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Electrifying Festival Shines at the Inner Harbor March 28-April 3



The inaugural Light City Baltimore will take place Monday, March 28, 2016 through Sunday, April 3, 2016 at the Inner Harbor. Light City Baltimore is the first large scale international light festival in the United States and is presented by The Baltimore Office of Promotion & The festival will feature the 1.5 mile BGE Light Art Walk with 50 attractions including illuminated visual artworks, musical performances, street theater and concerts. The event is free and open to the public. For more information about Light City Baltimore, call 410-752-8632 or visit: www.lightcity.org for a complete list of the events and other details, (See article on page 10)

Image Courtesy of the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts

Celebrating a PG County Trailblazer during Women's History Month

By Stacy M. Brown

At age 86, Julia Clark is still working hard as an advocate with a stern resolve to see any task through.

Only these days, Clark, a former Department of Housing and Urban Development employee who has arguably done more for African Americans in Prince George's County than anyone, advocates from the Arbor Terrace Greenbelt Senior Living Community in Lanham. Clark is the head of the senior living's resident council as well as the Ambassador's Committee there.

"Seven days a week, 24 hours a day, I'm available, I keep my button on," Clark said. "When people come in, whether it's with Alzheimer's or whatever it is, I work with them to help them adjust to the new community."

While Clark is beloved at Arbor Terrace, she has long cemented a legacy of helping to shape Prince George's County.

She arrived in Prince George's County in 1939 and she went on to play a key role in the economic development of the county, now the wealthiest African-American majority county in America.

Clark helped to start the first child care center at HUD and served as president of the South County Economic Development Corporation, a civic association that endorsed a "shop at home" campaign in the late 1990s.

"Everybody would go and shop elsewhere and I said why not shop at home. So we got a campaign started and we were telling everyone to shop at home," Clark said.

The county was already considered one of the wealthiest suburbs in the country, with a median household income exceeding the national median by about 25 percent but was underserved by upscale retailers.

"They [county residents] were traveling to places like Virginia and Annapolis to shop at stores like Nordstrom or Neiman-Marcus, which had no locations in Prince George's County. I said that had to change and we were able to get malls and shopping plazas here," she said. "Now, we got National Harbor, Shoppes at Brandywine and other



Julia Clark has played a key role in the economic development of Prince George's County, which is now the wealthiest African American majority county in the United States. A longtime civil servant, volunteer and activist, Clark has devoted her life to serving others, and at age 86, she is still at it. She is the head of the senior living resident council, as well as the Ambassador's Committee where she lives.

Courtesy Photo

places. We're doing good."

Among her biggest accomplishments, Clark said, was helping to fundraise and campaign for Wayne Curry, who became the first black county executive in 1994.

"We believed in Wayne Curry and we were able to bring big business back and he was instrumental in getting National Harbor in here because there were too many people who didn't want big business, they were afraid," Clark said.

Clark was also a driving force behind the stadium in Landover and she served as a member of the committee tasked with building the Wayne Curry Learning Center. The contributions that she has made in shaping African American life in the county are rarely lost on those who know her. However, while many often clamor for low-income housing,

she once led a group that sought high-income housing.

"That was important. I said we need million dollar homes and we got them and now look, Prince George's County happens to be the richest majority African American county in the coun-

try," Clark said.

Clark was influenced by Gladys Noon Spellman, the late former Congresswoman who successfully spearheaded many efforts to effect social and political reform in all facets of life for her Prince George's County.

Clark led successful efforts to get the Baltimore-Washington Parkway dedicated in Spellman's honor.

"She got me interested in working in the country and she got me interested in working beyond the county and inside our communities," Clark said.

Born in Wilson, North Carolina, Clark grew up with seven brothers and sisters, two of whom are still alive. She attended college in El Paso, Texas and married a career military man. She began volunteering in West Germany working for the Red Cross. She has five children, 10 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Clark still wants to help young African Americans.

"I think our black young males have been forgotten about. The parents paid all the attention to the daughters, but our males need us and I've always pushed for help for our men," Clark said.

"Another problem we face is many have parents with limited education where the mom and dad have to work two or three jobs and the television is raising our kids. We have to do something," she said, noting she's still active and still reaching out to the community at-large. "I want people to remember me for making important deposits—contributions everywhere I go. I want them to know about the positive deposits that others can build on."

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

Flint water crisis can still bring out best in Americans

By Dr. Patricia Maryland, NNPA News Wire Guest Columnist

Our nation continues to marshal support for the people of Flint, Michigan, after it was discovered that the water supply was contaminated with extremely dangerous amounts of lead.

The long-term exposure of Flint residents to lead, which even in small amounts can cause grave health problems, has raised the public's awareness of this health crisis and prompted the call for immediate and enduring action—now and for years to come.

Perhaps the most devastating consequence of the Flint water crisis is the uncertain impact that prolonged lead exposure will have on the city's children. We know that infants and children under the age of six are exceptionally vulnerable to lead poisoning, which can severely hinder mental and physical development and produce a host of health complications, including learning and behavioral disabilities, slowed growth, poor muscle coordination, hyperactivity and lower IQ.

More than 200 of the city's children have already shown signs of elevated blood-lead levels and the symptoms of poisoning can set in long after the child is no longer exposed—meaning that a child who appears well now can still face daunting health complications later in life.

We do not yet know the gravity of what has transpired in Flint but we do know this: Flint's children deserve every opportunity to be healthy, and we must come together to develop a comprehensive strategy that guarantees the compassionate care they need to overcome short- and long-term challenges to health.

Flint has already seen an outpouring of support from community members, non-profits, social service agencies and healthcare providers, including: the Greater Flint Health Coalition; the United Way of Genesee County; and Genesys Health System, an Ascension hospital serving Flint and its mid-Michigan neighbors; working together to maximize the benefits of their support services and develop a long-term healthcare strategy for the generation of Flint kids who might be adversely affected.

