

## BCCC honors nursing students at pinning ceremony



*Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) offers a two-year, associate's degree in nursing and a shorter, three-semester practical nursing certification. Both programs are designed to provide first-generation college students in Baltimore City with the opportunity to prepare for a knowledge-based career. Above: Mary Ihezue, a BCCC associate degree in nursing graduate receives her formal pinning and welcome into the profession. (See article on page 8) Courtesy Photo/BCCC*

# Presidents' Roundtable sets goals for New Year

By Stacy M. Brown

Among the primary goals in 2017 for The Presidents' Roundtable is to accelerate the formation of entrepreneurial opportunities for the African-American community and to expand and diversify the business opportunities for corporations that currently make up the ambitious organization.

"[Goals include] starting in Baltimore and the Baltimore region, but then expanding nationally and internationally," said Robert L. Wallace, a member of the Presidents' Roundtable and CEO of the BITHGroup Technologies, Inc., a Charm City-based information technology services company that specializes in managed security services, health information systems, infrastructure IT services, wireless engineering, and biometrics.

Among goals for next year are, to structure and disseminate to the community the corporate knowledge of the organization's family of companies so that the information and experience is readily available to other minority entrepreneurs and the community at-large, Wallace said.

The Presidents' Roundtable (PRT), will also provide consultative input and services to the political and business leadership about how to effectively integrate African-American entrepreneurs and the community into the economic mainstream.

Further, the group wants to facilitate the formation and acceleration of strategic alliances and partnerships between PRT corporate members and the overall business community, according to Wallace.

Founded in 1983, the PRT consists of 21 African-American entrepreneurs in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. region who employ more than 1,750 workers and oversee and control assets that exceed \$1.1 billion.



*PRT members (left to right): James Scott Jr., founding partner, Penan & Scott, P. C.; Jeffrey Hargrave, president, Mahogany, Inc.; Dr. Sheila Brooks, founder, president and CEO, SRB Communications; John Walters, owner and president, Walters Relocations, Inc.; Robert L. Wallace, president/CEO, BITHGroup Technologies, Inc. at the 2016 PRT Scholarship Awards Gala on Saturday, November 5, 2016 at the Hilton BWI Hotel.*  
Courtesy Photo/PRT

B. Tyrous Addison of the Atlas Insurance Agency; Dorothy Brunson of Brunson Communications; Raymond V. Haysbert of Parks Sausage Company; and William March of March Funeral Homes are among the founding members.

Dr. Sheila Brooks, president and owner of SRB Communications; Stanley Tucker, president of Meridian Management Group; James Davenport, president of American Technology Corporation; and Donna Stevenson, president of Early Morning Software; are among current PRT members.

In November, the PRT held its annual awards gala in Baltimore where it awards students in need from HBCUs in the region entrepreneurial scholarships.

"The organization has now awarded \$80,000 in scholarships over the past three years to five HBCUs in the Washington, D.C. and Baltimore region," Wal-

lace said in an email. "We are committed to entrepreneurial education for students attending HBCUs in this region."

To help accomplish its goals, PRT has partnered with such businesses as Merrill Lynch, State Farm, MedStar Health; Cadillac; M&T Bank; the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development; Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; Mahogany Inc.; Washington Gas; Edwards & Hill Office Furniture; the Commercial Group; SRB Communications; Penan & Scott, P.C.; Giant; Mercedes-Benz of Silver Spring; Earth's Enrichments; the MTA; Baltimore-Washington Thurgood Marshall International Airport; Pepco; Exelon; BGE; and the Harbor Bank of Maryland.

Also, PRT's Reach Foundation works in close collaboration with the leaders of PRT to promote social welfare and to improve the economic conditions of small and minority businesses, and the community at-large, Wallace said.

"PRT Reach Foundation supports education and encourages college students to become entrepreneurs," he said. "PRT Reach seeks to achieve its goal through professional development activities, outreach programs and intellectual works that are not readily accessible from community and business advocacy groups, government agencies and others."

For more information about the Presidents' Roundtable and its future plans, visit [www.presidentsroundtable.net](http://www.presidentsroundtable.net).

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## Making Workplace Wellness Count

By Dick Resch

Going to the gym is about to get a lot more expensive. That's because the share of companies offering wellness programs dropped 13 percent this year. These programs— which often include subsidized gym memberships, free fitness trackers, and bonuses for losing weight— keep employees healthy, thereby cutting medical and insurance expenses. At least that's the theory.

In practice, many companies aren't seeing a return on their wellness investments. So they're ditching the programs.

That's a mistake. Employers can save themselves millions through wellness programs. They just need to find ways to boost workers' low participation rates.

Properly designed wellness programs pad companies' bottom lines. Every dollar spent on wellness programs reduces medical costs by over \$3, according to a Health Affairs study.

