

# The Annapolis Times

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## Main Street Hats receives \$10K Wells Fargo, Urban League Grant

By Stacy M. Brown

**I**t's nice to have windows! That's the first thing Clyde Davis-El said when he learned that he was one of three Baltimore business owners selected to receive a \$10,000 grant to renovate their storefronts.

Earlier this month, Davis-El, owner of Main Street Hats was named as a finalist in a competition hosted by Wells Fargo, the National Urban League and the architect-design firm Gensler. The award comes just a couple of months after Wells Fargo and the NUL announced the "Wells Fargo Works for Small Business: Neighborhood Renovation Program," which is designed to help improve Baltimore small businesses through a business renovation contest.

"Small businesses are really the key to addressing urban unemployment," said National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial. "Encouraging entrepreneurship and creating an environment for small businesses to thrive is one of the National Urban League's top priorities. We're proud to partner with Wells Fargo for this innovative program."

Through the "Wells Fargo Works for Small Business: Neighborhood Renovation Program," eligible Baltimore small business owners will have the opportunity to compete in a contest in

*Clyde Davis-El, owner of Main Street Hats was named as a finalist in a competition hosted by Wells Fargo, the National Urban League and the architect-design firm Gensler. Courtesy Photo*

*Continued on page 10*

## Diamonds in the Rough:

# Local organization promotes unity and sisterhood

By Ursula V. Battle

Every two weeks, a group of young women ranging in age from their 20s to 30s, come together to promote unity and self-esteem, and to help those who are less fortunate. The group is called Diamonds in the Rough, and was founded by Prince Georges County native Tekoa Lucas.

“Our mission is encouraging young women to uphold themselves and others,” said Lucas who started the organization in 2014. “Diamonds in the Rough also seeks to teach women about having good self-esteem, setting goals, and revealing our self-worth and purpose in life.”

She added, “I started Diamonds in the Rough because I felt we lacked sisterhood and unity. I also thought it was important to start an organization that allowed its members to network and support one another. Sometimes, it takes more than one person for things to happen and for people to reach their goals. I believe it’s very important to have a sense of community and a shoulder to lean on.”

According to Lucas, members meet at her home located in the Windsor Mill area.

“We set goals when we meet,” said Lucas. “Then when we come back together, we discuss whether or not those goals were met. We also discuss a number of other topics, which include protecting ourselves against rape.”

She added, “We also have older



**(Left) Tekoa Lucas who founded “Diamonds in the Rough” in 2014. (Right) Members of Diamonds in the Rough distribute items to the needy. The group meets every two weeks and promotes unity and sisterhood among women. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday, August 8, 2016. For more information about the organization, to join or to make a donation to support the group’s community efforts, call 443-799-0293.**

**Courtesy Photos**

women to come in and speak to us, which really helps. Many times, they have already gone through the things we are experiencing, and provide words of encouragement and wisdom to help us make it through.”

Lucas also discussed the organization’s efforts to help those in need.

“We go to Baltimore City and distribute things like socks, underwear, deodorant, toothbrushes, hair care products, and feminine products to the homeless,” said Lucas. “One guy asked for a bucket, and we got in for him. They basically need the same things we go to the store and buy,

but they just can’t afford to get them. It’s very fulfilling to be able to help.”

Lucas, 26, is an entrepreneur, and owns a cleaning business called Preventative Maintenance LLC.

“The name Diamonds in the Rough represents making the most of wherever we are at the present moment,” she said. “I grew up in tough neighborhoods in both Baltimore and Los Angeles, but made the most out of the environment I was in, and made it through.”

Myia Anderson, 25 is a member of Diamonds in the Rough.

“I have been a member since 2014,

and found out about Diamonds in the Rough on Facebook,” she said. “The group has really helped me. We do a lot for the community, which shows that we care. I feel good about that. I encourage other women to become a part of the group.”

The next meeting date for Diamonds in the Rough is August 8, 2016. The group can be found on Facebook under “Diamonds in the Rough.” For more information about joining the organization or making a donation to support their community efforts, call 443-799-0293.

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# Guest Editorials/Commentary

## Why Black Lives Matter To Me

By Adam Vogal

There are deathbed conversions. I was there for one.

The day before he died in 2003, I asked my grandfather what was the greatest thing he had done in his 86 years of life. He thought for less than a second, and said, "I saved a black man's life in the middle of the Pacific ocean." My grandfather was a Navy sailor during WWII and as far as I had always known, a lifelong racist.

As he spoke, I was startled that he said, "black man." He did not use any derogatory phrases to describe the man he had saved nor the pilots who sunk his ship. The n-word and the term "Jap" that I had been accustomed to him using all during my childhood were missing throughout his entire description of his ship being sunk by Kamikaze pilots. But now he was facing his end. Things changed rapidly.

As he described his part in saving the black sailor when they hit the water, and the battle that led up to it, I could see the new pride he felt in his heroic actions. I could also see the acceptance that at the end of his life, he knew he had been wrong in his thinking about others. The greatest thing he did, in his entire life, was to save someone he despised only because their skin color differed from his. My grandfather, at that moment, became more of a teacher to me than he had ever been.

I became my grandfather's witness. Facing his own imminent death, he clearly recognized that the way he had chosen to be in the world was not the way he wished he would have been. I saw him comprehending that the choices he had made to create separation from other human beings were ones that he now regretted, immensely. In his words, I saw him trying to enlighten me to the importance of not having regrets about the way I treat other people when I come to the end of my life.

Thanks to the instruction of my grandfather that day, I take up the cause of #blacklivesmatter today because I believe in the equality and equity of all human beings. I believe that every person, without exception, deserves the dignity and restorative justice that will create the world we all deserve to live in. I believe that black and brown bodies are equal to white bodies and should be honored and preserved in the same way by a police force that takes an oath to do so.

We can honor black lives and honor white lives. We can respect black lives, white lives and the police officers that take an oath to protect them all. If you don't think this is possible, I direct you to Wichita, Kansas, where Black Lives Matter and the police picnic together, reifying these very possibilities.