Underlying the crisis in Flint are the many socioeconomic barriers that low-income children and families faced long before the tragedy, including a lack of access to quality healthcare and affordable housing. In a city of more than 100,000 Americans—where 57 percent of residents are black and more than 40 percent live at or below the federal poverty level—there are virtually no grocery stores to be found. Together, we're working to change that and ensure that Flint's children are not left wanting for nutritious food, early education and access to integrated social services ever again.

Even the smallest act of service can help address the short and long-term costs of this crisis. The Flint Child Health and Development Fund, created by a united committee of residents, healthcare providers and community organizations, will be used to provide social services, early childhood education, behavioral health services and more to children in Flint. The Flint Child Health and Development Fund is so important to the local community that Ascension Michigan (Borgess Health – Kalamazoo, Crittenton Hospital Medical Center – Rochester, Genesys Health System – Grand Blanc, St. John Providence – Detroit, St. Mary's of Michigan – Saginaw, and St. Joseph Hospital – Tawas City) has supported the initiative by donating to this effort.

Giving what you can is the single most effective action you can take to contribute to the ongoing care and interventions in Flint. To contribute, visit: www.flintkids.org.

Even after the water runs clean in Flint once again, its children and our community, may bear the scars for years to come. So we must confront the health ramifications of the crisis and support positive health outcomes for Flint's children. It will require our foresight and collaboration to guarantee their long-term care.

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



Community Affairs

Maryland businesses, taxpayers warned about email phishing Scams

Taxpayers advised not to open or respond to email phishing messages



Annapolis— With the 2016 tax filing season well under way, Comptroller Peter Franchot wants to remind taxpayers to safeguard their personal information by being alert to email phishing scams trying to get at their money through the disclosure of their Social Security numbers, wages and home addresses via W-2 statements.

The Comptroller's Office recently received calls from several Maryland employers reporting that employees at their businesses have received suspicious emails from individuals impersonating company officials and asking the recipient to supply copies of company employee W-2 statements. Those who respond to the emails risk the theft of personal information and identities.

"I want to assure taxpayers that emails like these are scams and they should not open or respond to the email with their personal data," Comptroller Franchot said.

The Comptroller's Office advises not to reply to emails asking for confidential information, most especially Social Security numbers, birth dates, salary information or home address. If you receive an email asking for a copy of your W-2 form, you should immediately contact your employer. You also may call 1-800-MD-TAXES or email md-comptroller@comp.state.md.us.

The Comptroller's Field Enforcement Division investigates suspicious activity reported by taxpayers. Comptroller Franchot's top legislative priority this year is the Taxpayer Protection Act, which provides greater tools to prevent fraud and protect taxpayers.

"I want all taxpayers to be careful with their personal information, and to be sure to tell their friends and neighbors to be careful of any suspicious emails," Comptroller Franchot said.

Trump's Hostile Takeover of the Republican Party

By Raynard Jackson
NNPA News Wire Columnist

I have repeatedly heard many of the talking heads in Washington, D.C. and the Republican establishment accuses Donald Trump and his presidential campaign of engaging in a hostile takeover of the Republican Party. I agree with them.

Having received my undergraduate degree from Oral Roberts University in tax accounting, let's define what is a hostile takeover.

According to Investopedia, "a hostile takeover is the acquisition of one company (called the target company) by another (called the acquirer) that is accomplished not by coming to an agreement with the target company's management, but by going directly to the company's shareholders or fighting to replace management in order to get the acquisition approved."

Investopedia continues, "the key characteristic of a hostile takeover is that the target company's management does not want the deal to go through."

Typically a company is targeted for a hostile takeover when their assets are considered to be undervalued. Trump sees the

Black community as an undervalued asset within the Republican Party.

Unfortunately, many in the party see no value in the black community because they don't think they will ever vote Republican. These are the consultants that go from one losing campaign to another, doing the same thing, and wonder why they never win an election.

institution has made such a goal.

The Republican Party will continue to be an undervalued asset as long as they hire consultants who go from losing campaign to losing campaign.

We have a national convention coming up in July, but where are the black staffers who have decision making powers? Where are the black delegates?

cerned about racism, but because they think it will hurt Trump's candidacy.

The shareholders of the party (Republican voters) have no faith in the current management (congressional leaders, the consultant class, Republican TV pundits, etc.) so they have told the establishment that they strongly support a hostile takeover (by Trump).

They have made this perfectly clear with their vote. Those opposed to Trump's takeover have spent north of \$30 million in just two weeks to try to damage Trump before the Florida and Ohio elections last week; but Trump still won four out of five states.

The shareholders want new management and they want Trump to lead the team. The shareholders have repeatedly told the current management that they don't want amnesty for illegals, they don't want these trade deals, they don't want continued increases in government spending; but the current management told the shareholders to sit down and shut up, thus the rise of Trump.

Hostile takeovers usually catch management by surprise because they have gotten complacent, lazy and comfortable; thus making them out of touch with their shareholders.

Clearly, the Republican establishment caused this problem and now they are trying to stop the takeover from happening. Well, it's too little too late and they will be forced to accept the inevitable.

Raynard Jackson is Founder and Chairman of Black Americans for a Better Future (BAFBF), a federally registered 527 Super PAC established to get more blacks involved in the Republican Party. To learn more about BAFBF, visit: www.bafbf.org.

"The Republican Party, as currently constituted, is the party of old white men. Trump sees a great opportunity to expand the party's market share by cultivating substantial relations with the black and Hispanic communities, not just with words, but also by his actions."

In 2016, you still have people in the party that believe if you seek the black vote it will alienate white voters, therefore they should ignore the black vote.

Trump sees the Republican Party and the black vote as an undervalued asset and its management totally incompetent. He is right on both counts.

The Republican Party, as currently constituted, is the party of old white men. Trump sees a great opportunity to expand the party's market share by cultivating substantial relations with the black and Hispanic communities, not just with words, but also by his actions.

Trump's national spokesman is a black female; his state director in North Carolina is a black male. No other presidential campaign or party institution has black staffers in such a position. Trump has publicly stated his goal of getting at least 25 percent of the black vote. No other presidential campaign or party

Where are the black vendors? Will there be any black entertainment?

One way of trying to prevent a hostile takeover is by using a poison pill. The purpose of the poison pill is to prevent the takeover from ever happening.

