



THE BALTIMORE TIMES

Vol. 38 No. 48

September 20 - 26, 2024

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication

UMBC Hosts, Empowers 25 Young African Leaders from 21 Sub-Saharan African Countries



University of Maryland, Baltimore County's Center for Global Engagement hosted 25 Mandela Washington Fellows from 21 Sub-Saharan African countries. UMBC's 2024 cohort fellows pose together for a photo on UMBC's campus under a Welcome YALI (Young African Leaders Initiative) sign on the way to their farewell celebration on July 26, 2024. The fellows were selected by IREX, which is a global development & education organization. Over 56,000 people apply every year and only 700 are accepted across 28 institutions for the extremely competitive U.S. Department of State program that empowers leaders. (See article on page 8)

Photo: UMBC Mandela Washington Fellows, Staff, and Friends

Biden-Harris Administration Announced Additional \$1.3 Billion Investment in HBCUs

By **Andrea Blackstone**

HBCU Week celebrates the impactful legacy of HBCUs. The National HBCU Week Conference was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from September 15-19, 2024.

On September 16, 2024, the Biden-Harris Administration announced more federal investments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) which total \$1.3 billion. These additional investments, combined with the previously announced \$16 billion in total federal investments in HBCUs, indicate that the Biden-Harris Administration set another record of more than \$17 billion in federal investments in HBCUs from 2021 through the present, according to information released by the White House.

“Over the last three years, the Biden-Harris administration has made an unprecedented investment in our nation’s HBCUs, and this time, more than \$16 billion has been allocated to HBCUs. For clarity, that is more than any other administration in the history of our nation,” said Dr. Dietra Trent, Executive Director of the White House Initiative on HBCUs during a press call.

She further explained that the money has been used for numerous things, including keeping students enrolled during COVID-19, infrastructure updates, and research and development funding. Specifically, Dr. Trent pointed out that The Department of Education announced nearly \$15 million in new grants under the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence Program to increase and retain the next generation of teachers who attend HBCUs, and who serve at the nation’s most

underserved elementary and secondary schools.

“These new awards include four HBCU grantees across four states (Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Texas), receiving a total of \$1.6 million in funding. This brings the total investment in Hawkins to \$38 million under the Biden-Harris administration, which is the first administration to secure funding for the Hawkins program,” according to information provided by the White House.

“It is notable to say that we are the first administration to fund the Hawkins grant awards, which further underscores the dedication this administration has to diversity, equity, and inclusion,” Dr. Trent added.

Additionally, nearly \$2.3 million in new grant awards was announced by The Department of Education for the Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program. The purpose of it is to strengthen science and engineering education programs and reduce barriers to STEM career entry for students of color and women. HBCU grantees in Georgia, Mississippi, and North Carolina will reportedly receive over \$1 million in funding.

Dr. Tony Allen, Chair of the President’s Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and the president of Delaware State University, stated that The United Negro College Fund continues to report that the single greatest indicator for low-resource African American entering the American middle class is their attendance at historically Black college and universities.

“I think you all know we only

represent 3% of all colleges and universities in the country, but we’re still producing nearly 20% of all Black graduates; and on every indicator, whether it be 50% of all Black teachers having started at an HBCU; 70% of all Black lawyers and judges started at an HBCU; over 80% of all Black physicians started at an HBCU; 40% of all STEM professionals of color started at an HBCU. We significantly punch above our weight,” Dr. Allen added.

Other noted additional federal investments in HBCUs that were announced included \$188 million in competitive grants to HBCUs through the Department of Education, including grants that will support R&D capacity building, and \$1.1 billion in funding to support students at HBCUs directly through need-based grants and other federal programs, that include Pell Grants.

Many more announcements were made, including The Department of Transportation’s announcement that Prairie View A&M University in Texas will be the first-ever HBCU to lead a University Transportation Center.

President Joe Biden took the stage at the National HBCU Week Conference to provide remarks about his Administration’s support of HBCU’s.

“Together, Kamala and I know that



Dr. Dietra Trent,
*Executive Director of the
White House Initiative on HBCUs*

Photo courtesy of The White House

an education makes a person free. HBCU’s education makes you fearless as well. It matters. I mean it. More than 180 years born under the shadow of slavery and Jim Crow, HBCUs have instilled a sense of purpose and freedom; a commitment to make a difference for all their students to lift up, not just yourselves, but others along the way. Institutions grounded in the belief that every American of every race; and every background, every zip code, and you know me, I mean this, should have a fair and equal chance to go as far as their God-given talents can take them. That’s who we are. That’s what we stand for,” President Biden said.

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Which savings strategy works for you?

Getting in the habit of saving money is important, as it helps lead to creating a financial cushion to cover future expenses. Saving is not easy, especially when everyday products are at an all-time high given recent years' rising inflation and simply suggesting cutting back on small indulgences can be irritating.