Of course, the programs only work if employees participate. Right now, four in 10 workers opt out. A majority of those employees say they don't have enough time to take part. And 43 percent say the program locations are too inconvenient.

In response to such concerns, some companies are bringing healthy choices right to workers' offices.

For instance, Blue Shield California stocks the cafeteria with nutritious food and provides sit-stand and treadmill desks. Eighty percent of employees now participate in the wellness program. Over a four-year period, employees' physical activity rates increased 32 percent and high blood pressure rates dropped 66 percent.

Other businesses rely on teamwork and a dose of healthy peer pressure to increase participation. Take Bazaarvoice, a software service company in Austin, Texas. Employees earn points— redeemable for gift cards and other perks— for healthy behaviors, such as undergoing yearly checkups or exercising.

Crucially, employees gain more points when they complete group activities, such as attending a fitness class with their team. Since implementing this team-based framework, participation has skyrocketed. Management anticipates reduced insurance and medical costs as a result.

It's essential that companies don't make employees compete for a prize. That's a sure-fire way to increase apathy instead of enthusiasm.

That's why my company, furniture manufacturer KI, measures and rewards employees individually. We set specific goals for each employee based on an initial health screening. If they meet their benchmarks, they earn back a portion of their health insurance premiums. The financial incentives and individually tailored goals are a large reason KI boasts a nearly 100 percent wellness program participation rate.

The program saves our company serious money. We spend \$2.2 million on the wellness program and save \$3.3 million a year on insurance premiums— a return on investment of 50 percent. Our annual health costs per employee are 24 percent lower than the national average.

If companies aren't reaping benefits from their wellness programs, they should look to boost participation before axing the initiatives. Companies can't simply hand out Fitbits— they need to find ways to ensure the fitness trackers wind up on employees' wrists, instead of in their dressers.

*Dick Resch is CEO of Wisconsin-based manufacturer KI.*



## Community Affairs

### Food For Fines 2017

*For each canned good donated, you will receive \$1 off your library fine between January 3 and January 31, 2017*

Baltimore— The Enoch Pratt Free Library is partnering with the Maryland Food Bank in the month of January for Food for Fines. From January 3 to January 31, 2017, donate a canned food item at any Pratt location and receive a \$1 off any library fine.

There is no limit on the amount of cans that can be donated. For example, 5 cans = \$5 off of your library card fines. Canned goods must be unopened and unexpired to qualify. To participate, just drop the cans off at the Circulation Desk of your local Pratt Library branch.

In January 2016, the library waived over \$13,000.00 in fines. That's more than 13,000 cans of food collected for the Maryland Food Bank, which is the equivalent of approximately 8,838 meals.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library, the nation's first free library system, opened its doors in 1886, the result of the generosity and imagination of businessman and philanthropist Enoch Pratt who Pratt

FOOD  
FOR  
FINES

**January 3 - 31, 2017**

envisioned a public library where "races, ages, and socio-economic classes mingled and people could educate themselves— without cost." His passionate belief continues to guide the organization.

The Maryland Food Bank is a non-profit hunger-relief organization, leading the movement to end hunger throughout Maryland. For more than 35 years, the Maryland Food Bank has partnered with communities across the state to distribute food to individuals and families in need.

For more information about the Pratt's Food for Fines campaign, visit: [www.prattlibrary.org](http://www.prattlibrary.org).

## *As Obama departs, we owe him our thanks*

*By Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr.  
President and Founder,  
Rainbow PUSH Coalition*

The final days of the Obama presidency are upon us. His popularity is rising with the economy, and with the increasingly stark contrasts to his successor. It is worth being clear about the legacy that he leaves behind.

Obama came to office facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. The global financial system teetered on collapse; the auto industry faced bankruptcy; the economy was shedding 400,000 jobs a day. He also inherited the catastrophe George Bush had created with the debacle in Iraq and government misrule dramatized by the shame of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Now, eight years later, the economy nears full employment, with more than 15 million jobs created and private sector job growth at a record 81 consecutive months and counting. Wages are beginning to rise, after long years of stagnation or worse. The auto industry has

enjoyed some of its most prosperous years.

This isn't an accident. Obama helped rescue the economy by passing the largest stimulus in history, the most ambitious financial reform since the 1930s, and daring and direct intervention to save the auto industry. Economic growth helped lower the annual budget deficit to less than half the level he inherited.

Obama also passed the largest health care reforms in six decades, providing

capable facilities, it also provided the most comprehensive and aggressive verification mechanisms in the history of arms control. In opening relations with Cuba, he helped reduce America's isolation in our own hemisphere and made the historic turn from a policy of embargo that had failed for five decades.