Marco Rubio said, "Trump can't win the general election." Nebraska's United States Senator Ben Sasse said, "I will never vote for Trump." Defeated campaign staffers constantly go on TV and talk about how Trump can't beat Hillary or he will never get the female vote, etc.

They don't really believe that, but this is the poison pill that the establishment is putting up because they can't fathom the idea of an outsider like Trump becoming president and they have little to no access to the inner circle.

Republicans have spoken out more on racial issues during the past two weeks than they have in my entire time as a Republican; not because they are so con-

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University of Maryland Medical Center leads in kidney transplants for blacks

By Stacy M. Brown

Although African Americans comprise about 13 percent of the population in the United States, they represent 34 percent of the patients waiting for a donor kidney, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Further, two years ago, a whopping 73 percent of African American organ transplant recipients received kidneys and, because blacks experience higher rates of diabetes and high blood pressure than other racial groups, experts say they're especially vulnerable to end-stage kidney disease, for which organ transplant is considered the gold standard long-term treatment.

Today, the University of Maryland Medical Center's longstanding national prominence in organ transplantation has been further elevated with its recent status as the leading center in the United States for performing kidney transplants in African Americans.

Data from the United Network for Organ Sharing shows UMMC performed more kidney transplants in African Americans in 2014 than any other center in the country—a total of 128, including both living and deceased donors.

These patients represent just under half of the 270 total kidney transplants done at UMMC that year, said Dr. Jonathan Bromberg, chief of the Division of Transplantation at UMMC and a professor of surgery, microbiology and immunology at University of Maryland School of Medicine.

"We are aggressive about accepting donor organs and aggressive about helping people to become active candidates on the list. We are very active in community outreach to ensure everyone gets a shot at transplant," Bromberg said.

Between January 1, 2011, and December 31, 2015, the UMMC transplant team performed 624 kidney transplants for African-American recipients, more than any other program in the country. In 2014, UMMC topped the list of transplant centers, with 128 African American kidney transplants, and in 2015, UMMC had the third largest total.

"The donor pool has increased only a small amount. We are transplanting patients because we are aggres-



Dr. Jonathan Bromberg
Chief of the Division of Transplantation at UMMC
Professor of Surgery, Microbiology and Immunology
University of Maryland School of Medicine.
Courtesy Photo/UMMC

sive about accepting organ offers, are aggressive about accepting patients onto the waiting list and keeping them active on the waiting list, and providing very comprehensive care in and out of the hospital after the transplant," Bromberg said.

UMMC's efforts to offer specialized kidney transplants have helped increase the donor pool to its patients. The medical center is among a small handful of medical centers that transplant type A2 cadaver kidneys—a subtype of the highly common blood type A—into kidney failure patients with type B blood, which is particularly common in African Americans.

The center also boasts unusual abilities in offering multiple renal artery kidney transplants, a complex surgery—required when donors have multiple renal arteries instead of a single artery—which many other high-volume transplantation centers can't do, Bromberg said.

Also, UMMC does more kidney transplants for African Americans than even its peer institutions nearby, from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C., who serve the same patient population or similar numbers of African Americans, according to Dr. Bromberg.

"Renal failure is more common in African Americans compared to Caucasians, so many African American families do not have potential living donors," Bromberg said. "Therefore, it is important to go to a transplant center, become knowledgeable and educated about transplant, get on the waiting list, and maintain your health to maintain your place on the list. African Americans are not at a disadvantage compared to others on the list once one becomes activated on the list."

UMMC transplant clinicians also employ their expertise in discerning which family members of kidney transplant hopefuls can successfully provide a kidney to their loved one without putting their own health in jeopardy, according to Bromberg.

Since conditions such as obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure can run in families, "Our expertise comes in having very good, stringent screening so we're not accepting some younger donors and putting them at risk of developing renal disease later in life," he said.

Assessing potential live donors' BMIs, glucose levels and other factors help UMMC physicians make prudent decisions, ensuring good outcomes for both kidney donors and recipients.

"We also have a long discussion with family members about the risk," Bromberg said. "We don't want to put any potential donor at significantly increased risk of having a bad outcome 20, 30 or 40 years later ... they might need that kidney."

For more information and further details about kidney transplantation, see this link to the University of Maryland Medical Center website:
<http://umm.gd/1SzH5bZ>.

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Added MARC Train Weekend Service
puts the Cherry on Blossom Festival



Additional rail cars on MARC Penn Line weekend trains will connect transit riders in Charm City with D.C.'s World-Famous Festival

Baltimore— The Maryland Department of Transportation's Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) encourages Baltimore-area residents to get to the month-long National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D.C., by using MARC Train's Penn Line weekend service.

The world-famous festival, which draws over one million visitors to the nation's capital each year to admire blossoming cherry trees, will officially begin with a March 26 opening ceremony and conclude April 17 following the National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade on Saturday, April 16.

Last year, festivities surrounding the National Cherry Blossom Festival led the MARC Train Penn Line to set a new record for ridership on its weekend service. Highlighted by the festival parade, MARC trains carried a total of 16,350 riders on the festival parade weekend—about 10,650 riders on the day of the parade. Typical ridership on a Saturday is around 5,000 passengers.

To manage this year's expected larger-than-normal crowd, additional rail cars will be added to MARC's Penn Line service. And, all weekend MARC trains will continue to operate with the bike

car, which is equipped to hold 28 full-sized bicycles and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

MARC Train's Penn Line weekend service offers nine round trips between Baltimore's Penn Station and Union Station in Washington, D.C., on Saturdays and six round trips on Sundays for the same \$7 one-way fare offered on weekdays – with monthly and weekly passes honored.

MARC customers are advised to purchase their tickets before boarding to avoid the \$3 surcharge for on-train ticket purchases. Also, MTA asks customers to arrive to the station early in order to purchase tickets and board the train before its scheduled departure.

The National Cherry Blossom Festival commemorates the 1912 gift of 3,000 cherry trees from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo to the District of Columbia. The gift and annual celebration honor the lasting friendship between the United States and Japan.

