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Civic Works' Tiny House: A small home that saves big on energy



The Civic Works Tiny House was open for a tour on Monday, February 29, 2016, at Clifton Mansion, Civic Works' Baltimore headquarters, located at 2701 Saint Lo Drive. Tiny House is a 200-square-foot home on wheels that serves as the Baltimore Energy Challenge Mobile Energy Education Center. Tiny House is being used to inspire residents and businesses to become more energy-efficient, and to educate students on green technology and sustainable living. (Above): Rodney Payne, EnergyReady Program Manager for Civic Works Baltimore Center for Green Careers (center), works with Civic Works YouthBuild program participants on Tiny House. (See article on page 10) Photo Credit: Craig Weiman Photography

Baltimore Attorney Wins Engineering Award

By Stacy M. Brown

To some, it may be surprising to learn that one of the best-known lawyers in the country, Baltimore's Billy Murphy, received the Birth of a Legacy Award at the 2016 Black Engineer Conference in Philadelphia.

However, Murphy's award can be traced even further back before his other countless honors that included making Baltimore Magazine's list of the 25 Smartest People in Baltimore.

"I've worked in engineering, that's where my start was," said Murphy, who represents the family of Freddie Gray and whose courtroom prowess once led Judge Howard Chasanow, formerly of the Court of Appeals of Maryland, to proclaim "juries are just spellbound by Billy Murphy."

After a pioneering career as an undergraduate engineering student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and early jobs in the aerospace industry, Murphy decided to follow in the footsteps of his father, William H. Murphy, Sr., who was one of the first African-American judges to preside in the state of Maryland.

The elder Murphy was a staunch civil rights supporter and a test case for integration at the University of Maryland Law School, his son said.

"Even as the son of a judge, segregation was an up-close and personal thing for me," said Murphy, who heads the Baltimore firm, Murphy, Falcon & Murphy.

"The injustices that my father experienced as a young man were formative, inspiring him to undertake a lifelong fight for the rights of underrepresented communities," Murphy said, noting that's in large part why he became a lawyer.



Baltimore attorney Billy Murphy received the "Birth of a Legacy" award at the 30th Annual Black Engineer Conference in Philadelphia. Murphy earned a Bachelor degree in Electrical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1965.
Photo by Gar Roberts

Murphy's crusade for justice on behalf of the underprivileged has now spread to Flint, Michigan where he's filed a federal class action lawsuit alleging a pattern of behavior by Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, the mayor and other officials whom Murphy said violated the Constitutional rights of those who are forced to pay for clean water but have never received it.

"The governor has to be held accountable," Murphy said.

As noted in a recent profile of Murphy, the 72-year-old has been the lawyer to call for more than 45 years.

The longtime criminal defense attorney is respected and feared as a litigator and he's been able to secure multimil-

lion-dollar settlements in police brutality and racial discrimination cases.

In 1966, he entered the University of Maryland School of Law where he was a member of the Law Review and founded the University of Maryland chapter of BLSA (Black Law Students Association) with the aim of setting admissions targets for 20 percent African-American enrollment and 50 percent female enrollment. The school adopted the admission targets in 1968.

After ten years of building a thriving practice, he successfully ran for judge of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City in 1980. In 1983 he resigned and returned to what he called his true passion: litigation.

In 2004, Judge Murphy received the Charles Hamilton Houston Award for Lifetime Achievement in Litigation. He has been profiled as one of the top five lawyers in the state and Murphy is recognized by his peers as one of the best defense attorneys of his time.

Last year, the Freddie Gray case in Baltimore again thrust Murphy into the national spotlight and he continues to represent Gray's family while prosecutors press on with criminal cases against several police officers involved in Gray's death.

In January, Murphy was asked to go to Flint by a group of local ministers. He says his visit revealed how residents are living in fear of what has happened to them and their children. Even if the situation is resolved, Murphy says there will be effects that last a generation.

"These people are living a nightmare," he said.

As to what he expects in the developing legal battle, Murphy said a heavy-weight championship-like atmosphere.

"Fifteen rounds and this is round 1," he said. "We want to help right every wrong that has occurred. We expect these people to lawyer up with the most expensive lawyers in the country but in reality they really shouldn't spend one penny of taxpayer money to try and defend their egregious conduct."

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To Find Hope, Look Around You

By Lee H. Hamilton

These are very unhappy times in Washington, D.C. Relations between the executive and legislative branches are not just sour, but corrosive. The Republican-led Senate has declared it will simply ignore a presidential nomination to the Supreme Court. Both houses have announced that they will flout a tradition going back to the 1970s, and refuse to hold a hearing for the President's budget director to present the White House's federal budget proposal. Partisan paralysis and game playing on Capitol Hill have become a hallmark of these times, as has the evident distaste our nation's leaders feel for one another.

It would be understandable to give in to despair, and a lot of Americans have done so. I have not, and for a simple reason: in our system there is always hope. Why? Because our representative democracy rests finally not on what politicians in Washington or in our state capitals do, but on what our citizens do.

The bedrock assumption of representative government is that Americans will make discriminating judgments about politicians and policies, and shoulder their responsibility as citizens to improve their corner of the world. The remarkable thing is, they often do.

Even better, the less-than-admirable stumbling blocks that we've come to identify with politics—confrontation, obstructionism and divisiveness—are rarely present. Public dialogues may get heated, but they don't often descend to the level of bitterness and obstinacy we see these days in Washington.

More than anything else, what you see when ordinary Americans decide to get involved in a public issue is their common sense and good judgment, their fundamental decency, and their remarkable sense of fairness. They recognize there are differences of opinion and that they have to be sorted through. They make decisions by and large based on hope, not fear or despair.

