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World-renowned Aeolians of Oakwood University Visit Creatively Black Baltimore as Part of Their East Coast Holiday Season Tour



World-renowned Aeolians of Oakwood University visit Creatively Black Baltimore on Sunday, December 15, 2024, as part of their East Coast holiday season tour. The Aeolians of Oakwood University, an award-winning and world-renowned HBCU choir established in 1946, continue their legacy of excellence with inspiring performances both nationally and internationally. The Aeolians are currently under the artistic direction of Professor Jeremy Jordan. (See article on page 8)

Photo: Denzel Photography

Brothers Release Christian Music Single, Dedicate it to Their Grandfather

“We want people to know Jesus and for God to bless them,” —Josiah Pope

By Andrea Blackstone

Christian musicians come in all ages, including nine and eleven-year-olds.

Noldon Pope, Resident Pastor at Harvest Missionary Bible Church began offering his sons, 9-year-old Josiah Pope and 11-year-old Joshua Pope chances to learn valuable spiritual lessons and musical skills with a father’s loving touch at a young age.

“I sat them at the piano when they were toddlers. It’s always been there for them to take advantage of,” Noldon recalls.

Pope’s ambitious honor roll scholars are aspiring cardiologists who both sing, play piano and keyboard.

Noldon—a devoted father who retired from the Anne Arundel County Fire Department, moved to South Carolina with his boys. He plays guitar and introduced musical skills to them the best he could, but his budding musicians were eager to learn more. YouTube videos began to fill in teaching gaps as their skill level increased.

Josiah and Joshua were motivated to study music theory on their own and they received a bit of helpful guidance. When they get stuck, the Pope family calls Scott Michael Sharp. Noldon regards Sharp as an excellent piano teacher.

Josiah and Joshua began performing at Reedy River Missionary Baptist Church in 2022 when they were just seven and nine years old.

“Joshua played piano, and Josiah sang,” Noldon explained.

The musical brothers have also performed at a gospel fest and entered a Talent Search sponsored by the Monroe Johnson Foundation at Paine



Josiah Pope; Noldon Pope, Resident Pastor, Harvest Missionary Bible Church; and Joshua Pope.

Photo: Benny Pope



Joshua Pope and his brother, Josiah Pope are featured in their single “He Loves Me.” Photo: Noldon



Josiah Pope sings and plays piano live at the GospelFest in Aiken, South Carolina. Photo: Calvin Ford

College in Augusta, Georgia.

“They won first place in the elementary division,” Noldon added.

However, singing at their grandfather’s interment was a very special moment for Josiah and Joshua. January Pope Sr. passed away on August 31, 2024, around the time his grandsons started to record their debut song, “He Loves Me.” When Noldon asked his sons if they would like to sing at their grandfather’s interment, they said “yes” and practiced on the way there. The special performance demonstrated courage and the love they have for a great man who meant so much to them. The picture that was used for Joshua and Josiah’s single depicts them sitting in January’s dining room while having breakfast with his grandsons in 2021. “He Loves Me” was released in late November of this year.

“It is our way of singing the song, ‘Yes Jesus Loves Me,’” said Joshua.

Josiah sang the verses and the runs. He also played the electric piano and the bassline. His brother sang the bridge, played the piano and added string instruments. The song was dedicated to their grandfather.

Joshua shared that it took a month to complete “He Loves Me.” The talented scholar is proud that he can play music for people and strives to evoke joy within others.

“We want to make people feel happy,” he said, mentioning the duo’s performance goal.

“We want people to know Jesus and God to bless them,” Josiah also said.

Christmas is a meaningful time of year for them.

“It means that Jesus came because he loves us and we celebrate that,” Joshua stated.

He and Josiah have diverse interests which range from making origami figures and giving them away, to taking beach trips and kajukenbo (a hybrid martial art form from Hawaii), and working on more songs. In fact, Joshua wants to perform at more festivals.

Josiah explained another message that ties to the meaning of their new song.

“Jesus will always love you no matter what.”

Pastor Pope stated that celebrating the coming of Jesus first is a holiday tradition that he instilled in Josiah and

Joshua. The hands-on father invests considerable time in his son’s personal development away from school.

“Besides God, the parents are usually a child’s primary teacher. I look at the school system as just a secondary entity. Our responsibility is to get them ready for the world and to point them to a path of success.”

He would like families and individuals to keep something in mind this time of year.

“It’s not the lights or the traditional figures that make for a great Christmas, but that people see hope, joy, peace and love in us. And the only place I know to get lasting love, peace, joy and hope is in God.”

“He Loves Me” can be downloaded and added to playlists. The song is available via <https://open.spotify.com/artist/3L24ozdvp7dNZZk1a57JG6>, <https://music.apple.com/us/artist/joshuajosiah/1783010492>, and <https://www.iheart.com/artist/joshuajosiah-44940648/songs/he-loves-me-301831622>.

Visit their growing YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@Joshuajosiah100>

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Spreading Your Holiday Cheer – Electronic Payment Options Compared

By Karen Clay

Clay Technology and Multimedia, L.L.C.