MARC Train operates its weekend service only on the Penn Line, serving Martin State Airport, Baltimore's Penn Station, West Baltimore, Halethorpe, BWI, Odenton, Bowie, New Carrollton and Washington, D.C.'s Union Station. The complete schedule is available online at: mta.maryland.gov/sites/default/files/PENN-weekend_Sched110615.pdf.

'My City Bikes' Readies Cyclers for Spring Commute

By Stacy M. Brown

Between 2000 and 2009, U.S. Census data revealed the number of commuter cyclists in Baltimore increased by a whopping 233 percent. Nationwide, biking has also grown as the number of individuals who cycled within the past 12 months increased from 47 million in the spring of 2008 to 66 million in the spring of 2015.

"For the average commuter, when you look at operating costs, a bike costs about 10 cents per mile, public transit breaks down to roughly 14 cents per mile and a typical sedan costs about 58 cents per mile," said Tina Schmidt, of My City Bikes, a public health alliance that helps individuals enjoy better health and quality of life through biking.

Add all of that to the fact that bike commuting allows an individual to combine their daily exercise and commute into one and more people are now motivated to get out and enjoy a daily bike commute instead of being stuck in traffic, Schmidt said.

With the arrival of spring, bikers are hitting the road and My City Bikes offers a mobile app which is said to be the official guide to beginner biking in hundreds of communities.

"My City Bikes is a mobile and web-based public health alliance of communities, organizations and local businesses dedicated to helping people discover better health and quality of life through biking," Schmidt said. "We work with local partners like the City of Baltimore and Race Pace Bicycles who are dedicated to community health to establish



The "My City Bikes" Baltimore app is a guide to biking in Baltimore for beginners. It offers need-to-know safety information, DIY bike maintenance information and local bike riding suited to beginners. (Above) Sharrows and cyclists at the intersection of Boston and Hudson Streets in Baltimore City.

Photo By Elly Blue

utility style, community-based mobile apps and publicly accessible information that make it easy and approachable for people to bike regularly."

The My City Bikes app is a guide to biking in Baltimore for beginners. It has need-to-know safety information, DIY bike maintenance information, and local bike riding that is suited to beginners.

"A lot of people can be overwhelmed when they think about biking, and try

to find local information. Every ride detailed in the My City Bikes Baltimore app is beginner level, so a new rider can choose any road, mountain or recreational option with confidence," Schmidt said.

My City Bikes started in 2010 and today provides local bike guides for beginner cyclists in more than 300 communities in three countries.

While commuting on bikes can provide many benefits, it can also help keep

children active as well, according to Schmidt.

"When you look at recreational biking you can take that a step further. These days people are concerned with not just their physical activity levels, but that of their kids as well," she said. "While the many groups and gyms and activities that are available are great, biking is unique in that you can do it together as a family. The kids don't have to be in childcare, and the parents don't have to be on the sidelines.

"Not to mention you can't really text or talk on the phone while biking so you get good old fashioned family time and exercise rolled into one. The reasons to bike are as diverse as the people who ride bikes, but every person has a great reason. Hopefully another reason that we see this is because biking is becoming more accessible for beginners," she said.

Also, it's important that bikers realize all of the options they have available to find a bicycle and place to ride that suits them, Schmidt said.

"Bike shops like Race Pace Bicycles are revolutionizing the idea of the bike shop from a place for elite enthusiasts to a place for everyone. That has opened the door for people to feel welcome and open to the idea that they, too, can bike," she said.

"It doesn't matter if you're just spiffing up the old bike in the garage, getting something shiny and new, or just want to go ask a bunch of bike questions.

"When you have a shop like Race Pace combined with the My City Bikes Baltimore mobile resource that the City of Baltimore has helped provide, every local rider is set up for success and has an unprecedented support system. It is a great time to be a beginner cyclist."

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Safe Streets opens new location in Sandtown-Winchester

By Stacy M. Brown

Ten safety counselors joined representatives from the mayor's office on March 17, 2016 to open a new Safe Streets facility in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood.

Located inside a former Catholic convent might be seen as a fitting backdrop in contrast to the gun violence that has plagued the area, which became the center of national attention last year because of a resident named Freddie Gray.

"The Safe Streets program has realized significant success across Baltimore City, with two sites having at least one twelve-month period with no homicides," said Sean Naron, a spokesman for the city's health department. "In 2014, Safe Streets workers had 15,000 client interactions and mediated 880 conflicts. More than 80 percent of those interactions were deemed to be likely or very likely to result in gun violence."

Safe Street uses previously incarcerated individuals and other men to counsel young people against violence. The

counselors walk the streets in Safe Street neighborhoods at night with the goal of seeking out potential problems and counseling individuals against violence.

"Most of us come from this environment and we understand the body language," said Imhotep Fatiu, a former convict who spent 14 years in prison and is now the director for the new Sandtown-Winchester office.

In 2015, five people lost their lives to gun violence in the blocks where the new Safe Streets office is located. Also, 12 others survived shootings but the 344 murders in the city last year were the deadliest in Baltimore history, according to health officials.

"Violence is a public-health issue. Violence spreads from person to person just like other diseases," said Dr. Leana Wen, the city's health commissioner.

Naron says Safe Streets has made a significant difference with violent crime dropping 50 percent in those neighborhoods, that include Cherry Hill, McElderry Park, Mondawmin and Park Heights.



A new "Safe Streets" facility was opened in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood on Thursday, March 17, 2016. Safe Streets Baltimore was launched by the Baltimore City Health Department in 2007 to replicate the national "Cure Violence" program. The initiative employs and trains outreach professionals to de-escalate and mediate disputes that might otherwise result in acts of violence.

Courtesy Photo/Safe Streets Baltimore

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PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
 SOME MATERIAL MAY BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 13

CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR THEATERS AND SHOWTIMES

"Safe Streets is a program that has been proven to reduce gun violence, and I think all of us know it is important to expand this program into the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood," Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake said at a March 17 press conference to announce the program's launch.