The sense that comes through when you watch Americans at work on public issues is their overwhelming desire to improve their community. Often this is reflected in concrete projects—a new bridge, a better school, a badly needed sewer system. But you can also see it in many people's cry for candidates who will set narrow interests and excessive partisanship aside, and work to improve the quality of life for all Americans.

While ordinary citizens may not know all there is to know about a given public policy issue, I was constantly impressed while in office at how much I learned from my constituents. We often think of representative government as a process in which the elected official educates constituents, but the reverse is usually even more the case. Americans may think that politics is filled with messiness and noise, but at the end of the day they understand the need for deal-making, compromise and negotiation—and that to achieve change, they have to work through the system we have, which means educating and pushing political leaders.

This is why I have an underlying confidence in representative government. Americans are pragmatic. They recognize the complexity of the challenges we face, understand there are no simple answers to complex problems, and do not expect to get everything they want. They see that what unites us—a common desire to improve our communities and create better opportunities for families and individuals—is stronger than what divides us. My confidence in the system is built on citizens exercising their right to make this a stronger, fairer country.

Lee Hamilton is a Distinguished Scholar, Indiana University School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice, IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.



Community Affairs

E-Filing Promoted as Maryland Surpasses One Million Tax Returns Processed

Comptroller Reminds Taxpayers that Filing Deadline is April 18, 2016

Annapolis—With the tax-filing season in full swing, Comptroller Peter Franchot recently announced that his office has processed more than one million tax returns. The one-millionth return was submitted by a Prince George's County tax filer.

To date, 1,020,123 returns have been processed, with more than \$1.2 billion in total refund payments issued. Comptroller Franchot urged Marylanders to e-file, as it's the most secure and efficient way to submit a tax return. Most Marylanders who file electronically receive their state refunds within three business days.

"As my office aggressively confronts a growing number of tax fraud and identity theft schemes, e-filing is the safest way for Marylanders to submit tax returns," said Comptroller Franchot. "It also

enables us to more quickly process returns and get refunds back to taxpayers."

March 1, 2016, represents the earliest date that the one million milestone has been reached, outpacing the previous mark of March 6, 2012. Through expanded public outreach efforts, the number of electronic returns processed has steadily increased. Last year, the Comptroller's Office processed more than 2.5 million returns electronically, a record high. Electronic filers represented more than 81 percent of all personal income tax returns filed last year.

This year, the tax-filing deadline is Monday, April 18, 2016, rather than the traditional April 15 date, which is Emancipation Day in Washington, D.C.

Marylanders can file their state tax returns electronically through the state's free iFile system, which can be accessed online at www.marylandtaxes.com. A list of other approved vendors to file electronically can also be found on the website.

For more information on any tax-related matter, visit www.marylandtaxes.com, call 1-800-MD-TAXES (1-800-638-2937) or 410-260-7980 in Central Maryland, or email taxhelp@comp.state.md.us.

Diversity among doctors drives trust in health care

By Patricia Maryland
NNPA News Wire Guest Columnist

Black History Month gives us the opportunity to reflect on the countless examples of the contributions that African-Americans have made to build our country. By celebrating these pioneers who helped shape America, we are inspired to overcome adversity and realize the positive change we, too, are capable of enacting in areas where inequity still persists. Black health is one such example where much has been achieved, but much more can be done to secure positive health outcomes in the black community.

We know that on virtually every measure of health, African-Americans fare far worse than their white counterparts—from diabetes to heart disease to infant mortality. These disparities can be explained by myriad and co-influencing factors, including a lack of access to affordable healthcare, nutritional education and safe spaces to exercise.

A less apparent, but equally troubling, reason for unequal outcomes in black

health is a strong sense of skepticism—even mistrust—in physicians, in medicine and in the healthcare system in general. The impact of the Tuskegee syphilis study, a four-decades-long clinical trial in which African-American men, unaware of their condition, endured the disease for the purpose of medical observation, still looms large on the black consciousness, perpetuating a culture of wariness that has lingered for generations.

truly improve the health of our families and communities. Today, too often, a lack of trust can become a huge liability, even a death sentence, for black patients.

I became a healthcare professional, because I saw my family members, friends and neighbors plagued by diseases that could have been prevented, if they had taken a proactive approach to their care. While it's important to acknowledge that African-Americans' relationship with the healthcare system is

this work will require a new standard of care that recognizes the unique needs of minority populations and designs a care strategy around what works for each individual patient. Working with physicians at our facilities, we are learning that when we actively engage the patient in his or her care, we're better able to build meaningful, long-term relationships that lead to better health outcomes. This personalized care approach is proving vital in earning trust and improving the health of the African American community.

Representation also matters when it comes to building confidence in healthcare in minority communities. Black Americans make up 13 percent of the population, yet they account for barely four percent of practicing physicians nationwide. What's more, is that studies show relationships between patients and physicians of the same race or ethnic background are characterized by higher levels of trust, respect and patient satisfaction.

It's clear that more needs to be done to encourage African-Americans to pursue medical professions and ensure the proper supports are in place to nurture diversity in the field.

As we remember and reflect on black history—the bad and the good, the darkness and the light—there is no better time than now to commit to actions that will make our community healthier and stronger. And it begins by working together to break down barriers, real and perceived, to the care we need and deserve.

Patricia A. Maryland, Dr. PH, is the President of Healthcare Operations and Chief Operating Officer of Ascension Health.

“Distrust, skepticism, fear— these beliefs are intensely embedded in the history of black healthcare, but they are ones we must overcome if we are to truly improve the health of our families and communities. Today, too often, a lack of trust can become a huge liability, even a death sentence, for black patients.”