Thankfully, there are options to help saving money become more of a habit to better equip you for life's unexpected needs. Before determining how much to start saving, first understand money coming in and money going out – like cost of rent, food, car or public transportation, utilities, and other direct payment expenses, such as subscriptions to various streaming services. Apps can help track these recurring expenses, making it a good time to reconsider or renegotiate them.

Once you've understood your monthly budget, check what's remaining to determine a doable amount to start setting aside each month. When it comes to saving, there are various strategies, from keeping a certain amount in your bank account each week, to automating transferring money from your checking to your savings account each month. You can also save for something specific, like a vacation, home project, or a splurge you've had your eye on for a while. Here are a few saving account options to consider:

Standard Saving Accounts are the most common, easy to access and typically open. Savings accounts can often be accessed and managed online or through the bank's mobile app, which can make things easier. Before choosing an account that best suits your needs, ask if there is a monthly

service fee and potential ways to waive the fee.

Money Market Accounts are similar to savings accounts, but the customer receives more interest on their money, something that varies with banks. They usually require a minimum balance.

High Yield Savings Accounts are increasingly popular, often coming with higher interest rates, making them suitable for short-term savings goals. They work a lot like the typical savings account, allowing for deposits and withdrawals, but there may be transaction limits and minimum balance requirements. They are also protected up to \$250,000 at FDIC insured banks.

Certificates of Deposit (CDs) are highly sought after when interest rates are favorable, but you must commit to leaving the money deposited in the CD untouched for the agreed upon term, which is usually months or years. There may be minimum deposit requirements, but they offer returns so

are useful for short-term goals, such as the down payment on a house or car.

Long-Term Accounts provide an opportunity to accumulate returns over years, depending on how the markets fluctuate. These accounts are designed for a specific financial goal and have tax advantages. Consult your financial institution for long-term savings account options, some of which may include:

- **529 Plans:** Saving over the years to pay for the education of a child, grandchild, or niece/nephew. Savings are tax-deferred and can only be used for the beneficiary's education, whether for college or another educational institution.
- **401(k):** Retirement savings accounts your employer offers. Contributions are usually made monthly (a percentage of the salary) via direct deposit. There are limits to how much you can contribute.
- **IRA:** There are various types of individual retirement Accounts (IRAs),

offering another personal retirement savings option. Contributions are limited, not necessarily offered by an employer, and like the 401(k), they are only used after retirement.

Be sure to ask your bank or financial advisor whether the account you plan to open has a monthly deposit or balance minimum, or any additional requirements or fees. For more budgeting and savings tips, visit chase.com/financialgoals.

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State Dpt. Modernizes Passport Service

State Department Launches Online Passport Renewal System for Millions of Americans

By Stacy M. Brown
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Millions of Americans can now renew their passports online instead of mailing the State Department paper documents with a check. The department announced Wednesday that its online system is now open after months of limited testing and years of pilots.

"We are really excited that we are now making online passport renewal available," said Rena Bitter, assistant secretary for consular affairs. "This is a new service that will allow Americans to pay, upload a photo, and apply completely online with no need to appear in person or send documents through the mail."

The State Department estimates that up to 5 million Americans can use the service annually. Last year, the department renewed 9.6 million passports.

Bitter said the online service is currently limited to renewals for adult, 10-year passports that have expired within the last five years or will expire in the coming year. It is also available for those needing expedited service, anyone not living in the United States, or people changing details like their name or gender.

"We want to make sure that we get this right, so this is where we're starting," she said.

Bitter noted that the online option does not offer faster processing times or reduced fees compared to renewing by mail. Passport processing times, which ballooned during the pandemic, are currently below six to eight weeks.

The announcement follows months of limited testing of a public beta version of the tool. The department

closed the tool after it reached certain application thresholds, making changes based on customer feedback. The state also previously piloted online applications in 2022.

Bitter noted a significant change in the number of applications the system can now handle. The department plans to expand the service to include more types of renewals in the future.

"We will expand this. This is not going to be the last thing that we do," Bitter stated. "We want to see how this goes and then we'll start looking at ways to continue to make this service available to more American citizens in the coming months and years."

The update is part of the department's broader efforts to modernize and reduce administrative barriers. The move to online renewals was included in a 2021 executive order on customer experience.

"Our goal, of course, is to get away from paper as much as we can, as quickly as possible," said Bitter. "This is a first step in what we hope will be a much longer-term process to be able to modernize the systems that we're using."

Currently, only adult passports can be renewed online, and only those living in the U.S., either in a state or territory, can use the service.

"The benefit of online passport renewal is that it's a more convenient



David Hillerby/Getty Images

service," Bitter added. "We don't expect to have a different service standard for people who apply online versus people who apply by mail. We just want to make sure that we give the American people a choice to be able to do either."