I offer this to you today because we need to do better as we act and react with one another in these uncertain times. Don't wait until your deathbed. Be bold, be brave now!

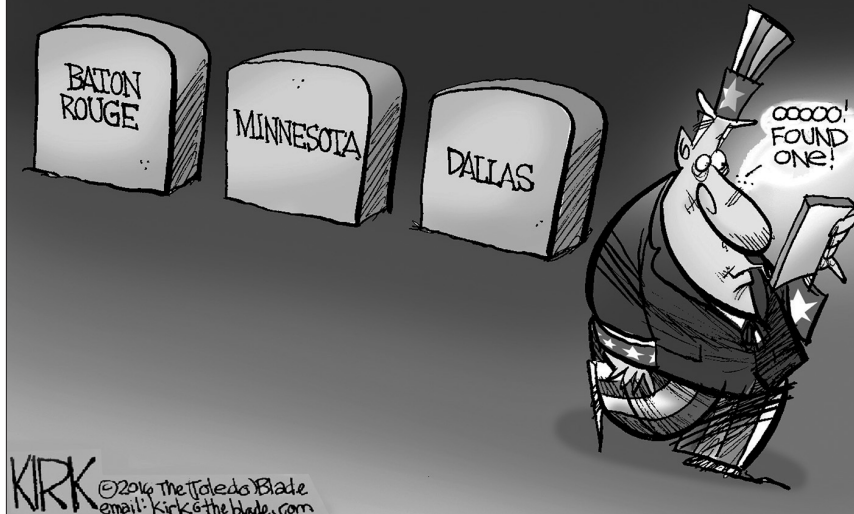
*Adam Vogal, Associate Editor of PeaceVoice, is a Conflict Resolution master's candidate at Portland State University.*

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SADLY, AMERICA IS MORE INTERESTED IN FINDING POKEMON THAN FINDING SOLUTIONS...



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## Community Affairs

### Hair Cuttery Benefits Children with School Share-A-Haircut Program

*For each haircut purchased, one will be donated to a child in need just in time for the new school year*

Vienna, Va.— Hair Cuttery will donate back-to-school haircuts to children who need it most this summer.

From August 1-15, 2016, for every child up to age 18 who purchases a haircut at one of Hair Cuttery's 900 salons, one free haircut certificate will be donated to a disadvantaged child in the community with no appointment necessary.

This summer, Hair Cuttery is aiming to donate tens of thousands of free haircut certificates ahead of the new school year. Certificates will be distributed with the help of more than 100 local government and non-profit organizations in communities across the country.

This year marks the 17th year of Share-A-Haircut, with Hair Cuttery's most recent campaign donating 55,000 haircuts to victims of domestic violence this



past spring. Since 1999, the Share-A-Haircut program has donated nearly \$30.35 million in haircuts.

"A new haircut for a special occasion is something we all take for granted," said Dennis Ratner, Founder and CEO of Hair Cuttery. "Our Share-A-Haircut program ensures that children in our communities aren't deprived of that simple, but essential, service. If we can send those students back to school with added confidence and a smile on their faces, then we've done our job."

For more information visit: [www.haircuttery.com](http://www.haircuttery.com)

## *From boycotts to buying from black-owned businesses*

By James Clingman

*"Well done, good and faithful servant!  
You have been faithful with a few things;  
I will put you in charge of many things."  
Matthew 25:21*

In recent days we have heard much about efforts to demonstrate our frustration and anger about the killing of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile. Boycotting malls and various stores, depositing funds into black-owned banks, are important and have had some positive effects. We must do more of the same, but in a more strategic and organized manner.

Are black folks, the recipients of \$1.2 trillion annually, poor stewards of this tremendous amount of money and, thus, unable to obtain economic empowerment because of our slothfulness? Is that why we find ourselves in "outer darkness," continuously attempting to "show" others how much money we spend instead of redirecting more of our money to ourselves?

The Parable of the Talents is quite fitting for black people, in general; of

course we fit the description of the last steward who buried his talent in the ground and did not multiply it. Unfortunately, we have used our billions in income to buy everything someone else makes, no matter the cost.

If we cannot demonstrate our ability to manage the resources we have—the small things—how will we ever gain authority over the larger things? How will we ever change the behavior of corporations when it comes to supporting us the way they do other groups? If we

take two dead brothers to get black people in a majority black city to put their money in a black bank that has been in their community since 1921?

Don't get me wrong; I am glad to see the effort, and I trust the bank will not be used as an ATM machine where folks put money in on Friday and take it all out on Monday. I am, however, bewildered over someone having to die before we followed through on such a practical solution by Martin Luther King, Jr., nearly fifty years ago. Is this just another

open to learning more about the history of his efforts and willing to listen to recommendations. I appreciated that and look forward to working with him.

Back to the stewardship issue and how it relates to our reactions not only to police shootings of black people, but also to our overall position in this country. Boycotts, if sustained, can work, but "work" to do what? Yes, they may turn the tide of recalcitrant corporations that only care about our dollars, which we give to them without reciprocity.

However, the "work" that any economic sanction effort should and must produce is economic empowerment for black people. Our efforts cannot be centered on hurting someone else; they must be done in an effort to help ourselves. Thus, we must have a strategic plan, and an organized movement to redirect the money we withhold back to our own businesses as much as possible.

As for depositing our money in black banks, we must do our due diligence, meet and develop relationships with bank managers, and I would recommend doing what the Collective Banking Group (Now called the "Collective Empowerment Group") did back in 1995 up to this present day. The group wrote covenant agreements with the banks and held them accountable for what they said they would do for their members in return for their deposits.

We must practice good stewardship if we want to be empowered.

*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 at [www.Blackonomics.com](http://www.Blackonomics.com).*

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refuse to shop at Target, for instance, but go to Walmart instead, what's the gain? What's the impact of staying away from the mall for a day or two, or even a week, and then return to spend all the money we withheld?