Mistrust in medicine is particularly pronounced among African-American men many of whom enter the healthcare system only after their conditions are severe or life-threatening.

A 2011 study by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that black men who self-identified as “highly mistrustful” of healthcare were more than twice as likely to delay check-ups and cholesterol screenings, and three times more likely to delay a routine blood pressure screening, than those who were more trusting.

Distrust, skepticism, fear— these beliefs are intensely embedded in the history of black healthcare, but they are ones we must overcome if we are to

complex, our community cannot afford to remain disengaged in these matters.

That's why all of us must take a hard look at the barriers that prevent African-Americans from achieving health equity and commit to an effort to reclaim black health and wellness.

On the part of individual members of the black community, that means not only taking advantage of the coverage opportunities provided by the Affordable Care Act, but also taking a hands-on approach to health—one that seeks out care in a timely and accountable fashion and works to nurture a positive culture of health in our families, churches, neighborhoods and cities.

On the part of healthcare providers,

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Baltimore City Public Schools Re-Engage City Youth

By Ruth Young Tyler

The Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) Re-Engagement Center has shifted the academic trajectory from a bleak past to an optimistic future for 19-year-old Destiney Turner and 15-year-old Donay Sims.

The Re-engagement Center (REC) located at 200 E. North Avenue is a new full-service facility that will serve as the outreach to students, who have previously dropped out of Baltimore City Public Schools; are at high-risk of dropping out; or have been previously incarcerated back to the school system and also to support students who are in acute crisis.

The center's priority is to help students identify the most appropriate support and educational environment in order to minimize the likelihood of dropping out and to decrease multiple transfers due to significant lack of progress towards high school graduation, according to officials.

BCPS is committed to the academic success of all city students and the center will provide a myriad of services including, high-impact instructional, social and emotional services to engage and re-engage students.

"There was a lot of turmoil and obstacles in my life," said Turner, who was a victim of bullying and struggled with mental health issues when she left school at 16. "There are a lot of kids who go through the same things."

Now three years later, Turner is on the road to success, thanks to the support and strategic direction she received at the center. She is on track to graduate from high school in 2017. Her goal is to study economics at Towson State University.

"I hope to encourage other students



(Left) Dr. Gregory E. Thornton, CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools addressing a packed room at the grand opening of the Re-Engagement Center on Wednesday, February 17, 2016. (Right) Dr. Rinata Tanks, Strategic Climate Specialist at the Re-Engagement Center (middle) with student participants Destiney Turner (left) and Donay Sims (right). The Re-Engagement Center is a new full service facility that will serve as outreach to students, who have previously dropped out of Baltimore City Public Schools; are at high-risk of dropping out; or have been previously incarcerated back to the school system and also to support students who are in acute crisis.

Photos by Ruth Young Tyler

and let them know there is hope for anybody," Turner said.

Each student at the center is assigned a case manager, who works to assess the student's needs and develop a personalized plan. The REC provides wrap-around services to accommodate education, teen parenting support, counseling services, and behavioral intervention support, if necessary.

Dr. Gregory E. Thornton, Chief Executive Officer of Baltimore City Public Schools addressed a standing-room only crowd at the BCPS district office on Wednesday, February 17, 2016 at the official opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the center.

"This is a hub where you can get all

the support that you need," Dr. Thornton said. "Today we hit a reset button for them [Baltimore City students]."

Donay Sims' mother passed away when she was only eight years old. She lacked the family support she needed until her aunt encouraged her to go back to school. Sims credits the REC for providing her with the support, direction and opportunity to help her get through school.

"I have hope now—a lot of hope," said Sims, who plans to attend Morgan State University when she graduates from high school.

Dr. Rinata Tanks, Strategic Climate Specialist with the Baltimore City Public School Re-Engagement Center wants students to understand that past mistakes

do not mean the end of opportunity.

"This is just the beginning," said Dr. Tanks.

"There is no other work that we are doing right now, that is more important," said Roger Shaw, director of Multiple Pathways for Baltimore City Public Schools.

"We know there are many factors that cause students to be disengaged," said Shaw. "We take the student where they are and help them to move forward. This Center has the potential to change Baltimore City."

For more information, about the Re-Engagement Center, visit: www.baltimorecityschools.org or call 443-984-2000.

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Ravens Joe Flacco: The Ultimate Team Player

By Turron Davenport

The Baltimore Ravens faced salary cap issues as they entered the free agency period. The team has a number of veteran players under contract, which has limited their cap space. One of the biggest cap numbers was the one occupied by Joe Flacco.

Flacco signed a six-year, \$120,600,000 contract with the Ravens. It includes a \$29,000,000 signing bonus, \$29,000,000 guaranteed, and an average annual salary of \$20,100,000.

The huge contract came after Flacco led the Ravens to a Super Bowl victory over the San Francisco 49ers. Flacco set record for games without an interception and passing yards in a playoff season.

The Ravens offered a contract to Flacco prior to that season, but he and his agent Joe Linta decided to roll the dice hoping the 2012 season would be special.

If Flacco played under his previous deal this upcoming season, he would count \$28.6 million against the cap. The Ravens had no doubt that Flacco would agree to redo the contract and give them more space to maneuver in free agency.

The idea of redoing his deal is something that Flacco knew would come about. He has always been a team player and wants nothing more than to win with the Ravens.