Passport processing times have returned to below six to eight weeks after peaking at 18 weeks in 2021 due to COVID-related staffing shortages. Despite a drop in demand during the pandemic, the department reported a significant bounce-back in 2023 as more Americans resumed global travel.

"We want to make sure we provide the most efficient and modern services possible," Bitter concluded.

Save the date to help fight kidney disease!

22nd Annual Maryland Kidney Walk: Sunday, October 6 to be Held in Baltimore

By Andrea Blackstone

Alexis “Lexi” Snyder, a 13-year-old Parkville resident who attends Pikesville Middle School’s virtual program, loves cooking, anime, creating various art forms, and spending time with family and friends. Although Lexi likes engaging in activities that many blossoming youths her age may typically enjoy, undergoing dialysis treatment is another aspect of her life that links with a previous health ordeal.

“Her journey began when she was diagnosed with hypoplastic left heart syndrome [a congenital heart defect that occurs when a baby’s left side of the heart does not form properly] at 26 weeks gestation. One of her first surgeries was an attempt to save her heart through a hybrid procedure. Her ventricular function was still very poor after the procedure and doctors quickly realized that the only options were to either transplant or do nothing. Receiving her first heart transplant at just 30 days old, Alexis defied the odds all while not missing a beat developmentally,” said Lexi’s mother, Brittany Merritt.

By the time Christmas Eve of 2018 arrived, Lexi was admitted into Johns Hopkins Pediatric ICU with acute heart failure.

“The heart that she received as a newborn lasted her seven years and was now rapidly slipping into 2R [moderate acute] rejection,” Merritt explained.

A second heart was successfully transplanted into Lexi in May of 2019, before she reached the age of nine years old.

“The waiting period for a new heart was full of terrifying moments that inevitably caused damage to other

functioning organs. Her renal function took a huge hit, but the complexity of the damage did not show itself until recently, causing her to be dialysis dependent since January of 2023,” Merritt also stated.

Lexi receives peritoneal dialysis as she sleeps, but the treatment does affect her life.

“I can’t be out later than around 7 p.m. on the weekdays because I have to be home to set up my dialysis machine, so I can be hooked up on time and unhooked before school starts,” she said, noting that the dialysis cycle runs for 10 hours.

Lexi further explained that the process sometimes takes longer if she gets hooked up later than normal, for instance, on the weekend.

“I’ll wake up and the machine is still running. Then, I have to sit there and wait for it to finish so my mom can unhook me. I’m basically stuck in bed until it’s finished.”

The resilient teenager who is currently on the transplant list imagined how her life would improve with the help of a kidney transplant.

“I probably wouldn’t be as tired as I always am because I’m always tired a lot, and I could spend the night at other people’s houses more. Now, I can’t really stay at places where people don’t know how to do my machine,” Lexi stated.

Lexi educates the community about chronic kidney disease as a youth ambassador for The National Kidney Foundation Serving Maryland and Delaware (NKFMDDE).

According to The National Kidney



Tisha Guthre leads Zumba warm up during a previous NKFMDDE walk. Photo courtesy: The National Kidney Foundation Serving Maryland and Delaware



Alexis “Lexi” Snyder enjoys her first voyage sailing with an organization, Dialysis to the Docks. Lexi is a 2024 Maryland Kidney Walk youth ambassador for The National Kidney Foundation Serving Maryland and Delaware NKFMDDE will host its 22nd annual Maryland Kidney Walk on Sunday, October 6, 2024 located 1000 Hilltop Circle in Baltimore, Maryland 21250. Photo courtesy of Lexi Snyder’s family

Foundation, approximately 11,000 Marylanders are on dialysis and more than 3,700 Marylanders are on the organ transplant waiting list. Risk factors include diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and family history.

Additionally, Lexi will join forces with NKFMDDE to raise awareness of kidney disease, organ donation and the importance of early screening and a healthy lifestyle for those at risk. The NKFMDDE will host its 22nd annual Maryland Kidney Walk on Sunday, October 6, 2024 at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, located 1000 Hilltop Circle in Baltimore, Maryland. Event proceeds raised from the family-friendly event directly support NKFMDDE’s local patient services, education and research efforts.

“Your participation will help us to give families the information they need to stay healthy and advocate for patients who need priority access to vaccinations, safe dialysis and transplants,” said NKFMDDE executive director Pattie Dash.

Check-in begins at 9 a.m. at Erickson Field. The Maryland

Kidney Walk kicks off at 10 a.m. A Zumba warmup and a brief opening ceremony will follow. The Marching Elite and Old Line Garrison will cheer on walkers who take a two-mile path or a shorter, patient-friendly path for strollers and wheelchairs. Music will be provided by DJ Young Fresh Prince, an 18-year-old who received a kidney transplant. Entertainment, refreshments, face painting, arts and crafts, games and more will be available during the Walk.

Although admission is free, donations are encouraged to support and educate the community. Visit www.kidneywalk.org/maryland to register online. Call Pattie Dash at 410-494-8545 to learn about sponsorship or volunteer opportunities.

