

Hundreds help cleanup after Baltimore riots



Members of the community clean up debris from a CVS pharmacy that was set on fire during rioting after the funeral of Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Maryland. (See article on page 12)

Photo by Andrew Burton/Getty Images

Taking Responsibility for Testicular Cancer

By Rian Dickstein, M.D.

Testicular Cancer Awareness Month, April, is almost over, but that doesn't mean men should forget about testicular cancer prevention.

Testicular cancer is a relatively rare cancer as it accounts for about one percent of all cancers; however, it is the most common cancer found in young men (ages 15-34 years old). Despite a higher rate of testicular cancer diagnoses in the past few decades, the death rate has significantly fallen due to improvements in treatment. As a result of our great success in treating testicular cancer, it is sometimes a forgotten or overlooked disease in terms of its importance.

Thus, it is of the utmost and critical importance that we spread the word about testicular cancer. In particular, the area where we can improve the most is that of detection. You cannot treat what you don't know exists. Moreover, the earlier you diagnose and treat this disease, the less likely it will spread and the easier it is to treat. Therefore, we must not ignore the importance of screening for testicular cancer.

Currently, there is no standard or routine screening test used for the early detection of testicular cancer. Physicians are reliant upon patient reporting to help make a diagnosis, as the majority of these cancers are first found by the men themselves, either by chance or by self-exam. The first symptom is usually a lump, nodule, or mass on the testicle. Alternatively, the patient might note enlarged or swollen testicles. Occasionally, pain is the presenting symptom, which



Rian J. Dickstein, M.D.
Courtesy Photo

may or may not be related to the disease; either way, these symptoms prompt additional investigation with either your primary care physician, or preferably a urologist.

Despite the fact that no standards exist, most physicians agree that a monthly self-testicular exam should be performed after the onset of puberty. The exam should be done during or after bathing when the scrotum is relaxed. The more familiar a person is with their body, the better they can assess what feels abnormal or different. Although cancer is a major concern, more often than not these symptoms are related to infection, injury or other causes. Nevertheless, it is important to see a physician to treat any other underlying or serious conditions causing these symptoms.

Unfortunately, many young men aren't seen by a physician for one reason or another until they have advanced stage disease. Some men are in denial that there is a problem. Others are

embarrassed or fearful about their problems, whether it be concern over discussing or exposing their genitals to a physician, concern over loss of sexual prowess (impotence or libido), or even concern over sterility. Some even delay seeing physicians for fear of ridicule or dismissal from physicians. Additionally, in today's environment, there is the ever-growing fear of being unable to afford care because of either not having insurance or not having the funds to pay for deductibles or co-insurances.

The onus is on us as a community to spread the word and educate young men about the dangers of testicular cancer. But we must also calm their fears and help them understand the truths. Moreover, just because this is a disease of young men, does not mean that it does not affect the women in their lives. One major issue, for example, is the potential for infertility after losing a testicle and potentially receiving treatment with either radiation and/or chemotherapy. Thus, the implications of this diagnosis involve not only the patient but also their loved ones.

The bottom line is that we need people to be more aware of testicular can-

cer. We need young men to be doing monthly self testicular exams to feel for any changes in their scrotum, including lumps and bumps, masses, pain or tenderness, or anything else unusual at all. If there are any concerns, we need families to be supportive and encouraging of men coming to see their physician for further evaluation. We don't want these young men losing their opportunity to be cured. We need them to come in before it's too late. They have too much at stake. When in doubt get it checked out, if even for only peace of mind. The ultimate responsibility for your health is yours and yours alone.

To learn more about testicular cancer, including how to do a self-exam, visit: www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/tca.pdf.

Rian J. Dickstein, M.D. is a urologist who completed a fellowship in urologic oncology at the world-renowned MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. Currently, he is a practicing urologist at Chesapeake Urology Associates and is an Assistant Clinical Professor in Urology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

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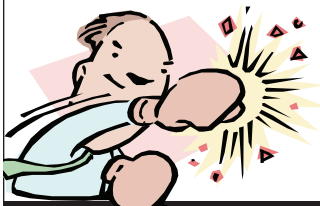
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Guest Editorials/Commentary

A letter from a Baltimore City teacher to parents of her second grade class following the night of widespread rioting on April 27, 2015.

Today Baltimore City Schools are closed due to the current state of emergency that our city remains under. If you had the opportunity to watch the news last night or tune in this morning, I'm sure you are completely horrified to see what has taken place in the streets of Baltimore.

For several years, I worked and lived in the area that I watched burn on television last night. I am sure that I taught more than one of those students out there wrapped up in all of that foolishness and it truly hurts my heart to see it has come to this. However, as you watch this footage I challenge you to take a few things into consideration as you analyze what is happening.

Eleven years ago, I sat in a sharing circle made up of six and seven year olds from southwest Baltimore and as we began a unit on community helpers they began to tell me their stories of what they knew of police officers. They told me about their homes being raided, parents and family members being taken away in handcuffs, seeing first hand the use of force by police and in a few cases on themselves, and actually having guns placed in their faces. These children did not have the capacity to process what they had seen. But that emotion and those feelings had to go somewhere right? When you bury something you are giving it the opportunity it needs to grow. And so we see it grow and it manifest itself as senseless anger.

Over my eight years of working in that area of Baltimore, I saw some extremely angry children who all had a parent or in some cases both incarcerated. These children all had experienced the death of a family member, if not more than one, due to street violence. Many felt police officers would have offered more protection had their addresses been different.

This city has been sitting on this hotbed of emotion among many of its residents for decades and there have been no firm supports put in place for these families or specifically for these children. These children are dealing with parent and family incarceration, addiction, physical and emotional abuse, lead poisoning, fetal alcohol syndrome and emotional disorders just to name a few things.

So, what have our efforts been to support these children the mayor so eloquently called "thugs?" Well, we have closed recreation centers and many of the religious institutions are afraid to reach out and offer programs for them. Our public schools are so overwhelmed by the mass quantity of students in need of support services that they often offer no support due to lack of staffing and finances needed to support these children. But who does have their arms open and ready to embrace these children? Gangs. And so the cycle continues.

I, by no means, am writing this in order to dismiss the behavior we saw last night or to justify it. My only hope is that you understand that there is a bigger, deeper and stronger issue at hand. As we wait as a community for the release of the report and hopefully a trial, please be aware that things may heat up again.

It is going to be a long couple of days, weeks and months ahead of us as a city and community— please hold your family close and stay safe.

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Your letter will not be published without the required information.

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Community Affairs

Baltimore: The Aftermath

By Phinisse Demps

The night of Monday, April 27, 2015 will be one that the residents of Baltimore City will never forget. The world watched in horror as the city erupted in violent protest, looting, arson and destruction of property.

The next day as we traveled through the city, we witnessed members of the community coming together to clean up after the activities the night before.

Sorority sisters from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. were busy helping the residents of the Penn-North Senior Citizen Home with food and water. They also were helping the residents fill their prescriptions since the CVS Pharmacy right next door was looted and was burned out.

Students from Coppin State University and Morgan State University were busy helping with the clean up in the area around the burned out CVS Pharmacy.

"Cleaning up North Avenue was very important to me," said women's basket-



ball junior forward Jordan Swails, who led Coppin State in scoring this past season and was named to the All-MEAC Tournament

team. "I'm living on campus, which means that North Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue is in my backyard. It was very terrifying so I felt like I had to make a difference."

Helping to control the crowd and the flow of traffic around the area of North and Pennsylvania Avenue was the 300 Men organization along with other community organizations.

Later in the day, Reverend Al Sharpton made a brief statement after meeting with the mayor and other city officials at City Hall. He said he was in Baltimore to lend support for the Mayor and the City of Baltimore and to ensure that justice and peace would get served.