“No matter what you do, there’s no way of getting around having a big cap number at some point or a consistently big cap number. The first few years of my deal, the cap number wasn’t very big. So, you don’t really have any other way around it [but] to have a monster one at the end of it,” Flacco said. “You



Joe Flacco celebrates after completing a pass at the start of the 2015 NFL season. He later had a season ending injury. Courtesy Photo/nfl.com

know it’s coming, unless the salary cap makes some kind of enormous jump, but it’s really kind of out of my control. It’s just an issue that these guys are used to dealing with— day-in and day-out.”

Flacco is coming off of his first injury as an NFL player. He tore multiple ligaments in his knee against the St. Louis Rams in November. He is expected to be back for the start of training camp, according to multiple reports.

The Ravens had some trouble along the offensive line last year. Left tackle Eugene Monroe went down and his backup allowed the hit on Flacco that resulted in the season ending injury.

Monroe is said to be the starter for now,

but it seems as if the Ravens would like to move on from him.

Kelechi Osemele filled in at left tackle at the end of the season. He is set to become a free agent next week. The extra cap space that was created by Flacco’s contract renegotiation may open up some room for the Ravens to sign Osemele.

The team is supposed to revolve around the quarterback and in the Ravens case, it truly does. The team is calm under pressure thanks to Flacco’s stoic personality. No moment is ever too big for him. He is always ready and willing to weather the storm.

Last season was an excellent example of Flacco’s leadership qualities. The offensive line allowed him to get hit constantly. He was always under pressure. Even though they did not play well, not once did Flacco throw them under the bus. There was no finger pointing.

The Ravens have closed the book on last season and are looking forward to the 2016 season. They are set to have their leader, Joe Flacco with them in 2016 and beyond.

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AACC Names Boykin Assistant Dean of Student Services

Arnold, Md.— Anne Arundel Community College has named Tiffany Boykin, Ph.D., J.D., as the new assistant dean of student services, effective March 1, 2016. She will be part of AACC's Student Services team in the Learner Support Services Division that focuses on helping students achieve their academic goals.

Boykin comes to AACC from Morgan State University where she most recently served as assistant professor in the Department of Advanced Studies Leadership and Policy, Community College Leadership Doctoral Program. Prior to that role, she was an assistant director for Morgan's Center for Academic Success and Achievement, a campus-wide academic support services center. She has conducted research on student achievement, publishing articles in journals such as "Urban Education" and "Journal of Educational Foundations" and co-authoring chapters in books, including "Black Males in Post-secondary Education: Examining Their Experiences in Diverse Institutional



Tiffany Boykin, Ph.D., J.D
Courtesy Photo

Contexts" and "Black Men in College: Implications for HBCUs and Beyond."

Boykin's background also includes working in Baltimore City Community College's enrollment services where she supported marketing and development activities related to recruitment and retention. She has a doctorate in Higher Education from Morgan State University and a law degree from the University of Baltimore School of Law.

For information about AACC, visit <http://www.aacc.edu>.

Bank of America kicks off 19th season of Museums on Us®

Nationally recognized program provides Bank of America and Merrill Lynch cardholders free access to 150 participating arts and culture institutions across the United States

Charlotte, N.C.— Bank of America has announced the 2016 "Museums on Us" program roster, featuring many of the nation's favorite arts, cultural and historical institutions. "Museums on Us" provides a cultural benefit to Bank of America and Merrill Lynch debit and credit cardholders across the U.S by providing each cardholder free admission to 150 prominent cultural institu-

tions across 101 cities in 33 states on the first full weekend of every month.

"These cultural institutions help local economies thrive," said Rena De Sisto, Bank of America global arts and culture executive. "We're thrilled to make these unique cultural experiences accessible to our customers for the 19th year."

In Maryland, the participating museums are the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture; and The American Visionary Art Museum.

For more information, visit: www.bankofamerica.com

Civic Works' Tiny House: A small home that saves big on energy

City Youth Helped to Construct Dwelling
By Ursula V. Battle

What's mobile, features more than a dozen "green" and energy-saving materials or technologies, including solar panels and a tankless water heater, a "pedal generator" that produces power by an individual pumping it with their arms and legs, a loft-style sleeping area, a solar powered generator, and was built by city youth?

It's Civic Works' Tiny House, a 200-square-foot home on wheels that serves as the Baltimore Energy Challenge Mobile Energy Education Center. Launched in 2009 by the Baltimore Office of Sustainability in partnership with the Baltimore Community Foundation and Civic Works, the Baltimore Energy Challenge (BEC) teaches low cost ways to save energy to Baltimore City residents, businesses, and nonprofits through grassroots efforts.

Tiny House is being used to inspire residents and businesses to become more energy-efficient, and to educate students on green technology and sustainable living. Civic Works recently received the "2016 Project of the Year Award" at The Corp Network's National Conference, in recognition of building the Tiny House. Civic Works is Baltimore's urban service corps and an AmeriCorps program, which seeks to strengthen Baltimore's communities through education, skills development, and community service.

Tiny House was open for a tour on Monday, February 29, 2016, at Clifton Mansion, Civic Works' Baltimore headquarters, located at 2701 Saint Lo Drive.

"Tiny House was built by participants in Civic Works YouthBuild program," said Earl Millett, Chief Operating Officer for Civic Works. "Most of these youth would have probably said they couldn't hammer a nail or handle a tape measure, and here they are building a whole house. It took them eight months to build the Tiny House, and they are proud of it."

Civic Works YouthBuild program provides job training and education for low-income Baltimore City youth. YouthBuild gives a second chance to Baltimore City youth who have either dropped out of high school, or require extra training and education. According to Millett, 20 young people worked on Tiny House. Through their work on Tiny House, the young participants gained new skills while creating an affordable home that can be used as a model in sustainable living options.