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Mandela Washington Fellows Visit the United States



A group of Fellows visit The Baltimore Times Creatively Black art exhibit on June 22, 2024. The gallery is located in the Light Street Pavilion and was curated by renowned artist Larry Poncho Brown. Photo Courtesy of Dena Wane



Fellows visit the Inner Harbor while learning about placemaking and Baltimore history with Dr. Joby Taylor of UMBC. Left to right: Margaret Wonah (Nigeria); Julius Nganga Mbura (Kenya); and Eden Workalemahu Abeje (Ethiopia). UMBC Mandela Washington Fellows, Staff, and Friends

UMBC Hosts, Empowers 25 Young African Leaders from 21 Sub-Saharan African Countries

By **Andrea Blackstone**

University of Maryland, Baltimore County's (UMBC's) Center for Global Engagement hosted the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. UMBC implemented a Leadership Institute as a part of the fellowship.

Fellows who arrived on Wednesday, June 19, 2024, had an opportunity to participate in cultural; social; leadership; coaching; networking; and other activities. The majority of the Mandela Washington Fellowship cohort departed on August 3, 2024, although four fellows completed month-long internships in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Austin, Texas; and Washington, D.C. The

inspired African leaders returned to their communities with a fresh perspective on service, community-building, and implementing resources.

Richard Siaw, 32, was among the 2024 fellows who participated in the prestigious opportunity. The founder and executive director of Voice Of Inspiring Inclusive Change Equitably (VOIICE, www.voiccommunity.org) leads a non-profit organization. It is dedicated to combating sexual and gender-based violence and addresses mental health issues, particularly for marginalized groups in Ghana.

Siaw aspires to become a leader of a global and impactful social movement. Traveling abroad to the United States for the first time profoundly broadened his understanding of leadership. He was able to appreciate and engage with diverse cultures and viewpoints.

"The diverse places I've visited, the incredible people I've met, and the invaluable lessons I've learned have been beyond quantification. Initially, I arrived with high expectations, but I quickly realized that America, like any other place, has its own unique challenges. This trip has truly been eye-opening, offering a deeper understanding of both the opportunities and complexities of this country," said Siaw.

The wealth of ideas and connections that he gained in the United States will significantly enhance the effectiveness of his advocacy work in Ghana.

"I've built networks with professionals who share similar goals and have made lifelong friends and future collaborators among the fellows. These connections will enable me to engage in more effective advocacy;

lead my movement more efficiently; and tap into the collective knowledge to support my work back home," said Siaw.

He also shared that meeting the Lieutenant Governor of Maryland, Aruna Miller, was impactful. Siaw said that her shared words about a good leader being led by compassion and empathy resonated deeply with him.

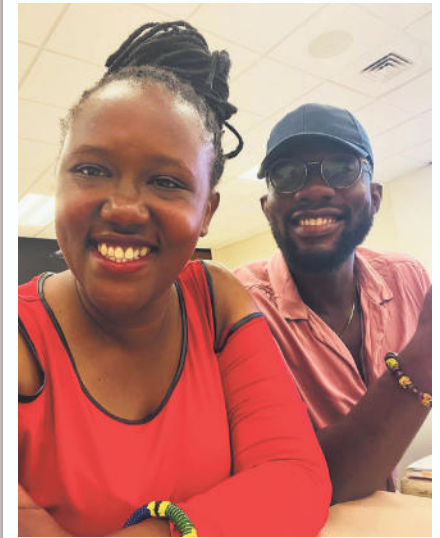
Madison Pickard, assistant director of special programs at UMBC's Center for Global Engagement, provided insight about the fellows' geographical backgrounds.

"UMBC's 2024 cohort hosted 25 Young African Leaders from 21 Sub-Saharan African countries [Zimbabwe; Côte D'Ivoire; Togo; Madagascar; Senegal; Democratic Republic of Congo; Liberia; Nigeria; Cameroon; Rwanda; Ethiopia; Kenya; Tanzania;



Former Maryland State Senator Michael Bowen Mitchell gives Fellows a tour of the Anti-Apartheid Exhibition within Baltimore City Hall on July 23, 2024.

UMBC Mandela Washington Fellows, Staff, and Friends



Navina Mutabazi from Tanzania and Richard Siaw from Ghana pose together during a leadership workshop at UMBC as part of the Mandela Washington Fellowship.

UMBC Mandela Washington Fellows, Staff, and Friends

Uganda; Malawi; Niger; Ghana; Lesotho; Botswana; South Africa; and Benin],” she said.

Pickard runs UMBC’s short term exchange programs to enable leaders to grow and better serve their communities. She pointed out additional facets of the Mandela Washington Fellowship:

“This Fellowship brings together leaders who care deeply about the wellbeing of their communities and their countries, similar to the way Baltimore organizations and leaders care for our own. Many of the fellows come from cities and areas that face challenges for food distribution, access to health care, women and girls’ education, employment opportunities, and mentorship, and these fellows work with their communities to try to change these patterns.”