Martin Luther King, Jr., stated in his final speech, "I call upon you to take your money out of the banks downtown and deposit your money in Tri-State Bank. We want a 'bank-in' movement in Memphis." That was 1968. Here in 2016, in response to the murders of two black men some of us are finally getting it. In Atlanta, there was a call for black folks to open accounts at Citizens Trust Bank. My question was: Why would it

fad, another temporary gesture of outrage, or just another feel-good sign of our frustration?

Additionally, I know "for everything there is a season," and the efforts taking place now in Atlanta at Citizens Bank, started by noted entrepreneur and rapper, Killer Mike, is the right message. Yes, there have been other messengers, but if he is the one that gets our people to respond, not only do I applaud our people, I also applaud Killer Mike. I had a chance to speak with him on the Carl Nelson radio show and he impressed me as a brother who is not egotistical and not concerned about being the HNIC in this issue. He was very respectful and

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# Baltimore resident earns spot in Paralympic Games

By Stacy Brown

He is newly married and on his way to Brazil! Baltimore resident Markeith Price has earned a spot in the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

“One of the things I’ve always wanted to do is represent the United States. I haven’t been able to be a police officer or serve in the military but being able to represent my country in this capacity is a big thing,” said Price, a Tennessee State University graduate and one of 66 athletes chosen to compete for the U.S. in the games that will take place from September 7 to September 18, 2016.

Price, 26, will compete in the 100m and the 400m under the T-13 visually impaired classification. He married his sweetheart Jessica nine months ago and he has maintained a strong training regimen with her help and an even stronger desire to win a medal.

“I want a gold medal. I got some big challenges on my hand but I am looking to compete the best that I can and to get the gold, if not the silver or the bronze,” Price said. “I’ve been to several world championships, went to London in 2012, two Pan American games and this year, I’m shooting for the stars.”

Diagnosed with Optic Nerve Atrophy at the age of three, Price has lived with visual impairment his entire life. The condition is caused by damage of the optic nerve or due to the nerve never fully developing at birth.

While typical vision is 20/20, the vision in Price’s right eye ranges from 20/250-20/400 based on the lighting,



**Markeith Price has earned a spot in the 2016 Paralympic Games, which will take place from September 7 to 18, 2016 in Rio de Janeiro. The 26-year-old will compete in the 100m and 400m under the T-13 visually impaired classification.**

Courtesy Photo

and his left eye is more in the 20/600-20/800 range.

“As I got older and heard other people describe their vision, I was able to get a

better understanding. Basically, to relate it to someone else, I can only really see a clear view of larger things from 2-5 feet,” he said. “After that, things do get

blurry. With reading, it’s not 2-5 feet; it’s more like 2-5 inches.”

Price, who competed before a packed house of more than 80,000 at the Paralympics in London four years ago, said impaired and physically challenged athletes don’t have any advantages over those not impaired or challenged.

“All of us train just as hard, maybe even harder but we run the same distance, we lift the same weight— if not heavier— and everything goes into my body and mind the same way that it does with all Olympians,” Price said. “We’re no different and we put in the same dedication as they do and when I talk to them, they look at all of us as their equal.”

Price says he is excited about the games and is looking forward to continuing to work to help those who are visually impaired through his “I C You Foundation,” a nonprofit he started that raises money for scholarships and programs for the visually impaired. The foundation already has given more than \$20,000 to the Maryland School for the Blind, the Tennessee School for the Blind, the United States Association for Blind Athletes and other organizations.

“It’s something that my parents really taught me and it’s something that I really believe in strongly, and that is giving back to the community,” Price said. “I specifically give back to the visually impaired community because I know that group of people and I know the struggle of how we go through life. I want to help people in the visually impaired community to go on and do something greater.”

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# BSO OrchKids host music and arts festival in West Baltimore

By Deborah Bailey

This past weekend, Saturday, July 23 and Sunday, July 24, 2016, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra OrchKids program hosted the second annual Green Festival at Carroll Park in West Baltimore.

Started in 2015, the festival serves as a way to bring diverse cultural access, community-awareness, and local Baltimore musical talent to the often-neglected West Baltimore community.

OrchKids is a year-round, during and after school, music program designed to create social change and to nurture promising futures for youth in Baltimore City neighborhoods.

“Today we have a lot of teachers and guests artists who come during the year [to] coach the kids and give them help,” said Khandeya Sheppard, site Manager for Booker T. Washington OrchKids Program. “The best part of OrchKids is working with the kids... [they use] music to express themselves and set goals for themselves in life.”

More than 1000 Baltimore youth are involved in music and enrichment activities during and after school at OrchKids sites at Baltimore Public and Charter Schools— Highlandtown; Lockerman-Bundy and Mary Ann Winterling Elementary Schools; and Booker T. Washington Middle School for the Arts.

Under the direction and leadership of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra’s Music Director Marin Alsop, OrchKids is the cornerstone of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra’s efforts to expand its relevance within the broad and diverse Baltimore community.

“I believe passionately that music has the power to change lives, and the BSO should lead the movement,” said Marin Alsop, BSO Director and OrchKids Founder. “Since coming to Baltimore, one of my priorities has been to create a school program that combines music and mentorship to have a positive impact on Baltimore City youth.”

Based on the premise of community revitalization, The OrchKids Green Festival began with a volunteer-based, street beautification and litter pickup in West Baltimore on Saturday morning. Volun-



teers were accompanied by live music as they traveled through the city collecting bags of trash.

“It’s really a festival for the community by the community, and it’s beyond time to start bringing real investment into West Baltimore. We already do this every day through the OrchKids program and have been for the past eight years. Why not also lead the trend in making it an attractive spot to host a music festival?” said Camille Delaney McNeil, OrchKids Senior Site Manager.

Takeia Hinton, one of the vendors who braved temperatures in the high 90’s to support the OrchKids festival has two children who have been involved in the BSO’s Green Festival since it started last year. She believes in the value OrchKids offers children and the community.