Well, we are probably in the most gift-giving of gift-giving seasons of the year. No matter your holiday tradition, you may opt to give some form of currency to those special people for whom buying a gift can be difficult.

Once upon a time monetary gifts took the form of cash or a check, placed inside a card. These days it's more likely to occur as an electronic transaction via Zelle, Venmo or Cash App. Therefore, it is important to know the basic differences between these three peer-to-peer payment (P2P) options, enabling you to make an informed decision regarding how you send money to people on your gift list.

Each app comes with unique features, benefits, and security considerations that you should carefully evaluate, even if you use more than one of these apps. If you choose to gift someone this way, here are some considerations to keep in mind.

Zelle

Generally speaking, Zelle is considered more secure than Venmo or CashApp, primarily because Zelle integrates directly into the online and mobile banking systems of participating financial institutions. It links to a user's bank account only and has no debit or credit card options.

Advantages: It offers real-time transfers between participating banks with funds typically available in minutes. Zelle operates within your bank's infrastructure, therefore it benefits from bank-level encryption and security and adheres to strict financial security standards. You don't share credentials with Zelle; they authenticate directly with your bank. There are no fees for transfers and the direct integration into bank apps

eliminates third-party risks. Its integration directly into the mobile banking platforms of major U.S. banks makes sending money seamless for account holders, using just an email address or phone number.

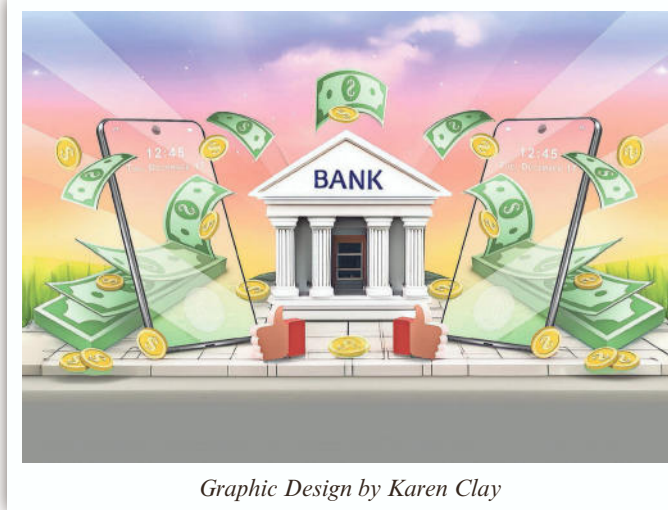
Disadvantages: Zelle payments are instant and irreversible. Once you send money through Zelle, it cannot be canceled. This makes Zelle ideal for trusted contacts but risky for payments to strangers as it doesn't offer purchase protection. You must be ever vigilant to assure that you don't fall victim to a scam that tricks you into sending money to a fraudster who is posing as a legitimate seller or acquaintance.

Venmo

Venmo is a standalone app that links to a bank account, debit card, or credit card. Users can send, receive, and hold money in their Venmo account, with a 3% fee applied for credit.

Advantages: Venmo offers additional funding source options to include linking your bank account, Venmo balance, debit card, or credit card. It uses encrypted transactions with optional multi-factor authentication to affect a transfer/payment, usually within 1-3 business days, or faster with a fee. Its social features (e.g., emojis and payment notes) are popular with many users.

Disadvantages: Venmo's optional social feed can expose payment details if you aren't careful as it can be a privacy risk if improperly



Graphic Design by Karen Clay

configured. Venmo also charges fees for credit card payments and instant transfers. For better security, ensure social sharing is turned off and privacy settings are configured to avoid exposing payment details.

Cash App

Cash App is another standalone P2P platform that allows you to send and receive money, buy cryptocurrency, and even invest in stocks. It also can be used with a bank account, debit card, credit card, or Cash App balance. As with Venmo, there is a fee of 0.5–1.75% of the transfer amount to affect an instant transfer.

Advantages: Cash App uses strong encryption and optional security features like PIN codes or Face ID as well as additional verification for transfers that you optionally can implement. This platform also offers unique features like cryptocurrency purchases and stock investments as well as the ability to hold funds in a Cash App balance.

Disadvantages: Like Venmo, Cash App charges fees for instant transfers. Due to its popularity, it is a strong target for scammers. To counter this, enable security features like PIN codes,



Karen Clay,
Clay Technology and Multimedia
Courtesy, Karen Clay

Face ID, or two-factor authentication and be even more vigilant about vetting scams such as fake giveaways, phishing attempts, etc.

Final Thoughts

While Zelle excels in speed and security for trusted contacts, Venmo offers a social experience ideal for friends and family. Cash App, on the other hand, provides versatile features like stock investments and cryptocurrency trading but comes with higher exposure to scams. Regardless of the platform(s) you use, be mindful of the following:

- **Know Your Recipient:** Only send money to trusted individuals.

- **Enable Security Features:** Use PINs, Face ID, or two-factor authentication.

- **Be Wary of Scams:** Avoid offers that sound too good to be true, like “cash flipping” schemes.

By understanding the strengths and risks of each platform, you can enjoy the convenience of P2P payments while keeping your finances more secure.