His most historic contribution was to understand the clear and present danger of catastrophic climate change. The agreement with China and subsequent

president. In part because of that opposition, much remained undone. The stimulus would have been larger and the recovery stronger except for Republican opposition. The national minimum wage would have been raised. A national infrastructure project to rebuild America would have been launched. Progress on making America the leader of the green revolution, the next global industrial revolution, would have been greater. Guantanamo, the shameful prison in Cuba, would have been closed. The Voting Rights Act would have been revived, and much more.

For most Americans, the recovery was slow; for many it was invisible. Donald Trump won election promising working people a better deal. He appealed to our weariness with war, suggesting a less interventionist policy. He played upon divisions, rousing fears about immigrants and Muslims. He pledged to "Make America Great Again," in part by undoing everything Obama.

So it is worth marking what Trump will inherit, as we head into what is already a rocky and tempestuous presidency. Unemployment under five percent. Eighty-one months of jobs growth and counting. Average wages rising at 2.4 percent over the last year. Growth at 3.5 percent over the last full quarter. Inflation at two percent. 20 million more Americans with health insurance.

America, one of the global leaders in the green industrial revolution. A president respected at home and abroad, known for his thoughtfulness and his great eloquence. Let us hope that Trump can build on that legacy, and not lead us into a far deeper hole.

*Keep up with Reverend Jackson and the work of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition at [www.rainbowpush.org](http://www.rainbowpush.org).*

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***"Obama won a majority of the votes in both his election and re-election, something neither his predecessor nor successor achieved.***

***He governed with grace and dignity, despite grotesque and too often racist provocations.***

***His family provided a model for all Americans, with Michelle winning hearts across the country.***

***He and his administration were remarkably free of scandal.***

***His administration demonstrated once more that competence could be valued in Washington."***

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health insurance for 20 million Americans. His reforms saved those with pre-existing conditions, provided the young with protection under their parents' programs and, although most Americans don't realize it, slowed the rise of health care costs dramatically.

Running for re-election in 2012, Obama recognized that income inequality had become "the defining issue of our time." With his progressive tax reforms both in his health care plan and in the partial repeal of the top-end Bush tax cuts, and with expanded tax credits for low-income workers and families with children, Obama made a significant beginning in addressing that inequality.

Abroad, Obama struggled against great opposition to reduce America's exposure in the wars without end in the Middle East. His nuclear agreement with Iran, not only dismantled its nuclear weapons

Paris Accord cemented a global consensus on the need for bolder action on global warming. On his watch, America began to reduce its reliance on coal and its greenhouse gas emissions.

Obama won a majority of the votes in both his election and re-election, something neither his predecessor nor successor achieved. He governed with grace and dignity, despite grotesque and too often racist provocations. His family provided a model for all Americans, with Michelle winning hearts across the country. He and his administration were remarkably free of scandal. His administration demonstrated once more that competence could be valued in Washington.

He did all of this while facing unprecedented, unrelenting partisan obstruction, with the Republican leader of the Senate opposing him at every turn, intent on making him a one-term

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**Mailing Address**

**The Baltimore Times**

**2513 N. Charles Street**

**Baltimore, MD 21218**

**Phone: 410-366-3900- Fax 410-243-1627**

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# *Singing Sensations captivate audiences in Baltimore and beyond*

By Ursula V. Battle

Many of the members of the Singing Sensations Youth Choir come from challenging backgrounds. Ranging from five to 18 years old, many of them have triumphed over insurmountable obstacles in the face of poverty. However, despite the difficulties they have experienced so early in their lives, they have a strong desire to sing and perform.

A music teacher assembles them all, and the choir goes on to achieve local, national, and even international acclaim. They have traveled to Africa, Trinidad, Canada and dozens of other destinations to perform. While this reads like a short synopsis of a play or movie, these characters are real, and if a title were given to their real-life production, it would be called the "Singing Sensations Youth Choir directed by Dr. Hollie Hood-Mincey."

Hood-Mincey founded the choir with the goal of exposing youth in the Baltimore Metropolitan area to the diverse and multifaceted aspects of the performing arts. Today, the Singing Sensations Youth Choir is a nonprofit organization comprised of approximately 50 youth.

Howard "Buddy" Lakins serves as director of music, while Patrick Brown is assistant director. Their repertoire consists of choral, patriotic and pop music, spirituals, show tunes, children and freedom songs, Motown, and songs in different languages.

"It has been a lot of hard work but I have seen our children develop socially, emotionally, academically, professionally, and musically," Hood-Mincey, a music teacher for Baltimore City Public Schools.

As a teacher at Furman L. Templeton Elementary School, Hood-Mincey worked with students from impoverished neighborhoods and low-income households, who love music. She asked the school's principal if she could start a choir and was granted her request.

Not long after the choir's assembly, The Sun Newspaper published an article about the choir written by columnist Gregory Kane.