“The program displays the hard work of children and is a positive outlet for the kids. This is also something positive for the schools and community,” Hinton said.

“We have bigger numbers than we had last year. We have more community members and not just our own OrchKids staff and family,” McNeil said, “We are hoping the more years we do this we’ll get more and more community support, more funding and we’ll really make this a substantial festival.”



*The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra OrchKids program hosted the second annual Green Festival at Carroll Park in West Baltimore on Saturday, July 23 and Sunday, July 24, 2016. (Top left) Members of the OrchKids program jump rope (Top right) Musicians who mentor members of the OrchKids program provide the entertainment at the OrchKids Green Festival (Above) A young boy gets his face painted at the festival.*

Photos by Deborah Bailey

## Baltimore Raven Justin Forsett teams up Amerigroup to tackle pediatric health

Baltimore— Amerigroup Maryland is kicking off another year of promoting annual wellness exams among children and teenagers in its Medicaid plans in the Baltimore area with the help of the Baltimore Ravens. This year's program includes a special free gift for every eligible Amerigroup member who completes and documents a health screening.

In its fourth year, "Purple Ticket to Health" encourages children and teens in Amerigroup Maryland's Medicaid plan to get an annual checkup. The medical exams are even more important for young people because their bodies are developing so rapidly.

Ravens running back Justin Forsett, who supports the program, said, "Having recently rehabbed my arm, I can tell you that it's critical to have access to quality health care. This is just as true for every child in the Baltimore area as it is for NFL players."

This year, Amerigroup will give every "Purple Ticket to Health" participant a free pair of Ravens-branded athletic socks. The socks feature the Ravens and Amerigroup logos as well as the hashtag #PT2H. "I encourage parents to take their kids to get their yearly health checkup," said Forsett, "And while they're at it, remember to register for some cool Ravens socks that you can wear when cheering on the team." Additionally, participants will be registered for hundreds of prizes through regular drawings, including a Ravens training camp experience, a gameday experience, stadium tours and autographed jerseys.

"Our partnership with the Baltimore

Ravens through Purple Ticket to Health has resulted in more of our members receiving their yearly exams," said Vince Ancona, plan president for Amerigroup Maryland. "That's good news not only for these individuals, but for public health in general. We're pleased with the results and are looking forward to even kicking up the program this year with the new features."

Through this promotion, Amerigroup hopes to give away thousands of pairs of socks this year and, more importantly, improve the health of some of its youngest members.

Eligible Amerigroup members have already received a brochure in the mail with a "Purple Ticket to Health" coupon, and can register for the socks and the drawings by getting the exam and returning the coupon. Socks will be mailed weekly once the annual checkup has been verified.

Amerigroup Maryland has provided health care coverage since 1999. The organization serves approximately 266,000 members in the Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs. Amerigroup Maryland is the state's largest Managed Care Organization (MCO) and is one of the largest MCOs in Baltimore City and the counties of Baltimore, Montgomery, Prince George's and Anne Arundel. Employees share genuine pride in making a difference in the lives of people who might need a little extra help.



*Baltimore Ravens' Running Back Justin Forsett has teamed up with insurer Amerigroup to encourage wellness exams for children enrolled in its Medicaid plans. (Above) Justin is wearing a pair of the Ravens-branded black athletic socks featuring the Ravens and Amerigroup logos as well as the hashtag #PT2H.*

*Courtesy Photo/Amerigroup*

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## **MTA wins national awards for rail safety and security**

Baltimore— The Maryland Department of Transportation's Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) recently received the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) 2016 Gold Awards for Heavy Rail Security and Light Rail Safety.

MTA was the safety winner for its Light Rail Railroad Worker Protection Training Program (RWP) and the security winner for its Zone Enforced Unified Sweeps (ZEUS) program at APTA's 2016 Rail Conference in Phoenix, Ariz. These awards recognize the top rail systems in North America for excellence in their safety and security programs.

"Nothing we do is more important than keeping our passengers and employees safe," said MTA Administrator and CEO Paul Comfort. "So, it's gratifying that the MTA was recognized as a national leader in this effort. The dramatic improvements we've made to provide safe, efficient and reliable transit with world-class customer service are clearly delivering results. And, our peers are recognizing it."

The RWP ensures continuous safety for Light Rail workers by clearly and concisely explaining protection rules to MTA trackside employees and contractors while working in the track area. Since the RWP was first enacted by the MTA, there have been zero employee injuries or fatalities related to on-track safety.

The MTA is one of the safest transit systems— of the top 12 transit agencies in the country— with the lowest number of serious offenses on its system in 2015. The ZEUS program helped contribute to an 11 percent reduction in these crimes from 2014 to 2015.

# Main Street Hats receives \$10K Wells Fargo, Urban League Grant

*Continued from page 1*

which three finalists will each win \$10,000 to renovate their businesses and will receive workshops and training from the Greater Baltimore Urban League's Entrepreneurship Center Program.

Gensler will collaborate with the three finalists to make physical renovations to the interior or exterior of their businesses.

To qualify, small business owners had to respond to essay questions about their business.

A panel of judges then named three finalists. From those finalists, judges will select the best business renovation design, and the winner, who will be announced on Aug. 1, will receive a reception at their business.

The public will also get to vote for the best renovation design, and the winner of the public vote will be announced on August 6, 2016, at the National Urban League's annual conference in Baltimore.



"Working with small business owners is one of the most important things we do at Wells Fargo, and we know how important it is to help small businesses succeed in our local communities," Andy Bertamini, Maryland region president at Wells Fargo, said in a statement. "Wells Fargo has a long history of community partnerships in Baltimore, and through the Wells Fargo Works for Small Business: Neighborhood Renovation Program we are able to continue helping our economy and community thrive."

For Davis-El, who left his job at a steel mill to open his hat store, it means windows for the Greenmount Avenue store he opened in 2009.

"I'll be able to put everything on display. Finally, my hats will be where people can see what I have and then they can come on in," he said.

