



# THE BALTIMORE TIMES

Vol. 39 No. 2

November 1 - 7, 2024

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication

## Ripken Foundation, UMMS Celebrate Opening of STEM Center at Katherine Johnson Global Academy



*Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation officials joined leaders from the University of Maryland Medical System and a group of Baltimore City educators and students for a ribbon-cutting ceremony that celebrated the launch of a state-of-the-art STEM center at Katherine Johnson Global Academy in West Baltimore on October 24, 2024. (See article on page 10)*

*Photo: Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation*

## Understanding E. coli: A Bacterial Infection to Guard Against and Avoid

By **Andrea Blackstone**

Angela Ginn-Meadow, a registered nurse, registered dietitian nutritionist, certified diabetes care and education specialist, and owner of Happily, Ever Living by Ang, Health & Wellness Company provides health coaching and medical nutrition therapy. The Baltimorean answered questions about Escherichia coli (E. coli). The bacterial infection became a recent topic of discussion when the CDC shared a food alert stating that it was investigating an E. coli outbreak that was reportedly linked to McDonalds Quarter Pounders. Onions sent to food service operators were voluntarily recalled by Taylor Farms. The CDC provided an October 25, 2024 update stating that risks to the public are now believed to be very low. Other fast-food chains decided to remove onions from their menus.

**Q: What is E. Coli?**

**A:** E. Coli is a group of bacteria normally found in our stomachs and stomachs of animals. Some strains of the bacteria are for healthy digestion, and some can cause illness. The infection causing E. Coli can adhere to cells and release toxins that cause you to become sick.

**Q: What are signs or symptoms that a person has E. coli infection?**

**A:** The symptoms include diarrhea, commonly bloody diarrhea, severe stomach pain, vomiting, and a possible fever. E. Coli infection can stay in your system for three to four days before symptoms occur.

**Q: How does a person commonly get E. coli?**

**A:** Typically found in contaminated

food or water, E. Coli is most commonly found in undercooked ground beef, unpasteurized milk or juice, soft cheese [made] from raw milk, contaminated raw fruit or vegetables such as lettuce, leafy greens or spouts. Contamination can occur at any point, from production, processing, distribution or preparation.

**Q: How is it spread?**

**A:** E. coli typically spreads through the feces of infected people or the consumption of contaminated food.

**Q: Is E. coli more dangerous for some than others?**

**A:** The severe complication of E. Coli is Hemolytic uremic syndrome which can lead to kidney failure and even death. This syndrome is dangerous for those at risk of infection. People at risk include pregnant women, children under five, and those with weakened immune systems. People living with HIV or AIDS or [people who are] being treated for cancer, recipients of organ transplants, or individuals with autoimmune conditions such as lupus or Type 1 diabetes may have a weakened immune system and are at greater risk of severe complications.

**Q: How long does the infection usually last?**

**A:** The infection can last five to 10 days, but most people feel better within five to seven days.

**Q: What can people do to avoid E. coli contamination while preparing meals at home or before ordering fast food?**

**A:** To avoid E. Coli infection, people should avoid unpasteurized milk or juice and make sure ground beef is

cooked to 160 degrees. When dining out, ask for hamburgers medium well or well [cooked] and request to remove any unpasteurized food items from your order.

Proper handwashing is the key to preventing transmission. Wash hands before, during, and after preparing meals. In addition, hand washing after using the bathroom is vital to preventing E. Coli transmission. Making sure most common foods are properly handled and cooked at the correct temperatures can limit your exposure.

**Q: Are there tips to help pick healthier or safer fast-food meals?**

**A:** Avoid eating undercooked ground beef and unpasteurized milk or juice or soft cheeses made from unpasteurized milk. Sprouts are high risk for E.coli infection. Skip the sprouts on your salad or burger topping.

**Q: What should a person do if he or she believes they have eaten something that made them sick from a fast-food chain?**

**A:** Contact your healthcare provider if you believe you are sick from food. They may require lab testing to verify if it is a foodborne illness. The local health department will be contacted to help solve any emerging or ongoing outbreaks. If the symptoms are severe, you must go to your local emergency room for care.

**Q: Are there two or three quick meal options that you suggest, or ways to return to cooking at home?**

**A:** Eating at home is beneficial for our overall health and can lower the risk of foodborne illness when cooking with food safety in mind. Some simple steps include washing



*Angela Ginn-Meadow, RN, RDN, CDCES, said that E. coli is mostly transmitted by the consumption of contaminated food or water. Proper handwashing is the key to preventing transmission.*

*Photo: Grain Foods Foundation*

hands, separating raw from cooked food, cooking meats to the right temperature, and refrigerating promptly.

I typically cook protein options on Sunday, such as baked chicken, blacked salmon, and roasted turkey, for easy lunches and dinners. Then, I batch-cook roasted vegetables to add to meals.

Visit [www.realtalkrealfood.com](http://www.realtalkrealfood.com) to learn more about Ginn-Meadows and her services.

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# Storyteller Tackles Historical Fiction, Celebrates Real Life Black Prima Donna

By **Andrea Blackstone**

Tiffany L. Warren, a Maryland-based storyteller draws attention to Black joy in her forthcoming historical fiction novel, “The Unexpected Diva.”

“This novel is about the rise to fame of the first Black prima donna, Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, more widely known by her stage name ‘The Black Swan.’ The time period it covers is from about 1850-1854 through her first tours of North America and Great Britain,” said Warren.