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CIAA & Congregations for Community Success Initiative

Baltimore— The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) is excited to announce the 2nd annual CIAA & Congregations for Community Success initiative. The initiative is a collaborative effort between the CIAA and Baltimore churches to support unhoused youth by providing scholarships, career opportunities, mentorship, mental health resources, and a strong community network to help students thrive. Working with the Baltimore City Public Schools' McKinney-Vento Program and the CIAA, pastors will provide students facing housing insecurities tickets to the 2025 Food Lion CIAA Men's & Women's Basketball Tournament, access to CIAA High School Education Day and a chance to receive a special scholarship to attend a CIAA member institution. CIAA Institution Acceptance announcements will occur on Wednesday, February 26, 2024, at the 2025 US Army ROTC CIAA High School Education Day. The CIAA and Congregations for Success initiative seeks to make a difference in the lives of those in need, offering an opportunity to experience the rich history, culture, and excitement of the CIAA Tournament.

In addition to tickets and scholarships, the CIAA and participating churches will host a special Mental Wealth Day in May 2025, offering mental health services, job training, and mentorship to ensure participating students have a support network as they transition to college. Spearheaded by CIAA Chaplain Pastor Jerome Barber of the Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Temple Church in Hampton, Virginia, the program also invites Baltimoreans and out-of-town fans to celebrate the power of community at CIAA “Church Night,” Tuesday, February 25, 2025. The members of the church congregations, fans, and the community can enjoy \$10 off their tickets to Tuesday night's games, and tournament games throughout



the week by using the CHURCH10 promotional code.

Participating Baltimore churches this year include:

The New Bethlehem Baptist Church
Southern Baptist Church
Greater Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church
Greater Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church
Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church
Morning Star Baptist Church
New Psalmist Baptist Church

About The CIAA

Founded in 1912, the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) is the first and longest running African American athletic conference in the U.S. and one of the most recognized conferences in Division II. The CIAA conducts 14 championships attended by more than 150,000 fans from around the country. The Basketball

Tournament has been honored as a 2019 Champion of Economic Impact in Sports Tourism by Sports Destination Management, the leading publication with the largest circulation of sports event planners and tournament directors in the sports tourism market, for both 2018 and 2019.

Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, the CIAA is governed by the Presidents and Chancellors of its 13 member institutions: Bowie State University; Bluefield State University; Claflin University; Elizabeth City State University; Fayetteville State University; Johnson C. Smith University; Lincoln University of Pennsylvania; Livingstone College; Saint Augustine's University; Shaw University; Virginia State University; Virginia Union University; and Winston-Salem State University. For more information on the CIAA, visit theciaa.com, like us on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram.

Travel Content Creator, Family Recommends Fun School Break Tips

By Andrea Blackstone

Lisa Summers, founder of www.itssummerssomewhere.com began a journey of creating content to share unique events and raise awareness about them a little under two years ago.

"I felt that there was a lack of awareness when it came to small businesses or new events in the area and knew that I could make things easier for the customer to find the business if I started a social media page to showcase them," the travel content creator explained.

Along with her husband, Tony Summers and children, Journey and Apollo Summers, the Baltimoreans trek locally and statewide to share positive things to do in the area. Lisa specializes in sharing family-friendly adventures, romantic date ideas, and group outings.

She handpicked four affordable places where parents, relatives or guardians can take children in the Baltimore area over the holiday break when school is out for students.

1. She stated that Charm City Lights costs \$10 per car through January 1, 2024. Visitors can stay warm in their cars while taking a drive to see holiday lights.

2. Ice skating at the Inner Harbor runs through January 2024 and costs \$12 per person for all day skate.

3. Baltimore County Library hosts events such as cookie decorating; winter rock painting; a chess club for kids; and play spaces.

4. Lisa's family likes playing games. They try to find low-cost arcades like Chuck E. Cheese or GameOn Bar+Arcade, which can be attended by all ages until 8 p.m. Many games only cost fifty cents.

The travel content creator suggested visiting Washington, D.C. because all the Smithsonian Museums are free.

"If you are not wanting to deal with the drive or traffic, you can hop on the



Apollo Summers, Anthony Summers, Journey Summers and Lisa Summers at the B&O Railroad Museum on the Polar Express.



Lisa Summers, Journey Summers, Apollo Summers, and Tony Summers at the Baltimore Christmas Village. Photos courtesy of the Summers family



Lisa Summers, Journey Summers, Tony Summers, Apollo Summers at the B&O Railroad Museum in the North Pole

MARC Train for low cost and get down there," Lisa shared.

Parents who prefer to build memories at home can cook with their little ones. It is an activity that the Summers family loves to do without rushing to work and school. During the holidays, they enjoy a slower pace and make meals together.

Playing cards and board games offer other ways to participate in competitive fun.

Tony feels that it is very important to build memories of fun times with friends and family to have something to look back on while remembering a shared, enjoyable experience.

"It's all too easy to lose someone quickly, so having many fun memories keeps them present in your mind and heart."