It was by chance that Davis-El opened the business. "I absolutely never thought of opening a hat store because I'm more of a technical person, working for a steel company, not this," he said. "So, what happened was that I took a cruise and I came back with some panama hats and



everybody wanted to know where I got them so I bought the store out and was selling them to some friends. And then more people started wanting them so I got to the point where I had so many hats in the house my wife told me I had to get them out of there."

In 2006, Davis-El bought the first half of 3019-21 Greenmount Avenue and a year later, he purchased the second half. He began replacing floors and walls but, until now, he never had that window he so desperately needed for his vast collection of Stetson, Dobbs, and Biltmore hats.

"I just put the front window in on one side and I am starting new façade improvements because the city, Johns Hopkins, Main Street Maryland Program and the Baltimore Development Corporation contributed matching grants to get this done," Davis-El said.

"It's so exciting for me and for my customers," he said. "You can get any kind of hat here."



## 2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL EASTERWOOD COOK-OUT



**DATE:** SATURDAY, JULY 30, 2016

**TIME:** 1:00 P.M. - 6:00 PM

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Line Dancing

Massages



# Mission Thrive Summer Helps Local Youth to “Grow”

*Five-Week Program Teaches Farming, Cooking, and Leadership Skills*

**By Ursula V. Battle**

Jonathan Edwards, a recent graduate of The Baltimore School for the Arts credits a city summer program with helping him to grow and mature into a responsible young man as he prepares to start college at Shenandoah University in Virginia.

“I’ve been in the program for three years,” said Jonathan. “You get to meet new people, learn new things, and visit places you’ve never been to before. Being in this program has also taught me to open up to different people, which has prepared me for college. That’s important, because in college you have to get used to being around different people, and living with roommates.”

The 17-year-old added, “This summer program has also taught me about how important it is to be professional and punctual. This summer experience has been life-changing for me.”

Jonathan is one of 27 students between the ages of 14-18 who participated in Mission Thrive Summer, a program that offers Baltimore City high school students the opportunity to participate in farming, cooking, fitness and food/health related jobs. Mission Thrive Summer is operated in direct partnership with the Institute for Integrative Health and Civic Works’ Real Food Farm.

Throughout the summer, the students rotated working at Real Food Farm. The participants prepared meals for each other and their families, and participated in leadership and professional development workshops. Real Food Farm is Civic Works’ innovative urban agricultural enterprise engaged in growing fresh produce on eight acres in and around Clifton Park in northeast Baltimore.

The goal of the five-week program is to develop leadership and job skills. Core activities included farming, cooking and healthy eating, mindfulness and physical activity, and leadership development.

In addition to spending the summer learning new skills, participants earn a stipend. They worked 25 hours per week and earned up to \$200 per week, de-



*Mission Thrive Summer participants Keishan Dempsey, Jonathan Edwards and Michael Dennis.*

Photos: Ursula V. Battle



*Mission Thrive Summer participants Keishan Dempsey, Jonathan Edwards and Michael Dennis.*

pending on their attendance and participation.

After the success of the program last year, Jonathan was among the students who returned and were given additional leadership opportunities. Known as “Peer Crew Leaders,” these students provide mentorship to other students and offer feedback on the operation of the program.

“I make sure the Crew Members are motivated and try to set a great example

for them,” said Jonathan. “I keep them on track.”

Real Food Farm works toward a just and sustainable food system by improving neighborhood access to healthy food, providing experience-based education, and developing an economically viable, environmentally responsible local agriculture sector. Real Food Farm has grown more than 60,000 lbs. of food and educated over 3,000 people.

“This was my first year,” said 16-year-

old Michael Dennis. “This program has been very helpful. It taught me ways to help my family and my community by making healthier meals for me, and my family. I now know how to manage a small garden, the importance of constantly weeding, how to mulch, when and when not to plant, and culinary skills, such as how to properly use a knife.”

The Baltimore City College junior added, “I plan to come back next year. The food we helped to grow here helps the community. It’s good to know that I was a part of that.”

Chrissy Goldberg serves as the Food and Farm Director at Civic Works.

“There are so many issues that face our city and the world, and one is food injustice,” said Goldberg. “Lots of corner stores sell chips, sodas, candy and other unhealthy foods. This program helps the students to understand how important it is to eat healthy. Mission Thrive Summer also teaches them about where fruits and vegetables come from, and how they are being grown right here in the city. The program provides education around those things so that the students can help themselves and their communities.”

Keishan Dempsey, 16, also participated in the program.

“My experience has been very positive and fun,” said The Baltimore City College sophomore. “I really had a really nice time. When I first started the program, I didn’t know what mulching was. Now, I know what mulching is, how to mulch, and how it helps to keep the weeds away. The program also taught me that I was at a workplace, and that I had to be professional. My dream is to become a chef, so the culinary skills I learned were very valuable. I can take that knowledge with me.”

He added, “We went on hiking trails, visited other farms, and canoeing. We also went to Whole Foods, and learned about how to get a job there. This experience was great.”

The program started June 27, 2016, and concluded July 29, 2016. For more information about Mission Thrive Summer, visit [www.realfoodfarm.org](http://www.realfoodfarm.org).

# Rambling Rose

## Farewell to Poet's Athletic Club



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello my dear friends, I hope you are enjoying this hot, sticky, sweaty weather we have been getting this month. Believe me, this is not a complaint from me, I love it. It is hard for me to breathe sometimes, but I will take 90 plus degrees over any of the winter months. This is my time of the year. I love it.

I just love the outdoor activities that the community has during this time of the year as well as the crab feasts, the cabarets, the festivals and the concerts. It is so great that you do not have to scrape ice off your windshields and dig your car out of three feet of snow. Yes folks! This is my time of the year.

I want to start out my column this week by saying farewell to the Poet's Athletic Club, located at 918 E. North Avenue in Baltimore City. This past weekend the club celebrated the beginning and the end of a beautiful, popular, well-respected nostalgic private club who opened their doors 54 years ago.

