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Breast Cancer Survivor Walks in Her Purpose, Inspires Through Memoir

Evelina Johnson Buendia, a courageous breast cancer survivor, unboxes copies of her memoir, "Healed: From Cancer to Survival." Johnson Buendia was diagnosed with invasive ductal carcinoma in 2017 at the age of 34, a mere year after giving birth to her son. Her treatment plan included chemotherapy, radiation, a right breast mastectomy, and hormone therapy through both pills and injections. The supporter of breast cancer initiatives reminds women that even if they do not have health insurance, they should check for available resources to get a free mammogram.

(See article on page 8)

*Photo courtesy of
Evelina Johnson Buendia*



Ten Simple Ways to Eat Out Smarter During Healthy Restaurant Week

Mind Over Meals creator Michelle Petties offers strategies to help Marylanders make every meal a celebration of health, not guilt.



Michelle Petties
Courtesy photo

By Michelle Petties

Let's be honest — most of us love to eat out. It's social, it's satisfying, it's convenient, and sometimes, it's even therapy. Whether it's Sunday brunch, Taco Tuesday, or date night, restaurants are woven into how we celebrate, connect, and unwind.

But for many people, dining out can also feel like walking through a minefield of temptation. We know how good the food tastes — and how easy it is to leave with a full belly and an even fuller sense of regret.

With an obesity rate of nearly 40% nationwide, and more than two million Maryland adults living with obesity, it's clear that we have serious health challenges to tackle. In Baltimore City, the obesity rate hovers between 38 and 42%, and in nearby counties, the numbers aren't much lower. That's why I'm excited that The Baltimore Times is launching Healthy Restaurant Week, November 1–9.



Getty Images

It's an opportunity for all of us to rethink dining out — not as a guilt trip, but as a celebration of mindful eating, community, and self-care.

The Real Secret: Decide Ahead of Time

As a recovering food addict and someone who spent decades “doing business over dinner,” I understand the struggle. For years, I lived in restaurants, meeting clients, friends, and colleagues over plates piled high with comfort and calories. So, when clients say to me, “I gain weight because I eat out all the

time,” I nod and think, “Dining out isn't the problem — what you decide to do while you're dining out is.”

The secret to eating out the healthy way starts long before you ever step foot inside a restaurant. It begins in your head, your heart, and your home.

Ask yourself:

- *How do I want to feel when this meal is over?*
- *What choice will honor my health and my life?*

When you decide ahead of time, you take back the ability to choose. You arrive at the table clear, calm, and

confident — not controlled, confused or consumed by cravings.

Use Food as a Tool, Not a Trap

Food is not the enemy. It's fuel. It's energy. It's medicine when used wisely. But too often, we give food more emotional power than it deserves. We use it to fill voids, numb pain, celebrate, reward, or forget.

Healthy Restaurant Week is a reminder that food can be something more—a tool that supports your goals, not sabotages them.

Continued on page 14

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CYBER Security Month: AI Doesn't Discriminate

By Karen Clay

Clay Technology and Multimedia, L.L.C.

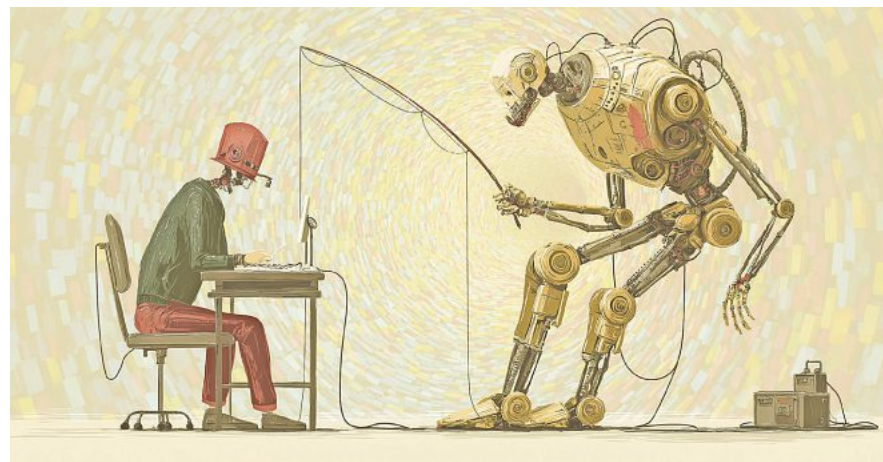
In this second article for Cyber Security month, we're going to focus on one of the hottest tools to gain traction in this century—Artificial Intelligence (AI). With the advent of AI as we know it today, it's even more critical, as we noted in our previous article, that we maintain a consistent **CYBER Security** posture of: **Checking Your Behavior Elevates Resilient Security**.

Just as we find AI tools like ChatGPT, DALL-E, Google Gemini, and Apple Intelligence useful, so do cyber criminals. They use these tools to make their emails, texts, voice calls, and video calls more realistic.

