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PNC Awards \$6,000 to Johnson Square Academy Head Start Program



LIGHT Health & Wellness Comprehensive Services' Johnson Square Academy has been awarded \$6,000 by the PNC Foundation in recognition of the volunteer efforts of PNC employees Karen Burley, Seson Taylor-Campbell, April Harper, Angela McFadden, Lourdes Montes-Greenan, Franklin McNeil and Robin Chester. Johnson Square Academy serves children in Baltimore through its accredited preschool. The academy provides a range of day and respite care for children ages 2-5 and their families. (See article on page 11) Courtesy Photo

Enoch Pratt Free Library CEO Waiting for Senate Confirmation to New Post

By Stacy M. Brown

Carla Hayden isn't talking much these days, just patiently waiting. However, those who work with the CEO of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore and library patrons can't contain their excitement as Hayden prepares to become the next librarian to lead the Library of Congress, the first African-American to hold that post.

"We're very excited for Dr. Hayden," said Roswell Encina, director of communications at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, where Hayden has been the CEO since 1993.

"If she's confirmed by the Senate, she'll be the first woman and the first African American to serve as the Librarian of Congress," Roswell said. "It's an honor to have her work recognized by President Obama."

Lucinda Sherman, who lives about one mile from the library and regularly visits with her grandchildren, says Hayden's selection is undoubtedly the right choice.

"She's a tremendously caring, engaging and thoughtful leader. This library has come a long way under her guidance and, if you remember, during the riots she made sure to keep it open because she understood that the children and everyone else needed positive messages and a positive place to go," Sherman said.

On February 24, 2016, President

Barack Obama announced his intention to nominate Hayden as Librarian of Congress. Her appointment is now awaiting Senate approval.

In nominating Hayden, the president cited her long history at Enoch Pratt as well as her previous experience in his hometown.

"Michelle and I have known Dr. Carla Hayden for a long time since her working days at the Chicago Public Library and I am proud to nominate her to lead our nation's oldest federal institution as our 14th Librarian of Congress," President Obama said in a statement. "Dr. Hayden has devoted her career to modernizing libraries so that everyone can participate in today's digital culture. She has the proven experience, dedication and deep knowledge of our nation's libraries to serve our country well and that's why I look forward to working with her in the months ahead."

Born in Chicago in 1952, Hayden received her B.A. degree from Roosevelt University and began work as a library assistant at the Chicago Public Library in 1973. She later received M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Chicago's Graduate Library School.

Hayden worked as library service coordinator for the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago and as a professor at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Library and Information Science.

In 1991, she returned to Chicago



Dr. Carla Hayden
CEO
Enoch Pratt Free Library

where she worked as the Chicago Public Library System's deputy commissioner and chief librarian.

According to a biography from the HistoryMakers, the nation's largest African-American Video Oral History Collection, Hayden is the second African-American to become the executive director of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, one of the oldest free libraries in the United States.

"Being the first female and the first

African-American really brings together two aspects of my life that make this even more significant in terms of how people view the future of libraries, and what a national library can be," Hayden said in a video released by the White House. "It's inclusive. It can be part of everyone's story."

Hayden has continually championed the cause of civil liberties and freedom of information, spearheading efforts to overturn legislation that forced all libraries receiving federal funding to install Internet content filters on their computers.

Eventually the Supreme Court upheld the right of adult library users to request the filter's deactivation, though they did not overturn the requirement that the filters be installed.

Hayden has been honored with the Andrew White Medal by Loyola College; the President's Medal by Johns Hopkins University; and the Legacy of Literacy Award by the DuBois Circle of Baltimore. She was named one of Ms. Magazine's 2003 Women of the Year and one of Maryland's Top 100 Women of Maryland. She is also the first African-American to receive the Librarian of the Year Award from Library Journal Magazine.

"If confirmed, Dr. Hayden would be the first woman and the first African-American to hold the position— both of which are long overdue," Obama said.

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

Meals on Wheels Needs Volunteers

Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland has a critical need right now for volunteers willing to deliver our meals to seniors and disabled adults in West Baltimore in addition to our usual need for volunteers in the surrounding counties of Central Maryland. It's actually a pretty easy and extremely rewarding way to make a really big difference. Folks can volunteer individually, or together with their kids, co-workers, friends or fellow church members. Most volunteers pick one day a week or one day a month to deliver meals. Deliveries are made between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Volunteers must be able to pass a criminal background check and have a vehicle they can use to make deliveries. To register to volunteer, visit: <https://www.mealsonwheelsmd.org/volunteer-application> or for more information, email: volunteer@mowcm.org.

Baptism and Ordination Service

The S.E.E.D. Church located at 400 East 31st Street in Baltimore, announces a Baptism and Ordination Service at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 18, 2016. An early and a late "Seven Last Words of Christ" Worship Service at 8 a.m. and at 7 p.m. will be held on Good Friday, March 25, 2016. Worship service begins at 10 a.m. on Sundays.

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

Blacks and Hispanics charged higher interest rates

By Charlene Crowell, NNPA News Wire Columnist

In recent months, this column has reported on a series of settlements reached between banks and finance companies with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Department of Justice. All of the actions were taken to resolve claims of discrimination in auto lending.

To date, over \$200 million in fines and restitution have been made to car buyers of color who paid higher interest rates than White borrowers—a violation of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act. Additionally and as a condition of the settlements, defendants were required to change their lending practices by significantly reducing the amount of additional interest dealers can add to car loans for compensation.

Despite these developments, discriminatory practices in auto finance persist with some lenders and dealers. While law enforcement comes after discriminatory acts have already been committed, a new advocacy effort appeals for dealers to change their practices to prevent further discrimination in auto lending.

A group of consumer advocates and civil rights groups recently wrote Warren Buffett, chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, to stop this discriminatory practice at his dealerships. Last year, Berkshire Hathaway acquired the Van Tuyl Group, the largest privately held dealership group in the nation. Renamed “Berkshire Hathaway Automotive,” the firm now operates 81 dealerships in 10 states, selling a range of domestic and foreign brands.

“While we welcome and applaud efforts of federal regulators to rein in this discriminatory practice, we urge responsible auto dealers to move immediately to end the practice on their own,” wrote the advocates. “As you have publicly stated, we need to end discrimination in any number of settings. We are writing to you to respectfully request that you join us and openly condemn this discriminatory practice and help lead the way to a fair, open and transparent marketplace.”

When a consumer finances a car purchase through an auto dealer, the dealer has the discretion to increase the interest rate offered by the lending institution and keep some or all of the difference as compensation. This difference between the interest rate priced for risk and the additional interest the dealer adds more compensation is known as dealer interest rate markup. It has also long been shown to result in higher interest rates for borrowers of color.