"It was too hard to continue," said Carl Beasley, general manager for the last several years. Now having health issues himself, it's been very difficult for him to run the club with only a few members who are also up in age and have health problems. So many of the dedicated, strong members have passed away. So it was time. Shutting down and leaving with such a great reputation was the key. They have been very successful with their "Friday Nite Karaoke" which became very popular with local want-to-be singers who had excellent voices headed up by Karaoke Girl, Kay who has been with the club for 21 years. Yes, Carl Beasley and Charles Slappey, president who held the fort down for so many years almost alone, I want to say well done. The club will be missed by all who love you. I want to know, what will East Baltimore do now for entertainment?

Moving along, I had a very busy week last week. I attended, covered and signed books at the Liberty Live Concert Festival as I have been doing every Friday since June at the 9900 block of Liberty Road in Randall-

stown hosted by Kelly and the Liberty Road Business Association. The audience has tripled and takes up most of the parking lot with folding chairs and tables enjoying the fantastic live bands each week. Many vendors are packed in from canopy to canopy around the edge of the parking lot selling everything you can imagine from clothing to wine to paintings. The food is great too, with vendors selling bar-b-que ribs, hot dogs, snowballs and more. Check it out every Friday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. It's okay to bring your coolers and folding chairs. Just make sure you clean up your area and do not leave trash of any kind on the grounds. I will see you there.

I also attended "The Meritocrats" Cookout and Picnic last Saturday, which was awesome. I did a book signing there too and sold a lot of books as well as connected with a lot of old friends I haven't seen in years, such as now the Bishop Jo Jo Ridgeley. It was well attended, the food was delicious, and DJ Sugar Chris played everybody's favorite oldies all afternoon.

As you may or may not know that my "Boo-Boo" Shorty and I are now caretakers for my darling sister, Maxine. She now lives with us— taking her out of hospice and taking care of her ourselves has been great. She is doing much better, but we have to divide our time coming to your events and making sure she is taken care of. But it is okay— we got this! Remember, Nat King Cole didn't name me "Rambling Rose" for nothing.

I don't want to run out of space before I tell you what's coming up this week. Bilal Ali Productions will host another "Smooth Jazz & R&B Summer Concert on Saturday, July 30, 2016, at the Quality Inn located at 1800 Belmont Avenue starting at 7 p.m. For more information, call 443-540-7797.

Rosalyn Gaines, founder of Kuumba Ensemble is hosting the "7th Annual Jazz/R&B



The Poet's Athletic Club went out with a "BANG" after 54 years with a Karaoke Party that brought friends and members together like never before. Farewell Poet's Athletic Club. The 900 block of E. North Avenue will never ever be the same again.



Kenny Davis & the Melodyaires headline the "Big Gospel Concert" sponsored by the Security Ministry of Mt. Moriah Baptist Church on Saturday, July 30, 2016 at 5 p.m. Mt Moriah Baptist Church is located at 2201 Garrison Boulevard in Baltimore. For more information, call David Tisdale at 443-802-6216.

Show under the Stars" on Saturday, August 6, 2016 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Lorraine Garden located at 1021 Hartmont Road in Catonsville featuring Kendall Leonard. For more information, call Roz Gaines at 443-413-1470.

Bassist/composer/vocalist, Jeff Denson returns to the East Coast for a special concert featuring Denson with bassoonist Paul Hanson, vibraphonist Warren Wolf, and drummer Eric Kennedy on Thursday, August 4, 2016, at An Die Musik located at 409 N. Charles Street on the second floor. For tickets information, call 410-385-2638.

Well, my dear friends, I believe this is it. I am out of space, out of time. I've got to go and take care of my sister. Remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. UNTIL THEN, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.



Adopted Baltimore blues singer "Big Jesse" Yawn, passed away in Florida on Tuesday, July 5, 2016 from complicated health issue. Jesse was 79 years old. Condolences to his family and the Baltimore Blues Society.

# Local family's jewelry business flourishes

By Stacy M. Brown

A Baltimore-based jewelry shop is getting noticed. Vintage Stamp Jewels, a family-owned business, which sells a brand of Simply Beautiful jewelry that was featured over the Mother's Day holiday in May at Macy's iconic Herald Square location in New York, continues to make a name for itself.

The owners, husband and wife team of Shane and Monica Sisk run their business from their backyard through the Etsy retail website.

"As you can imagine, being a small business operating out of our home, it was quite an honor to have been contacted not only by Macy's in Herald Square but also in partnership with Etsy wholesale," Shane Sisk said. "I think our first reaction was one of complete shock and once we picked ourselves up off of the floor, we were of course beyond excited. That feeling then was quickly replaced with a sense of urgency to prepare our company for its biggest opportunity to date."

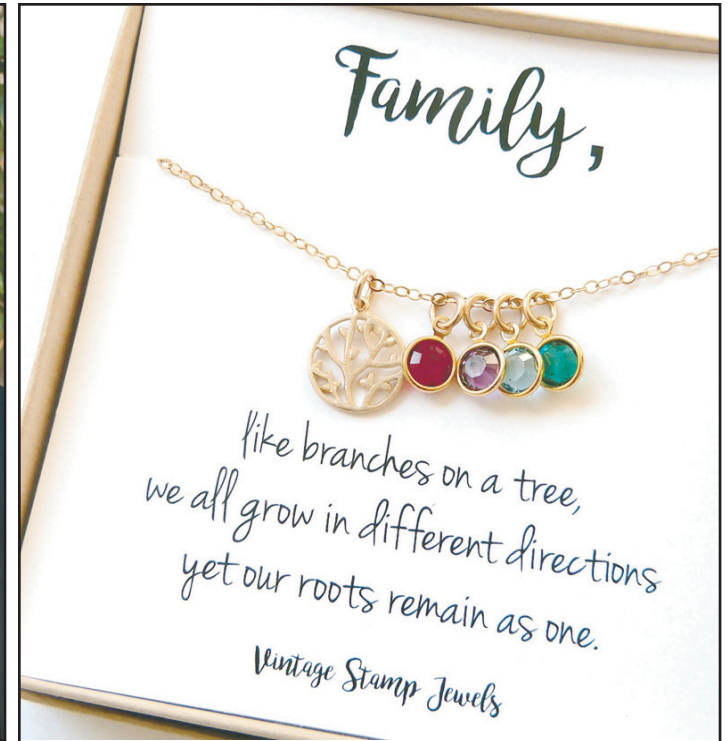
Since their beginning in 2011, Vintage Stamp Jewels has emerged as a top-selling Etsy Jewelry shop in Maryland. It's rated the ninth best-selling jewelry shop in Etsy jewelry sales worldwide.