Succeeding While Black:

Five ways to avoid altercations with police

By Matthew R. Drayton

During the past few months there has been numerous incidents— some tragic— where police officers were accused of brutality and abuse of power against African Americans, including Ferguson, South Carolina and New York being the most well-known. Some of the incidents were caught on video.

There are nearly 780,000 sworn officers in the United States protecting and serving 319 million Americans. Police officers have a very difficult and stressful job, but that is no excuse to use excessive force. However, we must take into account what these officers go through and understand that all police officers aren't bad.

I have been in situations where I could have easily gotten into confrontations with police officers. Years ago, I regularly worked with local and state police officers in major cities throughout the U.S. I can tell you first hand that there are some police officers that are preju-

diced or egotistical, and some that have their own agendas. I remember arriving in Texas to meet and work with local police there. When I reached out to shake one of the officer's hands, he refused! Later during that same trip, I was almost arrested because the same police officer who wouldn't shake my hand, failed to tell a group of his fellow officers who I was as I approached them.

On another trip to California, a police officer stood two feet in front of me and stared me down while I waited to meet with the Deputy Police Chief. I had never met this officer before, nor did I do anything to him to warrant the stare he was giving me. In both Texas and California, I was the only African American in the group; my co-workers were not subjected to the same treatment. In both cases, I had no choice but to work through whatever issues those police officers had with me. I did not respond to their behavior towards me, and worked more closely with the officers who reached out to me than the ones who didn't. In the end, we successfully finished our work in both cities, and I made some new friends in law enforcement.

My experiences with the police were not all bad; in fact there were more positive experiences with them than negative ones. I realize some of my circumstances and encounters with the police were of a different nature than being pulled over for a routine traffic stop, but the two situations I mentioned above were intense and could have easily become confrontational. I have been stopped and pulled over by the police numerous times over the years,

and I can honestly say, I have never been mistreated by a police officer. The following tips have worked for me when I have had encounters with police officers in the past. Hopefully they can help you too.

Obey the law: If you are breaking the law in any way; it's only a matter of time before you have to deal with the police. Turn on your flashers, drive slowly and pull over to a well-lit busy area if you are pulled over. Cooperate if you are being questioned or arrested to avoid any physical confrontation.

Be polite and show respect: Greeting and treating a police officer with respect immediately de-escalates the situation. Regardless of how you feel about being pulled over or questioned, the police are authorized to do so. Mouthing off and becoming aggressive towards the police will make the situation worse.

Obey police officer orders: When a policeman asks you to do something reasonable, do it. Remember, these men and women are trying to do a job, and sometimes need to gather facts to do their job. Disobeying the police officer's orders will again only make the situation worse.

Make lifestyle changes: Most of the things that happen to us are a result of our decisions. Alcohol, outdated license plates, and erratic driving are a few contributors to police stops. If you are hanging out late at night with known offenders, or in places where there is a high probability of a crime, there will likely be a heavy police presence there.

Educate your children: Teach your children at an early age about police brutality, and to be respectful when dealing with the police, and all adults for that mat-

ter. Explain current events to them in an unbiased way, and make them aware of the dangers they face if they break the law, and what can happen to them at the hands of some police officers.

It is not my intent to downplay police brutality incidents or to be insensitive to anyone who has suffered or died at the hands of the police. My purpose is to help African Americans understand that engaging an officer properly can de-escalate the situation, and possibly avoid a deadly altercation. I am a middle-aged, African American male who regrettably has had too many encounters with the police during my lifetime. I have never been arrested or beaten by a police officer, nor have I ever been disrespectful or mouthed off to one.

I do realize that if a police officer wants to use violence against you, he is going to do it, but I truly believe it's harder to beat up a person who is polite and compliant. Try these tips the next time you have an encounter with the police. It cannot hurt and it may just save you. Remember, we cannot control a police officer's behavior, but we can control our own.

Retired Army Sergeant Major Matthew R. Drayton is a corporate speaker, life coach, consultant, leadership expert and author of "Succeeding While Black." He has also been mentoring youth for over a decade and is currently the Executive Director of Great Oak Youth Development Center, a North Carolina-based non-profit organization that mentors at risk youth. For more information, visit: www.MattDrayton.com.

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Mailing Address

The Baltimore Times

2513 N. Charles Street

Baltimore, MD 21218

Phone: 410-366-3900- Fax 410-243-1627

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Port Discovery and NASA Goddard offer engineering programs for elementary school students

Baltimore— Port Discovery Children's Museum in Baltimore, Maryland and NASA Goddard Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland have partnered to offer two engineering based programs to elementary aged children in the Baltimore area. The two programs, "I'm an Engineer!" and "NASA's Sunday Experiment," will allow children to engage in the engineering process and promote a tendency to choose Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) classes in the future.

"The goal of our collaboration is to promote student interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) during a student's elementary school years," said Dean Kern, Deputy Director for the Office of Education at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland. "Students often form their interests in STEM identities and careers while engaged in hands-on, experiential types of learning opportunities— much earlier than many people probably believe to be the case."

The "I'm an Engineer!" program, based on NASA's Beginning Engineering Science and Technology, will be offered as an after-school program at four Baltimore County sites and will introduce elementary-aged students to



The two programs, "I'm an Engineer!" and "NASA's Sunday Experiment," allows children to engage in the engineering process and promote a tendency to choose Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) classes in the future.
Courtesy Photo/Metro Graphics.com

the principles of engineering and problem solving. Using the engineering design process, students will work on a variety of hands-on, NASA themed projects including designing and launching satellites and designing and building Martian rovers. The program is designed to allow children to fully immerse themselves in the engineering process and

directly interact with their projects, independently from adults. In addition to learning about engineering at NASA, students will also develop critical thinking and communication skills from working with partners and other teams.

Babcock Presbyterian Church, Cockeysville PAL Center, Hillendale PAL Center and the Dundalk PAL Center each

received four sessions of the "I'm an Engineer!" program during April and May.

The second program, NASA Sunday Experiment, will be held at Port Discovery and is open to all museum visitors. During each session, visitors will focus on a specific NASA mission and engage in a series of hands-on, inquiry based activity stations, watch videos and speak with NASA experts. The dates and topics of the sessions are:

- August 2: Optical Engineering
- August 23: Global Precipitation Measurement

"We are so excited to partner with NASA Goddard to bring these programs to the museum and local schools," said Nora Thompson, Director of Education at Port Discovery Children's Museum. They are a fun and interesting way to introduce STEM education at an early age."

The mission at Port Discovery Children's Museum is to connect purposeful play and learning— both within our walls and beyond. The Museum offers three floors of educational, interactive exhibits and programs that promote imagination, creativity, and critical thinking skills for children from birth to age 10. To learn more about Port Discovery Children's Museum, visit portdiscovery.org.

Christian Liberty Church Celebrates First Anniversary

Sunday, May 17, 2015

Douglass High School

2301 Gwyns Falls Parkway in Baltimore

Morning Worship Service at 10 a.m. with Minister Tony Miller

Anniversary BBQ at 12:30 p.m.

Outdoor Tent Service at 3 p.m. with Pastor Andre Murphy

For more information, visit: www.christianlibertychurch.org

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Four ways parents can promote positive behavior in school

News and Experts— Word arrives from school that the parent's child is in trouble. Maybe it was a minor offense and the student simply faced a trip to the office. But maybe a suspension or expulsion is in the near future, leaving the parents wondering whether they could have done something before the situation became so dire.

Before parents beat themselves up too much, though, they should remember that student discipline isn't always a clear-cut thing, says Renae Azziz, founder and director of Virtuoso Education Consulting, which provides professional development training to teachers and school district leaders.

"The reasons students are sent to the office are not always well defined," says Azziz, a school psychologist. "So-called problem behaviors are often too subjective, which leads to different teachers having different perceptions and definitions of what a problem behavior is."

The situation can be especially frustrating for the parents of these students. Numerous studies have shown that African-American students are more likely than their white peers to be severely punished for their transgressions.