The 17-member coalition calling on Buffett to act includes the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, League of United Latin American Citizens, NAACP, National Consumer Law Center, National Urban League, and the Center for Responsible Lending among others. The joint appeal also acknowledged the influential opposition faced in fighting for fair lending in auto finance.

“Unfortunately, the nation’s largest auto dealer trade association, the National Auto Dealers Association, has responded with a campaign to defend this discriminatory practice, jeopardizing the good will that auto dealers may have in their communities,” said the coalition. “As you have said, ‘it takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it.’ As a leader in the financial sector...[Y]our leadership would have a market-wide impact.”

Ranked by Forbes as the nation’s second wealthiest billionaire—surpassed only by Bill Gates—Buffett built a solid reputation for astute investing and major deals that grew Berkshire Hathaway into a multinational firm with more than 90 businesses owned and additional investments in corporations such as American Express, Coca-Cola, IBM and Wells Fargo.

Beyond Buffett, the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL) and its allies have also called on regulators to end the practice of dealer interest rate markup.

Charlene Crowell is a communications manager with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.



Community Affairs

Join the Arbor Day Foundation in March and Receive 10 Free Trees

Nebraska City, Nebraska— The Arbor Day Foundation is making it easy for everyone to celebrate the arrival of spring by planting trees.

Join the Arbor Day Foundation in March 2016 and receive 10 free white flowering dogwood trees.

“White flowering dogwoods are versatile trees that will break heavy winds and add beauty to your home,” said Matt Harris, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. “These fast-growing landscape trees are known for their soft needles and graceful branching, making them an ideal addition to any yard.”

The free trees are part of the nonprofit Foundation’s Trees for America campaign.

With planting instructions included, the trees will be shipped at the right time for planting, between March 1 and May 31. The six to 12-inch trees are guaranteed



to grow or they will be replaced free of charge.

Arbor Day Foundation members also receive a subscription to Arbor Day, the Foundation’s bimonthly publication, and The Tree Book, which contains information about tree planting and care.

To become a member of the Foundation and receive the free trees, send a \$10 contribution to: Ten Free White Flowering Dogwood Trees, Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, Nebraska 68410, by March 31, 2016. You may also join online at arborday.org/march.

Hypocrites, Hucksters, Histrionics and Hype

By James Clingman
NNPA News Wire Columnist

Aren't you tired of the rap and clap sessions by political wannabees and their respective contingents? I know I am. The so-called "debates" are downright insulting and embarrassing, especially on the Republican side, reminiscent of a stand-up comedy show, or "throwing shade," as the young folks say. Over on the Democratic stage (or should I say in their "ring"?), what was a fight has turned into a face-saving swan song for Sanders since he was, in his own words, "decimated" in South Carolina. Black folks strike again!

With all the money these candidates have in the bank this "theater of the absurd" could go on for months, and when it's all over black folks will have not moved one inch toward real empowerment. Unless we get serious about our own economic and political future, by establishing our political platform and being willing to promote, support, and leverage it, blacks will continue to be relegated to the clown ring in this cur-

rent political three-ring circus. We will be the diversions, the ones who turn the lion's attention away from the performers, the clowns who turn the bull's ire away from the bull rider by yelling and then jumping into a barrel.

The "Yo Mama!" debates in the Republican ring are really not debates, in case you have not noticed; they are

suppose the black candidate, Willie Wilson, has been invisible?

Post Super Tuesday shouting matches about who cares for black people the most now dominate, as though being embroiled in these kinds of discussions will move us forward. Top that off with MSNBC's U-turn in firing, demoting, or exiling their black Barack Obama-can-

ties and their selected candidates. Rather than asking the candidates what they will do for us, we must present our demands to them, and rather than settle for lip-service we must have them sign an agreement signifying their support of our issues.

I can hear the moanin' and groanin' now. "Jim, they would never do that. So why ask them to?" That kind of defeatist attitude and subsequent surrender is indicative of why we are in the shape we are in today. If they refuse to support our demands, verbally and in writing, then why should we vote for them? What do we have to lose? Why vote for any candidate who does not support reciprocity for those who vote for him or her? That's just stupid.

We must stop accepting the hypocrisy of candidates who say one thing and do another; we must not be sidetracked by arguments among political hacks and commentators that mean absolutely nothing to us in the scheme of things. We must stop doing our best impression of Pavlov's dog when they come to call on us. If nothing is funny, don't laugh; if you are not itching, don't scratch. We must change the silly way we deal with politics by collectively leveraging something of substance in return for our votes. If we don't change, the hucksters—black ones and white ones, will always win.

Join the One Million Conscious Black Voters and Contributors and let's make a real difference this time.

James Clingman is the nation's most prolific writer on economic empowerment for Black people. His latest book, Black Dollars Matter! Teach your dollars how to make more sense, is available on his website, Blackonomics.com.

“Rather than organizing ourselves into a voting bloc that must be reckoned with and leveraging our votes, we end up acquiescing to political parties and their selected candidates. Rather than asking the candidates what they will do for us, we must present our demands to them, and rather than settle for lip-service we must have them sign an agreement signifying their support of our issues.”

rap sessions, Ronald Reagan séances, and pseudo-patriotic diatribes, repeated ad nauseam by guys who swear they are the answer to our problems. The only one who has any kind of real record of having actually solved a few political problems is John Kasich but he's so far behind the others that a victory for him is very unlikely.

Over in the Democratic ring we have two combatants who offer condescending words and platitudes directly to black folks, as opposed to the Republicans who say absolutely nothing to blacks. The Democratic candidates rail against the business establishment and tell us that we really need more jobs to solve our problems. I don't know how they expect to bring us more jobs, which are created by private businesses, when they are constantly denigrating business. It's just hype. By the way, why do you

do-no-wrong hosts and we have a real firestorm on our hands, don't we?

Aren't you tired of being hustled and huckstered? Aren't you tired of the hype and political histrionics? Those of us who are absolutely tired of it all have made a commitment to DO something about it. First of all, we refuse to be swayed by patronizing pundits and condescending candidates. It matters not what they say—their actions are what matters.

Understanding how the system works with regard to what they have said versus what they do when they get into office, why are many of our people spending inordinate amounts of time arguing over whose plantation is more comfortable? Rather than organizing ourselves into a voting bloc that must be reckoned with and leveraging our votes, we end up acquiescing to political par-

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**Mailing Address
The Baltimore Times
2513 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218**

**Phone: 410-366-3900- Fax 410-243-1627
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Want to comment on the editorials or any other story?

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Environmental Justice Leaders Push Benefits of Climate Change

By Barrington M. Salmon
Special to *The Baltimore Times*

Whenever they discuss the impact of climate change on the United States, environmental activists of color are quick to point out that African Americans in cities and towns across the country continue to be adversely affected by legislative and other policies that put them at greater risk.