Taylor Greenfield was a real historical figure born on a plantation in Mississippi, manumitted during childhood, and then raised by her former enslaver’s widow in an abolitionist community in Philadelphia. Greenfield took music lessons and discovered her three octave voice that went from a deep baritone to an ear-splitting soprano, according to Warren.

She added, “When Eliza’s inheritance, left by her guardian, was contested, she was left penniless with few options. During a time when the Fugitive Slave Act allowed slavers to kidnap free and fugitives alike, she did the unthinkable and launched out in pursuit of her vocal gift. A chance encounter with a socialite on a steamship on the way to Buffalo set things in motion, and Eliza sang all the way to Queen Victoria’s salon at Buckingham Palace. The story is so rich with intrigue, danger, romance, and, of course, all the courage Eliza needed for this adventure. I had the time of my life writing this story.”

Warren explained that she came up with the idea for her debut historical biographical fiction novel while researching for a future novel that will

be released in 2026. During the process, she discovered W.E.B. Du Bois’ record company, Black Swan Records. It was named after Taylor Greenfield.

“When I found that it was named in honor of Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, I purposely chose this story because it’s joyful and not traumatic. We’ve had quite enough trauma and attacks on Black bodies and Black psyches. This is the story of a Black girl who chases her Black art, experiences Black love, finds Black joy, and exists in a world with many white people who love her and support her—true allies. She still finds strength in her Black community. She gets to have it all, and everything is right about that,” Warren confidently remarked.

Warren, a working mother of five adults, grandmother, and the wife of Brent Warren, a husband who is a huge supporter of her endeavors, has penned various fiction genres, screenplays and stage plays.

She added, “I even dabbled in poetry as a teenager, and I rapped a little too. All ways of storytelling. Executive producing the films is another aspect of the storytelling as well. It’s making sure you have the resources to tell your story on screen. The actors, locations and what not. It all works together.”

Writing is what Warren has loved since childhood. To date, she has penned over thirty published books.

“I started reading at the age of four, according to my mom. And as soon as I learned how to write, I started creating my own stories. I don’t remember not being a writer,” she remarked.

The novelist shared a tip for individuals who aspire to land a traditional publishing deal. She recommended that they should chase



*Tiffany L. Warren,  
author of “The Unexpected Diva.”  
Photo: Brynn Warren*



*Photo: William Morrow Paperbacks*

their gift and the story, not what’s trendy, whatever is selling or what they believe publishers want.

“Write the story your heart tells you to write,” Warren affirmed.

Warren decided that during the promotion of her novel, and perhaps even beyond that point, to spotlight today’s unexpected divas that stand on Taylor Greenfield’s shoulders. After putting out a social media call to action for young, Black opera singers, Warren said the response was overwhelming. Respondents sent videos of themselves singing and essays sharing how Taylor Greenfield’s legacy impacts their lives. Warren will be attending the Morgan State University performance of Scott Joplin’s “Treemonisha” <https://events.morgan.edu/event/scott-joplins-treemonisha> to give some unexpected divas their flowers later this month.

“There are too many triumphant stories of Black joy that have yet to be told,” Warren said. “The Black

Swan’ [Greenfield] was ‘the Beyonce of the Antebellum.’ She moved through her life with audacity, purpose, and I’m sure she did it afraid, but she was triumphant!”

The official publishing date of “The Unexpected Diva” is January 7, 2025. Warren noted that pre-order sales are underway. A book with large pre order amounts make publishers and distributors notice that there is a bigger demand for the book than they anticipated. Visit <https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-unexpected-diva-tiffany-l-warren?variant=42471083343906> to order “The Unexpected Diva” and [www.tiffanylwarren.com](http://www.tiffanylwarren.com) to obtain more information about Warren.

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#### Mailing Address

The Baltimore Times  
2530 N. Charles Street, Suite 201  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
Phone: 410-366-3900  
<https://baltimoretimes-online.com/>



## Commentary

# Opportunity Agenda for Black America

By Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.  
President and CEO, National  
Newspaper Publishers Association

We salute Vice President Kamala Harris for her leadership and innovative Economic Opportunity Agenda for America's future economic development progress. In particular, for underserved communities of color, this is good news. Especially for Black Americans striving to gain economic sustainability, all opportunities to achieve financial freedom and equity should be given priority attention and engagement.

The Harris Agenda emphasizes the need to provide people "With the tools to achieve financial freedom, lower costs to better provide for themselves and their families and protect their rights." I believe that increasing financial literacy on all the new and evolving financial assets, including cryptocurrencies is also strategically important.

Too often, marginalized communities are consigned to the sidelines to witness the economic innovation and progress of others. Yet today, I believe that Black America should take a deeper and more informed look at the emerging marketplace for cryptocurrency. I am not an expert on crypto, but I know that in the communities that I have worked for civil rights over the past 60 years deserve to have greater access to information and knowledge that is factual and honest about the specific benefits that may come from attaining crypto digital assets.

I coined the term "**Crypto Black**" as a timely call to action to Black Americans — and actually to all Americans — to take seriously the need to do personal and collective research, study and appropriate



Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.  
Courtesy photo

responses to the opportunities to gain greater financial literacy about the tools and potential benefits of acquiring cryptocurrency.

There are multiple collaborative roles that the government, the private sector, and civil society must all do together to advance the opportunity agenda in the crypto space.

**First, we need to foster better financial literacy education about digital assets inside the Black Community.** Too many Black Americans have fallen prey to major scammers inside this space — and too few have been able to access the windfall of opportunities from innovation in cryptocurrency. How do we close this gap? Education. We need community workshops on cryptocurrency literacy, just like we have had in the past on financial literacy. Black Americans can — and should — be leaders in adopting this revolutionary technology, but we need to understand how it works, and how to access its benefits.