Cultural misunderstandings between teachers and students often are at the core of those disproportionate punishments, Azziz says. When there is a mismatch between what the teacher sees as acceptable behavior and the student's view, problems can surface.

Teachers can learn to account for those cultural differences through explicit and ongoing training focused on culture. But there are also steps all parents can take that will go a long way in helping their children understand the school's expectations, Azziz says and offers these tips:

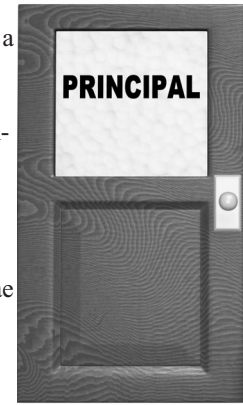
- Educate yourself.** Parents should read the school's discipline handbook and become familiar with the expectations for behavior in their child's school. That way parents will have a clearer understanding of the rules and can discuss them with the child. Handbooks lay out all kinds of information, such as what constitutes bullying or how unexcused absences affect participation in extracurricular activities. "Knowing and talking about the rules can help you head off problems," Azziz says.

- Positive reinforcement at home.** Parents can set up positive ways to acknowledge their student for doing the right thing at home that connect to the behavior expectations at school. Children usually respond better to positive reinforcement than negative reinforcement, so praise at home for correct behavior can translate into good behavior in the classroom.

- Learn the rules face to face.** Early in the school year, parents should meet with their child's teacher and principal to define and clarify behavior expectations and discuss how you will communicate with each other. Often, email is a good way to communicate with teachers because they can read and respond to the correspondence after class is over for the day. But find out what the teacher prefers. Good communication can help the parent and the teacher work together to make sure behavior expectations are understood and followed.

- Championing the child.** A parent should be the child's advocate. "After all, if you aren't in your child's corner, who is?" she asks. But that doesn't mean taking the attitude: My child is always right. "You will need to be fair and balanced," Azziz says.

Renae Azziz is the founder and director of Virtuoso Education Consulting. She and her team of consultants support educators nationally in the areas of Response-to-Intervention, Data-Based Decision Making, Assessment, Positive Behavior Support and Culturally Responsive Practices. For more information, visit: www.virtuosoeed.com.



Former Ravens speak out about riots in Baltimore

By Turron Davenport

The Baltimore Ravens is a team that is truly entrenched in the community. The team responsible for community relations for the Ravens has done a great job in keeping the Ravens players invested in the community.

Two of the truly influential players in Ravens' history have spoken out against the riots in Baltimore City.

Few players have done as much for Baltimore and the surrounding area than Torrey Smith. In fact, Smith is still involved with the community only months after he signed with the San Francisco 49ers. Smith was in town to support the Brigance Brigade 5.7K run to raise funds for ALS research and he took to Instagram to share the following message with the violent protesters.

"To all of my brothers and sisters protesting in Baltimore: I applaud you for your effort in raising awareness on the issue of police brutality but VIOLENCE IS NOT THE ANSWER. DESTROYING YOUR OWN CITY IS NOT THE ANSWER.

"Violent protests have never produced the results that we have wanted. Even the great Martin Luther King, Jr. adjusted his strategy. Keep the power in numbers and organized fashion. I don't know all of the facts or have the answers but I do know that a family is mourning the death of their child/brother/cousin that could have been prevented. I pray for the family of Freddie Gray during this difficult time and that they get all of the answers they need.

"To the people who view the rioters as



Former Baltimore Ravens player Ray Lewis considered by many as the single greatest leader in the history of sports spoke out against the riots in Baltimore. Lewis posted a video on Facebook exploring Baltimore youth to get off the streets as violence never solves the problem.

Courtesy Photo/www.baltimoreravens.com

'animals' you don't understand why people are so angry. It has been years and years of the same type of incidents.

"Right or Wrong....People are fed up and acting out in a way they seem fit. It is all driven by emotion and probably a few people who just wanted to start trouble. Don't let that take away from the thousands of people who went to protest in a peaceful way."

Smith also posted a plea for leaders in the community to spark change, "You need leaders that really want to change things and not just show up for the cameras and leave when they roll out."

Smith also promised to help the city which in his words; "went from a peaceful protest to damn near a war which

isn't going to do anything but delay progress."

Ray Lewis is considered by many as the single greatest leader in the history of all sports. There aren't many men who can tap into the inner spirit of people the way that he can. Lewis has vowed to always be involved in the Baltimore community. He posted a video on Facebook that should hit home for all people involved. Here is his message:

"No way, No way this can happen in our city. No. Young kids, you have to understand something...get off the streets. Violence is not the answer. It has never been the answer. Freddie Gray, we don't do nothing for him doing this. We know there's a deeper issue. We know

what the jungle looks like but this isn't it. There's enough of us in the streets trying to change what's going on.

Baltimore, get off the streets. Kids, stay home, GO HOME. You don't have the right to do what you are doing to this city. Too many hard working people built this city. We put this city together, put it on our back. We are with you. We know that there are problems, we know that there was wrong done. We know we aren't getting justice, we know we are not getting the answers but riding in our streets in wrong, DEAD WRONG.

We have to go back to the beginning; it takes a village to raise one child. We have to redefine what this looks like. We have to redefine what building Baltimore looks like. There's too many people putting real sweat, real tears to make our city a better place. I can't come back home and this is it, kids can't walk the street? This is our future. Our future is in Baltimore. What we are trying to build is in Baltimore.

There's too many babies paying attention to this craziness. The sad part is that we have young kids telling us how they're going to dictate our city. THAT WON'T HAPPEN. We must change this right now. Stop the violence. GO HOME. I am telling you, go home. Whatever I have to do, it won't happen on our clock."

Lewis truly meant what he said about doing what he had to do. He has chosen not to go to Chicago to cover the NFL Draft for ESPN, his current employer. Instead, Lewis is going to hit the streets of Baltimore to help the city push through these troubled times.

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Twenty-third Tree City USA Award granted to Annapolis

By Andrea Blackstone

Following Earth Day, an Arbor Day celebration was held on Thursday, April 23, 2015 at Wiley H. Bates Middle School in Annapolis.

Horace Henry, Maryland Forest Service's urban and community forester for the southern region presented a 2014 Tree City USA Award to Annapolis for exhibiting excellence in urban forestry management. According to information provided by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Tree City USA program is "conducted by the National Arbor Day Foundation in conjunction with the National Association of State Foresters." For consideration of Tree City recognition, applicants must submit documentation illustrating the presence of a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation. This year reportedly marks Annapolis' 23rd year receiving a Tree City USA Award. A pin oak tree donated by BGE to Wiley H. Bates Middle School was planted at the event.

"I can't win awards like this without the help of each and every one of you," Mayor Mike Pantelides said to students. "Winning an award for the environment is so important because all of us share the environment together. Each and everyone one of us will get the same benefits of this tree."

In addition to accepting the Tree City USA Award, Pantelides reminded students about the importance of environmental stewardship. Reading a proclamation for Arbor Day on behalf of the city of Annapolis and explaining the origin of the special day strengthened his message. Additionally, Henry cited benefits of planting trees like the Pin Oak. The forester reminded students that advantages of its presence will range from providing shade in the summer, to absorbing the carbon dioxide from the air, thereby reducing production of greenhouse gases.

"You are doing a wonderful job by planting this. You are helping to take

care of your environment, your planet, and this planet is the only one that we have," Henry said to students.

Sixth graders, participating teachers, community partners, Pantelides and Chris Truffer, the Regional Assistant Superintendent for Annapolis Cluster Schools, attended the event. The program's structure supported the remembrance that Wiley H. Bates Middle School is a green school and performing and visual arts magnet school. Artistic presentations began with a performance of "Ordinary Miracle" provided by the eighth grade chorus, led by Penny Renoll. Eighth-grade dancers presented a creative dance to an earth-themed song.