Rawlings-Blake announced that Catholic Charities will operate Safe Streets from St. Peter Claver, a convent on the parish property, employing credible messengers to interrupt violence before it occurs.

"These are individuals who come from the communities they serve," said Dedra Layne, director of Safe Streets Baltimore, adding that many Safe Streets outreach workers were once "a part of the problems these communities have been impacted by."

"They have recommitted themselves

to strengthening the communities they were once part of tearing apart," she said.

Safe Streets maintains that violence is a learned behavior that can be prevented using disease control methods.

"This intervention targets at risk youth, aged 14 to 25, through regular individual interactions, conflict mediation, media campaigns and community mobilization," Naron said.

Safe Streets Baltimore was launched by the Baltimore City Health Department in 2007 as a replication of the national Cure Violence program. The public health initiative employs and trains outreach professionals to de-escalate and mediate disputes that might otherwise result in acts of violence.

"The program has realized significant success across Baltimore City," Naron said.

Send your community calendar events to: kreevie@btimes.com

Electrifying Festival Shines at the Inner Harbor March 28-April 3

By Ursula V. Battle

You are at Baltimore's Inner Harbor, and spot a giant lotus flower sculpture, which lights up the water. You walk along a little further and now see hundreds of paper boats, which are changing colors. You now glance over towards The National Aquarium and see fish and crabs on the façade of the facility. You are not seeing things. You are at Light City Baltimore, a festival of light, music and innovation.

The electrifying festival takes place Monday, March 28, 2016 through Sunday, April 3, 2016 at the Inner Harbor. Presented by The Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts, Light City Baltimore will feature the 1.5 mile BGE Light Art Walk with 50 attractions including illuminated visual artworks, musical performances, street theater and concerts.

The event is free and open to the public and is the first large-scale international light festival in the United States.

"We are excited about Light City Baltimore," said Cathy Hornig, festival director for the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts. "About a year-and-a-half ago, two visionaries by the name of Brooke Hall and Justin Allen came to my office and asked about having a light festival here in Baltimore like the one they have in Sydney, Australia. Our events include Artscape and The Baltimore Book Festival, so it only seemed natural to take on this newest festival for our city."

According to Hornig, the original artworks are by local, regional, national and international artists who were selected by a jury through a call of entry held in the spring of 2015.

"They reviewed more than 240 proposals," said Hornig. "We were thrilled with the amount of proposals, especially with this being our first year. Everyone is really looking forward to it."



*The Pool by Jen Lewin
Photo by Denise Leong photo*



"Glacier" by Riki K

Many downtown restaurants, attractions, museums and retailers have teamed up with the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts and Visit Baltimore to offer unique experiences for festivalgoers during Light City Baltimore. These include special Light City-themed events; light displays on buildings; free glow-in-the-dark souvenirs for patrons; Light City-themed menu items; deals and discounts and more.

"We can't wait to see all the lights come on Monday night at 7 p.m.," said Hornig. "That evening will also feature a grand illuminated procession by the BGE Light Art Walk. Light represents so many things. One of the interesting aspects of the festival is how the artists took that medium and used it in so many different ways."

Light City Baltimore will also feature bands, dancers, and other performers at Club Light City, Harbor East Stage, and Mini Light City.

Hornig says the event will also kick-off the tourism season for Baltimore, which has struggled to attract visitors since the aftermath since Freddie Gray's death last April.

"Through this event, we are hoping to shine the light on all the positive things happening in our city," said Hornig, noting that CNN listed the event as one of the top things to see in America. "It's been a rough year, and we are hoping that Light City Baltimore will be an important part of bringing positivity back to our city, and helps to showcase the wonderful things Baltimore has to offer."

For more information about Light City Baltimore, call 410-752-8632 or visit: www.lightcity.org for a complete list of the events and other details, and to download the Light City Baltimore App.

ELEVATE YOUR EASTER BRUNCH

(Family Features) If you'll be hosting friends and family to honor Easter this year, make your gathering as simple as it is scrumptious with a decadent brunch menu.

If you're daunted by the diversity of dishes a brunch menu demands, remember that quality ingredients – not complex preparation – is what makes dishes truly stand out. Fresh produce and superior products instantly elevate a recipe from good to great.

These brunch staples all start as basics, but get a boost with the right combination of quality ingredients:

Made-to-order omelets are always a hit because they guarantee you're serving up exactly what your guests enjoy. Use a few winning ingredients to create an easy and quick

omelet base, then offer an array of toppings, including unexpected flavors such as Jarlsberg Brand Cheese. Best known for its classic wedge, this nutty, mild cheese is also available in slices – perfect for the ooey-gooey factor everyone loves in an omelet.

A classic French quiche combines fresh and flavorful ingredients, is easy to make and tastes delicious hot or cold. The quiche is simple enough to make that you can prepare several varieties, giving guests plenty of options and handily filling a buffet spread. Simply prepare your crust and filling base then mix in fresh, crisp veggies that are steamed or lightly browned. Or create a savory, meaty quiche with your favorite sausage or bacon. Add some

cheese before filling the crust and sprinkle some more cheese on top before baking.

Finger foods bursting with flavor simply make brunch better. This recipe uses ready-rolled puff pastry sheets, rosemary and the distinctive taste of Jarlsberg Brand Cheese for a mouthwatering dish that can be featured at a tasting station or as part of a larger meal.

Find more recipes for your Easter brunch at jarlsberg.com.



Make Brunch a Breeze

Skip the stress this Easter with these tips to make preparing your holiday brunch simply delicious.

1. Choose several make-ahead dishes that you can prepare well in advance, such as quiche or a breakfast bake.
2. Skip time-intensive pancakes and instead serve up a French toast casserole.
3. Prepare recipes using the highest-quality, freshest ingredients for the best results.
4. Give your meal a boost with unexpected but impactful touches, such as specialty butters, homemade jams and delicious cheeses.
5. Create beautiful and tasty accents for your buffet in minutes with pretty bowls or platters filled with colorful, seasonal fruit.