This is the second year UMBC has hosted the fellowship participants.

“Over 56,000 people apply every year and only 700 are accepted across 28 institutions,” said Pickard. “The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders (YALI) is hosted in 28 universities in the U.S. that act as Leadership Institutes in Business, Civic Engagement, and Public Management.”

The competitive program, which was born under the Obama administration, was started in 2014 by the U.S Department of State and Cultural Affairs (ECA) to invest in the next generation of African leaders, according to Pickard.

Like Siaw, Navina Mutabazi, a 28-year-old tech enthusiast, was excited to visit the United States for the first time and become a fellow.

“At home, I am establishing a grassroots non-profit called Her Tech Safari which aims at amplifying for more women and young girls to harness the power in the tech field,” Mutabazi explained.

Her programmatic experience was transformative and empowering.

“I always struggled to believe in the power of the social change work I do. I am from Tanzania. I work around advocating for the intersection of data, tech inclusion, and AI for social justice,” said Mutabazi.

Meeting Governor Wes Moore inspired her.

“Specifically, what I learned through meeting him was the power of resilience and commitment to change. Knowing that Governor Wes Moore is the first Black governor, and the youngest has spoken to me in so many

ways. Through meeting him, I now believe that a power shift can happen; young people can be trusted; and systematic barriers can be bridged, if few individuals like him could be resilient enough to compete for decision-making roles.”

Mutabazi mentioned that the skills gained from the Mandela Washington Fellowship will be crucially important for her to re-design better community programs that take into consideration all groups, including marginalized populations.

She added, “I also look forward to being able to empower more young people to embrace community volunteering. This way, we are able to solve community challenges collaboratively and immediately through our own skills, knowledge, and power as youth.”

Visit <https://www.irex.org/project/mandela-washington-fellowship-young-african-leaders#component-id-1429> to learn more about the Mandela Washington Fellowship. United States citizens can apply to travel to Africa and collaborate with fellows through the Reciprocal Exchange: <https://www.mandelawashingtonfellowship.org/reciprocal-exchanges>.



Fellows Richard Siaw (Ghana) and Buhlebakhe Shantel Tafadzwa Ncube (Zimbabwe) volunteer at the Maryland Food Bank sorting food into packages ready to be delivered and learning about the model of food distribution in Maryland. The Director of Operations at MFB, Meg Kimmel, has served as a 1:1 Focus Project Coach in the Fellowship for two years.

UMBC Mandela Washington Fellows, Staff, and Friends

Black Women, the Superwoman Myth, and Mental Health

By Andrea Blackstone

National Suicide Awareness Month is an ideal time to discuss the rising number of Black women 18–65 years old who are at risk of committing suicide. The demographic being at the highest risk for suicide among women, irrespective of their socioeconomic status, according to a study published in 2023, led by researchers from Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine and Howard University. The study found that Black women in the highest income strata had a 20% increase in the odds of suicide/self-inflicted injury compared to white women in the lowest socioeconomic strata. (<https://www.bumc.bu.edu/camed/2023/10/04/bu-study-black-women-aged-18-65-years-have-highest-suicide-risk-among-women>)

Chandra Gore, a publicist and business consultant who is based in Stafford, Virginia knows how exhausting it can be to wear a smile on her face but feel like she is breaking inside. She seeks to change the mindset in which some Black women are viewed as superheroes who must maintain a strong persona, absent of exhibiting outward signs of fear, sadness or tears.

“I’m choosing to tell my story around suicide because I’ve been quiet for so long and this battle that I’m fighting is not one that is easy,” said Gore. “I attempted suicide once when I was 16, again when I was going through my divorce, and most recently this year, 2024.”

She added that she had to be honest with herself and share her experiences to prompt others to be kinder and more understanding of one another.

Gore recalls being raised by her grandfather, Clarence Myers. She felt good having support in her formative years.

“He was my mother’s father, and he raised me to be strong and focused and compassionate, but to always be myself. Growing up in South Carolina, my family was a little bit different as I had my great-grandmother and my great aunt and support was there,” she added.

Two impactful life events that shaped who Gore has become include finding herself living away from her grandfather at 16 years old, and later becoming a divorced mother. Gore recalled feeling tired of fighting financial challenges, being a provider for her children as a single parent, and dealing with the overwhelming pressure to succeed.

“My divorce was very impactful on my mental health because it led to me being diagnosed correctly and medicated, pushing me to do more to learn more about my mental health and to become more aware of what triggers, and also to be more focused on finding the coping methods work best for me as a young mom, and now as a mom of adult children to keep going.”

Professional treatments that she received for a short period of time included going to intensive therapy and trying out different medications. Gore stated that she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder; PTSD; severe depression; anxiety; and ADHD.