While Pantelides and other program participants raised awareness about taking good care of the Earth, students enthusiastically welcomed his visit. The Mayor of Annapolis pointed out long-term benefits of youth taking care of the environment.

"There's lots of things in government and society that only affects certain people. We all breathe the same air, drink the same water, so it's important. I think starting them at a young age, it's good to be conscious about recycling and everything else, so they get in good habits for life," Pantelides said at the close of the program.



The songs, "Ordinary Miracle" and "What a Wonderful World" were performed by the eighth grade chorus.

Nina Larkins, a sixth grader who attends Wiley H. Bates Middle School, was selected to pick up a ceremonial shovel to toss dirt around the Pin Oak along with other participants. The 11-



Paul DeRoo, Nina Larkins, Mayor Mike Pantelides and Horace Henry stand around a freshly planted tree during an Arbor Day celebration. The event was held on April 23, 2015 at Wiley H. Bates Middle School.



This year marked Annapolis' 23rd year receiving a Tree City USA Award.

year-old student stood with her principal, Paul DeRoo, Pantelides and Henry as various attendees cheered. After her exciting experience, Nina said she wants to help the environment in her own backyard.

"We have a big back yard. I was thinking maybe I can go to a home store, get some seeds and plant them on my own, and it will help the environment, she said."

United Way Forum reveals the power of women

By Stacy M. Brown

The United Way has realized progress in issues facing the community and one goal of the nonprofit is to continue to have a positive effect locally and in cities throughout the country, according to the organization's national president.

"We've been incredibly encouraged by the power of women [that] come together and tackle tough issues. Women aren't afraid to get involved," said Stacey Stewart, United Way's United States president, who addressed the recent United Way of Central Maryland's Women's Leadership Council Forum in Baltimore. "They have an incredible amount of energy and compassion to care for their families and community."

Stewart leads the strategy for the 1,200 United Ways across the country.

The forum convened to celebrate dynamic business and community leaders who are committed to igniting the power of women to advance the common good, officials said.

"This was the council's inaugural Women's Forum, celebrating the Council's 15th anniversary and United Way of Central Maryland's 90th anniversary," Stewart said. "The forum focused on the immense impact its members have had, changing the odds for families and communities right here."

The forum also brought together more than 400 women business and community leaders from many sectors throughout central Maryland who are united in our desire to lead and change things for the better.

"The energy in the room was contagious. A lot can happen when women come together. It's electric and these women are part of the largest women's movement in the world," Stewart said.

Many of the stories shared at the forum focused on women working together for the community. Speakers included Patty Brown, the senior vice president of Johns Hopkins Medicine and president of Johns Hopkins HealthCare LLC, who shared how a friend invited her to an event where she joined the council. Brown now chairs the United Way of Central Maryland's board.



Stacey Stewart
United States President
United Way Worldwide
Courtesy Photo/The United Way

Many of the panelists like Dr. Pamela Brown, the executive director of the Anne Arundel County Partnership for Children, Youth and Families, told the forum about how they call each other to

get help for families in need. Brown called Sandy Monck at the United Way, and together they successfully helped a woman and her family of nine who were living in a one-room motel.

"As Mika Brzezinski shared at the forum, 'you can help more people if you increase your value.' When women come together and feel empowered and encourage each other, they can change the world," Stewart said.

In Maryland, there are several issues that need attention to help family stability, she said.

For example, in Baltimore City, 86 percent of students receive free or reduced-price lunch and Maryland ranks as the 4th most expensive state in the country for housing costs, and families are the fastest-growing homeless group.

Stewart says the child food insecurity rate in Harford County stands at 18.7 percent and, in central Maryland, 345,000 families are food insecure and are lacking healthy food which prevents children from learning because they tend to get sick more often.

"The good news is, we are making a difference. United Way's Access to Healthy Food Initiative has already provided 8.2 million pounds of food to low-income families in central Maryland. That's millions of meals," Stewart said.

Since its inception, and as a result of its family stability programs, 213 families still have a place to call home and 479 children have remained in their school of origin.

"We worked with 18 teen parents so far at the new United Way Family Center at Ben Franklin High School to provide the support they need to stay in school, graduate, and look to the future," she said.

Stewart says the second of its two scheduled forums for 2015 will be held on Saturday, June 6, 2015.

"My goal as president is to work with the more than 1,200 United Ways to create opportunities for a brighter future for all of us by focusing on the building blocks of a successful, self-sufficient life, [including] education, financial stability and health," Stewart said. "By working together and addressing the root causes of issues in each local community, we can ensure kids come to school ready and help more young people graduate from high school and get on the right path to a successful future."

Man on the Street *When Do Black Lives Matter?*

By Stacy M. Brown

The numbers are staggering, as of Monday, April 27, 2015—the day family members held a funeral for Freddie Gray—statistics revealed that there were 68 homicides in Baltimore, including three individuals under the age of 18. Fifty-nine of those murders were of African-Americans, reportedly committed by other blacks.

Three-year-old McKenzie Elliott, an African-American, was shot to death standing on her porch in Waverly in August 2014, and despite many eyewitnesses, no one has come forward.

“There has been no hash tag that says ‘Black lives matter,’ no public outrage, no protests or demonstrations about her death,” said Earl Al-Amin, the Imam of the Muslim Community Cultural Center in Baltimore, himself a longtime leader in the city’s African-American community.

“It’s apparent that we don’t want to confront reality. If all black lives matter then why do we hold candlelight vigils when we kill one another but when someone outside of the race kills us, then we protest with fervor and intensity that’s unmatched,” Al-Amin said. Al-Amin, who has served the community working with young individuals for nearly 40 years, said those leading protests over Gray’s death have reached out to him to participate, but he’s not interested. “We are evading the issues and we’ve allowed elements to come in so that we can’t fulfill our potential.”

“We constantly look outside of ourselves instead of inside. Marcus Garvey once said that ‘no one will do as much for you as you will do for yourselves.’ I have stayed out of this because I’m very wary of what has taken place,” he said. “We have mishandled this ‘No justice, no peace’ thing and we won’t look at ourselves and except internal responsibility.”

Gray died days after being arrested by Baltimore police on April 12, 2015. Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake has called for transparency, wanting to know exactly what happened. However, as protestors continue to cry out that,



Rev. Al Sharpton addressed the media in front of City Hall after meeting with Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.

Photo: Phinisse Demps

“Black Lives Matter,” Al-Amin and others said there’s too much black on black crime.

“All black lives matter,” said Attorney Reginald Greene, whose group “Black Lawyers for Justice” has been instrumental in helping to organize some of the local demonstrations. “Black on black killing by civilians is a major issue and it is a serious problem that must be addressed.

Marvin Wright, who said he simply came to Baltimore from New Jersey to pray for Gray’s family and not to participate in demonstrations, was stunned by the violence. “Not just the burning of buildings,” Wright said. “But, look at how nasty these people who are supposed to be seeking justice are to each other. They respect no one and they claim they want the police to respect them.”

Sylvia Jordan, a Washington, D.C. nurse who came to Baltimore to check on the welfare of her sister who lives in the area, said she is disgusted by the devastation of the community. She said she doesn’t understand why African-Americans only seem to get upset when others outside of the race commit crimes

against them.

“We should be equally upset, not rioting, but equally annoyed when we kill each other,” Jordan said. “I can never participate in any of these protests unless and until black lives matter to black people.”

While police must be held accountable for their actions, Al-Amin says protest leaders should also be held responsible for the escalating riots and damage to the city. He singled out Reverend Jamal Bryant of the Empowerment Temple, an organizer for demonstrations who gave the eulogy at Gray’s funeral.

“Bryant has some issues. He’s knowledgeable but not wise because wisdom is knowledge with discretion and Bryant has

stoked the flames for this,” Al-Amin said.

