student Scores



Launched in Baltimore 18 years ago, the AARP's Experience Corps program is an innovative, high-impact and evidence-based program that utilizes the time, skills and experience of adults 50 and older not only to benefit their own health and well being but to improve educational outcomes for elementary school-age children. AARP Foundation Experience Corps volunteer Marvin Murphy (left) and Delores Bell (right) with students at a local elementary school. Courtesy Photos

By Stacy M. Brown

Elementary school students tutored by volunteers over 50 years of age in an after school literacy program made faster than expected gains according to a standardized assessment tool, the local AARP Foundation announced.

Students were tested at the beginning and the end of the program with those demonstrating the greatest need assigned to small groups that met each week with an AARP Foundation Experience Corps volunteer to improve their reading skills and help them read at the appropriate grade level.

After the three-and-a-half month program, children in the small groups made almost five months of progress towards grade level while students in larger homework assistance groups made more than six months of progress, test results show.

Officials directly related the success to AARP Experience Corps, an evidence-based and award-winning AARP Foun-

ation literacy program that improves the literacy rates of children in kindergarten through third grade.

"Baltimore is the largest of the 24 Experience Corps programs nationwide and one of the keys to our success in Baltimore is that many of our volunteer members live in or around the neighborhoods where they serve," said Bill Romani, the branch director of the AARP Foundation's Experience Corps in Baltimore.

"That gives them an invaluable perspective on where the children are coming from and the circumstances many are facing and thus, a potentially deeper bond with the child. Working in their own neighborhoods also gives or volunteers a greater sense of commitment and ownership of their work," Romani said. "They aren't just volunteering, but volunteering to improve their neighborhood. That's a compelling connection."

Launched in Baltimore 18 years ago, the Experience Corps program counts

as an innovative, high-impact and evidence-based program that utilizes the time, skills and experience of adults 50 and older not only to benefit their own health and well being but also to improve educational outcomes for elementary school-age children.

The program provides tutoring and mentoring and each of the trained AARP Foundation Experience Corps volunteers commit five to 15 hours per week during the year and a team of six to 20 adults are placed in local schools working at the direction of teachers to support students.

Sixty-one students who participated in the after school program were enrolled in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's "OrchKids" Program, year-round music program designed to create social change and nurture promising futures for youth in Baltimore City neighborhoods through academic support and music education.

"Quality out of school tutoring is a key ingredient to making sure children are

reading at grade level," Romani said "These findings suggest that Experience Corps' successful in-class model may also translate into after school programs, providing another opportunity for our volunteers to further impact the literacy development of the children we serve."

The initial positive results have provided a solid foundation to build on and improve the quality of the program and the number of children it serves, Romani said, noting also that between the first and second year of the after school program, the number of students served jumped by 50 percent.

"We view the Experience Corps program as a win-win for our volunteer members and students," Romani said.

Published reports through the Johns Hopkins Center for Aging and Health indicate that while the program improves school climate and academic achievement, there is also an improvement in the physical, social and mental health of the older adult volunteer members.

"I can assure you, public service is a stimulating, proud and lively enterprise. It is not just a way of life, it is a way to live fully." —Lee H. Hamilton

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Three time Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter, Jill Scott receives first-ever Lady of Soul Award



Los Angeles, Ca.— Three time Grammy award-winning singer-songwriter, Jill Scott was awarded the first ever Lady of Soul Award on Sunday, November 29, 2015 at the Soul Train Awards. The award honors Scott's 15 years in the music industry and the impact she has had on the industry and fans worldwide.

"The Lady of Soul honor means a lot," Scott told Billboard. "It's the culmination of 15 years of giving my heart and energy to an audience that appreciates it.

Rolling Stone praised "Woman," proclaiming that Scott "has never sounded as authoritative as she does on her fifth album" and Us Weekly proclaimed it as "spirit-enriching" music.

Scott has described the sound of her recent album as "classic Philly soul meets country rhythm served with captivated storytelling."

Follow Jill Scott on Twitter and Instagram @MissJillScott, and like her on Facebook.com/MissJillScott.

Junior League of Annapolis, Inc. hosts new member open house

Annapolis— Junior League of Annapolis, Inc. (JLA) invites women in the community who are interested in learning more about joining the Junior League to attend our New Member Open House on January 5, 2016 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Carpaccio's Restaurant.

All women over the age of 21 years, living in Anne Arundel County and its vicinity, are invited to attend the New Member Open House and apply for membership to the organization's spring 2016 provisional training class.

The New Member Open House offers prospective members the opportunity to

learn about the mission and activities of the Junior League, as well as the chance to speak with current members about their volunteer and social experiences within the organization.

Junior League of Annapolis, Inc. is a network of 340 women dedicated to supporting women and children in Anne Arundel County and driven to develop ourselves into effective community volunteers and leaders" says Craig Friedrich, President. The provisional class of 30 collected and organized 400 books for Books for Babies at Anne Arundel Medical Center. This is only one of the community projects the provisional members will be involved with before they become active members of JLA.

For full details on our Open House or to register, please contact Anne Zalubowski at provisional@jlannapolis.org. You may also contact the Junior League of Annapolis Inc. at 410-224-8984 or visit www.jlannapolis.org.

Give the Gift of Time or Service this Holiday Season

Holiday Volunteer Guide Available

Annapolis— The Anne Arundel County Volunteer Center now has a Holiday Volunteer Guide listing volunteer opportunities through December 2015!

Volunteering is a way to support your favorite cause, even when you are short of cash. Gifts of time and in-kind donations can be pivotal at this time of year for the charities listed in the Holiday Volunteer Guide.

You can receive a FREE copy of the Holiday Volunteer Guide by stopping by the Volunteer Center, located at 2666 Riva Road, Suite 130, Annapolis, MD 21401 or via e-mail by sending a request to ask.aacvc@outlook.com. This Holiday Volunteer Guide is also posted on the Volunteer Center's Website: www.aacvc.org/Resources and can be downloaded for FREE.

Why should you volunteer? To help other people, make new friends, brighten the holidays for the homeless, volunteer with your family, learn about our community, earn community service credit, and most important - HAVE FUN!

For more information, contact the Volunteer Center at 410-897-9207 or email: ask.aacvc@outlook.com or visit the website: www.aacvc.org.



Reginald Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture Needs Volunteers

The museum is dedicated to serving the community by providing multifaceted support through meaningful interactions with history and material culture of Maryland African Americans. Volunteers are needed to assist at the Information Desk, as Docents, for Special Events, and more. There are ongoing opportunities on Saturdays and Sundays for assistance with greeting guests and patrons at the main entrance and to work with kid's activities during public hours. The minimum age for volunteers is 14. Volunteering is open to adults, seniors, college, and high school students. Service-learning credit hours can be earned by high school students. We are accepting applications for the following volunteer positions: Special Event Volunteer, Administrative Assistant, Curatorial Assistant, and Visitor Services. Volunteer orientations are held at 7:00 pm on the last Monday of each month. Contact Erica Holmes at 443-263-1800 or holmes@maamc.org; web site: www.AfricanAmericanCulture.org.

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