If you're wondering how AI is helpful to cyber criminals, just think for a moment. AI systems train on data we routinely make public via our social media posts, company websites, press releases, and other public records. Just as we can, they also can, with a few prompts, assemble a complete dossier of where you work, who you report to, what you just posted, and even how you write. These generative tools can then produce messages that mirror your tone, mimic a colleague's style, or reference a meeting on your calendar, making what's fake feel familiar.

Even when you use detection tools like virus checkers, multichannel phishing detectors, or other security products, the best everyday defense, in my opinion, ultimately boils down to personal habits. Here is where the **CYBER Security** acronym can be helpful. If you pause and check your behavior before you click, reply, or pay, you build your own resilience — and that of your family or workplace — against these AI-sharpened scams.

So how do you fight back if attackers can sound like your boss or write like



*Be wary of deepfake, AI phishing scams
Combined AI-generated graphic*

your spouse? Go back to **Checking Your Behavior Elevates Resilient Security**:

Checking: Slow down! Phishing works by rushing you. Re-read the message. Hover over links (or long-press on mobile devices) to preview real destinations. If a message asks for credentials, payment, or sensitive files, *check* it via a separate channel you already trust (e.g., call the person using a number you know) to verify its authenticity.

Your Behavior: Small routine changes beat complex tools. If you haven't already, turn on multi-factor authentication (MFA) wherever possible, use strong, unique passwords (a manager can help), and keep your software up to date. If you are on a company device, report suspicious messages (don't delete) and move on. Organizations that mandate reporting can spot campaigns earlier and protect more people.

Elevates — Every good choice compounds. When you verify a wire request, refuse to share a code over the phone, or escalate to the appropriate

people, an odd "VPN update" email, you raise the security bar for everyone in your circle.

Resilient — Assume some attempts will still get through. Resilience means creating backups for important files, setting alerts on bank and credit accounts, and establishing a clear plan of who you tell, what you change, and how you recover.

Security — Make it part of both home and work culture, not just a checkbox. Talk about scams with family and coworkers. Run short, realistic practice drills with your family members, especially children. Treat unexpected, urgent communication with skepticism, especially regarding money, credentials, or personal data. If a "CEO," "HR person," or "law enforcement representative" contacts you demanding quick action, DON'T! That's when to slow down the most.

Finally, know the telltales of AI-assisted phishing—even when spelling is perfect:

- **Personal but generic:** It references your role or project but avoids specifics



Karen Clay
Clay Technology and Multimedia
Courtesy, Karen Clay

you alone would know.

- **Channel-hopping:** An email pushes you to "confirm on this new number" or join a video call right now.
- **Unusual payment paths:** Crypto, gift cards, or urgent wire transfers with new instructions.
- **Account reset traps:** Links to "verify MFA" or "update VPN" that steal tokens and passwords.

If something feels off, it probably is. Verify through your own contact list, typed URLs, or official portals you navigate to yourself—not links you were sent. And if you do get phished, report it quickly. The faster you act, the more damage you prevent.

Bottom line: AI helps criminals scale their persuasive attacks, but if you remember and follow: **Checking Your Behavior, Elevates Resilient Security**, you and everyone around you will be safer.

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Putting People First: Otis Rolley's Blueprint for Baltimore's Revival

Otis Rolley Returns Home to Lead Baltimore's Economic Renaissance

By Harold Booker Jr.

When Otis Rolley stepped into his new role as President and CEO of the Baltimore Development Corporation in June 2025, it marked more than a leadership transition—it was a homecoming.

After decades of public service and philanthropic leadership, Rolley's return to Baltimore is both personal and purposeful. “I came back because I believe in Baltimore and in what's possible here,” he said. “This city gave me so much when I first arrived in 1998. I planned to stay two years and ended up falling in love with the people, the neighborhoods, the culture, and the sense of community.”

Now, he's focused on implementing the city's comprehensive Baltimore Together strategy—a shared vision for inclusive growth that puts people at the center of development. For Rolley, success is measured not by announcements or tax breaks but by results. “We're putting people over place,” he says. “That means investments must lift neighborhoods, support small businesses, and deliver real community benefits.”

Redefining Economic Development

The BDC plays a critical role in Baltimore's economic ecosystem as a quasi-public agency linking government, business, and community stakeholders.

While organizations like the Greater Baltimore Committee focus on the wider region, BDC's work is concentrated within city limits—helping local businesses start, stay, and scale. Under Rolley's direction, that mission is rooted in equity: ensuring small and mid-sized firms receive the same support and visibility as major corporations.

“Baltimore only succeeds when all of Baltimore moves forward,” he says.



Leaders discuss inclusive growth and workforce strategies during a Baltimore Together breakout session held at the “Made in America” space in Baltimore.

Experience Meets Action

Rolley brings deep experience in managing large-scale, equity-driven initiatives. He previously led a \$100 million workforce initiative at the Rockefeller Foundation, directed \$300 million in annual investments at the Wells Fargo Foundation, and managed billion-dollar budgets as a Baltimore City administrator.