"People started sending in donations, and we were able to buy instruments,



***(Left) Founder and director of the Singing Sensations Youth Choir, Dr. Hollie Hood-Mincey. (Right) Noelle Bradford (left), a member of the Singing Sensations Youth Choir, died in a car crash while heading to a concert rehearsal. She is pictured with her best friend Zariah. A moment of silence was held for Bradford during the December 18, 2016 concert and the choir sang "The First Noel" in her memory. Courtesy Photos***

travel and do 22 concerts. We are still going strong today," said Hood-Mincey.

Hood-Mincey says sponsorship is needed to keep the mission of the organization moving forward.

"My ultimate goal is to take these kids to every continent so they can see the world. I would also like to see them on the Stellar Awards," she said.

Most recently, the Singing Sensations presented "One Sound, One Season, One Savior," on Sunday, December 18, 2016 at FCF World Outreach in Owings Mills, Maryland. Hundreds attended the concert and the proceeds benefited the choir's scholarship fund.

During the concert, a moment of silence was held for a fellow choir member, Noelle Bradford. The 12-year-old Sumter, S.C., resident died tragically in a car accident on Saturday, December 17, while traveling to Baltimore for rehearsal. Johnathan Cruse, 28, who was traveling in the vehicle also perished in

the accident. The Singing Sensations Youth Choir sang, "The First Noel" in her memory.

The Christmas concert was one of the organization's two annual fundraisers. The next will be a Black History Month concert that will take place at Morgan State University in February.

"When people come to see them perform, many ask, 'How do you keep 50 kids sitting like that?'" said Dr. Hood-Mincey. "I tell them that we teach the children about presence and being excellent. These kids are like my family. Some of these children have lived with me. I fed them, dressed them and took them to school every day as if they were mine. The Singing Sensations Youth Choir is truly a ministry and more than a typical choir."

The Singing Sensations Youth Choir is always open to additional performers.

"We really don't turn down any children," she said. "We are trying to build

character and confidence. Some of our kids came to us in a shell, and are now some of our best performers."

Barbara Cooper a dedicated supporter of the choir, is always among their audience.

"They are very inspirational," said Cooper noting that they were her favorite choir. "They are very well-disciplined children who come from all walks of life.

"They have some melodious voices. Dr. Hood-Mincey has taken them out of their environment and taken them all over the world."

Cinnamon Brown-Mack, who also attended the Christmas concert, gave the choir rave reviews.

"The Singing Sensations Youth Choir was amazing," she said. "I was blessed and inspired by them. Dr. Hollie Hood-Mincey and her vision is truly from God."

For more information about the choir, visit: [www.sensationalsingers.org](http://www.sensationalsingers.org) or call Dr. Hood-Mincey at 443-622-4994.

## 50th Anniversary of Kwanzaa at RFL Museum



Baltimore— This year marks the 50th anniversary of Kwanzaa, founded in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, of Parsonsburg, Maryland. The Reginald F. Lewis Museum will hold a 50th Anniversary of Kwanzaa Celebration on Friday, December 30, 2016 from noon to 4 p.m. to commemorate the occasion. It culminates the museum's holiday programs celebrating Nia ("Purpose").

"Kwanzaa was founded to reinforce African Americans' common bond to each other and to celebrate African heritage and culture. Fifty years later, the holiday still provides an important focal point for African Americans to celebrate family, community, culture and traditional values," said Roni Jolley, Director of Education.

### 50th Anniversary of Kwanzaa Celebration Schedule

- |                         |                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. | African Marketplace                                                                                                                                           |
| 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. | Resource Center open. Research your family tree!<br>Genealogy Sessions 1:30 and 2:30 pm                                                                       |
| 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. | Kwanzaa Crafts — Make a family tree booklet, beaded necklaces, and or Kwanzaa banners                                                                         |
| 12:30 p.m. to 1:15p.m.  | Program Commencement. Sankofa Dance Theater performs opening drum call and candle lighting ceremony and explains the meaning of Kwanzaa                       |
| 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.  | Workshops: Sankofa Dance Theater Percussion Workshop; Storytelling/Spoken Word Session; African Dancing/Gelee Headwrap Session; "Black Candle" Film Screening |
| 2:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.  | Keynote Talk "Finding Your Purpose (Nia)" by Dr. Jeffrey Menzise of Morgan State University                                                                   |
| 3:30 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.  | Sankofa Dance Theater performs African dancing, drumming                                                                                                      |

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# BCCC honors nursing students at pinning ceremony

By Bill Fleming

Mary Ihezic and Rapheal Olumakinde were among the 25 nursing students honored at the Baltimore City Community College's pinning ceremony for the Class of Fall 2016 on December 20, 2016. Among the graduating class, 17 associate degrees and eight Practical Nursing certificates were conferred.

