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Annapolis unifies in celebration of MLK Day, educator honored



The third Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Parade was held in Annapolis on Jan. 16, 2017. Priscilla Montague is the parade's founder and this year's co-chair. Mayor Michael Pantelides participated in the parade, which was hosted by the City of Annapolis. The event was created under his administration. In addition to a lineup of local officials, businesses, various organizations, and bands such as Kirby Lane and Remnant, which performed, individuals of all ages participated in this year's celebration of love and unity. Helen Chambers—a well-respected leader and retired educator—served as the 3rd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Parade's grand marshal. (Above): Phyllis Tee Adams holds the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. banner. (See article on page 15) Photo: Andrea Blackstone

Commitment to peace!

By Tiffany C. Ginyard

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a man of impeccable word. He preached what he believed and lived like he believed every word he said.

Long before that fateful day, April 4, 1968, when he was killed on a balcony at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, King committed his life to demonstrating to the masses that peace was possible.

Dr. King was a man who spent countless nights alone in jail paying for the injustices he fought against, all the while praying for his people and writing letters of encouragement to the entire nation.

Here was a man who, when his home was bombed [with his family inside] by segregationists in retaliation for the success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, used

accept that black lives matter, that all lives matter, that your life matters.

It's not head knowledge the world needs right now; there's enough intellect aimlessly floating around, about how to increase the peace. What the world really needs is more heart knowledge. What Dr. King did was cast a light on the possibility of peace with words of wisdom from his heart. He once said, "forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude." The same is true for peace. It is a way of being—a lifestyle.

We are so quick to demand it, but are we even qualified to do so? Are we demanding peace in your own homes. With the people we come in contact with from day to day,

"Before we can stand for peace in our social and worldly affairs, we must first stand for peace right where we are—in our own minds and in our own hearts. The protesting and marching we do to change the public's perception about black folk and poor folk should be mirror images of how we we treat each other and ourselves when no one is looking."

his voice to calm a crowd of black folk who gathered on his lawn angry, armed, and ready to fight back.

This was a man who took a stab to his flesh, just inches away from his heart, and turned the other cheek.

Dr. King was a man who knew that peace, true peace, comes from within. He also knew that peace was what he had on the inside. Knowing this, he marched with courage, lived boldly and spoke with conviction:

"Within the best of us, there is some evil, and within the worst of us, there is some good. When we come to see this, we take a different attitude toward individuals. The person who hates you most has some good in him; even the nation that hates you most has some good in it; even the race that hates you most has some good in it. And when you come to the point that you look in the face of every man and see deep down within him what religion calls "the image of God," you begin to love him..." — Excerpt from the sermon *Loving Your Enemies*, delivered at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, AL on November 17, 1957

King had tapped into a realm of peace that many of us have trouble wrapping our minds and hearts around. Something spiritual. Something that can't be won by waging war or inciting a movement. Something that can't be achieved by marching and "acting" peacefully. Something that can't be attained by forcing our opinions and judgments on others about what is right, wrong, good or bad in the name of one god or another. There is nothing peaceful about living an exhausting existence fighting to make the world understand and

especially the ones who share the same skin as us— like, the young lady at McDonald's who was unpleasant and messed up your order; the person that cut you off on the road; the young man walking in front of you literally showing his behind because he bought his pants two sizes too large; the person who stole your purse; or robbed your house; or shot your son.

Part of the problem is we think we can strategize our way to peace, force it even without taking a look into our own souls and actually living that which we seek. Are we forgiving the father or mother we think abandoned us? Are we communicating respectfully with people we don't understand? Are we letting go of past hurts? Are we removing judgement from our perception of people and why they behave the way they do? Are we peaceful with our neighbors? Do we speak peace into the lives of every person we encounter everyday, or are we still gossiping calling it "tea" to make it socially acceptable?

Peace is more than a word; it's a commitment. A commitment to good all the time.

Before we can stand for peace in our social and worldly affairs, we must first stand for peace right where we are—in our own minds and in our own hearts. The protesting and



marching we do to change the public's perception about black folk and poor folk should be mirror images of how we we treat each other and ourselves when no one is looking.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a man who had a dream that one day the collective consciousness of peace among the people would rise up and cast light on the chaos caused by what he called the "the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism."

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a man who embodied the peace he wanted to see in the world. Do you?

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MLK's legacy for black America in 2017

By Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. President/CEO, NNPA

As the United States of America and the global community salutes, recognizes and commemorates the 88th birthday of The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., it is a providential time to reassess the meaning and challenges of Dr. King's legacy for black America in this year of profound change, anxiety and hope.

As we witness the transfer of presidential power from President Barack H. Obama to President Donald J. Trump, it is quite appropriate to apply some the long-lasting and enduring tenets of Martin Luther King's leadership, teachings, and perspectives. Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) prophetically stood strong for freedom, justice, and equality for Black Americans and for all people who cried out for a better quality of life throughout the world.

Dr. King was more than one of the greatest orators and preachers of the 20th century. He was one of the most effective intellectual theologians whose moral genius and courage helped irreversibly to change the course of American history for civil and human rights. No man or woman is perfect. Yet Dr. King's leadership inspired and motivated millions of black Americans and others to strive toward the perfection equal justice for all through nonviolent social change and transformation.

As a young teenage staff worker for SCLC in North Carolina in the early 1960s, I witnessed firsthand how Martin Luther King, Jr. would stir the consciousness of the masses. We overcame the fear of standing up for righteousness in the presence of evil powers and unjust systems of oppression and suppression.