All too often, several speakers said at a recent environmental justice symposium, black and brown people live in or around coal plants, brown fields, toxic waste, incinerators, power plants and other generators of pollution in their communities.

“Climate change is a threat multiplier for the black community. Our children have asthma, miss school, fall behind and end up in the school-to-prison pipeline,” said Leslie Fields, director of the Sierra Club’s Environmental and Community Partnership Programs. “We’re monitoring the cumulative impacts. African Americans are disproportionately affected by climate change and are demanding action. Air pollution and climate change don’t just greatly impact health, they stifle our ability to grow economically.”

Louisiana-based researcher and environmental activist, Dr. Beverly Wright, agreed.

“Fifty percent of people of color live within two miles of areas of pollution,” she said. “There needs to be buffers. We need a special distribution of polluting facilities. The people least responsible are the most affected.”

Wright, executive director of Dillard University’s Deep South Center for Environmental Justice says, those involved in environmental justice have a tough job fighting corporations, utilities and government officials intent on decimating the environment. Race, she says, is the predominant indicator for African Americans that determines their exposure to assorted toxins, chemicals and pollutants.

Climate change is manifested in illness from exposure to pollutants that drive climate change, physical displacement



of individuals and families in the face of rising sea levels, catastrophic or destructive storms and economic and food insecurity and malnutrition.

Fields and Wright were two of more than a dozen experts, specialists and community activists sounding the alarm of the perils to the U.S. and the planet by climate change.

The daylong symposium—titled, “Sustaining the Future: The Impact of Climate Change on the African American Community,” and hosted by Green For All at the Sierra Club in downtown Washington—brought together representatives from a broad spectrum of local and national environmental justice groups and organizations, policymakers and others seeking to bring about change.

“There has been a rub to a lot of people. The U.S. polluted for many, many years and now they’re asking developing countries to curb emissions,” said Wright. “But sustainable energy works. Wind and solar energy works. China is embracing it. You almost can’t go back. We now have to work together to save all of us now.”

In a subsequent panel discussion, “Black & Green: The Intersection Between Race and Environmental Jus-

tice,” moderator Angela Rye, principal and CEO of Impact Strategies, pushed panelists to expound on how best to become environmental activists.

“We know this is a crisis, we know that if this was in white communities this wouldn’t happen. How do you move forward?” she asked.

Jermon Williams continued to gently insist on the importance of bringing disparate groups and individuals into the process.

“We need to be bridging the gaps and bringing policy folks and advocacy folks together to the ground levels,” said Williams, senior vice president of Broccoli City. “They have a voice. It’s finding creative ways to meet people where they are and going from there ... one-offs don’t work. Activity breeds activity. We have to create and supply activity.” Broccoli City is a millennial grassroots organization that engages and activates more than 20,000-millennials around healthy eating and environmental sustainability that also works on building thriving urban communities that sustain future generations.

For Kim Noble, Green For All Director of National Partnerships, the effects of climate change are personal. She shared that she’s lost several people

close to her and cited the tragedy that continues to unfold in Flint, Michigan as a clear example of what environmental justice advocates are fighting against.

“In toxic waste studies in 1987 and 2007, people of color were most affected. In 20 years, the numbers haven’t changed,” said Quentin Pair, a retired senior attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Environmental and Natural Resource Division. “Sixty percent are now affected. Race has always been at the heart of environmental justice.”

The entire environmental picture isn’t bleak, asserted Fields and Wright. The way forward for embattled communities is President Barack Obama’s Clean Power Plan and the range of smart climate change policies the administration has enacted. The plan sets the first, ever federal limits on carbon pollution from power plants, lowering the amount of health problem-causing toxins released into the air. The plan has public health and climate benefits worth up to \$54 billion a year through 2030.

“This will create opportunity work, transitions and economic development,” said Fields. “We’re strongly advocating for states to continue working on the Clean Power Plan.”



Aviso de Audiencias Públicas

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) gives notice of six public hearings to provide interested individuals the opportunity to comment on proposed Express BusLink service and changes to existing Express Bus service.

Schedule of Public Hearings

Monday, March 21, 2016
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Towson Library, Towson Room
320 York Road
Towson, MD 21204

Access via Nos. 3, 8, 11, 12, 48

Tuesday, March 22, 2016
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Linthicum Community Library
400 Shipley Road
Linthicum, MD 21090

Access via Linthicum Light Rail Stop

Wednesday, March 23, 2016
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Woodlawn Library
1811 Woodlawn Drive
Baltimore, MD 21207

Access via Nos. 44 and 57

Thursday, March 24, 2016
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

White Marsh Library
8133 Sandpiper Circle
Baltimore, MD 21236

Access via Nos. 35, 58, and 120

Monday, March 28, 2016
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Owings Mills Library, Room A
10302 Grand Central Avenue
Owings Mills, MD 21117

Access via Nos. 56, 59, and Metro Subway

Tuesday, March 29, 2016
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP
801 S. Caroline Street
Baltimore, MD 21231

Access via Nos. 21 and 31

Read about the proposed changes at www.mta.maryland.gov/baltimorelink-hearings

- The full text detailing the proposed transit service changes is available for public review in the lobby of the William Donald Schaefer Tower at 6 St. Paul Street in Baltimore.
- Interested persons are invited to attend and present their views. The MTA will accept written statements until 5:00 PM on Friday, April 29, 2016. Mail written comments to MTA, Office of Customer and Community Relations, 6 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, MD 21202. Alternatively, you may email your comments to HearingComments@mta.maryland.gov with "Written Testimony" as the subject heading. Your name and postal address must be included with your comments to become part of the public hearing record.

Locations are accessible for people with disabilities. Please contact the department listed below to make arrangements for: special assistance or additional accommodations; printed material in an alternate format or translated; hearing impaired persons; and persons requesting an interpreter. All requests must be received one week in advance.

Los sitios tienen acceso para personas con discapacidades. Por favor pongase en contacto con el departamento de la lista de abajo para hacer arreglos: ayuda especial o adaptaciones adicionales; material impreso en un formato alternativo o traducido; personas sordas y personas que solicitan un(a) intérprete. Todas las solicitudes deben ser recibidas con una semana de antelación.