"Tiny House is in move-in condition," said Millett. "They aren't for everyone, but we found a surprising number of people who don't want to pay exorbitant energy costs. It's a much smaller space to heat, and the home runs off solar power. It would drastically reduce what people pay in their energy bills. We are hoping to build more."

Tiny House also features a propane heater, a back-up



(Left): Civic Works' Tiny House is in move-in condition and is heated by solar power.



Jay Feyjinmi, Tom Caponiti, and Shakahna Sutton of the Baltimore Energy Challenge program, inside Tiny House. Photos: Ursula V. Battle



Earl Millett, Chief Operating Officer for Civic Works, and Rodney Payne, EnergyReady Program Manager for Civic Works Baltimore Center for Green Careers sitting outside of Tiny House.

battery to keep the lights and appliances on when the sun isn't shining, a solar-powered ventilator, and a cool roof.

Tom Caponiti, serves as the Heat Islands Coordinator for the Baltimore Energy Challenge.

"Heat Islands are communities where there are a lot of dark surfaces such as roads and black roofs and not a lot of vegetation," explained Caponiti. "Our program is helping to combat that by promoting tree growth, and through other efforts."

He added, "We are also educating people about solar panels, and cool roofs which are outfitted on Tiny House. Cool roofs are made of reflective material, which pushes the heat away from the roof, which helps to reduce energy costs."

Rodney Payne, is the EnergyReady Program Manager for Civic Works Baltimore Center for Green Careers (BCGC).

"I was the construction coordinator and worked with the students on Tiny House," said Payne. "Initially, the students were very skeptical, but now they all want to either build a Tiny House or buy one. They had a real sense of pride once they saw the finished product. They were really happy."

He added, "They learned carpentry, framing, how to install siding, and other skills. They also learned about the importance of responsibility and accountability. This included showing up for work, being on time, having what they need to wear to work such as the right clothing or boots, and knowing the right terminology for that kind of business. They can take that to any job. It also provides them with an advantage over someone else who may be applying for the same job."

For more information about Tiny House visit www.civicworks.com/tinyhouse.

Hip-Hop Star and Producer Living Strong after Kidney Failure

By Stacy M. Brown

For hip-hop star David Rush, formerly known as Young Bo\$\$, touring the world with such superstars as Pitbull, was only one part of his dream and life goals. He also wanted a wife and children, but kidney failure almost derailed those plans.

“I was very surprised at 24 [when] I was diagnosed,” said Rush, now a producer and the man behind the 2009 hit, “Shooting Star,” which featured Pitbull and LMFAO. He also worked on Pitbull’s popular hit song, “Go Girl.”

“As far back as the 10th grade, I had protein in my urine and so there was some early warning signs but then you go on and go to college and you’re not really worried about doctor’s visits,” Rush said.

However, after graduation, a visit to the doctor’s office revealed alarmingly high numbers, feelings of sluggishness and being sick, he said noting that he was diagnosed with kidney disease and was already in Stage 4 failure.

Now, 33 and more than five years after a kidney transplant courtesy of his brother Dwaine, Rush no longer needs dialysis but is hoping to raise awareness about the fight during National Kidney Month.

According to the National Kidney Foundation African-Americans suffer from kidney failure at a significantly higher rate than whites— more than three times higher.

African-Americans also constitute more than 35 percent of all patients in the United States receiving dialysis for kidney failure, but represent just 13.2 percent of the overall population.



David Rush
Courtesy Photo

Due to high rates of diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease, African-Americans have an increased risk of developing kidney failure and need to be aware of the risk factors, making sure to have doctors regularly check blood sugar, blood pressure, urine protein and kidney function, according to foundation officials.

Further, diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure in blacks and approximately 4.9 million African-Americans over 20 years old are living with either diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetes.

For Rush, who has overcome his kidney issues and has achieved his dream of marriage and the birth of a son and daughter, the road wasn’t easy.

Before receiving the transplant, he was aided by the NxStage System One, the first portable hemodialysis system,

which has been cleared for home use by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration.

“The portable home dialysis treatment was something that I stumbled upon,” Rush said.

“I was signed to Pitbull and I wanted to go on tour and I just knew that there was a way because we have too much technology in the world not to be able to do this. I looked it up on Google and found NxStage and found that I could travel with the machine.”

It takes about a month of training to use the machine, but it could be well worth it, said Dr. Byron Welch, a kidney doctor at Satellite Healthcare in Texas. “The payoff has been that you have complete control of the schedule.”

Prescribing NxStage to patients is like allowing them to regain control of their lives and time, according to Dr. Jose Morfin of the UC Davis School of Medicine and a member of the NxStage scientific advisory board.

“The benefits my patients experience, like better blood pressure control, more energy and better mental health, are truly incredible to see,” Dr. Morfin said. “Performing more frequent home hemodialysis with the NxStage System One is definitely superior to convention in-center dialysis.”

Dr. Turan Marwaha, a specialist in internal medicine and nephrology in

Orange County, California, said while there are eight companies that make in-home dialysis possible, only two are available in the U.S., including NxStage.

“Patients who are using in-home dialysis have more energy, are able to spend more time with their families and have a better quality of life,” Marwaha said.

Rush said all of his doctors approved of the machine.

“When you’re first diagnosed, you are just in shock. Luckily, I was able to find the treatment and then consult with my doctor about it, get trained and go on tour. It changed everything for me. When I was going in for dialysis and spending five hours there, I still wasn’t coming out clean,” Rush said. “With this machine, I was at home doing three hours and 45 minutes and feeling better. It was acting as a kidney and cleaning me more. I was no longer sluggish and beat up and it allowed me to do a whole tour, an hour set of jumping around. It allowed me to continue my dream.”