“Counseling has been a key component for me in overcoming the traumatic events of my life. For a period of time, I was in intensive therapy because I could not get past certain things,” said Gore.

Her three children gave her more reason to live. Eventually, greater hope rose within the mother.

“My life started turning around when I started putting this energy into creating something that would be beneficial to those who are going through things like myself. Also, finding out that I matter, especially to myself and to my children, and those who care about me help me to see the light at the end of the tunnel. My life is a constant evolving space and so it will forever be going on a path,” she said.

Gore also began to face her fears and face self-doubt. She stated that she lost some people who meant the world to her. She understood that she did what was necessary to create spaces to thrive and to be at her best.

“Being able to start a healing journey and adhere to it has been the best thing that I’ve done. I have refocused myself on my professional and my personal life honoring those who have lost suicide and understanding that was their choice,” she added.

When a friend’s life ended, Gore was prompted to focus on helping others, although she had always been a helper who wanted to see others achieve



Business owner and suicide survivor Chandra Gore wants to remove the social stigma of Black women of being viewed as superheroes who are made to feel inadequate if they admit that they are sad, upset, or struggling with mental health challenges. Photo: In Motion Media

greatness. Pursuing professional help was key in Gore’s progressive healing.

Gore currently gives thanks to God. She reads books and engages in other forms of self-care.

“I also go down to a local beach and put my feet in the water. In these moments of solitude, I write, I meditate, I pray, and I enjoy the time to connect with myself and my thoughts again,” said Gore.

Learn more about Gore via www.chandragoreconsulting.com.

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Get to Know Baltimore with 'What's Out There' Free Tour

By Rosa Pryor

Hello, my dear friends!

This has been a very busy week, hasn't it? Well ladies and gentlemen, these upcoming weeks will be even busier. I have so much to talk to you about. I want you to register now for "What's Out There Weekend Baltimore" from September 21-22. This event features nearly two dozen tours of parks, gardens, and open spaces in Charm City led by expert guides. The tours are free, but registration is required by calling 202-483-0553 or email: nord@tclf.org. This is a part of a nationwide program that reveals the stories of places that are part of our daily lives.

I think this tour will be great for our senior citizens who live in senior citizens' homes who can take bus tours to this event. These tours enable people to discover the design history of places they may pass every day but don't necessarily know about. Expert guides provide rich stories, personal anecdotes, and keen observations about each site; landscape; architecture; city shaping; and garden design. Baltimore's landscape legacy includes myriad parks, cultural institutions, and historic sites and neighborhoods, including Carroll Park, Druid Hill Park, Fells Point Historic District, Pearlstone Park and Mount Vernon and many others.

The Caribbean Wine Food & Music Festival will be held on September 28 at Carroll Park, 1500 Washington Blvd. in Baltimore from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. There will be a "Free Wine Tasting." Enjoy a variety of wines, live entertainment with performances by international and local bands, music from some of the region's top DJs. There will be savory local and regional foods, including my favorite



City View Live presents "Chucks & Pearls" hosted by the one and only "Songbird" performance by "Shay" and DJ Jazz on Friday, September 20th from 6-10 p.m. at City View, 6700 Security Blvd, Gwynn Oak, Maryland. Wear your Chucks & Pearls.

Caribbean cuisine. This is a family-friendly festival celebrating Caribbean culture through arts, food and music. Let me tell you ladies and gentlemen, if you have never been to one of their festivals, you have missed something very special. I love it! So, check it out. Give them a call or email them to register.

Okay, moving right along to the "Legion Family Flea Market." Rain or shine, every fourth Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Vendors are welcome. Their last one will be Saturday, September 28, 2024 at the American Legion Liberty Post #122, 4424 Painters Mill Road, Owings Mills, Maryland. There will be food and music while you shop.

I will see you at the **Birth Day Celebration** for my little brother, **Carlos Hutchins** one of the baddest promoters in Maryland. That's right, Carlos Hutchins is celebrating his birthday at Lamont's Entertainment Complex. The address is under the photo. The entertainment will include The Intruders; Bela Dona; The Funk Band; "Forever Yours-O'Jays Tribute; Carmen Craven's, Stephanie



Eleanor Janey is celebrating her 89th birthday this week. One of Baltimore's beloved promoters and the Sportsman Lounge's hostess needs your love. Give her your flowers while she is still here. Help her celebrate her birthday this week with a visit, a call, or a gift. She is at Future Care Rehabilitation Center in Reisterstown, Maryland, Room 214.

Mills Tribute; and many others. Food and beverages will be on sale. Don't forget your lawn chair.

Oh! I want you to check out Baltimore's own, **Todd Marcus**, bass clarinetist, all-around musician, and composer's new CD named "In the Valley, Todd Marcus Jazz Orchestra." The CD is available on Bandcamp, iTunes, Amazon, and Spotify. "In the Valley" includes perhaps his most personal compositions to date and his most detailed and complex arrangements, performed with an astonishing discipline by a composer at the top of his game. Check it out!