He serves as his wife's cameraman during outings, ensuring that their children are safe and not running off or running away while trying something new or different. Tony enjoys seeing the excitement on his family's faces whenever they try new experiences or something fun.

"This is also a teaching moment because while we are out. We always encounter a world schooling moment," Tony stated.

Apollo Summers, 4, remarked that going everywhere with parties tops the list.

"I want to see the new lights and the lights are so cool."

Apollo added, "Port Discovery is my favorite place to visit because of the climbing structure and play kitchen area."

Journey, 6, feels like having lots of hot chocolate and making new friends at the indoor playground would be appealing things to do.

The Summers family also agreed that taking a simple road trip over the holiday period can be budget-friendly and enjoyable. They recently explored Calvert Cliffs, located in Calvert County, Maryland to search for shark teeth. The Summers also visited the Calvert Marine Museum to explore a

lighthouse tour and marine life.

"We went to the Annmariie Sculpture Garden to see holiday lights, and this was one of the best displays we have seen in the state. They change it yearly so it's never the same," Lisa also shared. "I think more people need to venture to these small counties to see how different life can be outside of the city."

The holiday season offers families chances to enjoy each other's company and pass down family traditions.

"We watch 'A Christmas Story' during its 24-hour run and recite the words I am passing down to my kids from my childhood. We do a gingerbread house-building competition with the family which is a tradition from my husband's side of the family," Lisa added.

Instagram users can keep up with Lisa and her family's adventures via <https://www.instagram.com/itssummerssomewhere>.

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World-renowned Aeolians of Oakwood University Visit Creatively Black Baltimore as Part of Their East Coast Holiday Season Tour

By Derrick Green

On December 14, 2024, the world-renowned Aeolians of Oakwood University, under the direction of Professor Jeremy Jordan, visited the “Creatively Black Baltimore” art exhibit as part of their East Coast Christmas tour. The exhibit is the largest collection of African-American art in the region and provided a rich cultural experience that complemented the Aeolians’ recent release of their Christmas album, “Aeolians: An Old-Fashioned Christmas.”

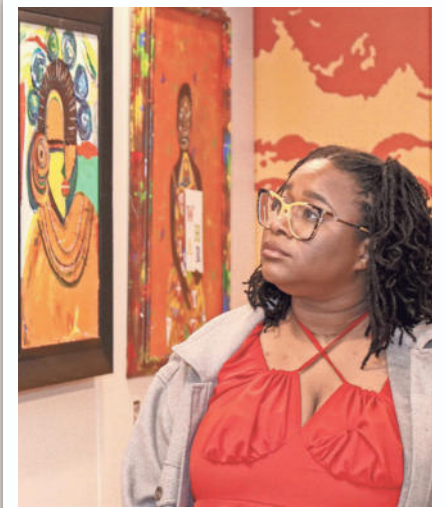
Oakwood University, founded in 1896 in Huntsville, Alabama, is a Seventh-day Adventist Historically Black College and University. The Aeolians, a historic choir on campus for over 75 years, has earned the title “Choir of the World” and are recognized for their rich legacy, performing anthems, spirituals, and various other musical genres. Oakwood University is widely known for its remarkable musical heritage. Its alumni have impacted the world musically, including luminaries such as Little Richard; Take 6; Brian McKnight; Wintley Phipps; Clifton Davis; members of Naturally 7; and Angela Brown.

Unlike many HBCUs that celebrate homecoming with football traditions, Oakwood’s homecoming is observed around Easter, with concerts and worship services celebrating the risen Savior.

On Saturday, the Aeolians performed at the Takoma Park Seventh-day Adventist Church. The following day, after a standing-room-only concert at the People’s Community Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, the choir visited Creatively Black Baltimore art exhibit.



Female members of the Aeolians Choir meet “Dear Black Girl.” Photographed with Maryland Senator Jill Carter (Bottom row, third from left); Tamara Payne, curator of Dear Black Girls (pictured in hat); and Paris Brown, publisher of The Baltimore Times and co-founder of Creatively Black Baltimore.



Members of the Aeolians tour the Black Art exhibition.

They were warmly greeted by Paris Brown, publisher of The Baltimore Times, Maryland Senator Jill Carter, and Professor Tamara Payne of Tamara Payne Creations and artist-curator of an installation at the art exhibition. Among the various works, the students were particularly drawn to “Dear Black Girl,” a collection curated by Professor Payne. The Aeolians enjoyed catering provided by Oleum, a vegan restaurant and Soul Kuisine, both local Baltimore eateries located at Baltimore’s Inner Harbor Light Street Pavilion.

For many students, this was their first visit to Baltimore. Despite the cold, rainy weather outside, they found warmth, healing, inspiration, and peace within the exhibit’s walls. “Awe-inspiring and breathtaking all at the same time,” said Andrew from Columbia, Maryland. “It makes me want to go back and pay attention to every aspect of the art exhibit.”

“The food was great,” said Celine of Maryland. “It was amazing to

see something different, inspiring, and uplifting. It really brings awareness to issues that need to be discussed. It painted vivid pictures of people who are often not heard or seen. Black women need to see a representation of themselves and the art they create, showing the amazing things they can accomplish.”