For Mary Ihezic, it was a chance to become a registered nurse (RN) after working for some time as a licensed practical nurse (LPN). With her degree, she will pursue her interests in either psychiatric or obstetric nursing after she takes the state board exams to earn an RN license.

"For me this is not just a job, but a lifestyle," she said. "Education is abundant in my family and we take it seriously."

Ihezic plans on staying in Maryland as she seeks to join the busy corps of practicing healthcare professionals in this area.

For Rapheal Olumakinde, it's the culmination of years of interest in the healthcare field, which became crystallized when he attended a nursing orientation session BCCC. With his newfound credential, which took him a little over two years to complete, Rapheal will build on his experiences in CPR and as a correctional officer with the State of Maryland, to transition into emergency room care.

"I like the dynamics, I guess it's the adrenaline of delivering direct care which can make a difference in the life of a patient and bring calm to a dire situation," said Rapheal.

Now that he is a new father, he says his advancement in this field will help him to support his growing family. He plans to continue working toward his bachelor's and master's degrees with the ultimate goal of becoming a nurse practitioner, a more advanced level in the profession, which carries administrative responsibilities.

"My husband loves God and is devoted to his family," said his proud wife, Temmy.

BCCC offers a two-year, associate's



*BCCC Class of Fall 2016 Associate Degree in Nursing graduates*

Photo: Melvin Fooks/BCCC



*BCCC Associate Degree in Nursing graduate Mary Ihezic with her brother and sister after the pinning ceremony.*

Courtesy Photo/BCCC



*BCCC Associate Degree in Nursing graduate Rapheal Olumakinde with his wife, Temmy and new son, Saint. BCCC*

Courtesy Photo/BCCC

degree in nursing and a shorter, three-semester practical nursing certification. Both programs are designed to provide first-generation college students in Baltimore City with the opportunity to prepare for a knowledge-based career. The

associate degree program, is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN); both the associate degree and certificate programs are approved by the Maryland Board of Nursing.

**Congratulations to all  
Class of Fall 2016 graduates!**



## Zion Harvey, mother to ride Donate America float

# Nation's first pediatric bilateral hand transplant patient in Rose Parade

Philadelphia, Pa. -- On Jan. 2, 2017, people from across the country will share in the 128-year-old tradition of watching the Rose Parade, which is held every year in Pasadena, Calif. For the past 14 years, Donate Life America has participated in this celebration by creating a float to promote organ and tissue donation, and this year will be no different! Gift of Life Donor Program – the organ procurement organization (OPO) serving the eastern half of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware – is supporting Zion Harvey's journey to California to ride on the float, along with his mother, Patti Ray, who will walk alongside the float as a living donor. Zion is one of 23 people who were selected to ride on the Rose Parade float.

Nine-year-old Zion, a Baltimorean, was the first child in the world to receive a double hand transplant in 2015, when surgeons from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), Penn Medicine and Shriners Hospitals for Children – Philadelphia, joined to complete this innovative transplant. The surgical team successfully transplanted donor hands and forearms onto then eight-year-old Zion in the complex, 11-hour procedure.

At the age of two, Zion developed sepsis, a life-threatening infection that attacked his entire body and eventually required amputation of both of his hands and his legs below the knee. The infection also damaged his kidneys, which required him to receive a life-saving kidney transplant from his mother when he was just four years old.

Today, nine-year-old Zion Harvey can throw a baseball over home plate since receiving his transplant. He can write in his journal, prepare himself lunch and manage zippers on his clothes. However, for most of his life, these and many other ordinary actions were impossible for him. When asked how his life has changed now that he has hands, Zion said, "I'm still the same kid everybody knew without hands. But I can do everything now. I can do the same things even better." Zion and Patti Ray are excited

to participate in the 2017 Rose Parade, and are grateful to Gift of Life Donor Program for allowing them to be a part of this special celebration.

Donate Life America's float is supported by more than 50 organizations from across the U.S. to help promote the life-saving power of organ donation, and to raise awareness about the more than 119,000 men, women and children in the United States who are currently awaiting a transplant.

The float's theme is "Teammates in Life," which stresses the importance of working together to save lives. The float depicts a spectacular Polynesian catamaran, which will be propelled by Zion along with a team of 23 organ, eye, and tissue transplant recipients - rowing in unison with strength gained from their donors. The sails of the vessel will feature 60 floral portraits of donors interwoven with Polynesian designs and patterns. Just as the donors' gifts empower the lives of others, the sails help power the catamaran on its journey. Sixteen living donors, including Patti Ray, will walk alongside the float carrying flowers in celebration of the life they have given to others and the quality of life they continue to enjoy themselves. For more information about the float, visit [www.donatelifefloat.org](http://www.donatelifefloat.org).

Gift of Life Donor Program has worked tirelessly for the past 42 years to coordinate donors' generosity with those in need. Since 1974, Gift of Life – the organ procurement organization for the eastern half of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware – has helped save nearly 42,000 lives through organ donation, and enhanced over half a million lives through tissue donation. For more information or to register, visit [donors1.org](http://donors1.org).