Bryant declined comment, choosing only to answer questions from CNN reporters.

“He won’t answer questions about black on black crime and why there is no outrage over that,” Al-Amin said.

Officials from the NAACP, Al Sharpton’s National Action Network and Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow Push Coalition also declined to respond to those same questions.

“The people are being manipulated by provocateurs,” Al-Amin said. “You see young African-American males acting out not because of a sense of outrage or a sense of justice. You see them acting out because they are getting their 15 seconds of fame. These misguided young men are playing to an agenda and their basic needs were not [being] met in their formative years.”

“It’s disconcerting for me to watch the so-called faith leaders and political leaders in this because they are not saying anything and they refuse to focus on black on black crime.”



Earl Al-Amin, the Imam of the Muslim Community Cultural Center in Baltimore. Courtesy Photo

Hundreds help cleanup after Baltimore riots

By Stacy M. Brown

Community centers and some business owners offered free meals, water and even a safe haven.

Students from Morgan State University, local teachers, individuals who were out of school because of the closings and members of several fraternities methodically began cleaning the city after a violent night of rioting and looting.

In all, about 3,000 individuals—many joining the efforts on an impromptu basis—worked from dusk until dawn to help Baltimore reclaim its Charm City moniker and to let the world know what Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake meant when she said, “We are One Baltimore.”

“We thought it was most important to let the community know that people are out cleaning,” said Kaeshawn Stewart, a Baltimore resident and a member of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority. “This is encouraging to the community and it’s giving the community hope because we’ve had many come by and say thank you.”

Anita Wade a school teacher and a member of the Zeta Phi Beta sorority worked arm-in-arm with Stewart as they cleaned a lot across from a playground and immediately around the corner from the flash point of activity at North and Pennsylvania Avenues.

Despite a low-hovering police helicopter and sounds of bullhorns and demonstrators clashing with police, Wade said cleanup efforts were important, particularly to set a positive example for young people.

“There are so many issues that are not being addressed, but our children need to see this [cleaning effort],” she said. “It makes things a little better.”

With a burned and destroyed CVS store, a multi-million dollar senior center destroyed and pure chaos serving as a most unfortunate backdrop, many residents displayed the spirit of true activism.

Melanie Diggs, the branch manager for the Pennsylvania Avenue branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library helped to keep as many as 30 individuals safe as demonstrations turned to riots and the local CVS store was looted and burned.

With a broom and a dustpan in his hand as he helped clean on Tuesday, April 28, Robert Stokes shook his head when asked about the effects of the riots: “You look around and see unemployment. Filling out job ap-



Morgan State University and Coppin State University students volunteer to help clean up after day of destruction in Baltimore. Courtesy Photo

plications and being turned down because of where you live and your demographic. It’s so much bigger than the police department,” he said. “This is a powder keg that’s waiting to explode.” But, Stokes and others attempted in earnest to diffuse that time bomb, simply by joining the efforts to show city pride, strength and solidarity by cleaning and otherwise lending a helping hand.

Baltimore City Public Schools were closed Tuesday due the previous night’s violence and many students had nowhere to go. A sign outside of Red Emma’s Book Store and Coffeehouse told students, “This is a safe place for Baltimore’s youth.”

Storeowners provided free lunch to all city children as efforts to restore peace and a sense of normalcy began.

CVS manager Haywood McMorris still lamented the fate of his store and told reporters that the destruction hurts those who work there and the residents of the area. “It didn’t make sense, we work here and this is where

we stand, and this is where people actually make a living,” McMorris said.

Cheryl Wright, another resident who lives nearby, listened as McMorris spoke. She said she understood his pain, but the efforts of her and others to clean up the city shows that there is hope.

“Look around you,” Wright said. “Look not at those yelling at cops, but look at how many are out here with brooms, dustpans, garbage bags. This is what gives all of us a reason to stay here and a reason to believe in the best of Baltimore.”

Morgan State University students also joined cleanup efforts at the intersection of Pennsylvania and North avenues, a mission organized by the university’s Student Government Association.

“The students decided to do this on their own,” said university spokesman Larry Jones. “They organized and initiated this on campus and on social media using the hash tag ‘MSU cleanup.’ We didn’t ask them to do this;

they just wanted to help in the community.”

As some of the nearby demonstrators broke into song, performing Bill Withers’ iconic

“Lean on Me,” the cleanup efforts proved as strong a message as the legendary lyrics, which include the words “Just call on me brother, when you need a hand we all need somebody to lean on... I just might have a problem that you’ll understand; we all need somebody to lean on.”

Edna Cleveland, who lives blocks from the flash point, said all of it inspired her.

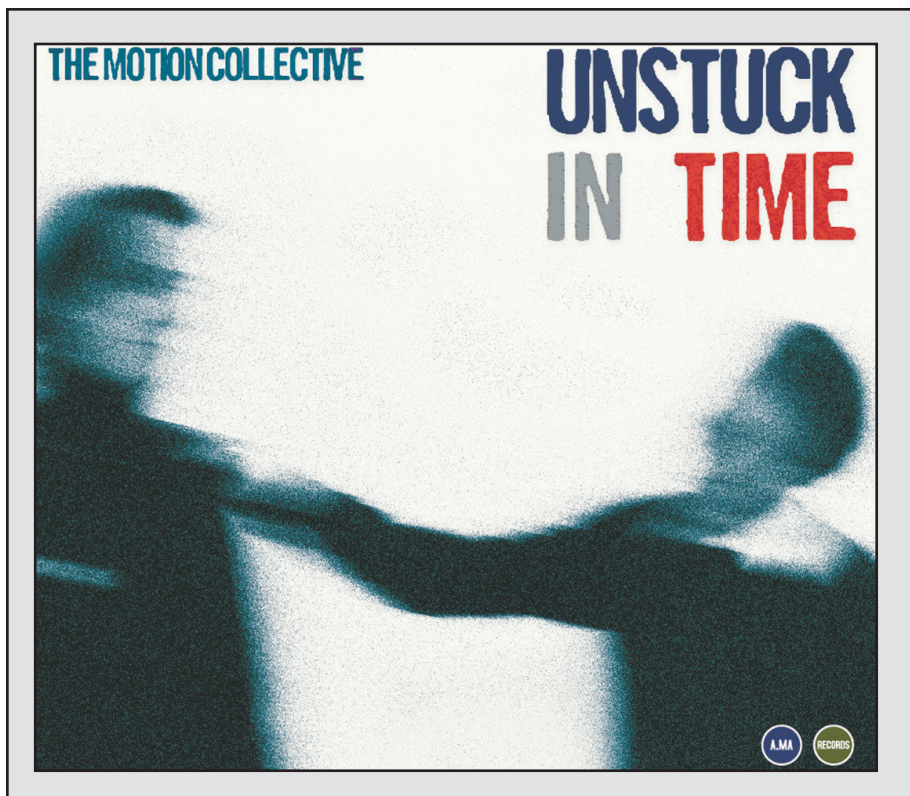
“It’s emotional. I wish that more people would get involved in cleaning up our city and then, when you hear the protestors singing ‘Lean on Me’ you hope that people realize that this is bigger than them. It’s bigger than riots and protests,” Cleveland said. “It’s about what is right and wrong and how to go about being a real community who knows how to genuinely stick together.”



Morgan students on their way to assist with the clean up of community in aftermath of riots. Photo Credit: Larry Jones, Morgan State University



AKA's with Senior Residents of Penn-North: Nicole Cameron Becketts, Janeen Jackson Monica White, Resident-Ms. Adams, Resident-Ms. Williams. Photo: Phinesse Demps



Indie Soul Music: The Motion Collective

By Phinisse Demps

The Motion Collective, the amazing jazz collective from Bari, Italy released their first full-length album for A.M.A Records with executive producer Antonio via TIMKAT Entertainment in America.