Cheesy Bacon Quiche

Makes: 4 portions

Crust:

1 cup butter
1 cup flour
2 tablespoons water
salt

Filling:

1 cup bacon, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1 leek
4 eggs
1/2 cup Jarlsberg Cheese, plus additional for topping, grated
3 tablespoons parsley
4 tablespoons cream
Heat oven to 400 F.

In large bowl, mix butter, flour, water and

salt together. Knead thoroughly to make firm dough. Pack dough in plastic wrap and let rest in refrigerator for 20 minutes. Press dough into full surface of pie plate and cover with aluminum foil. Prebake in oven 10 minutes, then remove aluminum foil and bake another 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in frying pan on medium heat, saute bacon. Add leek at end of cooking time.

In bowl, whisk eggs and cream together and add grated cheese, parsley, bacon and leek. Pour filling into crust and top with grated cheese. Bake for 15 minutes, or until edge is golden brown and center is set.

Tip: To save time, use premade pie crust and bake according to package directions

Easy Brunch Omelet

Makes: 4 portions

Toppings:

mushrooms
chorizo, bacon or ham
cherry tomatoes
spring onions
herbs

Omelet:

8 eggs
8 tablespoons water or milk
salt, to taste
pepper, to taste
2 tablespoons butter
8 slices Jarlsberg Cheese
8 slices ham

Prepare toppings. Fry mushrooms and chorizo, bacon or ham; cut cherry tomatoes and spring onions.

To make omelet, crack eggs in bowl and add water, salt and pepper. Whisk eggs until they turn a pale yellow color, about 25-35 whisks.

Heat frying pan on medium heat and melt butter. When butter is bubbly, add about one quarter of the egg batter. This will make one of four omelets. When batter starts setting, move hardened parts toward the middle, enabling the rest to get direct heat as well. Use a gentle hand to avoid scrambled eggs. When batter starts to look cooked, add cheese and meat and flip omelet over. The omelet should be slightly golden on fried side and a little runny and soft in the middle.

Finally, put omelet on plate and add garnish before serving.

Rambling Rose

Happy Easter to You!



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello, everyone and Happy Easter to you and your family. If the Easter Bunny is here that means only one thing—spring is also here. You might want to put away your fur coats but I suggest that you keep out your heavy coats, hats and closed-toe shoes ladies.

Last week, one of my dear friends, O'Donel "Butch" Levy was laid to rest in a much loved and musical way. There were many musicians at the funeral services from all over the country. Almost a hundred local musicians filled the seats of the Mount Hope Baptist Church. Such musicians as Kendra Holt and her side kick, drummer, Nick Costa; Marshall booze, Eddie Harrison, David Smith, Gail Martin, Chester Thompson and Ramir Bey. The entire Jump Street Band was there including Lamont Terry Battle, Brad Collins, Jeff Wilson and Jimmy Taylor. My dear friend Gabriel Goodman with her brother, David Bun flew into town. Sir Thomas Hurley, Nevitta Ruddy, Ron Pender, Glen Grainger and his brothers were there. Tiny Tim Harris, Lady Rebecca and Ethel Ennis performed. Andy Ennis, Joe Hosea, Dennis Chambers, Larry Willis, Gary Ellerbe, Bill Harvey, Sandy Mallory and her husband Joe, radio personalities and so many more were there to say goodbye.

Moving along, it is Easter Weekend and it is springtime and a few organizations decided to take advantage of this in a good way. King Neptune's Cabaret is back on the calendar this year with a Cabaret B.Y.O.B., with free beer, soda, ice, chips & pretzels and music by DJ Mike Jones. This event will be held on Saturday, March 26 from 8 p.m. until 1 a.m. at the American Legion, Towson Post #22, 125 York Road in Towson, Maryland. For tickets and information, call 410-404-1773.

Marva D and DJ Kenny D are having a "Good Friday Fish Fry Party" on Friday, March 25 from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the VFW Hall, 8123 Harford Road, Parkville, Maryland. You can B.Y.O.B, free beer and set-ups. For tickets, call 410-599-9159.

Arch Social Club is having an Easter Kids Disco on Sunday, March 27 from 4-8 p.m. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Children from age 11 and up only. Hot dogs and chips are included with admission. This is a fundraiser for the club and also to support the community.

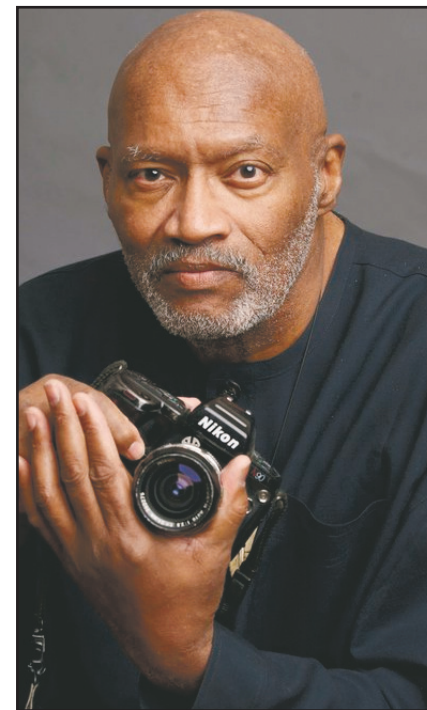
The Forum Caters is having an Easter Sunday Dinner Feast on Sunday, March 27 from 3-6 p.m. at the Forum Caterers 4210 Primrose Avenue. For more information, call 410-358-1101 or go to: info@forumcaters.com.

Well, my dear friends, enjoy your Easter Holiday. I'm going to get some rest. I recently had major stomach sur-



"Butch" Levy, both a national and an international recording artist, musician, producer, band leader, singer, comedian, and one of the world's gifted guitarist was born, September 20, 1945 passed away on March 14, 2016. Funeral services were Saturday, March 19 at Mount Hope Baptist Church.

gery, but I had to take time out to talk to you. I am out of space and out of time. Remember if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.



Vernard Gray will host "Art 4 Children, Youth Resources "Event at the New Motor House, located at 120 W. North Avenue on Saturday, April 2 from 11 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. A free admission event including vendors for healing, performing & visual arts, training opportunities for young people and yours truly, Rosa Pryor will be there for book signings. For more information, call Vernard at 202-262-7571.