Before receiving the transplant, David was aided by the NxStage System One, the first portable hemodialysis system,

Courtesy PhotoNxStage

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Paul's Place Helping to 'Stabilize' Southwest Baltimore

By Stacy M. Brown

For 35 years, Paul's Place has provided emergency assistance to individuals and families who are faced with an expense they are unable to pay.

Whether it's the crisis of eviction, the imminent shutting off of a utility or other one-time emergencies, Paul's Place has helped to meet the financial needs of residents and assisted them toward self-sufficiency.

"We started serving lunch 35 years ago because there were many who needed food," said Sadie Smith, the deputy director at Paul's Place, a catalyst and a leader for change and improving the quality of life in the Washington Village/Pigtown neighborhood as well as surrounding Southwest Baltimore communities.

"Across the city there's a lot of work to be done and so much can be done with the right resources," said Smith, who noted that the ultimate goal is that there no longer is a need for a Paul's Place.

The nonprofit's vision is that by 2020, individuals and families living in Southwest Baltimore will have full access to high-quality healthcare, education, employment, and housing along with other support necessary for stability and self-sufficiency.

Funded by private foundations, individuals and local government, Paul's Place recently began the "Stable Home Project," which seeks to link guests to safe housing in a timely manner.

The program offers structured assistance for obtaining or maintaining housing, including housing searches, landlord collaboration, and startup support to ensure that the process of accessing new housing or retaining current housing is as rapid and easy to navigate as possible, according to Smith.

"In order to be eligible, an individual has to have a court-order of eviction. So, we're dealing with those in crisis, on the verge of eviction," Smith said. "Often-times, they are facing urgent eviction and they also maybe dealing with other issues that are pretty challenging in that moment of crisis."

The Stable Home Project focuses on



Paul's Place is a catalyst and leader for change, improving the quality of life in the Washington Village/Pigtown neighborhood and surrounding Southwest Baltimore communities. Funded by private foundations, individuals and local government, Paul's Place recently began the "Stable Home Project," which offers structured assistance in obtaining or maintaining housing, including: housing searches; landlord collaboration; and startup support to ensure that the process of accessing new housing or retaining current housing is as rapid and easy to navigate as possible.

Courtesy Photo

eviction prevention for some individuals and rapid re-housing for others.

Rapid re-housing places a priority on moving a family or individual experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible, ideally within 30 days of becoming homeless and entering a program, according to Smith.

Eviction prevention focuses on those who have been pushed to the brink of homelessness by unforeseen hardships and limited resources.

In 2015, Paul's Place assisted 75 families in Baltimore with eviction prevention and 25 with rapid re-housing, a program that also includes enrolling guests in educational and skill-building opportunities as well as individualized goal planning and service coordination, all with a case manager.

"Our funding allows us to meet the unique financial needs of our guests and

help them to move beyond crisis to self-sufficiency," Smith said. "Historically, we did a lot of one-touch financial assistance. Maybe someone needed help with an electricity bill and that person would come in at the same time every year. Now, we're enhancing that and determining what can we do to help the individual not to come back next year. So, we're working with the individual for six or 12 months."

The services are all part of the continued evolution of Paul's Place, which began in 1982 as a soup kitchen where soup and sandwiches was served twice a week. Within two years, volunteers began preparing larger meals and then a hot lunch program soon began and expanded to seven days a week.

A Saturday morning and summer camp for children in the community was added and by the end of the fifth year, Paul's Place had established a Nurses'

Clinic to provide basic health screenings to homeless and uninsured members of the community.

Addressing homelessness, clothing and food distribution programs also became a staple, as officials at Paul's Place recognized that these services were greatly needed in the community.

Today, more than 24 services and programs are available to low-income individuals and families in the community and Paul's Place has vowed to continue to expand its programs and to partner with other organizations to help meet its mission of improving the quality of life in Washington Village/Pigtown.

"We have a wider open door," Smith said. "Paul's Place is so unique because we have so many services in one place. We tell people to come in and ask because we have pretty robust funding sources and we can always direct people to the right place to fill their needs."



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Federal Funds Available for Summer Meals for Children and Teens

Baltimore— The Maryland State Department of Education has announced that federal funds are available to assist public and private nonprofit organizations in serving free, nutritious meals to children and teens this summer through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), a U. S. Department of Agriculture program.

More than 400,000 Maryland children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, but may not have access to nutritious meals during the summer when schools are closed. For these families, food insecurity increases during the summer months. The SFSP plays a vital role in reducing childhood hunger along with providing healthful meals.

“While Maryland has made progress to expand access and increase participation in the summer meals program, more communities need to become involved in providing a meal service so children have access to meals in the summer months and return to school ready to learn,” said Dr. Jack Smith, Interim State Superintendent of Schools. “Particularly effective is pairing nutritious summer meals with engaging enrichment and recreational programs to draw children to the meal sites.”

The SFSP provides reimbursement to organizations for meals and snacks served to children in areas where at least 50 percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program, or when 50 percent of the children enrolled in a program qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Most organizations may be reimbursed for up to two meals or snacks per child per day. Camps and migrant programs may be reimbursed for up to three meals per child each day. Meals and snacks must meet federal nutrition standards.

The Program is open to children and teens age 18 and under and to individuals over 18 who are mentally or physically disabled. Interested organizations should contact MSDE at 410-767-0214. The deadline for applications is May 31, 2016. For information about the SFSP, visit www.eatsmartmaryland.org.