Now this CD has been in my Dropbox for about a month and when I finally listened to the music, I was blown away by the mix of sound, rhythm and technique. It was like making a summer salad, adding the right ingredients and topping it off with a light dressing. This 10-track digital download/CD, is “perfecto!”

The single, “Unstuck In Time” is just delicious and right on time for a Spring/Summer release. For those House and Club Deejays, the first two tracks, “Enchanting Drum” and “Enfarte Musical” should be on your playlists and in your mixes.

Indie Soul favorites are: “Into You,” “Hoverin,” and “Angels.”

I loved the sound and it definitely has that chillin’— let’s go for a ride or have a glass of wine— type of vibe. You can pick up a copy at: <https://timkatent.bandcamp.com/album/unstuck-in-time>.

“Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything.” —Plato



Indie Soul Reviews: *Street Magic*

By Phinisse Demps

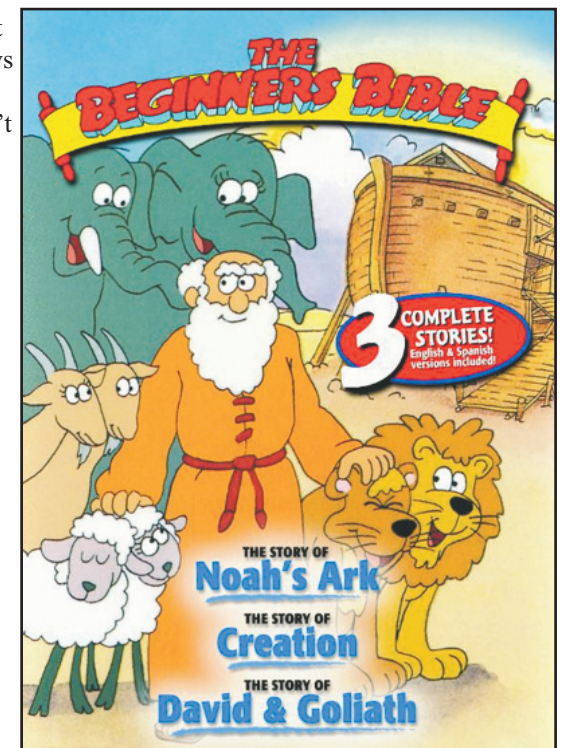
Indie Soul enjoys spotlighting independent authors. Recently, author Mary B. Banks stopped by our office to drop off her book, “Magic Street.” Banks credits her mother and father who always told her that the library was a magical place. We are so glad they did because her unique book is a collection of short stories about characters in and around Baltimore! Banks did a great job of giving her characters life. The stories are very vivid and you can actually picture the scenes, the characters, and the story.

The Beginners Bible:

There is a piece of scripture in Proverbs 22:6 that states: “Train up a boy in the way he should go; Even when he grows old he will not depart from it.” People have strayed away from one the most important aspects of life and that is spirituality. If your child knows all the details of a video or the lyrics to the latest song, shouldn’t they know what the Bible teaches? That is the premise of The Beginners Bible. To teach our children from a young age values and Bible fundamentals like the creation story. Make a note to purchase the DVD when it is released on June 9, 2015.

To see the trailer of The Beginners Bible, visit The Baltimore Times Facebook page: [Facebook.com/TheBaltimoreTimes](https://www.facebook.com/TheBaltimoreTimes).

Indie Soul welcomes your questions and comments. To contact Phinisse Demps, call 410-366-3900 ext. 3016 or 410-501-0193 or email: pdemps@btimes.com.





Indie Soul Spotlight: Poet Deep

By Phinisse Demps

"I want to make a difference in Baltimore and be an example to not only my kids but the kids in the community."—Poet Deep.

Whoever said that once you make mistakes in your life that you can't be a role model, must not have read that God forgives and has not met Poet Deep. Poet Deep is very honest about his past that includes drug dealing, fights and street life.

"One thing we have to do as a people is be honest and let the community know for those who are going through some things, that you have been there. The streets are looking for help and people they can relate to," said Poet Deep who is a very deep thinker, reader, and conscious person. "When you are in need, you do things that you know are wrong. I know. I was one of those dudes. I also know that I had to change because I have a purpose in life. It is not about the money. It is about saving lives."

Poet Deep is on a mission to let his words be his action through his words and music. Poet Deep adds, "This music and entertainment has our community messed up. The racial tension here in Baltimore doesn't help as well. We need a balance in music and entertainment with artists speaking truth and knowledge. I want to be that example."

Poet Deep is in the process of raising funds for musical ventures to make a difference. Please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1421539651492761/>. Also follow Poet Deep on Facebook as he makes that journey to change the culture of music, role models, and Black life here in Baltimore. #BlackLifeMatters.

Indie Soul Review: My Favorite Five and The Best of the Ed Sullivan Show

By Phinisse Demps

If you are a regular reader of Indie Soul, you know that we try to find entertainment for our fans that is under the radar.

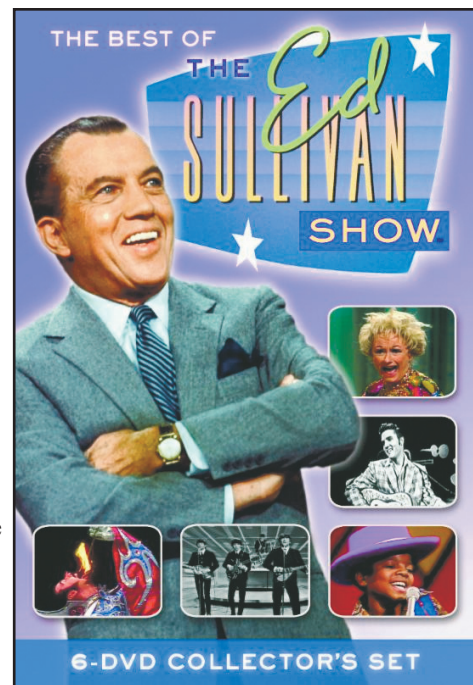
We want to let you know that Netflix seems to be the place for new African-American films including "My Favorite Five" a film directed by Paul D. Hannah and starring Rochelle Aytes, Brian White, DeRay Davis and Erica Hubbard.

"My Favorite Five" is a funny romantic comedy about a woman who is trying to find her one true love. Comedian DeRay Davis gives a great performance in this good date night movie. Be sure to visit our website: www.baltimoretimes-online.com to see a trailer of the movie and for more entertainment news and information.

New to DVD is "The Best of the Ed Sullivan Show." The release of six DVDs of some of the most memorable moments of the show including performances by The Jackson 5; Richard Pryor; Johnny Mathis; and many more. The special edition release delivers some the biggest names in entertainment business during the height of their careers, as well as astonishing novelty acts selected by Sullivan as his personal favorites from over 1,000 hours of classic television!

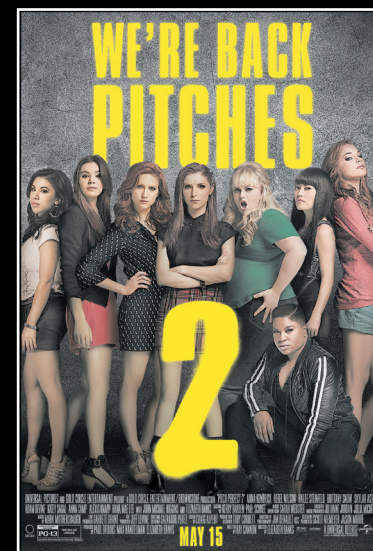
Indie Soul welcomes your questions and comments. To contact Phinisse Demps, call 410-366-3900 ext. 3016 or 410-501-0193 or email: pdemps@btimes.com. Follow him on Twitter@pdemps_btimes.