In his recent book, "Hijacking Bitcoin," Roger Ver — one of the founding fathers of cryptocurrency — shares how he and others sought to spread this technology to unlock financial freedom for people around

the world but have had to grapple with scammers and self-interested individuals who flooded into the space. Ver bears many scars from this decade-plus fight. He and others who are advancing cryptocurrencies for the right reasons should find ways and means to work with Black business leaders in the United States Black Chamber (USBC), the National Urban League and with many others.

**Second, we need to ensure that the growing number Black crypto CEOs and entrepreneurs have a seat at the most important industry tables.** While there are a few in the Black community who have been early adopters of cryptocurrency, we have not seen enough Black founders and CEOs at the head of the most important digital asset companies. There are many areas where a future President Harris could help promote Black leaders in this field. One idea for the next Administration is to host regular conversations on crypto and ensure that Black crypto entrepreneurs have a leadership role.

**Third, digital assets, if properly researched and attained can help to unlock innovative wealth advancement for millions of Black Americans.** I am hopeful personally that our next President of the United States, Kamala Harris, will seize this moment with a bold vision and a series of forward-looking public policies. "Crypto Black" will be good for Black America.

*Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is the President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and a long-term civil rights leader who can be reached at [dr.bchavis@nnpa.org](mailto:dr.bchavis@nnpa.org).*

## Baltimorean Beat the Odds After Aging Out of Foster Care

By Andrea Blackstone

Arielle Skinner recalls spending over 15 years in foster care, then aging out of the system at 21 years old. Skinner grew up in Norfolk, Virginia, then relocated to the Baltimore, Maryland area about four or five years ago.

“I was placed into foster care twice in Portsmouth and Virginia Beach, Virginia,” Skinner said.

Growing up in the foster care system caused her to experience a very challenging transition into adulthood.

“I’ve had to navigate reimagining family to include my “chosen family,” mental health challenges because of the trauma experienced, building a support system, and healing so that I not only can say I’ve overcome the foster care system, but I have also broken cycles,” Skinner added.

Despite the obstacles Skinner endured, the licensed clinical social worker (LCSW-C), nonprofit founder of Fostering Bridges, Inc., author, chaplain, and clinical supervisor with MENTOR Maryland noted that she proudly beat the odds. Skinner explained that she is part of less than 5% of foster care youth who earn a bachelor’s degree and less than 1% who continue their education and obtain a master’s degree.

Mentor Foster Care, located in Baltimore, is a part of the Sevita family of services where therapeutic and medically fragile foster care services are offered to babies, young children and teenagers. Skinner coaches and supervises case workers through Mentor Foster Care. She also helps to guide youth and advocate for them.

“I’m passionate about making sure the voices of youth in care are heard and I strive to create an environment where they feel understood, supported and empowered,” Skinner added.

Skinner—a cycle breaker, loving



*Arielle Skinner, foster care alumna, LCSW-C, and nonprofit founder of Fostering Bridges, Inc.  
Photos: Arielle Skinner*

wife and mother, created the “Bloom: A Self-Love Journal” and “I Am A Sunflower, The Sunflower Is Me” journals to offer guidance, support and a voice to those who might feel unseen or unheard.

The foster care alumna continues her progressive work through Fostering Bridges, while striving to continue to develop programming that will provide additional support to transition-age foster youth.

“Currently, we have our annual scholarships that support local foster youth going to a four-year and two-year college/university have access to dormitory items and financial support. We also are seeking to serve by providing mentorship, resource connection, curated opportunities and experiences for transition-age foster youth, along with communal supports,” Skinner explained.

The two scholarship opportunities consist of a dormitory and a campus bookstore scholarship. They are geared toward foster youth going to college for the first time. The dormitory scholarship involves an all-expense paid shopping experience to help recipients secure essential dorm items. The bookstore scholarship helps purchase textbooks and other essential



*Arielle Skinner (left) shops with a dorm scholarship recipient.*

materials from a campus bookstore.

“The award amounts currently are \$500.00, but we are hoping to increase with the support of donors and sponsors. We are also seeking to expand our scholarship to also include an award to support a foster youth currently enrolled in school,” Skinner stated.

The scholarships open November 1, 2024, and the application deadline to apply is June 1, 2025. Skinner shared that the public can support the scholarship efforts by making a one-time or recurring donation; joining a committee; serving on the nonprofit’s board of directors; or becoming a volunteer, partner, sponsor, and sharing the nonprofit’s work.

Skinner further stated that according to Foster Care Capacity, there are approximately 4,300 youth in foster care in Maryland, but only about 1,400 licensed foster families. Mentor Maryland is always looking for foster parents, according to Skinner. Although people from all walks of life and backgrounds are welcome to learn more about the opportunity via [mentorfostercare.com](http://mentorfostercare.com), basic

requirements must be met to become a foster parent.

It is possible to live a life beyond foster care. Foster youth who are in search of help should connect with their counselors, assigned social workers, and organizations that provide educational resources and support or resources.

“In the state of Maryland, eligible foster youth can access the Maryland Tuition Waiver for Foster Care Recipients that exempts them from paying tuition and mandatory fees at a public college in Maryland. This does not include covering the cost of books, room, board, and transportation. I believe this is an awesome resource and is one of my favorites. Also, some colleges have unique ways that they provide additional support to foster youth who attend,” Skinner said.

“I do believe foster care was a vehicle to get me to where I am today. It also showed me that foster care doesn’t have to be a graveyard but can be a launching pad,” Skinner shared.