More recently, their pet lovers' line of jewelry was displayed at the Nashville Agape Pet Rescue event.

The Sisk's also collaborated with Lane Bryant, the San Francisco 49ers, Stephen Bishop's Celebrity Golf Tournament and other organizations.

"We never imagined the small business we run from our home would have the opportunity to sell our simply beautiful jewelry at such a high-profile store like Macy's in New York," Sisk said. "While we are honored to have found success on a national level, Maryland is our home and we're proud of our roots and find joy in giving back to our community and supporting local events."

The company began with handmade necklaces crafted with vintage postage



**Husband and wife Shane and Monica Sisk, the owners of Baltimore-based Vintage Stamp Jewels. The couple run their business from their home through the Etsy retail website. Since 2011, Vintage Stamp Jewels has emerged as a top-selling Etsy Jewelry shop in Maryland and is rated the ninth best-selling jewelry shop in Etsy jewelry sales worldwide.**

Courtesy Photos

stamps, thus the name Vintage Stamp Jewels.

"I was pregnant with my third child and I desired to find an outlet for my creativity," Monica Sisk said in a posting on the couple's website. "While digging around in our 80-year-old house, I found a huge Tupperware, full to the brim, of vintage postage stamps. The collection was gathered by my late great grandmother and left to gather dust. I saw the beauty in the colors and history of the stamps and decided to create my first piece of jewelry."

Macy's has been trying out new moves to bring in new customers and keep up to date with changing shopping habits, according to a recent Forbes Magazine report.

So, in the recently renovated basement of its 1 million-square-foot store in New York, Macy's in January opened a shop for Etsy, the online marketplace that

specializes in homemade items and crafts.

The Etsy shop offers 57 products, including Vintage Stamp Jewels.

"What separates our products from the rest is clearly in two areas," Shane Sisk said.

"Number one, our price points are for the everyday buyer. We have specifically priced items in such a way that they can be afforded by the bride who is on a budget or a child buying [a gift for his mother] or a husband looking to surprise his wife," he said.

"Second, is our attention to detail when it comes to hand stamping each personalized item. Hand stamping itself is an art form and we pride ourselves in the ability of our workers to create items that are unique and as close to perfect for handmade items as possible.

"We are trying to erase the stigma that you have to go into high end stores to

get quality jewelry. We are also trying to erase the stigma that handmade jewelry cannot be quality and professional," Sisk said.

The couple hopes to establish relationships both with Macy's and Etsy wholesale so that they may be able to continue to produce Simply Beautiful jewelry for a long time.

"The competition in the jewelry business as you can imagine is quite strong. However, we believe that that competition is even more prevalent in the Etsy Marketplace and in the local retail stores," Sisk said. "For that reason we are continuing to develop our brand that is defined by quality affordable handmade jewelry with a commitment to excelling at customer service through clear and timely communication with every single buyer."

To view their products, visit: [www.etsy.com/shop/vintagestampjewels](http://www.etsy.com/shop/vintagestampjewels).

**When you create more small businesses, you create small entrepreneurship. Out of that comes self-determination and employment. —Jesse Jackson**

# Two New Exhibits at Central Library: 'Solidarity in Sadness' and 'Soul Food'

*New Exhibits at the Central Library showcasing moving photographs by Baltimore and City Paper Photographer J.M. Giordano of the Orlando Pulse Shooting Vigil and the origins of soul food*

Baltimore— The Enoch Pratt Free Library has opened two new exhibits at the Central Library Annex Gallery, Solidarity in Sadness and Soul Food.

**Solidarity in Sadness**— In connection with Baltimore's LGBT Pride Celebration, 28 moving photographs from the June 13 vigil remembering the 49 victims of the Pulse Night Club shooting in Orlando, Florida are on display. The images were taken by Baltimore and City Paper photographer J.M. Giordano. Exhibit designed and curated by Pratt Library Art Director Jack Young

"These photographs capture the raw feelings and sadness of the Orlando community but also the overwhelming tone of love and support," said Roswell Encina, Director of Communications of the Pratt Library. "The images mirror the same emotions of the LGBT community here in Baltimore and across the nation. Leading up to the city's Pride celebration, these photographs showcase that love truly conquers all."

Giordano's photographs have been on display at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, Baltimore Museum of Industry and soon at the new Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.

**Soul Food**— This exhibit showcases the origins of "soul food" and how this traditional cuisine derived from "slave



food" and the African American community of the South into a cultural comfort food. View the various foods, places, and cooks that made this cuisine a household name. Curated by Pratt Library's African American Department Manager Vivian Fisher and Jack Young. Both exhibits will be on display through September 30, 2016.

For more information about the exhibits, visit our website at [www.prattlibrary.org](http://www.prattlibrary.org).