Okay my friends, I have to go now. I am out of space. I hope to see you around at one of these events. Remember, if you need me call me at 410-833-9474, or email me at rosapryor@aol.com, or you can mail me a letter at 214 Conewood Avenue, Reisterstown, Maryland 21136.



"Lady J" Janora Winkler will be the hostess for one of the baddest promoters in the state, Carlos Hutchins. His birthday celebration will be at Lamont's Entertainment Complex, 4400 Livingston Road, Pomonkey, Maryland on Saturday, September 21. Gates open at 1 p.m.; showtime is 2-7 p.m. For ticket information, call 443-955-8600.



Phil Butts and the Sunset Band Featuring Larzine will be performing at American Legion Auxiliary Federal Post Unit 19 for an "Evening of Wine and Jazz" on Sunday, September 29 from 5-9 p.m. at The Cellar 2, Chateau Room, 7631 Harford Road. It is cabaret style, BYOB. Dress to impress, no jeans or sneakers. For more information, call 443-833-4258.

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Ravens Not Panicking After 0 – 2 start

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens were considered a legitimate threat to represent the AFC in the Super Bowl entering this season. Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs were the favorite and that's still the case after a close victory over the Ravens in the season opener.

Bouncing back with a win over the Las Vegas Raiders seemed inevitable in Week 2, especially considering the game was in Baltimore at M&T Bank Stadium. But, that wasn't the case. The Raiders handed the Ravens a surprise 26 – 23 loss.

Ravens coach John Harbaugh isn't panicking despite the rough start to the season.

"We're 0-2. We're going to play a 17-game season, and we will be defined by the next 15 games," Harbaugh said after the game. "So that's going to be our objective – to play the best 15 games we can, be the best football team we can be, and if we do that, then we're going to have a really good season, have a shot to win a lot of games and get in the playoffs and make a run, so that's what we have to do. Big picture – short-term – we have to go back and look at every little thing, continue to clean up the things that we know we can clean up and get better at the things that make a difference in games. We'll continue to work very hard to do that."

One positive was the play from Derrick Henry who made his home debut as a Ravens running back at M&T Bank Stadium. Henry averaged 4.7 yards per carry and gained 84 yards overall. He was brought in to give Baltimore's rushing attack another player to be concerned about besides Lamar Jackson. The rushing attack showed life late in the game. But it

simply wasn't enough. Henry isn't pleased with the start but still believes the team will be fine.

"We definitely don't want to be 0-2. We wanted to get off to a good start, but we've just got to keep working [and] keep having faith in one another," Henry said. "There are a lot of teams that start 0-2 and then finish the season strong, and we've just got to look at it that way. We're out to a slow start right now, but we'll just keep believing in each other and keep working and keep getting better, and the wins will come soon."

Baltimore hasn't gotten off to an 0 – 2 start since 2015. Harbaugh hopes his message to the team at the start of the week can help get them back on track.

"The message is we define our season. We're not going to be defined by everyone that's saying we're not any good, that we're good [or] that the season is over after two games. That's what's going to be said, and we understand that, but they're not here; they're not inside. No one inside is going to say that. We have to take care of our stuff, take care of our business [and] take care of our work. We know that we're a good football team, and we're going to keep getting better and better and better and define the season by the way we play."

Despite not being worried, the Ravens will attack their next game with a sense of urgency. It starts this week as they prepare to face the Dallas Cowboys on the road.

"[We've] just got to find a way to win," Jackson said. "I'm not used to being 0-2. [We've] just got to catch our momentum and get it started right away."



Baltimore Ravens head coach John Harbaugh during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Sept. 15, 2024, in Baltimore.

Photo: AP Photo/Nick Wass

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DEPARTMENT
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OFFICE OF ENGINEERING
AND CONSTRUCTION

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 **Sanitary Contract No. 994-Clarifiers and Gravity Sludge Thickeners Rehabilitation** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M. on **November 6, 2024**. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. Bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates and can be watched live on CharmTV's cable channel 25/1085HD; charmtvbaltimore.com/watch-live or listen in at (443) 984-1696 (ACCESS CODE: 0842939) from City Hall at Noon. The Contract Documents may be examined, without charge, at Contract Administration 4 South Frederick Street Baltimore, Maryland 21202 on the 3rd floor (410) 396-4041 as of **September 20, 2024** and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **50.00**. **Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package.** All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be prequalified by the City of Baltimore Contractors Qualification Committee. Interested parties should call (410) 396-6883 or contact OBC at 4 S Frederick St., 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 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 **E13003 Water and/or Sewer Treatment Plants and Pumping Stations**. Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$60,000,000.00 to \$70,000,000.00**.