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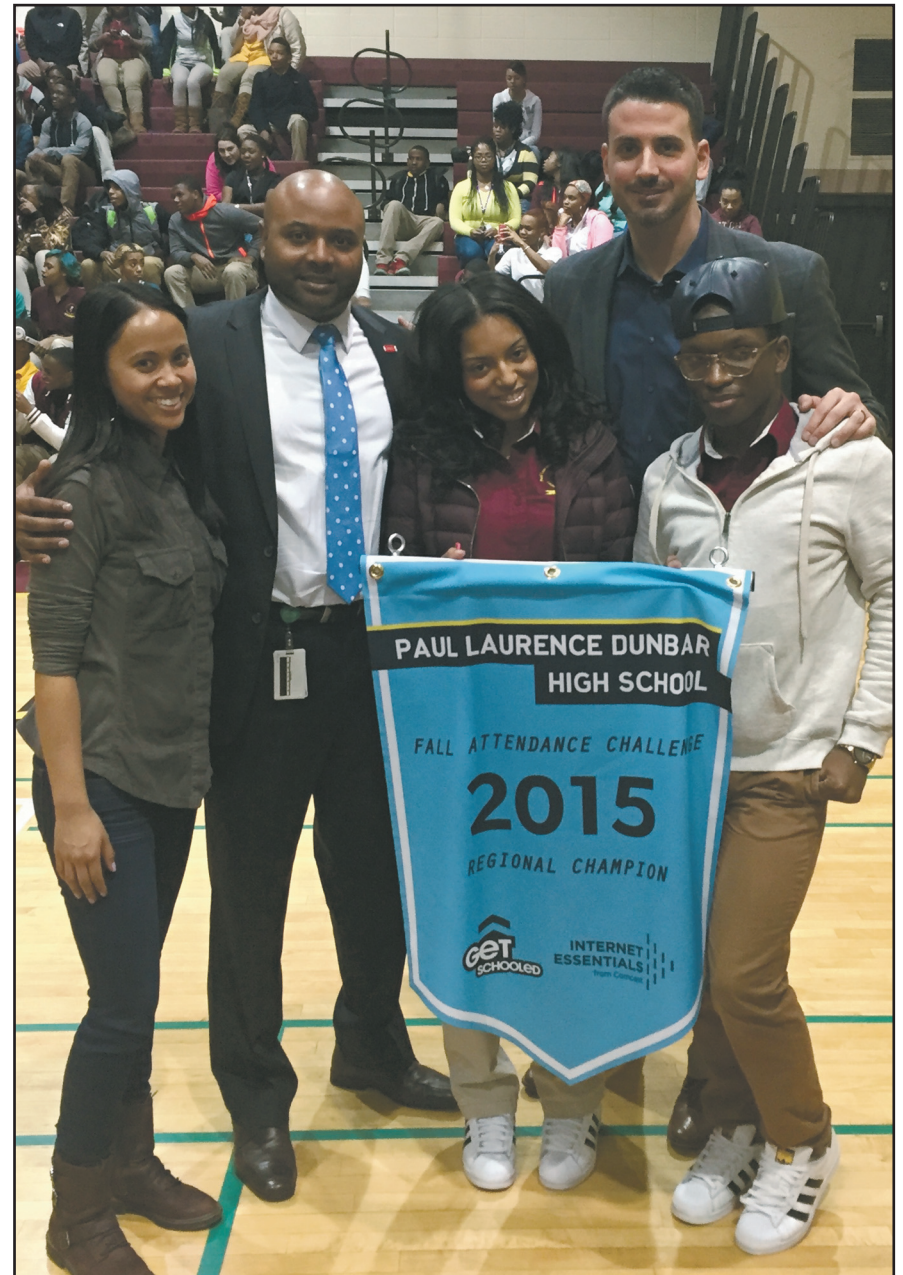
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Congratulations, Dunbar!

Get Schooled Regional Championship Winners



Antoine Banks, Senior Manager of Government & Regulatory Affairs for Comcast's Beltway Region; and Brad Palazzo, Community Investment for Comcast's Beltway Region joined students at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Baltimore City to celebrate their Get Schooled Regional Championship win for improved attendance in the Fall 2015 Attendance Challenge. Get Schooled is a national non-profit that gives young people the tools and inspiration to get the education they need to succeed. In the fall of 2015, Get Schooled led 98 middle and high schools from around the country in a national attendance challenge—a friendly competition aimed at improving school attendance. Paul Laurence Dunbar High improved its attendance rate 1.2 percent—more than any of the other 14 high schools around country that participated in the competition. Nationally, over half of all participating schools reported an increase in attendance. The Challenge is supported by the Internet Essentials program from Comcast.

Courtesy Photo/Comcast

Follow Your Dreams Because 'Dreams Do Exist'

By Brenda Bowe Johnson

Baltimorean Daryl C. Smith is a community activist who spends much of his time enriching lives of others through youth advocacy. His lifetime goals include helping kids find their niche through mentorship and youth athletic programs.

Smith, an outstanding athlete, graduated from Northern High School and Essex Community College. He played professional baseball sixteen years making his Major League debut with the Kansas City Royals in 1990. Currently, he is a certified master sales associate for Lexus.

"The foundation was formed because I wanted the youth to be inspired the way that I was coming up, [by] the powerful influential people in my life. I strive to promote the need for adult mentorship to positively impact youth and the community," said Smith who founded the "Dreams Do Exist" Foundation in 2008.

The mission of the foundation is to promote youth advocacy through hands-

on activities including mentorship, athletics and the arts. The foundation is funded through corporate sponsorships, private donations and volunteers.

In addition, the foundation supports youth by identifying their dreams, showcasing their talents and empowering strategic decision making through real world experiences and mentorship. The company's motto, "You Don't Have to be a Superstar to be Successful" further promotes the mission of the company by following basic core principles of empowerment, strategic planning, and establishing networking skills.

The foundation has several annual events including: Dreams of Tomorrow Youth and Jazz Event to be held Sunday, April 3, 2016 at the Gordon Center for Performing Arts in Owings Mills, Maryland; The Dreams Do Exist Golf Tournament to be held Sunday, August 7, 2016 at the Links at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; and One Dream Free Baseball Clinic, Summer 2016, to be held at the Weinberg Fine Stadium in Owings Mills, Maryland.



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Saturday April 16, 2016
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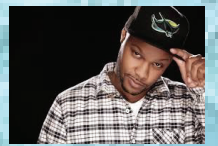
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Publisher, entrepreneur brings unique publishing program for young writers

By Andrea Blackstone

Ashley Logan Graham is a motivator who is known for helping others to bring fresh ideas to life between the pages of books and in their entrepreneurial endeavors. The Waldorf, Maryland resident who graduated from Arundel High School in Anne Arundel County, is the CEO and founder of an independent publishing house called Lift Bridge Publishing, LLC. Since 2014, Graham has offered top-notch publishing, branding and marketing services to clients who are business owners and to aspiring authors who want to learn the publishing process.

As an extension of Graham's mission to educate word-smiths, she launched a new program called Generation Write Now on February 22, 2016. Although Graham's target audience includes writers from ages eight to 18, the program is open to younger students who are serious about enhancing their creative writing skills and learning about publishing. Each participating student receives a workbook, a Generation Write Now t-shirt, and a printed copy of their book at the close of the four-week program. The finished book is available for sale in Lift Bridge Publishing's online bookstore and through Amazon.