*Zion Harvey and mother, Patti Ray*  
Courtesy Photo



# Rambling Rose



*Rosa Pryor Trusty*

**Happy, Happy New Year to you all!**

Hello, to all my readers and fans. This has been a helluva year, don't you think? Some good and some not so good, but we are still here above ground and blessed. This weekend, we celebrate New Year's Eve and Day as well as Kwanzaa and Hanukkah. There are a couple of events I want to share with you for these holidays.

The Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. of Columbia, Maryland, will host a New Year's Day party on Sunday, January 1, 2017 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Kahler Hall, 5440 Old Tucker Roe in Columbia. Watch the New Year's Day football games and enjoy music from a DJ, card games, door prizes, and food. BYOB. For more information, call 301-596-9103.

New Year's Eve Celebration hosted by Ertha Harris, Mike "Miguel" Stokes & Party Rocka MC ICE will host a New Year's Eve celebration with music by DJ Mike Jones from 9 p.m. until 3 a.m. at the Diamondz Event Center 9980 Liberty Rd. in Randallstown, Md. The tickets include a cash bar, light buffet, champagne toast and party favors. For ticket information, call 443-655-7198.

As the year comes to a close, I want to leave you with some thoughts that someone passed on to me:

\*Make peace with your past, so it won't screw up the present.

\*Remember, what others think of you is none of your business.

\*Time heals almost everything— give it time.

\*Don't compare your life to others and don't judge them. You have no idea what their journey is all about.

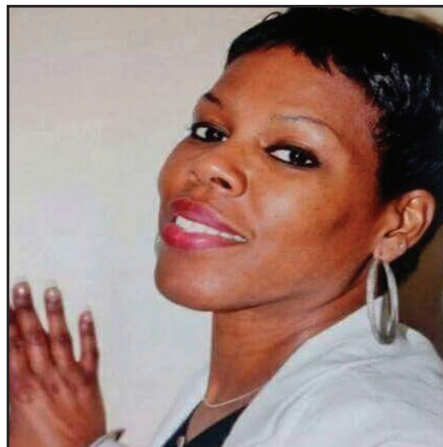
\*Stop thinking too much— it's alright not to know the answers. They will come to you when you least expect it.

\*No one is in charge of your happiness, except you; and smile you don't own all

the problems in the world.

Happy New Year to you all! May your New Year be prosperous, fun and better than 2016. God bless you and your family. Thanks to you, my friends and fans who continually read my column every week and share it with others.

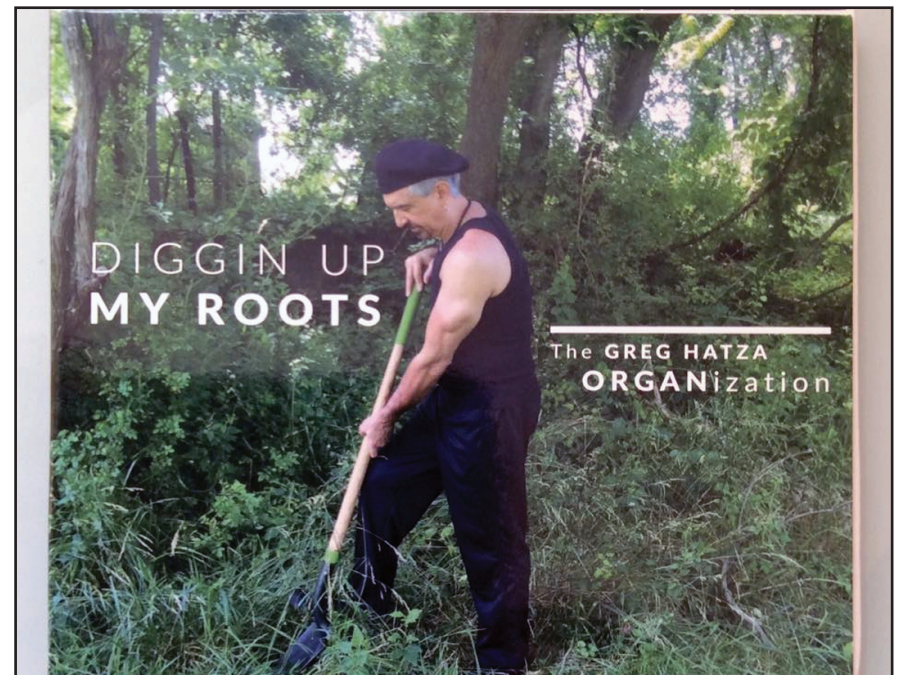
Remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at [rosapryor@aol.com](mailto:rosapryor@aol.com). Until next time, I'm musically yours.