That experience now fuels BDC's push to expand access to capital, especially for Black-owned and minority-owned businesses. The need is clear: though Baltimore's population is 62% Black, only 12% of its businesses are Black-owned.

Through Commercial District Assessments, BDC is identifying neighborhood-specific challenges and opportunities—from infrastructure needs to foot traffic data—ensuring resources are directed where they'll make the biggest difference.



Otis Rolley, President and CEO of the Baltimore Development Corporation is leading Baltimore's inclusive economic growth strategy through Baltimore Together.

Photos courtesy of BDC

Continued on page 12

Anna Barber: Transforming Nonprofit Growth Through Fundraising Excellence

By The Baltimore Times Staff

When it comes to fundraising leadership and nonprofit transformation, few names resonate as strongly as Anna Barber, Founder and CEO of Ask A Fundraiser, Inc. and Barber & Associates. A 25-year veteran of the field, Barber is best known for her groundbreaking success as part of the Smithsonian Institution's inaugural fundraising team for the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC)—where her determination and strategy helped raise over \$42 million in leadership and major gifts, including 22 individual million-dollar contributions from first-time Smithsonian donors.

Now, Barber brings that same expertise to Baltimore's nonprofit community through a powerful new collaboration: The Ask A Fundraiser Fundraising & Sustainability Program, presented by Wells Fargo in partnership with Times Community Services, Inc.

From the Smithsonian to Sustainable Growth

Anna Barber's approach to fundraising has always been rooted in a mix of bold relationship-building, strategic engagement, thoughtful research, and fearless execution. Her reputation as one of the nation's most successful individual fundraisers was cemented when she built a new donor network from scratch for NMAAHC without prior connections or institutional leads on the West Coast, raising more than \$40 million. Her work inspired gifts from cultural icons like Denzel and Pauletta Washington, LaTanya and Samuel L. Jackson, Magic and Cookie Johnson, Kobe Bryant and Michael Jordan. It helped shape one of the most successful museum campaigns in modern philanthropy.

Today, as the leader of Barber & Associates and Ask A Fundraiser, Barber

has turned her experience into a transformative educational and consulting model that helps nonprofits of all sizes master the art and infrastructure of sustainable fundraising.

Ask A Fundraiser: A Transformative Program for Nonprofit Leaders Ask A Fundraiser Fundraising and Sustainability Program is an initiative designed to equip nonprofit organizations with the tools, strategies, and mindset needed to grow and sustain their missions. Developed by Barber and a team of veteran fundraising consultants with more than 50 years of combined experience, the program blends practical training with technology through the proprietary Ask A Fundraiser E-Tool©.

Participants are guided through a step-by-step process to build a comprehensive three-year fundraising plan, including:

- A compelling case for support
- A stewardship and donor recognition structure
- Budget development and financial projection tools
- A policy and procedures manual
- Templates and language to refine the organization's funding pitch

The Program includes an in-person Introductory course and organizational assessment, three (3) virtual practice presentation sessions, a final in-person pitch session appropriate for funders, and a one-year subscription to the Ask A Fundraiser E-Tool©. This offers an



Anna Barber, Founder and CEO of Ask A Fundraiser, Inc. and Barber & Associates

Photo: Jaida A. Moore with Fiercely Feminine Studios

opportunity to learn fundraising best practices through an innovative process, supported by an online platform that helps nonprofits create customized fundraising resources.

A Partnership for Progress: Wells Fargo and The Times Community Services

This first-of-its-kind cohort is made possible through the support of Wells Fargo, whose Small Business Growth and Financial Mobility initiatives align perfectly with the goals of Ask A Fundraiser. Wells Fargo's commitment to building financially resilient communities and empowering small businesses is now extending to Baltimore's nonprofit sector—helping leaders strengthen their organizations from within.

In collaboration with Times Community Services, Inc., a nonprofit arm of The

Baltimore Times dedicated to advancing wellness, financial empowerment, and community development, this partnership underscores the importance of local investment in sustainable social impact.

Empowering Baltimore's Nonprofit Future

Through this initiative, Barber is not just teaching fundraising—she's cultivating a culture of sustainability and self-reliance among nonprofit leaders. Her journey from raising millions for the Smithsonian to mentoring the next generation of changemakers in Baltimore reflects her belief that every organization, no matter its size, can achieve transformative results when equipped with the right tools, strategy, and persistence.

Ask A Fundraiser will be hosting an exclusive Fundraising and Sustainability Program for Baltimore non-profit leaders. Supported by Wells Fargo's dedication to nonprofit business growth, it marks more than the start of a program—it signals a movement to strengthen Baltimore's community organizations, one leader at a time.

To register for the introduction session, please scan the code below. You must attend the introduction to qualify for the program.