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IN THEATERS MAY 15TH
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Loretta Devine and James Pickens Jr. unite for first time since Grey's Anatomy

Silver Spring, Md.— TV One pays honor to the spirit of Mother's Day with the premiere of the network original film For The Love Of Ruth on Saturday, May 9, 2015 at 8 p.m. The film is inspired by the Biblical story of Ruth that at its core is a quintessential story of love, commitment and loyalty.

Denise Boutee (Meet The Browns) stars as Ruth, an orphan who was in search of her place in a lonely world, until Naomi Marachond, played by Loretta Devine (Grey's Anatomy) enters her life and provides the guidance and warmth she has been seeking. Rounding out the cast are James Pickens Jr. (Grey's Anatomy) in the role of Stephen Marachond, Naomi's sullen brother-in-law and Gary Dourdan (CSI) as Braxton Marachond, damaged isolated cousin Ruth's love interest.

"Mother's Day is an ideal time to share this classic tale of one of the strongest and complex relationships in the world — that between mothers and daughters," said D'Angela Proctor, SVP Original Programming and Production for TV One. "We hope this film also relays an even greater message — that compassion, loyalty and devotion for those in need can profoundly change the course of someone's life."

For The Love of Ruth follows the journey of Ruth Sommerling (Boutee), who, orphaned as a child and currently residing in a women's shelter has lived a life filled with pain and disappointment. In rapid succession, Ruth marries Nicholas Marachond, but a dreadful accident leaves her widowed. Refusing to aban-



Inspired by the Biblical story of Ruth, the TV One network original film "For The Love Of Ruth" premieres on Saturday, May 9, 2015. "For The Love Of Ruth" is a quintessential story of love, commitment and loyalty. The stars (left to right) Gary Dourdan; Denise Boutee; Loretta Devine; and James Pickens Jr. Courtesy Photo/TV One

don the new family ties she has formed, Ruth develops a close bond with Naomi Marachond (Devine). As the matriarch of the Marachond family, Naomi introduces Ruth to the fullness that a life filled with faith and loyalty presents.

However, Naomi's brother-in-law Stephen (Pickens Jr.) discourages this connection and voices his suspicion of Ruth's intentions. Ultimately, the love

she desired all her life is found in Naomi's reclusive cousin, Braxton (Dourdan) who despite objections from others showers Ruth with an outpouring of love and kindness.

For the Love of Ruth is produced by Eric Tomosunas of Swirl Films. Christine Swanson served as director for the film and the screenplay was written by Rhonda Baraka.

3rd Annual African American Children's Book Fair
Reginald F. Lewis Museum
830 East Pratt Street in Baltimore
Saturday, May 9, 2015 — Noon to 4 p.m.

The largest showcase of African American children's literature in the Maryland and Washington, D. C. area. The books, story themes, authors and illustrators are meant to reflect African American children and children of other ethnicities.

For more information on the African American Children's Book Fair, call 443-263-1800 or visit www.rflewismuseum.org.

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CALL 1 800 420 7783 NOW!

Annapolis Drum & Bugle Corps holds annual Gospel Fest

By C. Lisa Johnson

The Annapolis Drum & Bugle Corps held the first annual Gospel Fest in Annapolis on Saturday, April 12, 2015 at the Cecil Memorial United Methodist Church.

The band's founder and director Pat Montague says the event was held to raise money for new equipment, uni-

forms and various band expenses for the 85-member band.

The mistress of ceremony was Tityonna Jones a member of the pompom team and the ushers included band members Latajah Courtney and Ra'Shika Butler. The church was taken over by the youth band members as they welcomed the guests and delivered the

prayer at the event.

The Gospel Fest included performances by the Annapolis Drum and Bugle Corps and local gospel artists including Sounds of Joshua, The Christian Cavaliers, First Samuel Gospel Band, The Souls of Joy, and Mitchellvilettes, plus a beautiful praise dance performance by Karen Beans. There was also a powerful

rendition of "Take me to the King" by 10-year-old Josiah Fisher, who says he has been singing since he was two years old. He sings on a regular basis at his home church Asbury Broadneck. He is also a member of the drum and bugle corps where he is a percussion player.



The Mitchellvilettes of Michellville, Md.



The Sounds of Joshua of Annapolis.



Center row left: The Souls of Joy of Mitchellville, Md.; Center row right: Annapolis drum and bugle corps exits the church after their performance; Bottom left: Josiah Fisher sings solo; Bottom row right: Praise dancer Karen Beans.



Photos: Lawrence Kimble

World Premiere Musical Marley at Center Stage in Baltimore

Baltimore— The world premiere production of Marley, the first original musical based on both the life and music of Bob Marley, began rehearsals March 24, 2015 at Center Stage, the State Theater of Maryland. Marley will run May 6 to June 14.

International singing sensation Mitchell Brunings has been cast to play Bob Marley.

"When I first saw the YouTube clip of Mitchell singing 'Redemption Song' on 'The Voice,' I was mesmerized. I jumped on a plane and dashed to Holland to see him immediately. Having auditioned actors around the world for this role, I knew right away that he was a natural," Kwei-Armah says. "His soulful, gorgeous voice and deep respect for Bob's music and life make him the perfect fit for this production. For the last year, we've been assembling the cast and crew for this show, and I couldn't be more thrilled with our team."

"Bob Marley is a huge inspiration in my life and it's an overwhelming honor to be playing the legend in a new musical," Brunings says. "I am so excited to be working with Kwame and an amazing cast and group of musicians bringing the story of this pivotal moment in Marley's life to the stage."

This will be the first-ever stage production to feature both the music and life story of Bob Marley. The musical entwines many of Marley's beloved songs with the story of a critical moment in his life in a production that honors the life of this visionary musician and activist. A cast of more than two dozen actors play Marley's family, friends, fellow artists and political leaders, bringing to the theatrical stage the fascinating and little-known story of the moment that Marley became an icon.

After surviving an assassination attempt in 1976, Marley left Jamaica for London, where he spent nearly two years in self-imposed exile. Chronicling the events surrounding this earth-shaking moment, Marley tells the story of a man transformed into one of the 20th Century's most important cultural figures. Set in the soundscape of an era, this new musical weaves together the life and



Mitchell Brunings to Play Bob Marley in the musical Marley at Center Stage in Baltimore. Written and directed by Kwame Kwei-Armah, "Marley" begins previews May 6 and runs until June 14, 2015