*Talented newcomer and sweet vocalist Ms. BO'NA, will perform at the New Year's Event at the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge on Sunday, December 31, also featuring "The Spindles," "BADD," The Mighty Heat, and the "Family," just to name a few. For ticket information, call Don at 443-447-2207.*



*Baltimore's own recording artists, Diane and the Ravenettes will headline Don Jones of D&K Entertainment New Year's Eve Extravaganza on Sunday, December 31, 2016 from 8 p.m. until 3 a.m. at the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge, 1307 Eutaw Place (side entrance). Dinner, show, BYOB, Free Set-ups, Hats, Horns, Noise Makers are included with your ticket. For more information, call Nowlin at 443-525-2715*



*Greg Hatza, renowned musician, organist and his band "ORGANzation" releases their new CD "Digging Up Roots" nationwide, January 6 to all retail stores. For more information, go to [www.greghatza.com](http://www.greghatza.com).*

*Kwanzaa Celebrations will take place on Friday, December 30, 2016 from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. with Master Griots, fun and entertainment at the Banneker Museum located at 300 Oella Avenue in Catonsville. It's free and open to the public. For more information, call 410-887-1081. Kwanzaa celebrations will also be held at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum on Friday, December 30 from noon to 4 p.m. featuring Sankofa Dance Theater, Community Artist Sallah, African Marketplace, Storytelling, Crafts and more.*

## Musicians help raise money for youth program:

# Youth Writers Rock launches at Pratt Library

By Andrea Blackstone

The Youth Writers Challenge, Inc. (YWC), a community-based organization, will launch The Youth Writers Rock, a free, six-month writing program for students ages 10 -17, beginning on Saturday, January 7, 2017 at Enoch Pratt Library's Waverly Branch.

Founded by Patricia Johnson-Harris, Youth Writer's Rock is a new writing program, which focuses on challenging students to speak what is on their minds and to write about what is in their hearts. At the end of the program, a graduation ceremony will highlight the accomplishments of having stories published in two books.

"What I want them to get out of this program is, if they are going through anything, [they are] able to release that through writing, through something positive. The program also gives them another opportunity to learn something different, that they may or may not want to pursue," Johnson-Harris said.

Johnson-Harris anticipates that The Youth Writers Rock program will have therapeutic value, give confidence to students, and provide encouragement for students to pursue goals that they have in life.

"At least they can say they know a little bit about writing, and they know illustration, they know editing, and they've written a book. And I think I want them to have something that they can carry with them for the rest of their lives. So once they publish the book, no matter where they go in life and what they do, they can always say, 'I am an author.'"



Patricia Johnson-Harris (right) with musicians and entertainers holding the check for funds raised from the Winter Jazz & Soul Experience held on December 11, 2016 at Magooby's Joke House & Sound Stage in Timonium, Maryland to benefit the Youth Writer's Rock program, a free, six-month writing program for students ages 10 -17, beginning on Saturday, January 7, 2017 at Enoch Pratt Library's Waverly Branch. Courtesy Photo

The Youth Writers Rock Program will meet at Enoch Pratt Library's Waverly Branch every Saturday through June 17, 2017. One high school and one middle school slot are still available.

To fund her commitment to creating a platform for young people to hone their skills as writers and to share their stories in a published work, Johnson-Harris and her husband, Roger Harris, hosted the Winter Jazz & Soul Experience, a fundraising event for the new writing program. Held on December 11, 2016

at Magooby's Joke House & Sound Stage in Timonium, the event featured the Fahrenheit band and other musicians and vocalists from around the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia metropolitan area.

"I have witnessed Pat and Roger Harris's commitment to the community, youth and various organizations throughout the years, and I am humbled every time I get the opportunity and privilege to be a part of such a positive, uplifting experience," said saxophonist Isaac Parham.

Johnson-Harris was able to achieve the organization's goal to raise \$2,500 with additional help from Baltimore-based Mano Swartz Furs. The company also

donated mink ear-muffs for a raffle.

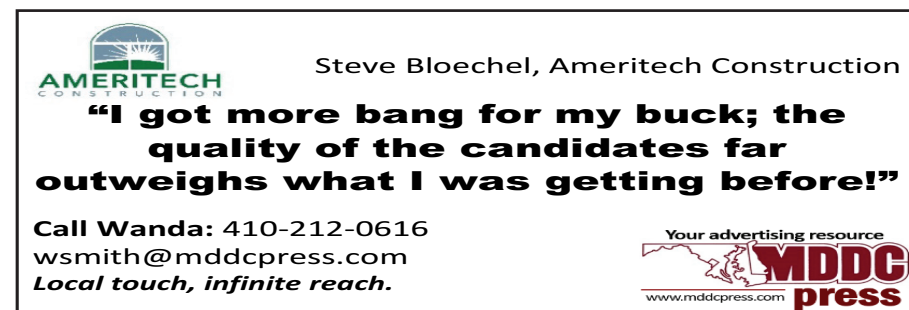
"There are so many nonprofit organizations in Maryland but the Youth Writers Rock program is a one-of-a-kind initiative, Harris said. "We are already planning and looking forward to next year's benefit concert."