The Build Your Fundraising Plan with Ask A Fundraiser© introductory session will be held on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, from 12:00–1:00 p.m. EST at Creatively Black Baltimore, 301 Light Street, 2nd Floor Auditorium, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. For questions, please contact Paris Brown at 410.366.3900, Ext. 4.



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Breast Cancer Survivor Walks in Her Purpose, Inspires Through Memoir

By Andrea Blackstone

Evelina Johnson Buendia was diagnosed with invasive ductal carcinoma (IDC) in 2017 at the age of 34, a mere year after giving birth to her son. A lump and discharge in her nipple made her realize something could be wrong with her breasts.

“During a wellness checkup, I mentioned a concern to my doctor. Because I was younger than the usual screening age, he told me that if my insurance wouldn’t cover a mammogram, I should contact Every Woman’s Life. They covered the screening, and through that mammogram, I was diagnosed with invasive ductal carcinoma,” said Johnson Buendia.

IDC is the most common type of breast cancer, making up 80% of all breast cancer diagnoses, according to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc. (<https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/invasive-ductal-carcinoma>). It was also reported that “the majority of women diagnosed with IDC are 55 years old or older, though it can happen at any age.”

National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc. reported that breast surgery cancer types such as a partial mastectomy (removal of breast-conserving surgery that removes only the cancerous tumor and a small margin of healthy tissue surrounding it); a mastectomy (the surgical removal of the breast); radiation (use of high-energy rays to destroy cancer cells and may be used after lumpectomy surgery); chemotherapy (use of a combination of drugs to destroy cancer cells or slow their growth); or hormonal therapy (use of drugs to block or lower the levels of hormones, such as estrogen and progesterone in the body which can help slow or stop the growth of some breast cancers) are treatment options for invasive ductal carcinoma.

Johnson Buendia’s treatment

plan included chemotherapy, radiation, a right breast mastectomy, and hormone therapy through both pills and injections. She used her faith in God as a weapon to encourage herself and to constantly speak healing.

Johnson Buendia added, “I would repeat, ‘I am healed,’ over and over again, even as they wheeled me into the operating room. The “Word” reminds us to speak those things that are not as though they were, and declaring God’s promises became a source of strength and hope throughout my journey.”

When Johnson Buendia was diagnosed with breast cancer, she shared an apartment with her sister. Their mother also lived with them for a while. The family rallied around Johnson Buendia and her son, serving as valuable helpers. They assisted her with her son during her unexpected medical emergency.

“Because of that, I never had to worry about taking care of my baby; my family stepped in to care for him. In addition, my other sister and my dad provided support, and we also had a support worker, Mrs. Barbara, from a home-visiting program called Healthy Families, who would come weekly to ensure he was meeting his milestones. In every detail, God worked it out.”

Johnson Buendia, a business owner who was running her graphic design business, rested when she needed to without it affecting her salary. However, writing has always been therapeutic for the cancer



Evelina Johnson Buendia signs books at First Baptist Church Mahan in Suffolk, Virginia.

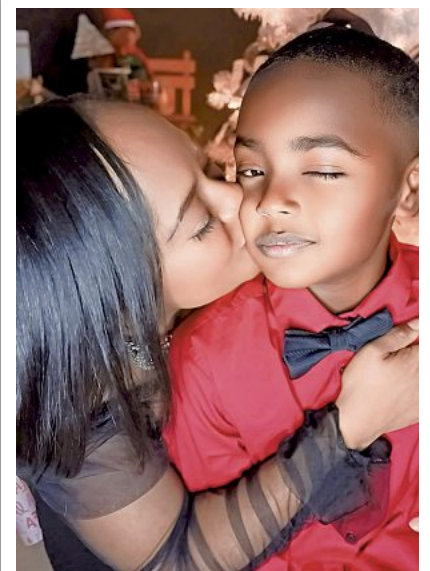
Photos courtesy of Evelina Johnson Buendia

survivor. At the time, to guard her mind from negativity, Johnson Buendia did not want to post anything on Facebook. She found another way to explore her emotions while navigating through a challenging experience.

“When I came across mylifeline.org [an online cancer support platform], I felt led to start journaling my journey. Writing became the way the Lord comforted me along the way. Sometimes I would post three or four times a day just to release the heaviness I was feeling. Now, in this season, I primarily use social media to share my journey, but my original blog posts can still be found on (<https://www.mylifeline.org/EvelinaJB/updates/messages>),” Johnson Buendia explained. “As more and more people told me how encouraging my words were to them, it was planted in my heart to publish my story to inspire and uplift others.”

Writing “Healed: From Cancer to Surviva” was never Johnson Buendia’s intention, but the author stated that it was God’s intention. The book was published in 2023.