Choir member Anaeya Perry, from Fairfax County, Virginia, reflected on the exhibition: “I thought it was inspiring to see a variety of talents showcased through different mediums. It was empowering for Black women. My favorite part was the ‘Dear Black Girl’ book, where we got to write



Choir members enjoy the backdrop of the beautiful Inner Harbor. Photos: Denzel Photography

messages to young Black girls. It was wonderful to add our voices to something that could spark motivation and inspiration for whoever comes across it.”

Kennedy Green, from New Jersey, was equally moved: “The Creatively Black Baltimore art exhibit was amazing. As a musical artist, I was so inspired by the representation of ideas,



Senator Carter enjoys a fun selfie moment with members of Aeolian Choir.

cultures, experiences, thoughts, and expressions. “Dear Black Girl” was life-changing—being able to write positive messages for others you may never meet was profound.”

The Aeolians’ visit to Creatively Black Baltimore’s art exhibit was more than a tour stop; it was a meaningful cultural exchange that nourished their artistic souls and reaffirmed the power of creativity, community, and representation.



Senator Jill Carter addresses the inspiring Aeolians and accompanies them on a guided tour of Creatively Black Baltimore, the region’s largest exhibition of Black art.



Members of the Aeolians tour the Black Art exhibition.

Think Twice Before You Spend

Eleven Ways to Make Unique Gifts a Hit Without Breaking the Bank

By Andrea Blackstone

Despite a gift giver having good intentions, Christmas gift giving can lead to the gift giver wasting money as unwanted items stack up in closets, spare rooms or garages of recipients. Sometimes thoughtfulness is more important than the price of a purchased item. It is prudent to pay attention to what may truly be wanted or useful before spending money. Credit card bills and other financial obligations must be paid after the holidays are over. Purchase items wisely and realistically before grabbing random, last-minute gifts this holiday season. Additionally, trying to come up with gift ideas for people who seem to have everything or who say they want nothing can prove to be frustrating or wasteful.

Customize your blessing to suit a person's tastes to the best of your ability. Do not lose sight of the fact that personalities differ. Remove what you like from the equation before you spend money on expensive gifts. These tips offer ideas that can help you to share while tapping into your creative spirit.

1. Design homemade coupons that are good for helpful or thoughtful things you can do, such as pet-sitting; babysitting a child or children; cutting grass; raking leaves; having lunch on you; cleaning help; providing a listening ear when it is needed; or something else that can be redeemed. Inform the person that he or she can use the coupons throughout the year. Be sure to discuss times that may work for your schedule and be willing to follow up if the coupon calls for an in-person meeting. Keep the coupons you make simple, personal and thoughtful. If you do not reside close by, consider including coupons for virtual tea or dinner, or include one that is redeemable for a request to visit during downtime.



2. Offer a service or consultation to a budding or small business owner. Think about what you heard someone say that he or she could use or something that is wanted. You may have a skillset that is an asset to his or her endeavor. Encourage them to pursue a dream by showing that you are willing to give hands-on help for a set time or to complete a task you know how to do well.

3. Memories last but material things do not. If you are crafty, make candles, art, or print and frame a favorite photo of you and the recipient as a gift. You may also make a memory album if you have time. A homemade creative gift basket that you design can include cold weather perks such as a cozy blanket, warm socks, and a person's favorite tea or coffee.

4. Giving a person time and undivided attention can be such an underrated gift in a busy world. For example, set the stage for a night at home by finding a DVD you believe the other person would like to watch with company. Add popcorn and a note that you would like to set up a time to watch it together.

5. If you reside a distance away from loved ones, send a batch of holiday cards with heartfelt thoughts or messages before 2025. Include postage stamps while suggesting a routine of keeping in touch by mail throughout

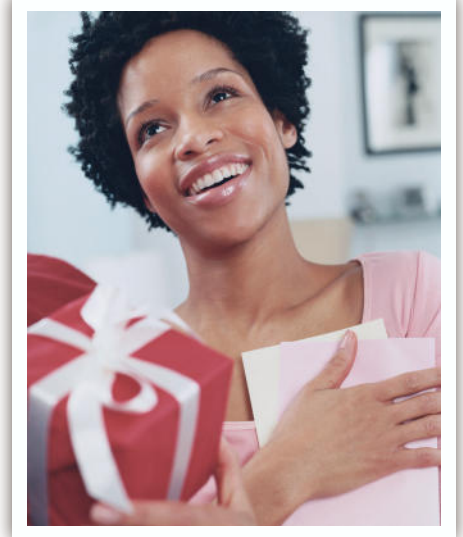


the year. Receiving a card or letter offers a nice pick me up touch in a time when email and texts have become more popular.

6. Buying and giving gift cards can feel impersonal, but there are ways to add a personal touch. For example, purchase a gas card for a commuter or someone who drives a lot. Who would turn down a free tank of gas?

7. Sometimes, we may forget to purchase simple items that we may use daily such as sets of oven mitts and kitchen hand towels. Something practical, useful and simple can be a hit, especially if you notice that a person has forgotten to purchase them for themselves.