Students may complete the Generation Write Now workshop in-person or online. One-on-one feedback and creative writing sessions are provided amid the outlined curriculum. The cost of the online Generation Write Now University is \$150, however the program is offered free in partnering schools, community organizations and churches. Self-published anthologies can even be sold as a fundraiser.

"I started Generation Write Now because as an author, this is a program I would have wanted for myself as a young writer" said Graham. "I feel as though if our kids knew that they could publish a book right now, it would inspire them to not just want to be an author one day, but to make the declaration that they will be an author and that they could do it right now. I also know that it will give them so much confidence to pursue anything else on their list of dreams," she continued.

Graham aspires to offer Generation Write Now University in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Montgomery County, Howard County, Prince George's County and Charles County. Graham and her brother Tony Logan are both facilitators of the four-week program.

Eric Boyd—a 15-year-old from Annapolis—was one of six students who participated in a pilot program in 2015. He completed his manuscript about a young boy named James living in the U.S. during the Civil War. After he was kidnapped from his home where he lived as a free person, James was brought to the South and forced into slavery. "Finding Freedom," was published by Lift Bridge Publishing in 2015.

"I learned that getting published doesn't have to be



In November of 2015, Ashley Logan Graham (left) and her brother, Tony Logan (right) returned to Arundel High School where they once attended school to discuss publishing, the Generation Write Now program and lead engagement activities. Sherri Billheimer (middle) is the Signature Program Facilitator at Arundel High School. The writing program is offered through Graham's Lift Bridge Publishing Company. Participating students who take the program through schools engage in a program, which allows them to write and publish their work in an anthology. Courtesy Photo

some impossible complicated task and I would recommend the program," Boyd said.

Graham's 27-year-old brother Tony Logan serves as Lift Bridge Publishing's marketing director. Logan also graduated from Arundel High School. He agrees that helping to cultivate the talents of young people is important.

"I believe it takes a village to raise a child because it worked for me growing up. I credit my success to everyone taking time and investing in me and helping to nurture my gifts, whether it was conversations that made me think, or providing activities and programs to keep me busy," Logan said. "I credit everyone who helped me on my path to success, so it's only right that we help the next."

To learn more about Generation Write Now University, visit www.liftbridgepublishing.com or to contact Graham about the Generation Write Now Program, email: contact@generationwritenow.com.

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NKF-MD Hosts Celebration for Maryland's Longest Surviving African-American Transplant Recipient

By Ursula V. Battle

George Franklin was in his final years of junior high school when he suddenly became ill. His illness continued throughout his high school years. Shortly after graduating from high school, Franklin's condition worsened and he slipped into a coma. Doctors would give his family devastating news. Franklin had been diagnosed with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD), they had done all they could do, and he would most likely die.

Forty years and two transplants later, Franklin is now 61-years-old, and holds the distinction of being Maryland's longest surviving African American transplant recipient, and the nation's second longest surviving African American transplant recipient from a deceased donor.

The Cumberland, Maryland resident was honored by The National Kidney Foundation of Maryland (NKF-MD) in recognition of the 40th anniversary of his kidney transplant. Titled "Celebration of Life – George's Journey," the event was held Thursday, Mar. 3, 2016, at The Grand Historic Venue located on 225 N Charles Street in Baltimore.

The evening included food and wine, networking, and an auction to support kidney patients who are on dialysis or waiting for a transplant. Franklin shared his story during the event, along with other transplant recipients.

"I got my first transplant in April of 1975, but it didn't work," recalled Franklin. "But then I got a call for a second kidney. I was nervous and apprehensive about going through another transplant, so I nearly turned the kidney down. However, my surgeon convinced me to take the kidney. I did, and the rest is history."

The Washington, DC native attributes his longevity to healthy eating, properly taking his medication, exercise, and faith. He competes in the International Transplant Games, and has won 11 medals in swimming and bowling.

"I have a very strong faith in Christ," said Franklin. "I think there is peace and



Franklin and Traci Barnett, President & CEO of NKF-MD, during the NKF-Maryland reception honoring him on March 3. Franklin is Maryland's longest surviving African-American transplant recipient and the nation's second longest surviving African-American transplant recipient from a deceased donor.



Franklin and Barry Hargrove, Pastor of The Prince of Peace Baptist Church in Baltimore during the event. Courtesy Photos

understanding there. I can do everything I can to lead a healthy life, but it still takes a higher power to sustain me and keep me going."

Franklin is one of 12 Transplant Games of America Athlete Advisory Council Members, and also serves as chair of the Minority Athletes Council.

The reception for Franklin also included remarks by Traci Barnett, president & CEO of NKF-MD, and other NKF-Maryland officials. Serving central and western Maryland, the Delmarva Peninsula and portions of Virginia and West Virginia, the National Kidney Foundation of Maryland is the area's

only voluntary health agency dedicated to preventing kidney and urinary tract diseases, improving the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by these diseases, and increasing the availability of all organs for transplantation.

The event was fittingly held in March, which is National Kidney Month. According to the National Kidney Foundation (NKF), kidneys filter 200 liters of blood a day, help regulate blood pressure and direct red blood cell production. NKF notes that one in three Americans are at risk for kidney disease due to diabetes, high blood pressure or a family history of kidney failure. There are more than 26 million Americans who already have kidney disease, and most don't know it because there are often no symptoms until the disease has progressed.

"I didn't have a family history of kidney disease," said Franklin "But as people of color, we tend to have more illnesses than other groups. We have to do a better job of taking care of ourselves. More people of color also need to become organ donors."

He added, "My kidney came from a white woman who died in a car accident. I've never met her family, but would like to meet them one day."

Barry Hargrove, pastor of The Prince of Peace Baptist Church in Baltimore, also spoke during Franklin's event. Like Franklin, he did not have a family history of kidney disease.

"The big takeaway for me was that life does not end with a diagnosis of kidney failure or being on dialysis," said Pastor Hargrove. "I spent 10 years of my life on dialysis and 20 years dealing with kidney disease. You have to be intentional about living as full a life as you can."

He added, "You might not be able to do everything you want to do, but do what you can do. Live life to the fullest."

For more information, visit www.kidneymd.org.

PNC Awards \$6,000 to Johnson Square Academy Head Start Program

By Stacy M. Brown

LIGHT Health & Wellness Comprehensive Services' Johnson Square Academy has been awarded \$6,000 by the PNC Foundation in recognition of the volunteer efforts of PNC employees Karen Burley, Seson Taylor-Campbell, April Harper, Angela McFadden, Lourdes Montes-Greenan, Franklin McNeil and Robin Chester.

The foundation's program rewards employee volunteerism by presenting a grant to a child care center that's assisted by employees.