Isaac Parham is one of the headliners for the Dreams of Tomorrow Event hosted by Dreams Do Exist Foundation on Sunday, April 3 at the Gordon Center for Performing Arts, 3506 Gwynnbrook Avenue from 3-6 p.m. For tickets and information, call Darryl Smith at 410-984-8444

Film activist empowers black girls through conversation, storytelling

By Andrea Blackstone

Women's History Month highlights the contributions of women in American history during the month of March. However, the achievements and accomplishments of young black women in contemporary society are also worthy of acknowledgement.

Tiffany L. Gill, a filmmaker, writer and founder of Black Opal Media, was raised in Baltimore and attended Towson State University. Today, Gill is working to give girls and young women of color a voice through film, programming, conversation and a growing social movement.

The purpose of her forthcoming documentary called Black Girls Unscripted (BGU) featuring, predominately African-American and Afro-Latin girls from the ages of 11-22, is to provide an opportunity to see themselves in ways that they may not in mainstream media and tell their own stories. Girls who are excelling in various areas will also be highlighted as stereotypes are challenged.

The creation of the forthcoming film project is rooted in a conversation Gill had with a former 13-year-old mentee. The girl's mother died from breast cancer. She returned to the area to visit her grandmother, after moving out of state with her father. When Gill saw her again in 2013, a conversation led to the teenager revealing news of her attempted suicide.

"I asked her why and pretty much outside of mental health issues that I discovered later that ran in her family, she said, 'I hate being dark-skinned. I hate my wide nose. I hate my hair. All the boys in Texas like the light-skinned or Spanish girls,'" Gill said. "She went a step further to say: 'I never see anyone in media who looks like me that's considered kind or pretty or smart.'"

Gill added that probably the most profound thing her mentee said to her was that there is nothing good about growing up to be a black woman. The next day, the teenager proposed the idea showing different media imagery where women of color are represented through something better than degrading or stereotypical images in popular culture and media.

"That conversation was really the springboard for this project," Gill said, referring to her documentary and movement.



Film activist Tiffany L. Gill facilitates a BGU Listening Session at Oxon Hill High School in Prince George's County on April 25, 2015. Courtesy Photos

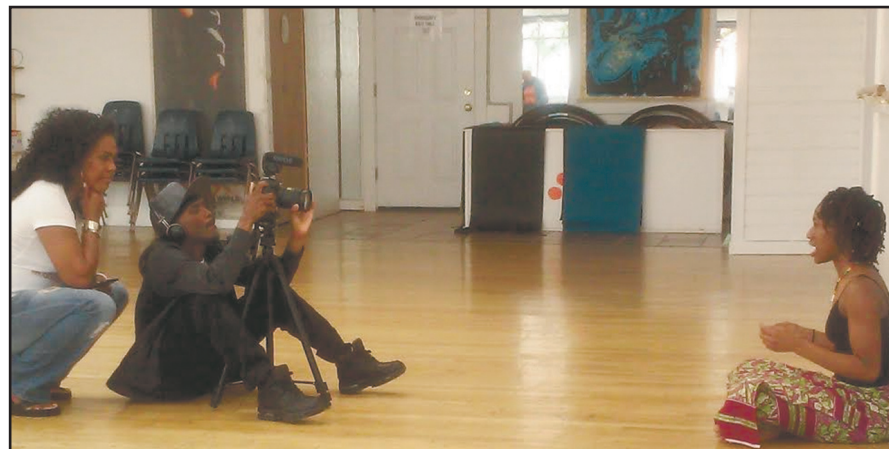
Filming has taken place in Baltimore, the District of Columbia, New York and Chicago. Gill explained that the project will follow girls of color through their challenges and triumphs. A fundraising initiative to complete production and editing of the project will be launched in late spring.

"And the hope is that we'll be ready to roll the piece out winter of 2016, early 2017 at the very latest," Gill said.

Gill is also a former nonprofit executive who integrated an opportunity for girls ages 13-19 to talk about hot-button topics during listening sessions that will be held every two months at the South Bowie Branch Library, located at 15301 Hall Rd. in Bowie, Md. BGU Listening Sessions are facilitated by team members, Charmayne Walker—BGU's social media director—and Belinda Brewington—BGU's community relations director. Gill said the discussions are also a great opportunity for girls to make new friends.

Marian D. Daniel, a BGU advisory board member and supporter from Baltimore said that the project provides a place and atmosphere where girls can safely express themselves without being judged. She added that their voices have been silenced because no one is typically interested in truly hearing them.

Additionally, VeTalle Fusilier—BGU's development consultant, advisory board member and longtime supporter said the



Gill, rear, interviews a dancer at the Adinkra Cultural Arts Studio in Mount Rainier, Maryland.

team identified a key area that she would like to see change occur through BGU's impact.

"Most importantly, as the title suggests, we want Black girls to see themselves as they truly are—unscripted. Not a fictional, idyllic portrayal, but unscripted, beautiful, smart and savvy," Fusilier said. "It is the story of Black girls achieving in different environments, triumphing despite limiting circumstances, (and) maximizing their opportunities for growth and self-realization."

Gill wants the collection of empowering messages to reach communities where girls need them most.

Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever, founder of

Exceptional Leadership Institute for Women, was interviewed for Gill's project and described its value as tremendous.

"It provides a much needed focus on the often unspoken needs and challenges faced by Black girls, and creates the impetus for the rest of us to do a better job at meeting those needs," Jones-DeWeever said. "Our girls deserve it."