8. If you or a child do not have a Christmas gift-purchasing budget, there are creative ways to exhibit thoughtfulness this time of year. Children can give customized photo magnets or personalized calendars to grandparents, mentors, or people who are special to them.



9. Purchase a gift certificate to buy a book from a bookstore for an avid reader.

10. Buy a notebook or journal for someone and write brief, personal notes of encouragement on some of the pages.

11. Donate money to a nonprofit or cause that you are confident that a person supports.

Celebrate Kwanzaa in Baltimore 2024

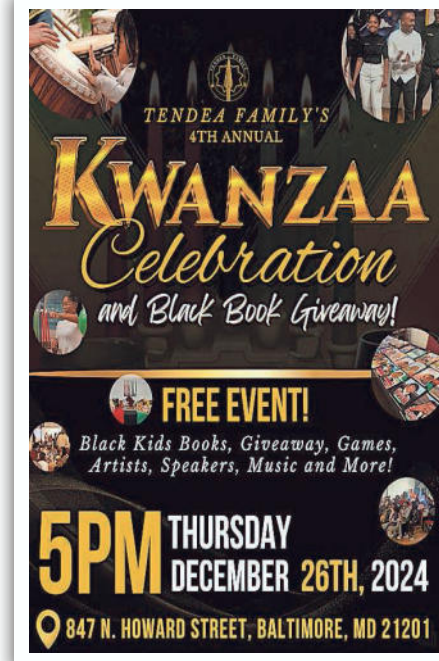
Compiled by Andrea Blackstone

Dr. Maulana Karenga is creator of Kwanzaa, an African American and Pan-African holiday celebrated by millions throughout the world, according to the official Kwanzaa website. Kwanzaa was inspired by numerous African cultural practices. Dr. Karenga based the family-oriented holiday on traditional African harvest festivals. The name is derived from a Swahili phrase (matunda ya kwanza) meaning first fruits.

Kwanzaa began in 1966 during the aftermath of the Watts Riots in Los Angeles, allowing celebrants to encourage pride, and empower them to unify and celebrate family, community and culture. This holiday is held from December 26- January 1 each year, following Christmas. Seven principles known as Nguzo are recognized over the seven-day period.

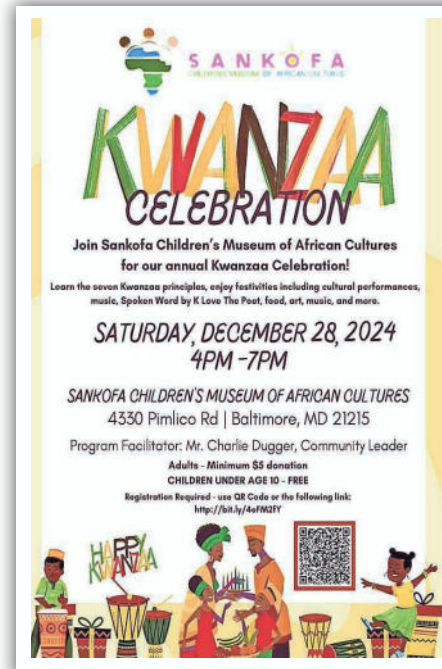
“During the holiday, families and communities organize activities around the Nguzo Saba (The Seven Principles): Umoja (Unity); Kujichagulia (Self-Determination); Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility); Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics); Nia (Purpose); Kuumba (Creativity); and Imani (Faith). Participants also celebrate with feasts (karamu), music, dance, poetry, narratives and end the holiday with a day dedicated to reflection and recommitment to The Seven Principles and other central cultural values,” per information provided by <https://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org>.

Kwanzaa events in Baltimore have been compiled for your convenience. Check with organizers to confirm details.



The Tendea Family will hold their **4th annual Kwanzaa Celebration and Black Book Giveaway**, located at 847 N. Howard Street, Baltimore, Maryland, Thursday, December 26, 2024 from 5-9 p.m. The evening will be filled with cultural performances, food and community spirit. Light the kinara, share stories, enjoy features of Black children’s books, giveaways, speakers, and more. See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tendea-family-s-4th-annual-kwanzaa-celebration-tickets-1111844770639?msocid=1f7c920a8db76bb71b7b86a58cb06ac3> for more details and tickets.

The Tight Knit Family and special guests will host a **Celebrate Kwanzaa event at the House of Chiefs**, 4603 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212, will host Kwanzaa Week every day (Thursday December 26 – Wednesday January 1)



from 1 – 5 p.m. Music, food, art and shopping are planned. Call Katelyn at (410) 499-5801 or Ertha Harris at (443) 655-7198 about vending.

The **18th Annual Kwanzaa Celebration** will be held on Thursday, December 28, 2024 from 6-8:30 p.m. at The Weinberg Y in Waverly, 900 E. 33rd Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21218. A candle lighting ceremony, African storytelling, African drum and dance, Unity Dinner, and children’s activities will be held. Contact Baba Olamina Stevenson by email at olamina.stevenson@gmail.com or by phone at (443) 527-5527 if you would like more information.