Visit [www.fosteringbridgesinc.org](http://www.fosteringbridgesinc.org) to learn more about Skinner’s nonprofit and scholarships.

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# Baltimore Green Space Revitalized

## \$3.6 Million Renovation Transforms Schoolyard into a Vibrant Community Space in East Baltimore Midway

BALTIMORE, Md.— Parks & People (P&P), celebrating 40 years of improving Baltimore's communities through green spaces, announced the grand opening of the newly renovated Cecil Community Park in East Baltimore Midway. Located at Cecil Elementary School, the park will serve as a vital community space for the school, the Cecil-Kirk Recreation Center, and local residents. The \$3.6 million renovation project is part of a multi-year initiative to revitalize Baltimore's green spaces and was made possible through the collaborative efforts of P&P, the Central Baltimore Partnership, The Mayor's Office of Recovery Programs, Baltimore City Public Schools, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, and the East Baltimore Midway community.

"Cecil Community Park is a beacon of what we can achieve when we invest in our youth and their education," said Frank Lance, CEO of P&P. "Parks & People is committed to transforming our city, and Cecil Community Park stands as a testament to that mission. This park will not only offer a safe and fun space for children but will also provide a platform for educational programs, fostering a brighter future for our young generation."

The transformation of this 1.5-acre space includes a complete renovation of the school's park and playground spaces while also adding an outdoor classroom and raised garden beds, creating a hub for outdoor experiential learning, recreation, and community involvement. The major renovation occurred in two phases. The first phase focused on the development of an outdoor classroom and its surrounding green space, including trees, grass, and bushes, as well as raised garden beds, to teach students about growing fresh produce, sustainability, and



*A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at Cecil Community Park on Thursday, October 24, 2024 to celebrate the opening of the newly renovated Cecil Community Park in East Baltimore Midway located at Cecil Elementary School. Courtesy photos*

food security. Phase 2 saw the full renovation of the playground and park spaces, creating a much-needed community amenity for the school and surrounding community members.

"This project embodies our commitment to building stronger, healthier neighborhoods through strategic investments in green spaces," said Mayor Brandon M. Scott. "Building better park and recreation spaces to ensure every Baltimorean has access to world-class facilities has been a cornerstone of my administration. Cecil Community Park is a shining example of how public-private partnerships can help create lasting, positive change in our communities. By transforming this space, we're providing a safe, welcoming environment for families and children, improving the quality of life for residents, and fostering a sense of pride and ownership in the neighborhood. Projects like this show the power of collaboration in creating a better future for Baltimore."

The park's renovation is a key part of the Baltimore City Reinvestment Plan and the Central Baltimore Partnership's strategy for East Baltimore Midway, ensuring that every

resident has access to vibrant public spaces that enhance their quality of life. Funded by a mix of public and private sources, including contributions from The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, the France-Merrick Foundation, the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Recovery Programs, and MD Dept. of Housing and Community Development Cecil Community Park is designed to be a shared amenity for more than two thousand neighborhood residents living within a quarter-mile radius of the park.

"Creating Cecil Community Park was the top priority for the Cecil Elementary School and East Baltimore Midway community," said Ellen Janes, Executive Director of Central Baltimore Partnership. "Through a participatory process, they envisioned a welcoming space where the entire community could have fun and meet their health goals. This Park is a true community achievement, and we look forward to keeping it as vibrant and active as possible with sports leagues, classes, and a wide array of gatherings."

As P&P marks its 40th anniversary, this project highlights the



*This newly renovated 1.5-acre park, located at Cecil Elementary School in East Baltimore Midway, represents a \$3.6 million investment and will serve as a vital gathering space for the school, the Cecil-Kirk Recreation Center and local residents.*

organization's legacy of improving Baltimore communities through green spaces and education. With 48 completed park projects, \$15.4 million reinvested into underserved communities, and nearly 109,000 residents impacted, P&P continues to play a pivotal role in shaping a brighter, greener future for Baltimore.

To celebrate the park's opening, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at Cecil Community Park on Thursday, October 24, 2024, including remarks from Mayor Brandon M. Scott, Carol A. Gilbert, Assistant Secretary of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Sarah Manekin, Program Director, U.S. Education at The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Elizabeth Rice Senior Program Officer, France-Merrick Foundation, Aleesha Manning Principal of Cecil Elementary School, and community leaders.

For more information, visit [parksandpeople.org/cecil-community-park](https://parksandpeople.org/cecil-community-park).



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# New STEM Center Serves Elementary School Students

## Ripken Foundation, UMMS Celebrate Opening of STEM Center at Katherine Johnson Global Academy

By Demetrius Dillard

Officials from the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation (CRSF) joined leaders from the University of Maryland Medical System and a group of Baltimore City educators and students for a ribbon-cutting ceremony that celebrated the launch of a state-of-the-art STEM center at Katherine Johnson Global Academy in West Baltimore on October 24, 2024.

In accordance with a growing demand for STEM opportunities – particularly in minority communities – the Ripken Foundation and UMMS acknowledged the need for the educational asset and teamed up to make the STEM Center a reality.

Katherine Johnson Global Academy, located near the intersection of Braddish Avenue and Lafayette Avenue, is already equipped with two other STEM centers on its second and third floors.

The newly renovated STEM Center on the school's first floor will specifically serve elementary school students.

Distinguished speakers during the ribbon-cutting ceremony included Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, CRSF President and CEO Steve Salem, Katherine Johnson Global Academy Principal Nancy Fagan, UMMS President and CEO Mohan Suntha, UMMS professor Rodney Taylor and CRSF co-founder and Baltimore Orioles legend Cal Ripken Jr.