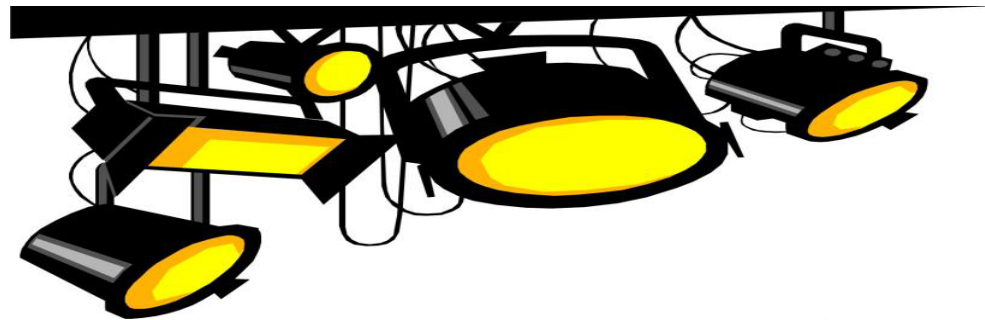
A BGU listening session will be held on March 26, 2016 at 10:30 a.m. at the South Bowie Branch Library. The event is free but registration is required via <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/black-girls-unscripted-listening-sessions-tickets-22183615792>. To learn more about BGU, please visit www.blackgirlsunscripted.org.

St. Philips Episcopal Church Youth & Young Adult “Coffee House”

Saturday, April 9, 2016

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St. Philip's Episcopal Church ~ Great Hall



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Rehearsal will be held on Saturday, April 2, 2016, at 11:00 am, at St. Philip's ~ Great Hall
Participants are urged to arrive 30 minutes prior to show time on April 9th

For more information, please contact:

Marion Wenn ~ 410.212.1199 / murniec@yahoo.com

Nadine Forgenie ~ 410.279.5842 / nforgenie@gmail.com

Nikki Washington ~ 410.212.0563 / nikki.washington516@gmail.com

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Maryland seeing late surge in influenza activity

State health department urges residents to get flu shots, practice germ hygiene

Baltimore— After getting a slow start to the influenza season, flu activity in Maryland has ramped up in recent weeks. While the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene announced the first laboratory-confirmed case of seasonal influenza in November 2015, flu activity remained at low levels before increasing substantially in late February and early March. Most of this increased activity has been due to influenza type A

(H1N1). This year's influenza vaccine formulation includes the A (H1N1) strain.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory disease that may lead to serious complications, hospitalization or even death. The virus that causes influenza spreads from person to person through coughing or sneezing, as well as through direct contact with infected people and contaminated surfaces or objects. Common symptoms include fever, body aches, fatigue, coughing and sore throat. Symptoms usually begin one to four days after being exposed to the virus.

The influenza vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and your family from becoming ill with influenza. Yearly vaccinations are important because the strains of influenza that circulate change over time. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone older than 6 months get the flu vaccine. It is not too late to get vaccinated and Maryland residents are urged to get protected now by contacting their health care provider, local health department or neighborhood pharmacy.

The CDC recommends you take the following steps to help prevent catching the flu:

- *Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- *Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- *Practice other good health habits such as these: clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill; and get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

If you believe you are ill with influenza:

- *Contact your healthcare provider for management of flu symptoms or treatment of any complications. Call them if you have high fever, difficulty breathing or other severe symptoms.
- *Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- *Get rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- *Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers and wash your hands often.
- *If possible, stay home from work, school, running errands and visiting friends or relatives when you are sick – especially those who are in hospitals or nursing homes. This will help prevent spreading your illness to others.

According to the CDC, clinicians should encourage all persons with influenza-like illness who are at high risk for influenza complications to seek care promptly to determine if treatment with influenza antiviral medications is warranted.

The state has an Internet-based Maryland Resident Influenza Tracking Survey (MRITS) to enhance Health and Mental Hygiene's existing influenza surveillance by monitoring influenza-like illnesses among residents who might not seek medical care. Please volunteer! Sign up via the Internet at <http://flusurvey.dhmh.maryland.gov/> to receive online surveys where you can report any flu-like symptoms each week.

For more information about the seriousness of seasonal influenza and the benefits of vaccination, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/> or <http://goo.gl/y4YpFX>, or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO. Stay up-to-date on in-

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Red Cross has significant need for type O negative blood

Type O negative is often needed in trauma situations

Baltimore— The American Red Cross has a significant need for type O negative blood donors to donate blood for patients.

Type O negative blood can be transfused to patients with any blood type and is often used in emergency situations. While less than 7 percent of the U.S. population has type O negative blood, hospitals depend on frequent O negative donations to ensure it's always available for patients in need.

Eligible donors with type O negative blood are encouraged to make a whole blood or double red cell donation, where available, through the Red Cross. During a double red cell donation, two units of red blood cells are collected while most of the plasma and platelets are returned to the donor.

"Type O negative donors are an important part of the Red Cross trauma team," said Nick Gehrig, communications director, Red Cross Blood Services. "While all blood types are needed, type O negative donations are necessary in emergency situations when there is no time to determine a patient's blood type. Because there is such a high demand for type O negative blood, O negative donors are needed to donate often."

Blood donation appointments can be quickly and easily scheduled by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting redcrossblood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Because of generous donors, the Red Cross is able to provide blood products to trauma patients like Carla Randecker. In 1995, a semi-truck failed to halt at a



stop sign, changing Randecker's life forever. She suffered a broken neck and femur. She woke from surgery to see a bag of blood attached to her IV.

"I'm O negative, a rarity," said Randecker. "All I remember was, wow, someone gave their blood for me. I made a promise that day to do the same. When I was well enough, I'd return the favor."

Randecker became a regular blood donor and gave for many years. This past year, her family fulfilled her wish to give blood together. Five of the family members who gave were type O negative, and since then, donating blood has become a family tradition.

"If I teach them nothing else, it's that they should always, always, do for

others," said Randecker.

The Red Cross must collect approximately 14,000 blood and platelet donations every day for the patients at about 2,600 hospitals and transfusion centers nationwide. Blood and platelets are needed to respond to patient emergencies, including accident and burn victims, heart surgery and organ transplant patients, and those receiving treatment for leukemia, cancer or sickle cell disease.

Those who come to donate now through May 15, 2016, will be entered to win four single-day tickets to any of 10 Cedar Fair theme parks in the U.S. For a full list of participating parks, visit: redcross.cedarfair.com.

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, email Janet Pack, Executive Director, at asbury.acan@gmail.com or call 443-763-1120.

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