Sankofa Children’s Museum of African Cultures will host an annual Kwanzaa Celebration at 4330 Pimlico Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21215 on



Saturday, December 28, 2024 from 4 – 7 p.m. Learn Kwanzaa Principles, enjoy art, music, food, poetry and more. Admission for adults is \$5 and free for children under 10. Registration is required. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sankofa-childrens-museum-invites-you-to-our-2024-kwanzaa-celebration-tickets-1087243918829?msocid=1f7c920a8db76bb71b7b86a58cb06ac3>

Sister Circle collection with Paula Brooks will hold a Kwanzaa Celebration at Clay Pots, located at 1635 West Pratt Street Baltimore, Maryland 21223 on Monday, December 30, 2024 from 1 – 3 p.m. Celebrate the principles of Kwanzaa and their significance. See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sister-circle-session-5-kwanzaa-celebration-tickets-1099999119979?aff=ebdssbdestsearch> to obtain registration information.

Dr. Tonya Jeffries Among 450+ Morganites Who Graduated in Fall Ceremony

By Doni Glover
BMORENews.com

On December 13, 2024, more than 450 bachelor's, master's, and doctoral candidates received their degrees during the Fall graduation ceremony at Morgan State University, a cherished national treasure in Baltimore. Among those who walked the stage was Dr. Tonya Denise Jeffries, who earned her doctoral degree in Education focusing on Community College Leadership.

A trained dental hygienist by profession, Dr. Jeffries has dedicated nearly two decades to working in the dental field. Her dissertation, recognized as one of the best of the year at Morgan State, is titled "The Effects of Student Engagement on Black Dental Hygiene Students at Blue Community College Focusing on Student Characteristics as Factors in Pre-College Experiences." In celebration of her accomplishment, a special event was held in her honor Friday night. During the festivities, Dr. Jeffries highlighted that all the vendors and business professionals who contributed to the event's success were Black-owned businesses.

"I believe it is important that we empower one another, which is why I want to recognize all of the vendors who supported me in celebrating my graduation," Dr. Jeffries shared. "While it may seem like the evening was about celebrating me, it really wasn't—because we cannot do things alone. The universe requires us to support each other, and there are many Black businesses doing phenomenal work. We need to support them with the same monetary investment that we give to other businesses."

Advancing Oral Health in the Black Community

Dr. Jeffries' commitment to community empowerment extends



Dr. Tonya Denise Jeffries earned a doctoral degree in Education focusing on Community College Leadership from Morgan State University. Courtesy photo

beyond her academic achievements. A native of West Baltimore, she has dedicated her career to transforming perceptions about oral health in the Black community. Recognizing that oral health is often overlooked in underserved communities, Dr. Jeffries has tirelessly worked to educate, advocate, and empower individuals through her profession. As the first African American president of the Maryland Dental Hygienists Association (2015–2016), she has been a trailblazer in her field, addressing the lack of diversity and the systemic barriers within oral health care.

Dr. Jeffries is the first African American in Maryland to develop a dental hygiene and dental assistant program at a community college. This initiative is critical, as statistics reveal stark disparities in oral health outcomes for African Americans. According to the Anne Arundel County Department of Health:

- Oral cancer is most common among African American men, ranking as the fourth most common cancer in this demographic.

- African Americans are one-third more likely to develop oral cancer than Caucasians.

- African Americans have nearly twice the mortality rate from oral cancer compared to Caucasians.

"My mission is to help increase the number of Black dental hygienists and others from underrepresented communities," Dr. Jeffries stated. "We need to raise awareness about oral health in the Black community because it is connected to overall health and systemic health. Our mouths are not disconnected from our bodies, and oral health education empowers the entire community."

A Legacy of Mentorship and Advocacy

Dr. Jeffries' impact reaches far beyond her accomplishments. Brionna Burris, Program Director of the Dental Hygiene Program at the Community College of Baltimore County, is one of many mentees who has benefited from her guidance.

"Tonya has been an exceptional mentor and leader," said Burris.

"Her wisdom, unwavering support, and genuine care have shaped my professional growth and personal development. She has worked tirelessly to increase awareness of oral health and has been a pioneer in creating initiatives like 'Deaf and Dental,' which demonstrated her innovative approach to meeting the needs of underserved communities."

Dr. Jeffries' efforts to advocate for fair treatment and equal pay for dental hygienists have also left a lasting impact. Former Maryland state Senator Joan Carter Conway recalled a legislative effort in Annapolis where Dr. Jeffries played a pivotal role. "There was a big rift between dentists and dental hygienists because the dentists wanted hygienists to do the work without proper compensation. Tonya fought for their respect and equitable pay, which was long overdue," Conway said.

A Vision for a Diverse Future

Dr. Jeffries continues to champion the need for diversity in the dental hygiene profession, where only 3.7% of practitioners are African American, compared to 73.9% white. She believes that representation in health care professions directly impacts the quality of care and education communities receive.

"If our clinicians and providers are not diverse, we're not effectively addressing the needs of the community. When patients see professionals who look like them, they're more likely to seek care, get treated, and learn how to maintain their health," Dr. Jeffries explained.