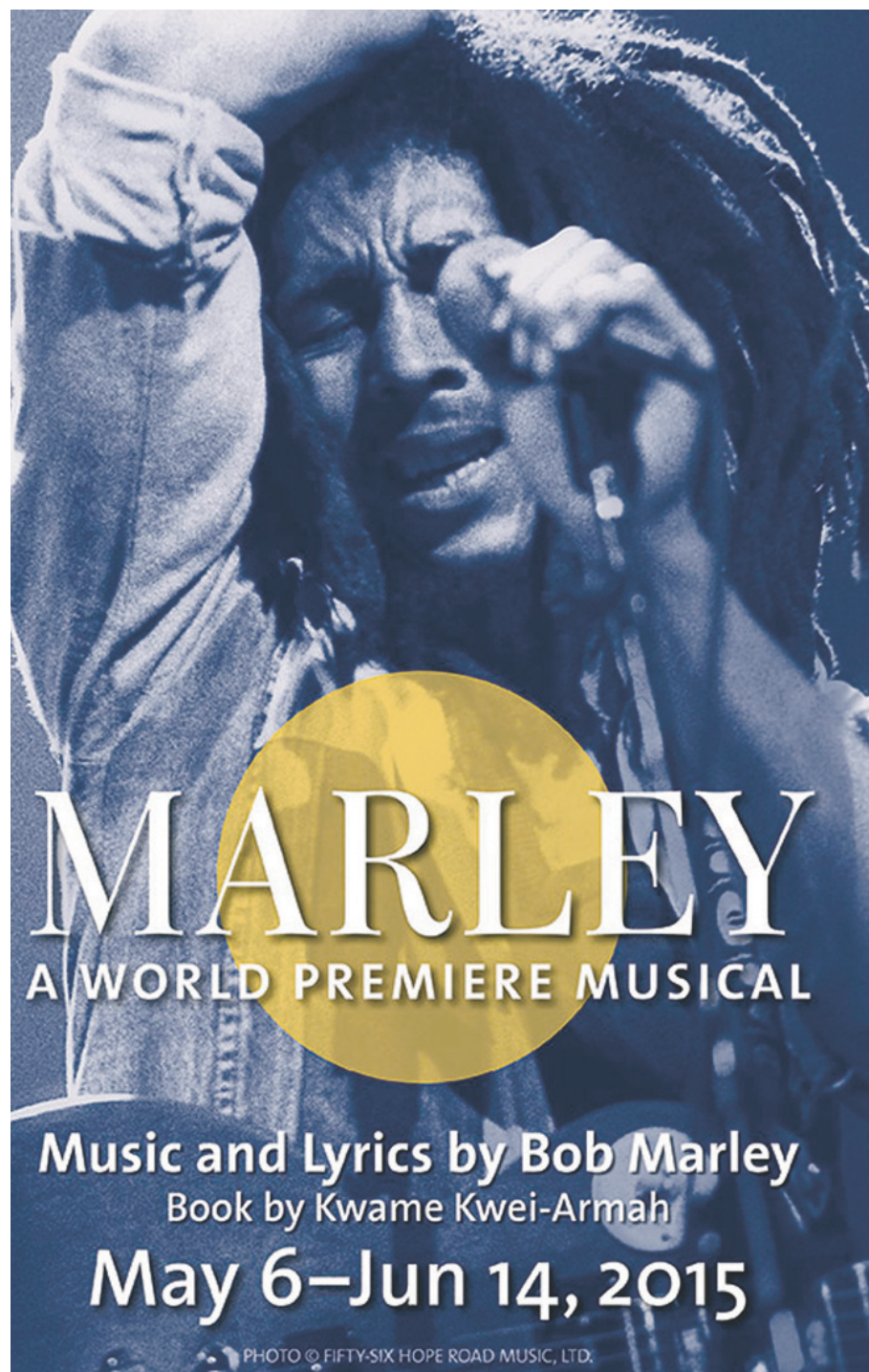
music of a man who, to heal himself, first healed his homeland.

Brunings gained worldwide attention in 2013 when his soulful rendition of Bob Marley's "Redemption Song" during his audition on Holland's version of popular singing reality show "The Voice" went viral. His performance has more than 35 million views on YouTube. Brunings has gone on to tour worldwide, often covering his idol's songs.

Through an agreement with Blue Mountain Music and Tuff Gong Pictures, Marley will feature music composed by Bob Marley—including, among others, songs from Exodus, Kaya, and Rastaman Vibration, which were written during the period in which the production is set.

"We are very proud that our father's legacy is going to be brought to the stage and that Mitchell's unique and soulful voice will be a part of this great journey," Cedella Marley says.

Kwei-Armah, a playwright, director, and international arts advocate, came into prominence in his native England as an actor and playwright. He is the author of plays such as Elmina's Kitchen, A Bitter Herb, Seize the Day, Let There Be Love, and Beneatha's Place, the latter of



which was written as a response to Clybourne Park for Center Stage's The Raisin Cycle, which was the subject of a nationally broadcast PBS documentary, "A Raisin in the Sun Revisited: The Raisin Cycle at Center Stage." Kwei-Armah serves as Chancellor of the University of the Arts London and was named an Officer of the Most Excellent

Order of the British Empire in 2012.

The full cast and creative team for Marley will be announced soon. For more information, visit centerstage.org and marleymusical.com or call the box office at 410-332-0033.

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Water wisely for a beautiful garden and landscape

By Melinda Myers

Too much or not enough water and never when you need it. That seems to be the long time plight of gardeners. Add to this extended droughts, flooding and watering bans. What is a gardener to do? Become a water wise gardener.

Water wise is not just about growing drought tolerant plants or eliminating plantings. It is a holistic approach to managing water to avoid flooding that overwhelms sewer systems, improper watering that wastes water, and poor landscape designs that generate too much work and require too many resources.

Make this the season that you incorporate a few water wise habits into your gardening. You'll find it is good for your garden, the environment and your pocketbook. Start with one or more of these strategies this year:

Select the right plant for the growing conditions. Plants that thrive in normal growing conditions for your area will be healthier, require less care and need less water. Look for drought tolerant plants that require less water once established.

Keep water out of the storm sewers and in the garden instead. Prevent flooding while improving your garden. Adding several inches of compost to the top eight to 12 inches of soil increases the soil's ability to absorb and retain water. This means less runoff into the storm sewers and less frequent watering.

Use plants to prevent runoff and conserve water. Plant trees, shrubs, and groundcovers to slow the flow of rainwater, increase the amount of water that stays in your landscape for your plants, and to filter water before it enters the groundwater. Install one or more rain gardens to intercept surface water runoff for use by rain garden plants and to help recharge the groundwater.

Provide plants with a healthy diet. Use a slow release non-leaching organic nitrogen fertilizer like Milorganite (milorganite.com). You'll encourage slow steady growth, so your plants will require less water and be less prone to insect and disease problems. Plus, the slow release nitrogen encourages



Collecting rain in rain barrels when it is plentiful and storing it until needed is an effective way to manage water for the landscape. Water plants thoroughly and only when needed. Water the soil, not the plant, using a watering wand, drip irrigation or a soaker hose so less water is lost to evaporation. Water early in the morning whenever possible to reduce water loss during the heat of the day and diseases caused by wet foliage at night.

Photo credit: Melinda Myers, LLC

healthy growth and does not prevent flowering and fruiting.

Water wisely. Water plants thoroughly and only when needed. Water the soil, not the plant, using a watering wand, drip irrigation or a soaker hose so less water is lost to evaporation. Water early in the morning whenever possible to reduce water loss during the heat of the day and diseases caused by wet foliage at night.

Manage your lawns to reduce water use. Select drought tolerant grass varieties to reduce watering needs. Prepare the soil before seeding or sodding or aerate and spread a thin layer of compost over existing lawns to increase water absorption and reduce runoff. Mow high to encourage deep roots that are more drought tolerant and pest resistant. Allow lawns to go dormant during hot dry weather. If irrigating, water thoroughly when needed, that's when your footprints remain in the lawn.

Conserve water and reduce time and money spent on plant care. Mulch the

soil around trees, shrubs and other plants with several inches of woodchips, shredded leaves, evergreen needles or other organic material. Mulching reduces watering frequency, prevents soil compaction from heavy rainfall thus increasing water absorption. It also adds organic matter to the soil as it decomposes.

Repair leaking faucets, fittings and garden hoses. A slow leak of one drip per second can waste up to nine gallons of water per day.

Look for and use wasted water. Collect the "warming water" typically wasted when preparing baths and showers. Use a five-gallon bucket to collect this fresh water and use it for your containers and gardens. Collect water from your dehumidifier and window air conditioners for use on flowering plants. Do not, however, use this water if environmentally harmful solvents have been used to clean this equipment.

Check with your local municipality if you are considering using gray water. Once you wash clothes, dishes or

yourself, water is classed as gray water and most municipalities have guidelines or regulations related to its use.

Harvest rainwater if your municipality allows. The ancient technique of capturing rainwater in jugs, barrels and cisterns has made a comeback. Collecting rain when it is plentiful and storing it until it is needed is one way to manage water for the landscape. But first check local regulations before installing a rain harvesting system. Several states have banned rain harvesting, while others offer rebates or rain barrels at a discount to gardeners.

Melinda Myers is a gardening expert, TV/radio host, author and columnist who has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books. Please visit Myers' website: www.melindamyers.com for gardening videos and tips.

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