“My hope is that readers will be



Evelina Johnson Buendia, a Panamanian author, speaker and therapeutic storyteller, with her son, Emil. Johnson Buendia, a breast cancer survivor, supports breast cancer initiatives.

encouraged to know that no matter the situation, no matter the storm, with faith and trust in God, we Can-Cer-vive it! I also want people to have an idea of what a cancer survivor goes through. Everyone’s journey is not the same, but I feel that if they have an idea of what a cancer patient goes through, they will also want to be there for their family, friend or loved one,” the author, mother, speaker and businesswoman added.

The supporter of breast cancer initiatives reminds women that even if they do not have health insurance, they should check for available resources to get a free mammogram. The author’s book can be purchased from Amazon: <https://a.co/d/hqJTmxP>. Follow Johnson Buendia on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/evelina.johnson> and https://www.instagram.com/evelina_jb.

Entries Accepted to Win a Car in Baltimore, 2025 Cars With Care Gala Tickets Available

By Andrea Blackstone

Ma'Lia McClain reflected on a blessing that she does not take for granted.

"I won a 2015 Nissan Altima on Christmas of 2022," she said.

The mother faced obstacles commuting to and from work and school, and transporting her children wherever they needed to go, until an unexpected solution emerged. Since 2016, a collective of Black-owned business owners teamed up to purchase, recondition and donate nine vehicles to families in need around Baltimore on Christmas Day through a local nonprofit called Cars With Care. Committed male business owners strive to continue the mission and help more families in the Baltimore area with the transportation they need.

Martius Harding, owner of Auto Source, has been a faithful supporter and asset to the cause. He joined the Cars With Care team in 2024.

"We couldn't be happier about it," said Stephen Green, co-founder of Cars With Care and owner of Paintless Dent Doctor. Damond Horne, co-founder of Cars With Care and owner of Total Recon; Michael Foy, owner of CM Mobile Detailing and founder of The Emilie Wall Foundation; Eric Randall, owner of BMore Like Us, KXX Financial and founder of BMore Soleful Kicks; Kermit Fowlkes, owner of Focus Movers and a Hug Don't Shoot partner; and Gabe Epps, owner of Pro Speed Elite and founder of Long Live Jo are also a part of the nonprofit's collective.

McClain mentioned that the Cars With Care team has become family to her.

"Everything I do, I let them know it was because of their thoughtfulness and love for what they do that made it possible for me to become successful and



(l-r): Damond Horne, Stephen Green, Malia McClain (2022 Cars With Care vehicle winner), Michael Foy, Eric Randall, and Kermit Fowlkes. Photo: Stephen Green

to be able to achieve everything I had set out to do."

This year will mark 10 years of Cars With Care blessing Baltimoreans in need, but support is critical. The 5th Annual Cars With Care Fundraising Gala will be held at Patapsco Arena VIP Room, located at 3301 Annapolis Road in Baltimore, Maryland on December 12, 2025, from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. The black-tie affair, hosted By April Watts, will feature DJs, nineties R&B covers, catered food, a cash bar, a 360 booth, and a drink package with each ticket purchase. Gala sponsors include MBF Development LLC; KDW Catering; TAJ Strategic Consulting Services LLC; DJ Mike Crosby; and April Watts.

"Our team donates all labor and logistics and 100% of all monies raised from the gala fund the cause," Green stated.

Gala tickets directly fund everything from a vehicle purchase, parts, registration and titling to a monetary donation that is awarded to the winning family to cover the initial cost of car ownership.

Horne mentioned that although all skill, labor and time to fix cars is donated by the team, purchasing and fully reconditioning a vehicle is a substantial financial undertaking.

"Sponsorship and gala ticket sales afford us the capital to accomplish that goal, especially this year, with the vehicle needing an engine replacement before we even get into the exterior and interior reconditioning," he said.

Volunteers help with event setup and break down, venue decoration, cleaning, and curation of a smooth and classy event for gala guests.

"Everyone who attends our events

knows how much attention to detail we put into the gala. Accomplishing that requires a host of willing volunteers," said Horne.

Help is needed to address these tasks. Online assistance can be given by sharing social media posts on Instagram and Facebook. Cars With Care can sign off on community service hours.

Tiffany Demory, the event coordinator's manager for culinary production throughout the evening of the gala, stated that families deserve to reach their destinations smoothly.

"Having reliable transportation is the means to accomplish that. Helping a family that may not be able to afford one makes it ten times better," she stated.

Entries to apply for a Cars With Care vehicle are currently being accepted. Entrants must be a member of a family with a legitimate transportation need; have school-aged children living in the household; hold Baltimore residency; possess a valid Maryland Driver's license; and be in good MVA standing. The Cars With Care team business owners select entrants whose submitted stories resonate with them. Their choices are entered into a drawing to decide the winner. More information about the contest is available via <https://www.carswithcare.org/entries>.

Any kind of sponsorship is welcome if volunteers have a heart to give without an agenda. Interested individuals can follow up by calling Green at 443-610-2769 or by emailing carswithcare@gmail.com. Purchase gala tickets from <https://CarsWithCareGala2025.eventbrite.com> and donate via www.carswithcare.org/donate.