"We are so excited to have the STEM program here at our school; we're so excited to be named after someone who was so mathematically inclined (Creola Katherine Johnson) and STEM-oriented, and we try to uplift those values," said Fagan, who is in her



*MLB legend and Hall-of-Famer Cal Ripken Jr. (right) poses with Katherine Johnson Global Academy Principal Nancy Fagan (left) and fifth-grader Michael McFadden (front). Michael was the student speaker.*  
Photos: Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation



*Katherine Johnson Global Academy students express gratitude for the school's STEM center, a much-needed educational resource.*

first year as the school's principal.

"I am a 39-year veteran in this system, and when I taught science way back when it didn't look like how it looks today. You (students) are so very lucky, and we know that. And we're just so appreciative."

Michael McFadden, a fifth grader at Katherine Johnson Global Academy, also shared remarks. The event attracted other UMMS board members, city government officials, Katherine Johnson Global Academy faculty and staff, and board members from the Ripken Foundation.

"When you think about why the health system partners with the Ripken Foundation to create educational opportunities for you all in a place within your school – because we want you to imagine the future," Suntha said at the podium, directly addressing Katherine Johnson Global Academy students.

"We want you to think about, and learn, and study opportunities that will



*From left – Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller; UMMS President and CEO Mohan Suntha; MLB icon CRSF co-founder Cal Ripken Jr.; CRSF President and CEO Steve Salem.*

help shape how you think about your own future. My hope is that you love science.... Be excited about your future, and thank you so much for giving us this opportunity."

As a result of CRSF's partnership with UMMS, 10 STEM centers have been developed across the medical

system's footprint in Maryland, made possible by a three-year \$500,000 grant.

"The best part about the STEM centers is kids having fun learning and using their hands as they engage in important skills for today and for the future, giving them a leg up," Salem said.

Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony, event participants toured the innovative space while students experimented with high-tech tools like 3D printers, hands-on coding and electronics activities such as “littleBits” and Snap Circuits.

Ripken and Suntha interacted with the children, trying their hand at STEM activities as well.

As of October 2024, the Ripken Foundation has opened more than 600 STEM centers in 25 states and Washington, D.C., along with 22 district-wide public school systems, impacting more than 260,000 students across the country, according to UMMS officials.

“Our STEM Center program has been amazing to watch,” Ripken said.

“The demand for these centers all across the country has been tremendous and continues to grow. The University of Maryland Medical System is a great partner and because of them we are able to provide tools to students and teachers that help them develop problem solving skills and critical thinking.”

Ripken, among the pantheon of Orioles icons, was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2007. Since its founding in 2001, the Ripken Foundation has impacted millions of children living in underserved communities. The organization regularly opens youth development parks and other community-building amenities in addition to its STEM center initiative.

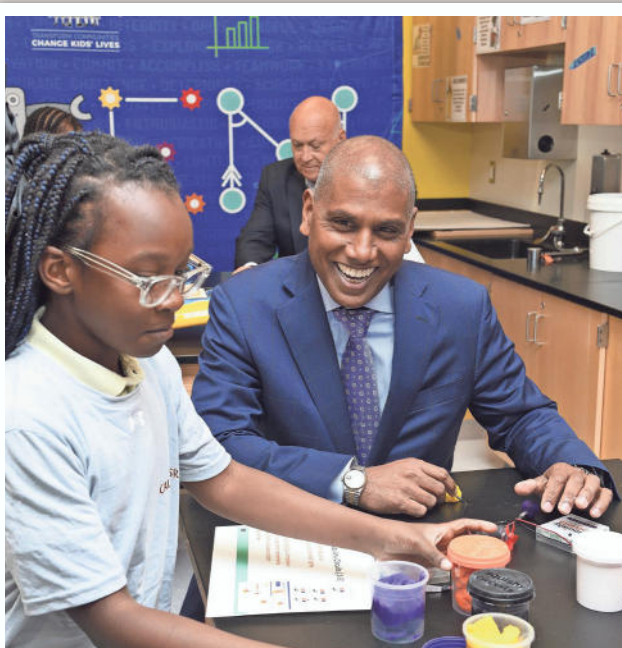
The UMMS-CRSF partnership also illustrates an opportunity to introduce students to the field of STEM, a core principle to the work of UMMS, while allowing the system’s member organizations to engage with local communities through relationships with community-based organizations and schools.

“We know that extending access to STEM education will help pave the way for the next generation of scientists,” Suntha added.

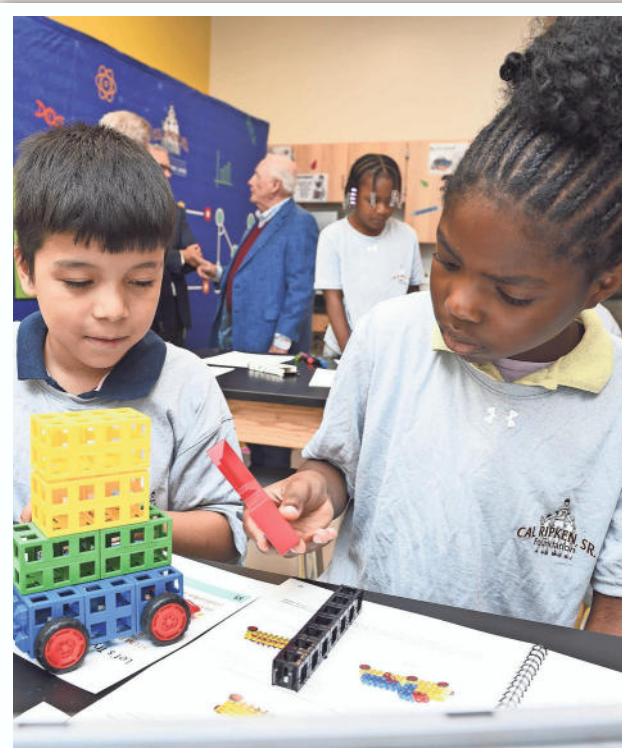
“This great partnership provides a unique and significant opportunity to reach more young people in our communities with foundational skills that will inspire future medical breakthroughs and advancements in compassionate, equitable care.”