"I've enjoyed volunteering all of my life, so when this came up I didn't hesitate to do it," Chester said. "Just the fact that I'm helping the community, these young children and the smiles on their faces... I have so much fun with them and I think my fun and smiles spread to the children."

Johnson Square Academy serves children in Baltimore through its accredited preschool.

The academy provides a range of day and respite care for children ages 2-5 and their families with or without special needs, and who may require more comprehensive services.

Programs at LIGHT help facilitate the social, cognitive, and intellectual development of each child with individualized attention to meet their needs and training is also provided for parents on child development, medical care, and medication regimens.

Johnson Square Academy can use the funds in any way officials deem necessary, said Burley, PNC Financial Services Group assistant vice president of regional media relations.

PNC provided the \$6,000 grant in support of its "Grow Up Great," initiative, a \$350 million multi-year bilingual program in early childhood education.

This year, PNC doubled the grant an employee, or groups of employees, can earn for a center after volunteering a set number of hours for efforts that began in 2014.

For teams who began volunteering in 2014, an individual grant is \$2,000; a team of two to three employees who



The PNC Foundation provided a \$6,000 grant to LIGHT Health & Wellness Comprehensive Services' Johnson Square Academy in support of its "Grow Up Great," initiative, a \$350 million multi-year bilingual program in early childhood education. Courtesy Photo/PNC Bank

volunteer for 60 hours collectively can earn a \$3,000 grant and four to 10 employees who volunteer for 100 hours collectively can earn a \$6,000 grant for their center.

"I think most people when they're considering working for an organization they think about what the organization is giving to the community and that influenced my decision to leave the Federal Reserve Bank after 16 years and come to work for PNC," McNeil said. "The resources and materials they put toward financial education is great. It's exciting to know that every Friday for six weeks, I'll be going to work at Head Start. PNC has given us 40 hours a year to do that."

Founded by The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc., PNC "Grow Up Great" program emphasizes the importance of the first five years of life, which research has shown is critical to long-term

achievement, and provides innovative opportunities that assist families, educators and community partners to enhance children's learning and development, according to PNC officials.

An investment in pre-K students makes good economic sense and plants the seeds for the dynamic workforce of tomorrow, Franklin added.

The program also has a Sesame Street component called "For Me, for You, for Later," a continuing partnership between PNC and Sesame Workshop that encourages young children to manage their money by spending it wisely, saving some for a rainy day, and giving some away to charity.

"You go in with an agenda and a plan," Franklin said. "The 'For Me, for You, for Later' involves Elmo teaching students about want versus need. Elmo is saving to buy a super stupendous ball

that plays music."

"Elmo has \$3 but it cost \$5. So, he's sent out on Sesame Street to make money and when he's about to make the purchase the Cookie Monster comes up and wants to borrow \$1 so Elmo has a decision to make on whether he shares his money and if he does, he has to buy the next level down," he said.

Ultimately, Elmo does give Cookie Monster the money and makes a purchase that's not as expensive as what he set out to buy.

"These children really need to learn to expect what to expect out of life," Chester said. "They need what is good food; they need encouragement; they need special attention. These kids see how you smile and how you're being courteous and they thrive on that. When I get ready to leave, they want me to stay."

HopeSprings Director Honored as Alumni of the Year

By Stacy M. Brown

Just two years! That was the gauntlet that Erin Donovan threw down before her husband, letting him know in no uncertain terms that they would only live in Baltimore a short time before moving on.

Donovan, the executive director of the Baltimore-based nonprofit HopeSprings, an organization that seeks to awaken, equip, and engage the faith community by building capacity within HIV Service Providers, had her heart in Africa.

After all, as a young girl, Donovan's father took her there and she was able to see firsthand the sufferings of many with the deadly virus and disease.

"When I was 14, my father took me on trip to East Africa and that expanded my view on the issues of poverty and other things. When I was in college, I felt a clear call to work in East Africa and that call directed every decision that I made including choosing a major at Vanguard University to spending my summers in Kenya," said Donovan who last month was named Vanguard University of Southern California 2016 Alumni of the Year.

Donovan has centered her life on helping the HIV/AIDS community.

In 1999, she had the opportunity to work with a professor on a research grant testing a rapid, 20-minute HIV test. "After graduating, I moved to Kenya to do community health education and development work. I spent much time in urban shantytowns with open sewage and no running water. I began to see death everywhere, but HIV/AIDS was never mentioned," she said. "It was tuberculosis, cancer, or dehydration caused from diarrhea, but



Erin Donovan

never HIV/AIDS. As I began to learn, the stigma and discrimination led to silence, and the silence led to death. Parents passed away, and small children were left to run the streets. This exposure to death shaped me, but so did the church's response.

Organizations like ours, World Relief, and World Vision were training churches not just to provide education but also to surround our Kenyan brothers and sisters, so that they may die in dignity.

Those were the days when medication

was not readily available."

When Donovan returned to the United States, she got married and moved to Baltimore.

She said the plan was to stay in Charm City for two years and then go back to East Africa. However, she said a friend asked her a question that changed everything, including her desire to move; what happened to the passion she had while serving in Africa and why couldn't

she do that in Baltimore?

She then was told about HopeSprings and that's when she learned that so many in Baltimore were living with HIV. "I didn't need to go to East Africa, there were problems right here that I could help," Donovan said.

A little more than five years ago, Donovan became executive director at HopeSprings which develops networks of faith communities in the Baltimore area and beyond to train congregants as volunteers with a goal of reducing the spread of HIV and its stigma and to provide hope to those affected by HIV and AIDS.

"I had the opportunity to really find where my passion is and look at social justice issues and to get involved in the world of HIV and AIDS, fighting against the stigma," Donovan said. "I'm so thankful for that opportunity to be a part of that community. It can be a tough thing for the faith community to be engaged in."

Donovan said her husband and two young children are also very much involved.

"It's a family thing. My daughter is six and my son is eight and they know all about the HIV/AIDS situation and they interact with all types of people. They have a heart of compassion and that's the way I want my family to be," Donovan said. "It's all about raising the next generation of kids who see needs and what assets are in the community. It's about a concept of building a brighter future and I want my kids to be a part of that. I want them engaged because a zip code shouldn't determine what you do or what you have access to."