"We greatly appreciate donations of any amount. One hundred percent of your contributions fund the cause," said Green.

The Many Faces of Grief

By Julia C. Boms, MPH

“We will all lose someone we love at some point in life, and feeling grief and being vulnerable about it is not a sign of weakness. It is a pure reflection of the love and connection you have had the privilege of experiencing.”

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) describes grief as the emotional reaction to losing someone close.

Building on this, Dr. Simran Malhotra, an expert in palliative care, hospice, and lifestyle medicine, defines grief as a completely normal response to any kind of loss (a job, a relationship, a body part, or a life).

She adds that grief comes in two main forms: anticipatory and bereavement. Anticipatory grief occurs before a loss, often in families facing serious illness, and may involve sadness, farewells, or preparing for the future. Meanwhile, bereavement follows the death of a loved one and can include sadness, denial, or a sense of lost identity.

Grief and Mental Health

Children and teens may show grief in ways adults may not notice, such as acting out, feeling emotions they can't name, or struggling in school. The majority of adults adapt with time, but if someone is really feeling stuck, it's usually a sign that they need further care and support.

The expert noted, “Complicated or prolonged grief affects about 10% of adults worldwide and can significantly disrupt relationships, daily functioning, and overall quality of life. Several factors may put a person at higher risk of complicated or prolonged grief disorder (PGD), including the way the loss occurred, the type and duration of the relationship with the deceased, etc.

During the pandemic, I saw many



Support is a hand to hold.

Photo: Getty Images

people face the sudden loss of loved ones without the chance to say goodbye in person due to strict no-visitor policies. That absence of closure in combination with the sudden loss definitely created conditions that increased risk for complicated or prolonged grief for many people in 2020,” she said.

No one deserves to face grief alone. If you are grieving, know that you are not alone. Reach out, lean on others, and allow yourself to be supported by others.

What to Understand

“There is no real ‘timeline’ for grief as each person’s experience is unique.” The pain doesn’t disappear over time; it simply changes. It comes in waves; some unexpected triggers can be a phone call asking for them, seeing their photo online, or realizing you’re alone doing a simple task like laundry.

Showing Support

After the loss of a loved one, strong support from family, friends, and community may reduce psychological distress, promote healthier coping, and foster resilience.

While supporting those grieving, remember that no words can erase their pain. Phrases like “let it go,”



Dr. Simran Malhotra is a triple board-certified physician in internal medicine, hospice & palliative care, and lifestyle medicine. *Courtesy photo*

“you’ll be fine,” or “don’t worry” can unintentionally minimize their pain, said Dr. Simran.

A quiet presence speaks louder—instead of trying to “fix” their grief or pain, focus on being present. If you really need to do something, think of small, meaningful ways you can help—for example, organize a meal train, help with home/pet/childcare, send a care package, or write a simple note letting them know you are thinking about them.

If grief persists or gets worse, gently suggest reaching out to their medical team to connect them with resources like bereavement counselors, mental health therapists, social workers, chaplains, or support groups. Additionally, cultural and religious beliefs play a significant role in shaping

how grief is expressed and understood. These practices and beliefs may reduce the risk of complicated or prolonged grief.

Your grief is part of your uniquely beautiful human story. Let yourself to love, feel and keep growing as you simultaneously learn to carry the memory of someone who remains a part of you.

Julia Boms is a public health researcher and writer with a focus on maternal, child and adolescent health, and behavioral health. As a health equity advocate, she is passionate about improving health outcomes for underserved populations.



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² Tori Finch, MS, M Cabell Jonas, PhD, Kevin Rubenstein, Eric Watson, BA, Sundeep Basra, MPH, Jose Martinez, BS, & Michael Horberg, MD, MAS, FACP (2021). Life Expectancy Trends Among Integrated Health Care System Enrollees, 2014-2017. *The Permanente Journal*, 25(4), 10-17. thepermanentejournal.org/doi/10.7812/TPP/20.286.

Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc. 4000 Garden City Drive, Hyattsville, MD 20785 2025CE0515 MAS 5/16/25-12/31/26



Entrepreneurs and community members participate in a Baltimore Together workshop focused on small business development and neighborhood investment.

Photo courtesy of BDC

Continued from page 5

Progress, Not Promises BOLD

This year's Baltimore Together Summit will highlight measurable progress since the plan's launch. According to Rolley, Baltimore's partners achieved 95% positive progress across shared goals—covering innovation, workforce, and neighborhood investment.

Notable 2025 milestones include:

- Syngene International is opening a major life-sciences facility at Bayview.
- Greenlight Networks investing \$100 million in citywide high-speed fiber expansion.
- The Baltimore Peninsula welcoming 18 new retail tenants, 30% of them minority- or woman-owned.
- The Mill on North launching seven new minority-owned culinary concepts,

creating jobs on West North Avenue.