*Katherine Johnson Global Academy students experiment with a STEM activity following a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the school’s STEM center made possible through a partnership between the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation and University of Maryland Medical System.*



*UMMS President and CEO Mohan Suntha participate in a STEM activity with a Katherine Johnson Global Academy student at the school’s new STEM center on October 24, 2024.*



*Students engage in a STEM activity.*

# Domestic Violence: The Common Issue is More Than Meets the Eye

By Andrea Blackstone

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM), but raising awareness about the incidence of it should never stop.

“About 41% of women and 26% of men experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime and reported a related impact,” the CDC reported.

Traditionally, domestic violence is thought to involve physical, financial, verbal, emotional, or sexual abuse within a personal relationship in a home. However, how domestic violence is defined has expanded.

“Sometimes it’s called intimate partner violence (IPV), which is a language that speaks more to what might happen between people who have to have a close relationship. That might be sexual or not, but it is definitely about forms of control,” said Dr. Karen McLean, Department Chair and Associate Professor of Social Work at Western Connecticut State University.

Monitoring someone’s computer or Internet activity; restricting monetary access, including bank accounts or credit cards; and caregivers withholding or hiding needed medications such as asthma pumps or insulin are more examples of situational attempts to control a person.

Domestic violence and abuse can both involve repeated acts of negative behaviors.

“When people think about abuse, they think about it as more frequent and intense. Domestic violence falls under a very broad umbrella of behaviors that can be subtle, and not

so subtle,” Dr. McClean said.

She added, “Mostly when people think of domestic violence, they often think that it’s something that occurs typically between a male and a female, but the range is broad.”

Dr. McClean stated that domestic violence can occur within a family unit, with roommates, colleagues at work, at school, or with anyone who has some type of relationship with someone, not only romantic partners.

“It really focuses on when the perpetrator is trying to somehow control the person who might be the target,” Dr. McLean stated.

The phrase IPV is sometimes used interchangeably with domestic violence.

“I think intimate partner violence speaks more directly to what happens within a household with partners because as we look at partnerships and relationships and how those have evolved, we have people who identify within the same gender that have relationships,” Dr. McLean said, mentioning the need to be more inclusive of the types of partners and family dynamics within a household.

Dr. McLean pointed out that undocumented persons in communities will not report related issues because of fear of deportation. A trans person may fear being stigmatized or not being believed. Male victims also fall into the underreported category of domestic violence.

Seeking help through law enforcement is still a huge barrier, even in some communities of color in which the victim is a woman who is being severely abused.

“She’s still concerned about the possible consequences of the perpetrator because of the familial

ties or concern about the perpetrator being killed might supersede her own victimization that she’s experiencing,” Dr. McClean stated.

The stigma of seeking help for domestic violence in communities of color still exists. Belief that “what happens in the house, stays in the house” has not been eradicated.

When it comes to confidential and safer methods of reaching out for assistance, Dr. McClean shared that using 1-800 telephone numbers may offer more anonymity to help prevent the call from being traced. Using the Internet can leave clues because of algorithms. A trusted friend, neighbor, or colleague can also help facilitate communication.

Hotline callers can be referred to domestic violence shelters or safe houses.

“Most times, the addresses of these places are confidential. Then there’s a protocol that might be used so that a victim can get there... because they have to protect the other people who are also receiving services at that agency,” Dr. McClean added.

When someone seeks help as a domestic violence victim, the goal is to empower the person to help them recognize their situation, connect with resources, and develop a strategy to exit the situation.

“While getting someone involved, they have to really assess the safety [when possibly dealing with the



*Karen McLean, PhD, LMSW,  
Department Chair and Associate Professor  
of Social Work at Western Connecticut State  
University. Photo: Norman Oates*

perpetrator], because the goal is that that person gets out of that situation alive,” Dr. McClean explained.

Domestic violence victims should establish an emergency plan to safely leave the perpetrator’s presence.

It is critical to note that teenagers are not immune to the issue of domestic violence or intimate partner violence.

“When IPV occurs in adolescence, it is called teen dating violence. About 16 million women and 11 million men who reported experiencing intimate partner violence in their lifetime said that they first experienced it before age 18,” the CDC reported.

Call 1-800-799-SAFE to seek confidential domestic violence help.

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# Ravens Trade for Diontae Johnson Continues Trend of Acquiring Veteran WRs

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens wanted to bolster their wide receiver group, so they took action before the trade deadline. General manager Eric DeCosta resorted to an old Ravens tradition of acquiring veteran pass catchers by trading for Carolina Panthers receiver Diontae Johnson on Tuesday.

Johnson has 30 receptions for 357 yards and three touchdowns this season for the Panthers. The Panthers acquired Johnson from the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Ravens' AFC North rival, before the season.

Carolina sent a sixth-round pick with Jackson, who was about to be released, to the Steelers for Johnson and a seventh-round pick in last year's draft. Having played five seasons for the Steelers, Johnson is well familiar with the AFC North and should fit right in with the Ravens.