A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams on **October 3, 2024** at 10:00 a.m. Meeting ID 290 427 541 819, Passcode: **enw6h2**. Vendor can attend by phone (audio only) 1 667-228-6519, conference ID: 229 477 238#. A site visit will be held on **October 9, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.**

All questions from bidders must be submitted in writing to the project manager, Abdul Jafari Abdul.jafari@baltimorecity.gov by **October 28, 2024 at 5:00 P.M.**

To purchase a bid book, please make an electronic request at:

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https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/dpw-construction-projects-notice-letting_and_dpwbidopportunities@baltimorecity.gov.

For further inquiries about purchasing bid documents, please contact the assigned Contract Administrator:

lwalston@baltimorecity.gov,

Principal items of work for this contract include, but are not limited to:

1. Demolition of Gravity Sludge Thickeners (GSTs) No. 1, 2, and 4 mechanisms, drives, underflow pumps, grinders, sump pumps, influent lift pumps, seal water systems, flushing water systems, scum pumps, and associated existing piping and appurtenances; demolition of existing Secondary Clarifiers No. 1 through 4, 5A/B, and 6AB mechanisms and drives, scum pumps, level instruments, piping, and associated appurtenances; demolition of existing sluice and slide gates; demolition of existing Secondary Clarifier and GST power distribution and control systems; demolition of miscellaneous power supply and control systems; demolition of miscellaneous HVAC and plumbing systems; demolition of miscellaneous architectural items; demolition of existing odor control system.

2. Provision and installation of new GST mechanisms and drives, associated piping and appurtenances; provision and installation of new Secondary Clarifier mechanisms and drives; systems and associated piping and appurtenances; provision and installation of new underflow pumps, grinders, sump pumps, influent lift pumps, seal water systems, flushing water systems, scum pumps, and associated existing piping and appurtenances; provision and installation of new sluice and slide gates; provision and installation of new power distribution and control systems; provision and installation of new miscellaneous HVAC and plumbing systems; provision and installation miscellaneous of new architectural items, provisions and installation of concrete restoration and new coating systems; provision and installation of new scum piping and associated site restoration.

The MBE goal is **22%**

The WBE goal is **16%**

APPROVED:
Clerk, Board of Estimates

APPROVED:
Khalil Zaied
Acting Director
Department of Public Works

BGE To Host Recycling Drop-Off Event in Bel Air, Maryland, Saturday, September 21

Residential customers can receive \$25 rewards for turning in old room A/C units, dehumidifiers and/or mini fridges

Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (BGE) will host a recycling drop-off event on Saturday, September 21, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Bel Air High School, 100 Heighe St, Bel Air, MD 21014. Since 2013, BGE customers have recycled more than 4,350 units through these events, helping avoid over 135 tons of waste recycled instead of landfilled.

During the Saturday's event, BGE residential customers can drop off qualifying old, but still working, appliances (A/C units, dehumidifiers and/or mini fridge) for recycling and receive a \$25 reward per unit, up to \$100 per household. In addition, BGE customers can recycle other household items, such as cellphones and eyeglasses, in partnership with Harford County Collection Day.

"Events like this provide customers with a quick, easy and environmentally friendly way to dispose of their old and inefficient appliances," said Eric Riopko, manager of residential energy efficiency programs for BGE. "By removing these older units from the energy grid and properly recycling them, event participants help realize several benefits, including reducing energy use in their own homes. Their participation also contributes to reducing the emission of ozone-depleting substances and greenhouse gases, ultimately helping the state of Maryland shrink its carbon footprint."

Rain or shine, representatives will be on hand to safely unload the old appliances from customers' vehicles. Units must be in working condition to be eligible. Customers will receive a check in the mail approximately 6 to 8 weeks after the event. More information is available at BGESmartEnergy.com/SeptemberEvent or by calling 888.316.8056.

Although recycling services for larger appliances such as old, working refrigerators and freezers will not be accepted on Saturday, September 21, residential customers also can receive a \$50 reward for recycling when they schedule a home pickup through BGE's Smart Energy Savers Program.

To participate, customers must make an appointment by calling 888.316.8056 or online at BGESmartEnergy.com. Once an appointment is scheduled, BGE will collect and haul away a limit of up to three refrigerators and/or freezers—and up to four room A/C units, dehumidifiers and/or mini fridges at the same time—for recycling per residential household from January 1, 2024 through Dec. 31, 2026. Appliances must be in working (cooling) condition and measure 10 to 30 cubic feet, which is the standard size for most refrigerators and freezers. Room A/C units, dehumidifiers and mini fridges also may be recycled through this program, but only if picked up at the same time as an eligible refrigerator or freezer.

These recycling programs support the EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act. EmPOWER Maryland programs are funded by a charge on your energy bill. EmPOWER programs can help you reduce your energy consumption and save you money. [Learn more about EmPOWER Maryland at energy.maryland.gov](http://energy.maryland.gov).

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