Johnson-Harris leader is still seeking volunteers who could offer fundraising assistance and hands-on support on Saturdays when the program is held.

Parents of youth who are interested in writing, email: [pjohnson@youthwriterschallenge.org](mailto:pjohnson@youthwriterschallenge.org) for more information and registration. To learn more about the Youth Writers Rock Program, visit: [www.youthwriterschallenge.org](http://www.youthwriterschallenge.org).



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## Alzheimer's Research Continues:

# Generation Study Now Recruiting Volunteers

By Stacy M. Brown

Officials at the Alzheimer's Prevention Initiative say they have made great strides in the fight to find a treatment to delay symptoms of Alzheimer's or to prevent the disease altogether. The organization is working with researchers at Georgetown University in Washington to recruit participants for a research study in cities across the country.

"To date, we have screened two and enrolled zero participants at Georgetown University Medical Center. Our goal is to enroll at least 10 participants at our site," said Dr. R. Scott Turner, Ph.D., director of the Memory Disorders Program at Georgetown University Medical Center in Northwest, Washington, D.C. "For the nationwide study, we estimate that we will need to screen approximately 100,000 people to obtain the approximately 1,300 cognitively healthy older adults, who carry two copies of the e4 type of the APOE gene and are eligible for the Generation Study."

APOE is a gene that makes apolipoprotein E. There are three different types of the APOE gene called alleles – e2, e3, and e4 and everyone has two copies. The combination of the three determines an individual's APOE genotype.

The Generation Study seeks to recruit participants between the ages of 60-75, with no cognitive impairments, but who are likely to develop the more common form of late-onset Alzheimer's based on genetic risk.

This study will be the first to incorporate genetic testing and counseling into



**Lead study Dr. R. Scott Turner, Ph.D. is the director of the Memory Disorders Program at Georgetown University Medical Center in Northwest, Washington, D.C. The Alzheimer's Prevention Initiative is working with researchers at Georgetown University in Washington to recruit participants for a research study in cities across the country.**

Courtesy Photo

the screening process.

The API Generation Study serves as a complement to the research being conducted in Colombia that was highlighted on 60 Minutes earlier this month.

The Colombia study, which serves as a complement to research being conducted in Colombia is being conducted among a large Colombian family that has a rare genetic mutation which makes them certain to develop Alzheimer's by their mid-forties.

The study consists of two parts. Part I includes assessments of memory, think-

ing, and mood, along with meeting with a healthcare professional to learn your APOE gene test results. All participants who learn their APOE results will be followed for one year. Individuals who learn that they have two copies of the e4 type of APOE may be eligible for Part II of the study, examining whether anti-

amyloid medications— compared to placebo— prevent the onset of memory and thinking problems associated with Alzheimer's disease.

Participants in Part 2 of the trial will be followed for five to eight years and will be asked to visit the study site every few months.

The Generation Study is largely being recruited through the Alzheimer's Prevention Registry's GeneMatch program which connects Alzheimer's prevention studies with eligible volunteers, based in part on their genetic status.

Through GeneMatch, interested individuals submit a genetic sample to be analyzed.

Turner and fellow testers are hopeful that by targeting changes in the brain before symptoms of Alzheimer's disease appear, they can make significant progress towards staving off or preventing the disease.

"Prevention," said Turner. "Will likely be, easier than cure."

Visit [www.endALZnow.org/GeneMatch](http://www.endALZnow.org/GeneMatch) or [www.generationstudy.com](http://www.generationstudy.com) for more information about GeneMatch and the Generation Study. Interested individuals in the Baltimore/Washington metropolitan area may also contact the George Washington University Medical Center Memory Disorders Program at 202-784-6671.

### Baltimore Community ToolBank Needs Volunteers

The Baltimore Community ToolBank stewards an inventory of hand, power and gardening tools for lending at nominal charges to charitable organizations to increase the impact of their mission-related efforts in the community. Volunteers are needed (individually or in groups) to help with a variety of tasks relating to warehouse and tool organization and maintenance; these include tool assembly, repair and maintenance, and inventory and warehouse management and tool lending program support. For more information, email: [ToolBank@baltimore.volunteer@toolbank.org](mailto:ToolBank@baltimore.volunteer@toolbank.org) or call 410-244.5565. For more information or to complete and application, visit: [www.baltimore.toolbank.org/under "Get Involved."](http://www.baltimore.toolbank.org/under%20%22Get%20Involved%22)

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