Popular Gospel Artist to Headline Fashion Show in Baltimore

By Stacy M. Brown

For lifelong Baltimore resident OL Williams, music is a passion that developed decades ago when he was just 13.

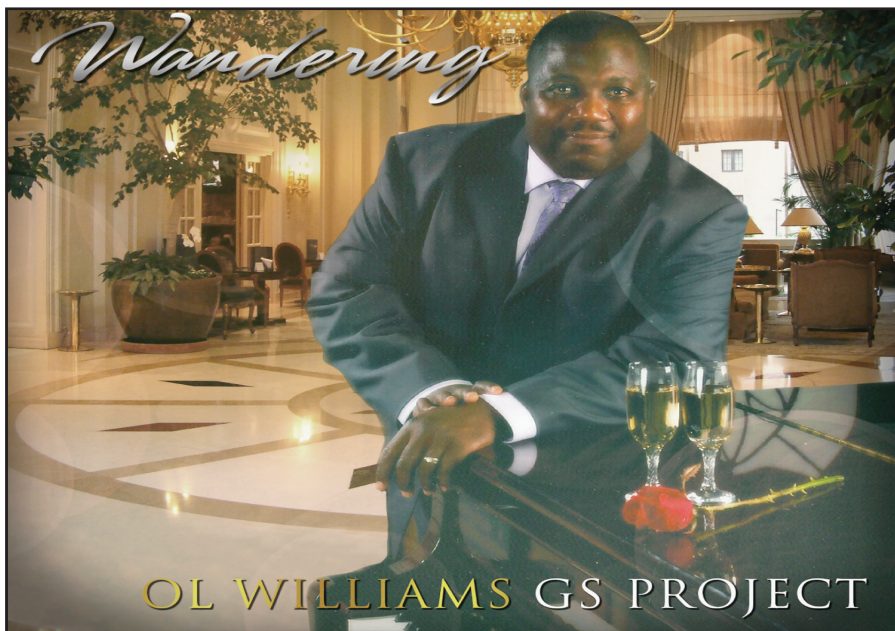
After honing his skills with some of the industry's most accomplished artists like Charlie Thomas of the Drifters, the R&B group the Swallows, and the Panama Band; Williams formed his own band and has been performing for more than 40 years.

On Saturday, March 12, 2016, the OL Williams GS Project—which stands for God's Special Project—will headline a full-figure fashion show at Positive Youth Expressions Educational Institute at 200 N. Bentalou Street in Baltimore. The 4 p.m. event is free and open to the public.

"This should be a real, real nice event. It's a full-figured fashion show and there will be a comedian and we'll be doing our upbeat music," said Williams, whose father helped to teach him to play the piano and he later studied music at the then-Community College of Baltimore.

Williams has been the recipient of more than 14 music citations, including from the Baltimore mayor's office, City Council and Maryland's governor's office.

Last year, he was also honored at the



Baltimore Gospel artist OL Williams, who has been entertaining audiences for over 40 years, will headline the full-figure fashion show at Positive Youth Expressions Educational Institute on Saturday, March 12, 2016 in Baltimore.

Courtesy Photo

annual Rosa Pryor Music Scholarship Banquet hosted by Baltimore Times columnist Rosa Pryor.

"Being that we're a gospel group, our music is the kind that will reach those young and old because it's cheerful and,

believe it or not, you can dance to it as well," Williams said. "We just want to get out there and give a good message,

a positive message, and have people enjoy themselves."

Among the selections Williams will perform is his group's signature song, "Jingle to His Love," which Williams calls a happy song. The group will also perform "The Lord's Business" and "I'll Dance for You."

"The song, 'The Lord's Business,' is a song that when you hear it, it has got a little bit of everything in it. It's heavy on the R&B side but delivers a great message," Williams said. "With 'I'll Dance for You,' we usually get the audience up and clapping. We also have a dance step for that song where everyone gets up and participates."

Additionally, Williams current CD "Wandering" includes songs like "Fly Away," "Honest Praise," and "Starting Fresh."

He says he is looking forward to performing his music in front of a hometown crowd.

"I'm just excited," Williams said. "This should be fun and we hope people will come and just enjoy themselves."

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Walters Art Museum presents the works of Carlo Crivelli and Madame de Pompadour

The Walters Art Museum continues to be the home of some of the greatest artwork and curators on the East Coast. Their latest exhibits, A Renaissance original: Carlo Crivelli and Rare Etchings by Madame de Pompadour are a must see by any artist in the area. The creators of fashion, music, the written word, sculptors and painters who are searching for inspiration will be inspired.

Both artists were ahead of their time.

They never copied was popular; each artist was unique and brought their own interpretation to their own work. In the case of Crivelli, this is a new view of the Italian Renaissance, the work of one of the most original and innovative painters in fifteenth-century Italy, Carlo Crivelli of Venice. This intimate exhibition showcases his luminous paintings, with their lavish use of gold, suggesting the materiality of goldsmiths' work and luxury textiles.

The story of Madame de Pompadour, mistress of King Louis XV of France, is best remembered as an enthusiastic patron of the arts. Less well known are the works of art she made and collected. On view here for the first time are selections from the Suite of Prints, an extremely rare first-edition set of etchings created by the royal mistress in the 1750s and purchased by Museum founder Henry Walters from a Parisian book dealer in 1895.

Both exhibits will be shown at the Walter's Art Museum until the end of May. The Walters is FREE and open to the public. Bring the entire family.