It was just three seasons ago that Johnson posted 107 receptions for 1,161 yards and eight touchdowns with Pittsburgh. His numbers have been on a decline over the past two seasons. With nine games left and 30 receptions on the stat sheet, Johnson can improve upon last season's 51 catches if he can jump right in and connect with quarterback Lamar Jackson.

The Ravens are coming off a last-minute 29-24 loss to the Cleveland Browns last week. Zay Flowers did his part to help set up for a win

with seven catches for 115 yards. Unfortunately, drops by Rashad Bateman and Nelson Agholor didn't help the Ravens' cause on the road.

As a result, DeCosta went out and got Johnson. There weren't many receiver options left after the trades over the last couple of weeks. Interestingly, all of the action came from AFC teams.

Former Las Vegas Raiders receiver Davante Adams was reunited with Aaron Rodgers after the New York Jets acquired him. The Kansas City Chiefs went out and acquired veteran DeAndre Hopkins from the Tennessee Titans. The Buffalo Bills picked up Amari Cooper from the Cleveland Browns.

The Ravens have managed to make it work with veteran receivers dating back to Quadry Ismael who helped bring the first Super Bowl championship to Baltimore in 2000. Anquan Boldin helped the Ravens win it all again in 2012 when he came over from the Arizona Cardinals.

Two of the best receivers in franchise history were veteran acquisitions, although they didn't result in Super Bowls. Derrick Mason's 471 catches and 5,777 receiving yards are the franchise record for the Ravens. Steve Smith Sr. had a good run after joining the team as well.

Johnson isn't as high profile of an addition as the previous veterans. But this Ravens team appears to be a legit contender. If he can help improve the passing attack, it'll be worth it.



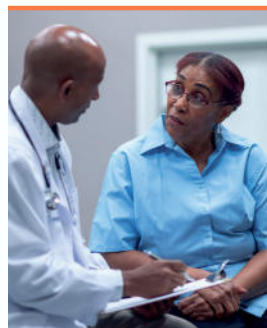
**Diontae Johnson**

Photo: Matt Kelley/Getty Images

gp<sup>2</sup> Black & African American  
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Parkinson's Disease Study

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The Global Parkinson's Genetics Program (GP2) is an international research program. GP2 aims to learn more about gene changes that may cause Parkinson's in people from all backgrounds.



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To learn more, please visit [blaacpd.org](http://blaacpd.org).

gp<sup>2</sup> Global Parkinson's  
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The proposed ritual, The Overcome: A Black Passover, is the concept of a yearly celebration of and by African Americans commemorating the significance of overcoming slavery, Jim Crow, and institutionalized racism to ascent as leaders in all walks of life. This proposed ritual has been compared to the yearly commemorated Jewish Passover. The book *The Overcome: A Black Passover* delineates the logical explanation of a celebration. *Overcome: Rite, Liturgy & Songs* outlines the actual celebratory ceremony. So, like those of Jewish ancestry, ***there is no going back to Egypt and for African Americans, there is no going back to slavery!***

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### CERTIFICATION OF PUBLICATION

#### CITY OF BALTIMORE OFFICE OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS PUBLIC NOTICE

#### REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL - PROJECT NO. 1408 ON-CALL WATER AND WASTEWATER FACILITY ENGINEERING

The City of Baltimore Office of Engineering and Construction (OEC) has been authorized to request the Office of Boards and Commissions (OBC) to advertise Project 1408 for the selected services for the City of Baltimore from qualified Consultant Engineering firms. It is the expectation of the City that interested firms providing these services must demonstrate and document the following services for the City of Baltimore.

\*Experience in Water and Wastewater Facility systems investigations, evaluations, and design of repairs, renovations, and new construction.

\*Knowledge of Water and Wastewater Facility structures, equipment, pumps, valves, piping systems, drives, and controls.

\*Overall team experience in investigating systems and equipment failures; development of innovative methods to upgrade, repair, and replace existing systems to improve system efficiency and reliability.

\*Experience in design, construction, and operations start-up of Water and Wastewater Facilities in support of the Department of Public Works team goals and needs.

Manpower availability and ability to complete assignments within time and budget.

\*Experience in preparation of Bid Documents, Cost Estimates, and performing QA/QC reviews/procedures at critical project stages.

\*Overall team approach to utilize, manage, and coordinate assigned tasks of the Minority/Women Business Enterprises partners and to conform to City goals.

The City intends to select the services of three (3) firms for (3) years, with an option to extend for Two (2) one-year additional term at the City's discretion, for a fee not to exceed \$3,000,000.00 for each selected firm. The Office of Engineering and Construction reserves the right to have a second interview with eligible consulting firms.

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DPW encourages all contracting firms that have the experience and capacity to work on this scope to submit their proposals. All firms must demonstrate and document their capacity and resources to deliver the required services on time. Projects must comply with the 2006 edition of "The Specifications for Materials, Highways, Bridges, Utilities and Incidental Structures". City personnel will utilize the City of Baltimore Guidelines for the Performance Evaluation of Design Consultants and Construction Contractors for this contract/project.

Should you have any questions regarding the scope of the project, please contact Mr. Remi Urbonas at 410-396-7300 or by email at [remi.urbonas@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:remi.urbonas@baltimorecity.gov)

**All firms** listed in the specific proposal for the Project **must** be prequalified by the Office of Boards and Commissions for each applicable discipline at the time of submittal for this Project. Any construction contractor listed in the specific proposal for the Project to perform work in an existing prequalification

category must also be prequalified. *A copy of the prime and sub-consultant's current Prequalification Certificate should be included in the bid submittal package.* Information regarding the prequalification process can be obtained by calling the Office of Boards and Commissions at 410.396.6883.