- Baltimore's Black labor-force participation rate rising by over five points since 2019.
- The launch of a \$150 million TIF grant program to revitalize long-vacant buildings and lots.

Baltimore's population, long in decline, has also begun to grow again—a small but powerful signal that confidence is returning. “People believe in this city again,” Rolley says, “and that belief is backed by action.”

Taking the Conversation to the Neighborhoods

In an effort to deepen community engagement, the 2025 Baltimore Together Summit will expand into neighborhood-based workshops from October 28–30.

“Economic development has to be built

with people, not just presented to them,” Rolley says.

Sessions will focus on supporting Black-owned small businesses, creative industries, and local markets, while gathering real-time data from BDC's Commercial District Assessments. Each event will give residents and entrepreneurs a direct voice in shaping policy and investment priorities.

Building a Bigger Table

Rolley is clear that Baltimore's path forward depends on collaboration, not competition. “The scarcity model is dead,” he says. “The pie is big enough for everyone in Baltimore to have a slice—because we made the pie.”

That means attracting national and global companies while simultaneously investing in the city's small business

ecosystem—the backbone of its economy. “Most of our growth comes from small and mid-sized businesses,” he notes. “They deserve the same level of energy and investment.”

Baltimore's Future Is in Our Hands

For Rolley, Baltimore Together isn't just a plan—it's a movement grounded in collective ownership. “We have the right strategy, the right leadership, and the right partners,” he says. “Now it's time for everyone to move in the same direction.”

His message for residents and business owners is clear: believe in Baltimore, take action, and be part of its next chapter.

“The future of Baltimore's economy will be shaped by people who believe in this city and are willing to do the work,” Rolley says. “Baltimore is ready. Now it's time to act.”

THE BALTIMORE TIMES

Presents

Baltimore's First Annual Healthy Dining Awareness Restaurant Week

November 1-9, 2025

Join us at Baltimore Inner Harbor, Light
Street Pavilion for Campaign Kick-Off

Supanos Steakhouse Sports Bar and Grill,
Cuples Tea, Pure Green, GOODFood,
Soul Kuisine

Light Street Pavilion
301 Light Street
Baltimore, Maryland

Friday, October 31, 2025
6 pm - 9 pm

Scan QR Code for a list of participating
restaurants and to learn more!



SCAN HERE



Continued from page 2

And the best part? We can still enjoy food without making taste the only star of the show. Try dining with your other senses:

- See the beauty and creativity in the presentation.
- Smell the herbs, spices, and warmth rising from the plate.
- Hear the laughter, the music, the hum of connection.
- Feel the joy of being fully present in your body.

When you eat this way, food becomes a full-body experience—not just something you taste, but something you *feel*, *appreciate*, and *respect*.

Focus on the Plate, the People, and the Purpose

Healthy Restaurant Week isn't only about calories or carbs. It's about consciousness — paying attention to the *why* behind our choices.

When you sit down to a meal, ask yourself three simple questions:

What's on my plate? — Choose foods that *love* you back: colorful, nourishing, and portioned for the real you. Who's at my table? — The people matter more than the plates. Use meals as moments of connection, conversation, and care. What's my purpose? — You're not eating to escape; you're eating to engage with your best life. Every bite can either drain your energy or help you live more fully.

When you focus on the *plate, people, and purpose*, dining out transforms from a diet challenge into a sacred act of self-respect.

Ten Mindful Dining Strategies

Here are ten strategies that can help you dine out the healthy way and still love every minute of it:

Create a Safe Meal. Choose a “go-to” option that keeps you grounded, like a soup and salad combo. **Plan Ahead.** Look up the menu online and decide what you'll order before you go. **Eat a Little First.** Have a small, healthy snack so you don't arrive ravenous and impulsive. **Skip the Appetizer.** Those little bites count and they add up quickly. **Practice Saying**



Getty Images

“No, Thank You.” It's not rude to refuse extra bread, desserts, or drinks. It's you exercising power over your palate. **Hydrate Early.** Drink water before the meal to reduce false hunger. **Bring a Reminder.** Keep a photo or outfit that represents your health goals on your phone — and look at it before you order. **Ask for a To-Go Box Early.** Split your entrée in half as soon as it arrives. **Enjoy the Experience.** Focus on conversation, laughter, and connection more than consumption. **Remember Why You're There.** To nourish your body, strengthen relationships, and honor your life.

A Celebration of Choice

Healthy Restaurant Week is more than an event — it's an invitation to live with intention. Every meal out is a chance to affirm who you are and what you value.

So, the next time you dine out, take a deep breath, look around the table, and say to yourself, “*This meal is about more than food — it's about me, my health, and my purpose.*”

Enjoy the moment, celebrate your progress, and remember when you honor your health, you're not missing out on pleasure — you're making room for a deeper kind of joy.