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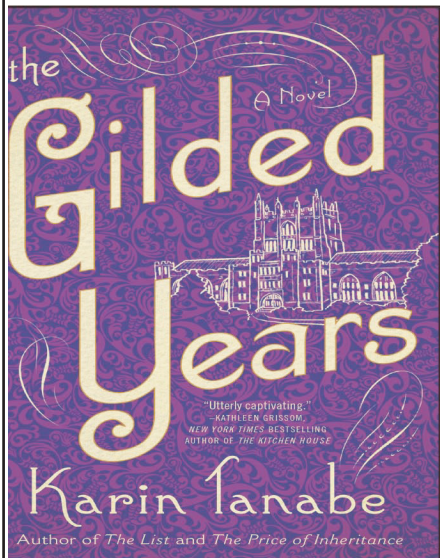
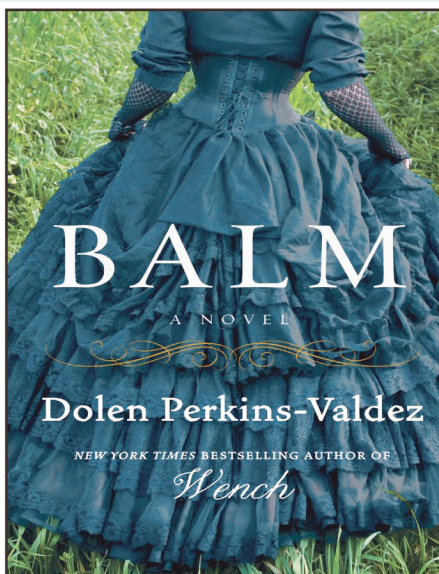
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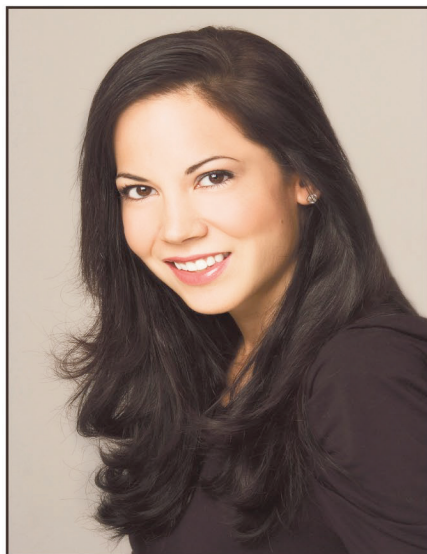
*Two women writers discuss the intersection of
place, time, and culture in literature
and in the lives of women.
The conversation will be
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Dolen Perkins-Valdez, New York Times best selling author of Wench



*Karen Tanabe, best selling author of The List
and The Price of Inheritance*



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Conscious Canvas

By Phinisse Demps



*Artist Antonio Moore with Baltimore City mayoral candidate Sheila Dixon who
purchased one of his pieces at a Conscious Canvas event. The next event will be
held on Thursday, March 24, 2016 at Brookshire Suites located at 120 East
Lombard Street in Baltimore.*
Courtesy Photo

The Conscious Canvas is an event meant to tap into the art community in Baltimore, thanks to the creative mind of Stephen Wise, owner of SWB, custom menswear in Baltimore City. Wise says art and fashion have a natural connection.

“Fashion is art. How I design a piece comes from inspiration and from the heart. It’s the same train of thought for artists. I wanted a platform for artists to be able to showcase their work and perhaps get commissioned to do work for others and perhaps sell some art.”

Antonio Moore is an artist who has benefited from such an event. “This gives me the chance to have my work seen by folks who might not see my work” he said. Moore had the opportunity to sell one of his pieces to mayoral candidate Sheila Dixon.

The Conscious Canvas Event is also a great time to mix and mingle and a chance to share great business ideas with others, according to Wise.

“We have some incredible talent in my city! Just like someone gave me chance to show what I can do in fashion, these artists deserve the same kind of outlet to be able to show what they can do” Wise said.

Brookshire Suites, located at 120 E Lombard Street in Baltimore, hosted the showcase. The next Conscious at Canvas event will be held on Thursday, March 24, 2016 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Rambling Rose

**Historic Arch Social Club
Celebrates 104 Years!**



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello everyone, this will be an exciting weekend if you follow my lead. I want you to get all dressed up in your finest digs and strut yourself to the Arch Social Club on the corner of Pennsylvania and North Avenues to help celebrate the club's 104 years. The members are struggling and doing their best to clean up that corner so you can walk into that beautiful building unafraid. Check it out on Sunday, March 13, 2016 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Your support will keep the doors open, hopefully for another 104 years. This is a black tie event with an open buffet, live entertainment and cash bar for only \$10.00. Have you ever heard of such?

Jazz Expressways Foundation needs your support also. We must keep our music alive, there are not too many organizations left to continue to give us the live music we enjoy so well. They are having a "Jazz Breakfast" that is BYOB with a great buffet and live entertainment featuring the Sterling Silver Quartet. It will be held at the Forest Park Senior Center located at 4801 Liberty Heights on Saturday, March 12 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Vendors will be available, too. I will see your face in the place. For tickets, call Howard or Cynthia Easley at 410-323-7295.

Pamela Leak's "Maybelle & Co Full Figured Fashion Show" is just about sold out. It is Saturday, March 12 at 4 p.m. It is a fundraiser for the Breast Cancer Association and two cancer survivors will be honored at this event; Greta Willis and Marva Williams formerly of 92Q. There will be live entertainment, buffet, door prizes and vendors. It will be held at the Positive Youth Expression School at 200 N. Bentalou Street. For tickets, call 443-226-8895.

The Sick and Shut-ins

Now, I want you to join me in prayer and condolences for the sick and shut-in and friends and members of our community who recently passed. Another Baltimore legend of the Whatnauts, Roland "Chunky" Pinkney passed away last week; Rudy Little, travel agent and husband of Juanita Little passed away last week; Winsor "Cooter" McDowell, owner of Club International in the 2300 block of West Baltimore Street, was buried last week; Edward "Smitty" Smith also passed away last week.

Sugar Chris, one of Baltimore's favorite DJs is in Sinai Hospital recuperating from knee surgery; Warren Hailey, a musician, is in the VA Maryland Health Care

Hospital; Michael Eugene Johnson is also in the hospital and Sandra "Coffee" Rollins, one of Baltimore's beloved DJs for playing oldies at Big Wooten's Lounge back in the 70's also passed away last week. O'Donel "Butch" Levy, I understand is still in the

nursing home and a little under the weather. May God carry your prayers to these individuals, their families and love one.

Well, my dear friends, it is about that time, I am out of time and space. Remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at: rosapryor@aol.com. Do not send me information on Facebook, I will not get it. Always send me your flyers by email. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.



The Arch Social Club invites the public to the club's 104th Anniversary and Black Tie Affair featuring live entertainment by the Phil Butts Band with an open buffet, dancing and cash bar on Sunday, March 13, 2016 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Donations only \$10.00. For Ticket information, call 410-622-2271. Please come out to support this historical venue!

Singer and producer Ralph Magwood is National Coordinator for the "Susie's Colon Cancer Foundation, Inc. His Gospel Group along with Kenny Davis & the Melodyaires, Rebirth, and many other entertainer will be at the free family health festival at Mondawmin Mall Center Court on Saturday, March 19, 2016 from 12:30-4:30 p.m.



Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority, Inc. Iota Chapter will host the Founder's Day Awards Luncheon on Saturday, March 19, 2016 from noon to 3 p.m. at Forum Caterers located at 4210 Primrose Avenue in Baltimore. For ticket information, call 443-804-8219.

Annapolis group lends a hand to Flint residents during water crisis

By Andrea Blackstone

In early March, eight members of an Annapolis based group called Black Wall Street Annapolis LLC (BWSA) drove to Flint, Michigan armed with optimism, bottled water and plans to do a good deed for the people affected by the city's toxic water supply.

Tap water in Flint was contaminated with lead after the source of Flint's water supply was changed in 2014. President Barack Obama declared a federal emergency in Michigan in February. Families are still struggling to avoid lead poisoning through consuming the toxic water that flows out of their taps. In addition to safety issues associated with drinking, bathing in the yellow or brown water is also a cause for concern.

As news of the difficult crisis continues, Deonte Ward, Christian Smooth, Tierra Smith, Mike Mullins, Amy Jackson, Adetola Ajayi, Akina Jones and Demetrius Shakur of Anne Arundel County wanted to do something to help. They urged individuals in the Annapolis area to support residents of Flint by donating water. Next, the proactive group loaded a box truck full of it and headed to Flint in a minivan, while embarking upon a two-day journey.

Ward, 27, is the CEO and founder of BWSA. The Annapolis native explained that members of BWSA who collected cases of water surpassed their goal of getting 300 cases—nearly 400 cases were collected, in addition to over 150 single gallons of water.

"A few members walked the streets of Annapolis going into communities, mom and pop shops, and large corporations. This is how we gathered [the] water," Ward said. "With the help of a few people that I know from being a resident in Woodside Garden Apartments, we reached our goal and [then] some, after they donated 120 cases of water."

While in Flint, BWSA members met team members of a humanitarian organization called Islamic Relief USA (IRUSA). IRUSA has been distributing pallets of bottled water by going door to door every weekend in Flint's lower-income communities.



Deonte Ward (standing, second from right) and members of Black Wall Street Annapolis LLC distributed water to residents of Flint, Michigan at Triumph Church Flint Campus on March 6, 2016. The church was the first stop the group made to help Flint residents. Ward is the founder and CEO of BWSA, which was founded in 2015, to help with building entrepreneurship, increase employment opportunities and foster community engagement in Annapolis and beyond. Courtesy Photos

After dropping off the last 100 cases of water in Flint, BWSA members attended the Justice for Flint concert and donated water. Money was raised by celebrity performers, musicians and activists for residents who have been impacted the city's water crisis.

Ward and fellow members of BWSA whose ages range from ages 21 to 56 years old are working to improve communities and meet other goals, such as helping people become entrepreneurs. The group was founded in 2015.

"One of the reasons I started Black Wall Street of Annapolis was to be able provide jobs for people that get overlooked, because of lack of experience, or because of their background," Ward said. "I'm looking forward to joining the other Black Wall Streets across the USA and I'm hoping to work towards the same concept and decrease or reduce the unemployment rate in the lower-income communities."

Christian Smooth also noted that BWSA intends to create more events that engage the community. Helping

Flint's residents to have clean drinking water during their time of need was the most rewarding part of the trip.

Smooth—an independent filmmaker, producer and founder of Smooth House Productions—plans to release a documentary about the trip called "The Road to Flint." Smooth expects that it will help others to understand what is really occurring in Flint.

"No one should be living the way they do, especially in America," Smooth said.

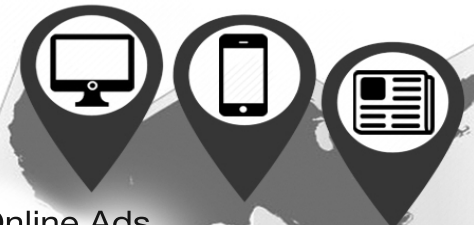
BWSA members hope to return to Flint in May. The group has already

begun already collecting water, hand sanitizer, water filters for showers and faucets and other items.

"When we return in May, one of our goals is to give out hand sanitizer and wipes to reduce the usage of water. This gives the residents more water to drink and bathe with. Collectively, I want to double the amount of water we [collected]," Ward said.

Anyone interested in donating items to help BWSA's drive for residents of Flint, contact Deonte Ward by email: black-wallstreetannapolis@gmail.com.

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Protecting the Right to Vote: Fifty Years After Selma

Washington, D.C.— The “Bloody Sunday” beatings of civil rights demonstrators in Selma, Alabama, served as a catalyst for the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Fifty years after Selma, this Election Day reminds us of the struggles— past, present, and future— to ensure equal voting rights.

Our nation was founded as a democracy, yet for centuries many people were denied the right to vote as a matter of law. Even after legal barriers were overcome, disenfranchisement took other forms. African-Americans, Latinos and other minorities were denied access to the polls through violence, intimidation, and many other forms of discrimination. It took years of struggle and bloodshed to enact laws that protect the fundamental right to cast a ballot.

Immense challenges remain today. The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Shelby County v. Holder*, gutted key protections against voting discrimination in the Voting Rights Act. Congress has yet to restore this law to its former vitality.

Across the country, voting rights are under attack. State and local officials are disseminating misinformation about voting requirements and procedures, eliminating early voting, purging voter rolls, and enforcing discriminatory voter identification requirements that disproportionately affect minorities, transgender people and elderly voters. Many polling sites are inaccessible to non-English speakers and voters living with disabilities. Far too many states, including Massachusetts, are ignoring federal laws that are designed to expand access to the polls.

Just this year, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and our voting rights allies— in partnership with Ropes & Gray— settled a major case, *NAACP v. Galvin*, which challenged our state’s failure to comply with its federally-



mandated duty to provide voter registration opportunities to public assistance recipients. As a result of our settlement, the state will now automatically distribute voter registration materials to public assistance recipients and provide multilingual assistance to those who wish to register.

Each year, the Lawyers’ Committee’s national office operates an Election Protection Hotline to assist voters who need information or assistance (see information below). Through this effort, we know firsthand that significant barriers— from incorrect voter registration records to inaccessible polling places— continue to stand in the way of equal

voting opportunity, particularly for people of color, immigrants, non-English speakers, and people living with disabilities.

Looking ahead, we know that vigilance will be key to protecting voting rights. At the Lawyers’ Committee, we are committed to dismantling barriers that stand in the way of equal access to the ballot box.

On Election Day, remember that the right to vote is precious. However you choose to vote, VOTE!

Election Protection Toll Free Hotlines: : 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683) administered by the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

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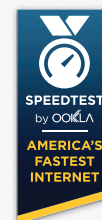
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