#### **Submittal Process**

Each Firm responding to this Request for Proposal (RFP) Project #1408 is required to complete and submit **an original** Standard Federal Form (SF) 255 unless otherwise specified in this RFP. Provide one **(1) original** submittal, along with **five (5) additional** copies to the Office of Boards and Commissions at **4 South Frederick Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202** on or prior to the due date by **NOON Friday, December 13, 2024**. Submittals **will not be accepted after the due date (NOON) and cannot be emailed.**

The Federal Standard Form (SF) 255 **cannot** be supplemented with additional pages, or additional information such as graphs, photographs, organization charts, etc. All such information should be incorporated into the appropriate pages. Applications should not be bound; simply stapled in the upper left-hand corner. Cover sheets should not be included. Inclusion and/or submittal

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of additional material may result in the applicant being disqualified from consideration for this project.

Firms interested in submitting a proposal for this Project, shall address a "Letter of Interest" to the Office of Boards and Commissions, or you may email: [OBC.consultants@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:OBC.consultants@baltimorecity.gov). Letters of Interest will be utilized to assist small minority and women business enterprises in identifying potential teaming partners and should be submitted within five (5) days of the date of the project's advertisement. The Letter of Interest must provide the name and number of your firm's contact person. Failure to submit a "Letter of Interest" will not disqualify a firm submitting a proposal for the project.

Only individual firms (including, for example, individuals, sole proprietorships, corporations, limited

liability companies, limited liability partnerships, and general partnerships) or formal Joint Venture (JV)

may apply. Two firms may not apply jointly unless they have formed a joint venture.

#### **COSTS OF RFP RESPONSE**

There will be no payment or compensation provided to firms who desire to participate in any part of the submission. All expenses related to the preparation of a response, including additional requested information, interviews, and any other necessary information, will be the sole responsibility of the firm. The City, its staff, or its representatives will not be responsible for reimbursing any costs or expenses incurred as a result of providing a submission to this RFP.

#### **MBE/WBE Requirements – Mayor's Office (SMBA&D)**

It is the policy of the City of Baltimore Mayor's Office of Small and Minority Business Advocacy & Development (SMBA&D) to promote equal business opportunity in the City's contracting process. Pursuant to Article 5, Subtitle 28 of Baltimore City Code (2000 Edition) – Minority and Women's Business Program, Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) participation goals apply to this contract.

The MBE goal is **30%**  
The WBE goal is **15%**

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Both the proposed Minority and Women's Business Enterprise firms must be named and identified as an MBE or WBE within Item 6 of the Standard Form (SF) 255 in the spaces provided for identifying outside key consultants/associates anticipated for utilization for this project.

Any submittals that do not include the proper MBE/WBE (in some instances DBE) participation will be disapproved for further consideration for this project.

#### **Verifying Certification**

Each firm submitting an SF 255 for consideration for a project is responsible for verifying that all MBEs and WBEs to be utilized on the project are certified by the SMBA&D before submitting the proposal. A directory of certified MBEs and WBEs is available from SMBA&D. Since changes to the directory occur daily, firms submitting SF 255s should call SMBA&D at (410) 396-3818 to verify certification, expiration dates and services that the MBE or WBE is certified to provide.

#### **Non-Affiliation**

A firm submitting a proposal may not use an MBE or WBE to meet a contract goal if:  
The firm has a financial interest in the MBE or WBE  
The firm has an interest in the ownership or control of the MBE or WBE  
The firm is significantly involved in the operation of the MBE or WBE (Article 5, Subtitle 28-41).

#### **Insurance Requirements**

The consultant selected for the award of this project shall provide professional liability, auto liability, general liability, and workers' compensation insurance as required by the City of Baltimore.

#### **Local Hiring Law**

Article 5, Subtitle 27 of the Baltimore City Code, as amended (the "Local Hiring Law") and its rules and regulations apply to contracts and agreements executed by the City on or after the Local Hiring Law's effective date of December 23, 2013, which is applicable to all vendors. The Local Hiring Law applies to every contract for more than \$300,000 made by the City, or on its behalf, with any person. It also applies to every

## Legal Notice

agreement authorizing assistance valued at more than \$5,000,000 to a City-subsidized project. Please visit [www.oedworks.com](http://www.oedworks.com) for details on the requirements of the law.

### Additional Information

Any firm submitting an SF255 in response to the RFP that fails to comply with the requirements of Article 5, Subtitle 28 of Baltimore City Code when executing a contract is subject to the following penalties: suspension of a contract; withholding of funds; nullification of contract based on material breach; disqualification as a consultant from eligibility to provide services to the City for a period not to exceed 2 years; and payment for damages incurred by the City.

A resume for each person listed as key personnel and/or specialist, including those from MBE and WBE must be shown on the page provided within the application.

Please be advised that for the purpose of reviewing price proposals and invoices, the City of Baltimore defines a principal of a firm as follows:

*A principal is any individual owning 5% or more of the outstanding stock of an entity, a partner of a partnership, a 5% or more shareholder of a sub-chapter 'S' Corporation, or an individual owner.*

Out-of-state corporations must identify their corporate resident agent within the application.

Firms providing an SF255 in response to an RFP who are not prequalified at the time of the submittal due date will be deemed not qualified or considered for further participation in the project.

Failure to follow the directions of this advertisement or the application will cause disqualification of the submittal.

Deena Joyce, Executive Secretary  
Chief Office of Boards and Commissions

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