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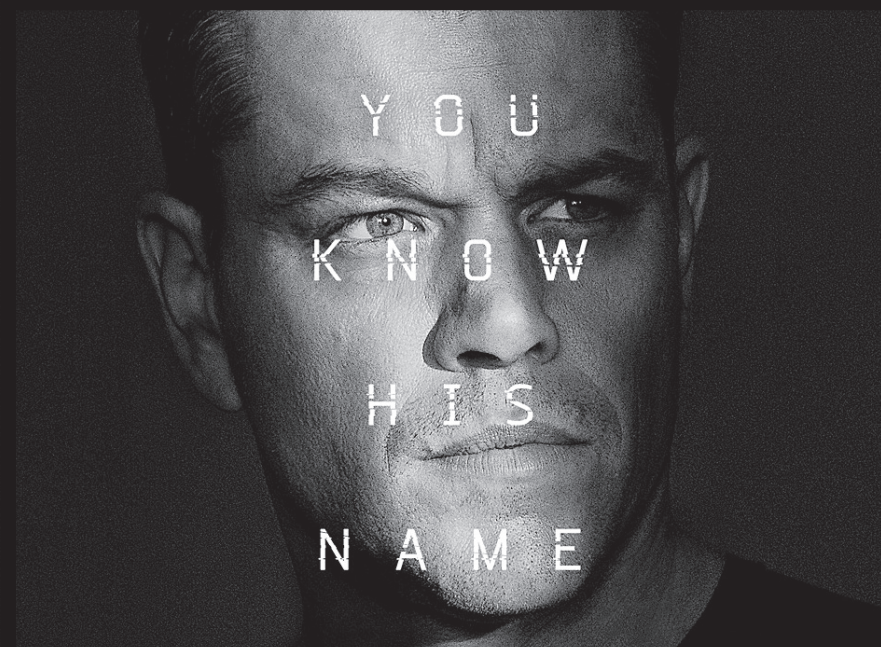


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# FILMSTERS Academy: 15 years filmmaking with kids in Annapolis

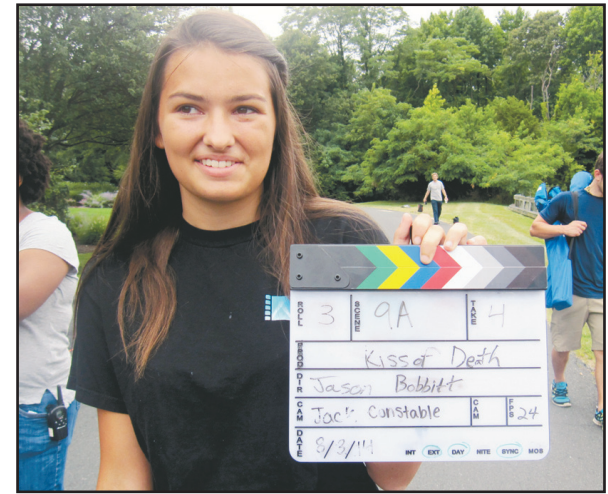
Annapolis— FILMSTERS Academy, a summer film camp for kids is celebrating 15 years this summer. Over 138 short films have been produced, shot, directed, acted in and edited by kids, from 11-18 years in age. In the fifteen-year time span, over 800 students have attended the film camp, which offers three levels of instruction.

FILMSTERS Academy was co-founded in 2002, by Lee Anderson and Patti White, nationally credited TV producers and filmmakers. The duo also brought about the Annapolis Film Festival, which they co-founded together and is now heading into its fifth year. At FILMSTERS, the staff is made up of young working professionals who are graduates of film schools all over the country.

“We have an 80-85 percent return rate at film camp. Most kids average 4-5 years of film camp as they move thru the levels. We are with them as they grow creatively each year,” says Lee Anderson, co-founder. “Not only are we growing young filmmakers and seeing them get into some of the top film schools in the country; FILMSTERS Academy has also become a professional network for the young professionals who teach each summer and then move on to New York or LA.”

This year, the program takes place from August 1 through August 8, 2016. Each student will have the opportunity to conceive, pitch, write, shoot, produce, direct, create and edit a short film over the course of five to 14 days depending upon their level of expertise and experience. At the end of the program, they present their work to family and friends at film festival on August 12, 2016, in the Key School Activity Building. This original short film screening is free and open to the public. Though this year’s date to register has passed, late registry is available until July 31 and spots will fill up quickly.

After years of running the camp, its reputation is growing as it attracts terrific guest instructors. First time feature film director, Marlee Roberts, who directed the feature film “Little Miss Perfect,” which screened at the Annapolis Film Festival, is coming in as supervi-



ing director for the Advanced filmmaking program. Musician Logan Nyman will provide the music for films. The camp will also feature other guest instructors this summer, including: Producer/Writer Mimi Edmunds and Michael Miller, Stunt Coordinator Rick Kain, professional Make-up artist Julia Gingles, LA Cinematographer Kevin Mayorga, Gaffer David Burroughs and former CNN Producer Lucy Spiegel who will work with the kids.

“If you ask us what we are the most proud of in creating this program, it would be the fact that we’ve managed to create a 100 percent non-competitive, creative learning environment that is just plain fun,” says Anderson. “Almost anything can happen at film camp. We’ve had lots and lots of drama, but somehow in the end, we put it on the screen in time for the film festival. The audience is always amazed at what these kids can do with their imagination and the right tools.”



Enrollment this summer at the popular FILMSTERS Academy is approximately 60 kids, 25+ staff and the many guest professionals from all over the country who all gather together to teach these young filmmakers the art of storytelling. There are three levels for Beginners (11-14): two one week programs, Intermediates (13-16): a 10 day program, and

Advanced (ages 16-18): a comprehensive 14 day program. FILMSTERS Academy in Annapolis will be held at the Key School, 534 Hillsmere Drive in Annapolis.

For additional information please visit the FILMSTERS website [www.filmsters-academy.com](http://www.filmsters-academy.com)

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# Notice of Public Meeting Regular Meeting

Monday, August 1, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.

Grand Courtroom  
29 Courthouse Square  
Rockville, MD 20850

Reservations are encouraged, but not required. To make a reservation or to be added to the agenda, please contact Mr. LeRonn Herbert by Friday, July 29, 2016 at: 410-216-6181 or [MCAAHC@gmail.com](mailto:MCAAHC@gmail.com).

Free. The public is invited to attend.  
Light refreshments will be served.



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