Michelle Petties, Food Story Coach and Author of “Leaving Large – The Stories of a Food Addict” is an award-winning author, food story coach, and creator of

Mind Over Meals. Through her writing, coaching, and workshops, she teaches people how to heal their relationships with themselves and gain mastery over food by uncovering the stories that shape their habits and beliefs. You can get her latest guide, How to Start Eating & Shopping Healthy at <https://go.michellepetties.com/howtoeathealthy>.



Baltimore Ravens Boys & Girls Club opens in West Baltimore

By Demetrius Dillard

The recent opening of a new community hub in West Baltimore will not only invigorate the surrounding community but also reflect an ongoing effort by city and state leaders to inspire Charm City's next generation of leaders.

On the morning of Oct. 6, 2025, Baltimore Ravens executives joined the Bisciotti Family Foundation, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Baltimore, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks and Green Street Academy to host a ribbon-cutting ceremony, officially marking the opening of the Baltimore Ravens Boys & Girls Club at Hilton Recreation Center in West Baltimore's St. Joseph's/Allendale neighborhood.

According to the Boys & Girls Club of Metro Baltimore – or BGCMB – only NFL franchises in the nation have teamed up with a Boys & Girls Club to produce similar projects, and Baltimore is one of them.

Primarily made possible through a \$20 million investment from The Bisciotti Family Foundation and the Ravens, the club's opening was dedicated to former Ravens President Dick Cass, who attended the ceremony. The Boys & Girls Club's athletic field bears Cass's name.

"I've been in this business 25 years and have heard a hundred times about the effect that a place like this had on [Ravens] players," Bisciotti said. "You deserve this, and we're not going to stop here."

When dozens of community stakeholders, residents, elected officials, sports figures, local residents and Green Street Academy students and faculty in attendance beheld the immaculately designed Ravens Boys & Girls Club, they saw the thorough transformation of what was once the Hilton Recreation Center.



Executives from the Baltimore Ravens, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Under Armour joined city leaders, project supporters and city youth to celebrate the opening of the Baltimore Ravens Boys & Girls Club at Hilton Recreation Center on Oct. 6, 2025, in West Baltimore. Photos: Shawn Hubbard/Baltimore Ravens

"Baltimore's youth is the city's most precious resource," Mayor Brand Scott said as he delivered remarks at the podium during the ceremony.

"This facility has everything that our young people need, from arts and technology, to gym fields and a turf field – it's got something for ladi dadi and everybody," said Scott, also acknowledging the investors, stakeholders and contributors who made the project a massive success.

"Ravens Boys & Girls Club is proof of what happens when Baltimore comes together. It could result in so many people bringing opportunity to Charm City, a success story for public-private partnership and a testament to the will of our community."

The state-of-the-art facility, built to provide academic support, mentoring, leadership development, health and wellness programs and athletic opportunities for children and teens, is only steps away from Green Street Academy, a public charter school on North Hilton Street.

The school, which serves about 875 students in grades 6-12, will have the privilege of using the new facility to host athletic events. Its football team played their first home game of the season at Dick Cass Field on the evening of Oct. 10, according to GSA Athletic Director Jason Leonard, who said the Ravens Boys & Girls Club will mean a great deal to the athletic program.

"It's going to be huge for us because we've been trying to have a home facility since we started back in 2016 with athletics, and we've played nothing but away games," Leonard said.

"It's going to give us the opportunity to build a community in our own backyard, and have school spirit and pride, something for the kids to really grab a hold of and love. Having a facility like this is going to directly benefit our athletic programs."

The event featured remarks from Ashley Hill, director of the new Ravens Boys & Girls Club; Mayor Brandon Scott; Ravens President Sashi Brown; State Sen. Antonio Hayes; Jeff Breslin, president and

CEO of BGCMB; Lorraine Orr, Executive Vice President and chief operating officer of Boys & Girls Clubs of America; and Ravens owner Steve Bisciotti.

Hill also welcomed guests and shared her vision for the Club's impact. Following the remarks was a ceremonial ribbon-cutting, tours of the new facility and a dedication ceremony honoring Cass.

"The Baltimore Ravens Boys & Girls Club will be an important and dynamic space, designed specifically not only to support but empower the bright and deserving youth of Baltimore," Brown said.

"We are so thankful for the partnership and trust of the City and the incredible generosity of Steve and Renee (Bisciotti)."

Located at 2950 Phelps Lane, the renovated facility includes:

- Dick Cass Field, a multi-purpose athletic turf field with sports lighting
- Under Armour gymnasium
- A teen center
- Activity and games spaces
- Tutoring spaces
- Indoor and outdoor community gathering areas

BGCMB will offer programs focused on health and well-being, academic success, character and leadership, and life and workforce readiness. In addition, BGCMB will coordinate with nonprofit partners to further expand services for youth and families.

"I will say, over my years and decades of service to this great mission – I've been in thousands of Boys & Girls Clubs across this country, and this is something special," Boys & Girls Clubs of America executive Lorraine Orr said.

"This will be a magical place for young people... today's event promotes the power and the necessity of sports in the lives of young people."



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