Reflecting on her journey, Dr. Jeffries said, "I'm proud of how far I've come. From mentoring others to creating programs and advocating for legislation, I've been able to contribute in ways I never imagined. It's an honor to be part of this industry and to work toward a healthier, more equitable future."

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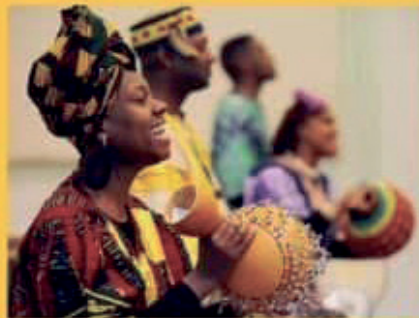
KWANZAA CELEBRATION

Join us in a cultural celebration of the spirit of Umoja (Unity) this Kwanzaa season, hosted by The Roots of Scouting in partnership with Sankofa Emma and the Baltimore Rites of Passage Initiative. We invite you to come together with our community as we celebrate Umoja, the first principle of Kwanzaa, representing the essence of unity. Join us in reflecting on what Umoja means to each of us and how we can carry it forward to support each other and uplift future generations.

THURSDAY | DECEMBER 26, 2024
THE WEINBERG Y IN WAVERLY
900 E. 33 RD STREET, BALTIMORE, MD 21218
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Candle Lighting Ceremony
African Drum and Dance
African Storytelling

Children's Activities
The Karamu (Unity Dinner)



<https://www.eventbrite.com/managed/events/1105058994199/tickets>

CONTACT BABA OLAMINA STEVENSON
EMAIL: OLAMINA.STEVENSON@GMAIL.COM OR PHONE: 443.527.5527

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Legal Notice

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
OFFICE OF ENGINEERING AND
CONSTRUCTION
NOTICE OF LETTING**

Sealed Bids or Proposals, in duplicate addressed to the Board of Estimates of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore and marked for **SANITARY CONTRACT NO. 1028-CLEANING OF THE OUTFALL INTERCEPTOR** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M on **February 5, 2025**. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. Bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates and can be watched live on CharmTV's cable channel 25/1085HD; charmtvbaltimore.com/watch-live or listen in at (443) 984-1696 (ACCESS CODE: 0842939) from City Hall at Noon. The Contract Documents may be examined, without charge, at Contract Administration 4 South Frederick Street Baltimore, Maryland 21202 on the 3rd floor (410) 396-4041 as of **December 20, 2024**, and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **100.00**. **Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package.** All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be prequalified by the City of Baltimore Contractors Qualification Committee. Interested parties should call (410) 396-6883 or contact OBC at 4 S Frederick St., 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. **If a bid is submitted by a joint venture ("JV"), then in that event, the document that established the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes.** The Prequalification Category required for bidding on this project is **G90129 Large Diameter Sewer Cleaning**. Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$5,000,000.01 to \$10,000,000.00**.

A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted via Microsoft Teams. Vendor can call +1667-228-6519 PASSCODE: 689032354# on **January 9, 2025** at 10:00AM. "All bid inquiries must be emailed to: amber.coles-johnson@baltimorecity.gov and carlos.stephemson@baltimorecity.gov by the Q&A deadline of **January 15, 2025**. Questions received in writing and by the deadline will only be considered".

For further inquiries about purchasing bid documents please contact the assigned **Contract Administrator** @baltimorecity.gov and dpwbidopportunities@baltimorecity.gov.

Legal Notice

Principal items of work for this contract include, but are not limited to:
Approximately 31,300 linear feet of cleaning and inspection of interceptor sewer CCTV and sonar inspection
Approximately 7,000 tons of disposal of sanitary sewer debris
Approximately 58 manhole inspections

The MBE/ DBE goal is **23%**
The WBE/DBE goal is **16%**

APPROVED:
Clerk
Board of Estimates
City Hall

APPROVED:
Director
Khalil Zaied
Department of Public Works

Legal Notice

**CITY OF BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
WATER RATES**

A public hearing has been scheduled by The Board of Estimates for considering the adoption of these recommendations for January 22, 2025. The hearing will take place in the Hyman Pressman Board Room located at 100 Holliday Street, City Hall Room 204, Baltimore, Maryland 21202.

The City of Baltimore owns and operates a public water supply, treatment, and distribution system built and maintained by the City to provide potable water and wastewater services. Baltimore City Code Article 24 § 3-5(a) states, "It shall be the duty of the Director of Finance and the Director of Public Works to recommend, and the duty of the Board of Estimates to: (1) establish rates and charges to make each utility financially self-sustaining at all times." The Director of Finance and Director of Public Works jointly recommend that the Board of Estimates adjust the fixed, infrastructure, and volumetric rates for the water utility by 3.00% and sewer utility by 15.00% for Fiscal Year 2025, effective February 1, 2025. It is further recommended that the Board of Estimates adjust the fixed, infrastructure, and volumetric rates for the water utility by 9.00%, sewer utility by 9.00%, and stormwater utility by 3.00% effective July 1, 2025 and July 1, 2026.

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