Courtesy Photo

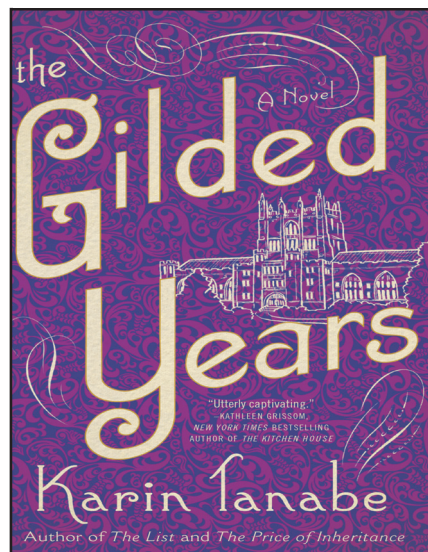
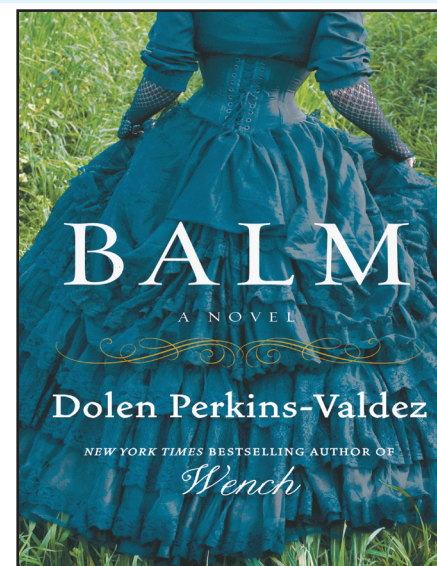
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Rosa Parks Collection at Library of Congress digitized and now online

The Rosa Parks Collection at the Library of Congress has been digitized and is now available online at: www.loc.gov/collections/rosa-parks-papers/about-this-collection.

The collection, which contains approximately 7,500 manuscripts and 2,500 photographs, is on loan to the Library for 10 years from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation. The Library received the materials in late 2014, formally opened them to researchers in the Library's reading rooms in February 2015 and now has digitized them for optimal access by the public.

"It's a great privilege to open the Rosa Parks Collection and help people worldwide discover more about her active life and her deep commitment to civil rights and to children," said David Mao, Acting Librarian of Congress. "From the thoughtful reflections she left us in her own handwriting to her "Featherlite Pancakes" recipe and smiling portraits, you'll find much to explore in this collection about Mrs. Parks' life beyond the bus."

Parks became an iconic figure in history on December 1, 1955, when she refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Her arrest sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a seminal event in the Civil Rights Movement. Parks died at age 92 in 2005.

The collection reveals many details of



Parks' life and personality, from her experiences as a young girl in the segregated South to her difficulties in finding work after the Montgomery Bus Boycott; from her love for her husband to her activism on civil rights issues.

Included in the collection are personal correspondence, family photographs, letters from presidents, fragmentary drafts of some of her writings from the time of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, her Presidential Medal of Freedom and Congressional Gold Medal, additional honors and awards, presentation albums, drawings sent to her by schoolchildren and hundreds of greeting cards from individuals thanking her for her impact on civil rights. The vast majority of

Photo Source: www.loc.gov

these items may be viewed online. Other material is available to researchers through the Manuscript and Prints and Photographs reading rooms.

The Library of Congress has created a video, which tells the story of acquiring and preparing the collection: www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=7081.

In the video, Howard G. Buffett, chairman and CEO of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation said, "I think it's so important for us to remember the iconic figures that changed our lives and gave us what we have and preserved what we have . . . Rosa Parks showed how much

difference one person can make. It's important for our children to see that and to really embrace it and understand it. Without getting this collection out of the boxes and out of the warehouse and in front of people, that wasn't going to happen. And so, I thought we should make sure that this was in a place where millions of people can see it and benefit from it and, obviously, the Library of Congress, there's no place better than this facility and this team to do that."

The Rosa Parks Collection joins additional important civil rights materials at the Library of Congress, including: the papers of Thurgood Marshall, A. Philip Randolph; Bayard Rustin; Roy Wilkins; and the records of both the NAACP and the National Urban League. The collection becomes part of the larger story of our nation, available alongside the presidential papers of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, and the papers of many others who fought for equality, including Susan B. Anthony, Patsy Mink and Frank Kameny.

To support teachers and students as they explore this one-of-a-kind collection, the Library is offering a Primary Source Gallery with classroom-ready highlights from the Rosa Parks papers and teaching ideas for educators.

For more information, see www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/rosa-parks-gallery/.

American Cancer Society Needs Volunteers

Volunteers are needed for the Road to Recovery Program. For many cancer patients, getting to and from treatment is one of their toughest challenges. The American Cancer Society needs volunteer drivers in the Greater Annapolis area and Central Maryland to help provide transportation for people in your community. Through the simple gift of a lift in your car, you can help carry patients one step further on the road to recovery. Schedules are flexible. Get in the driver's seat in the fight against cancer with the American Cancer Society. To volunteer to drive for the American Cancer Society's Road to Recovery program, call toll free 1-800-227-2345 or visit: www.cancer.org.

Asbury Church Assistance Network Needs Volunteers

ACAN is a non-profit organization providing food/toiletries, and/or financial assistance toward court-ordered eviction notices or utility cut-off notices in Anne Arundel County. There is an immediate need for volunteer(s) to design and maintain a website for ACAN which currently doesn't have a web presence. In addition, volunteers with public relations or grant writing experience are also needed. ACAN also seeks donations of a commercial refrigerator and freezer and tables. Monetary and nonperishable canned goods donations would also be appreciated. For more information, contact Janet Pack, Executive Director, at asbury.acan@gmail.com or 443-763-1120.

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