Legacy is about establishing in one's life and work, that which will endure and last for generations to come. Dr. King's life and work exemplified intellectual honesty, activism and courage. At a time when the misguided phenomena of so-called "fake news" is gaining momentum in the body politic of the nation, we all should be reminded that Dr. King would always cautioned that only "The truth will set us free."

For this reason we are determined to maintain and to sustain the viability of the Black Press of America as the truthful, accurate and trusted voice of black America. This year marks the 190th year of the Black Press in the United States. During the height of the Civil Rights Movement led by Dr. King and other leaders, the mainstream press would often attempt to undermine the legitimacy and purpose of the movement for change but the Black Press always chronicled the news of freedom movement with strategic visibility and editorial support.

In Dr. King's last address in Memphis, Tennessee on the night before his assassination on April 4, 1968, he made statements that still apply and endure today in 2017. He emphasized that when society appears polarized and deeply divided, we must strive to overcome divisiveness and hopelessness.

Thus, what may appear to some to be a "dark" hour is in fact a God-given time to reassert that justice and freedom are still possible and very probable if we unify, organize, mobilize and speak truth to power. We cannot afford to engage in the cynicism that is now popular.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s living legacy beacons us to not give in to hopelessness and self-defeatism. We have had difficult times before and each generation is called to stand up with the principles, values and commitments that we have inherited from so many of our sisters and brothers who sacrificed for us to be where we are today.

While race is still a defining factor in American society, we must not allow racial discrimination or racism in any form to divide us or to prevent us from moving forward as families and communities steadfast in our unified actions to improve our quality of life. Black America will overcome. We have come too far to stand still or go backwards.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and can be reached at dr.bchavis@nnpa.org.



"My first proclamation is to declare every day
'Take Your Children To Work Day'"

Community Affairs

Governor's Office of Community Initiatives delivers books, school supplies to schools, after-school programs, recreational centers, churches across Maryland

Annapolis— The Governor's Office of Community Initiatives has delivered more than 25,000 books and school supplies to nearly 50 schools, after-school programs, recreational centers and churches in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Caroline, Charles, Kent, Prince George's, and Talbot counties.

"Reading is one of the fundamental building blocks for education and imagination, and helps put our children on a path for lifelong success," said Governor Larry Hogan. "I want all children in Maryland to be excited about reading and have access to books, regardless of their family's circumstances."

The Governor's Office of Community Initiatives has coordinated with B.I.G., or Books for International Good Will

(Rotary Club Parole Annapolis), Goodwill Greater Washington (Prince George's County), and Velocity of Books to provide access to books for children across the state.

love of reading."

In 2017, books will be distributed to schools in Allegany, Cecil, Garrett, St. Mary's, and Washington counties, and to the Salisbury Board of Education for distribution on the lower Eastern Shore. Velocity of Books will assist in transporting books by tractor-trailer to Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore.

For the second year, the Governor's Office for Children is partnering with the Family League of Baltimore City to ensure that every child in Baltimore City aged five and under will be eligible to enroll free of charge in the "Governor's Young Readers" program, established in January 2016 and inspired by Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, the Tennessee-based nonprofit organization that mails a specifically selected, age-appropriate book each month to the homes of participating children. Every month, each enrolled child in Baltimore City receives a new book specially chosen by professionals in education, child development and early childhood literacy.

Americans, not Moscow, are sending Trump to the White House

*By Armstrong Williams (NNPA
Newswire Columnist)*

Let's distinguish fact from fiction and separate out whining from winning. Vladimir Putin did not elect Donald Trump to serve as the next president of the United States. The American public did.

Like it or not, Mr. Trump is our official President-elect, and it's past time for brokenhearted Clinton voters to accept this reality and help our country move forward.

The fixation of some people to desperately look for a Russian scapegoat to blame for Donald Trump's presidential election victory is further deepening already hyper-polarized political divides, a painful wedge that chips away at U.S. solidarity and undercuts the notion of a "United States" of America.

On Friday, January 20th, Donald Trump will take the presidential oath of office as a result of a strategic, successful and laser-focused plan that targeted the states Trump needed to win the electoral vote.

Americans who preferred other presi-

dential candidates to Trump should accept the official outcome of the election results, and stop woefully harping on Hillary Clinton's win of the popular vote. It's not how our system works, and not a good look for Democrats.

Instead of dwelling and laying blame on others, Americans must not lose sight of the bigger picture: our country cast its votes on election day, those votes were tallied, Donald Trump won and is going

to be serving as the next President of the United States of America. To be clear, there is zero evidence incriminating the Russians in hacking American voting machines and thereby swaying the election. There is no proof to show that a single actual votes cast by an American was tampered with or impacted by the Russians.

What matters is the mathematical bot-

tom line. Clinton lost the critical votes in the key states necessary to win the election. Game over.

Most recently, irresponsible media outlets have begun leaking unverified stories alleging that the Russians are armed with compromising information related to personal information on Trump, as well as some financial matters. Trump has forcefully denied these allegations, classifying these false claims as part of a witch-hunt targeting him. Despite numerous and significant questions surrounding the lack of substantial evidence implicating Russia, President Obama did not hesitate to sanction two Russian intelligence services and expelling 35 Russian officials in the U.S. last month, based on allegations that Russia launched cyber attacks against the United States. Yet, last year, President Obama chose to lift biting economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism with a clear track record and proof of lying, cheating and aggressively pursuing its dangerous anti-Western goals of nuclear terrorism. On his way out the door, President Obama is leaving a shameful foreign policy legacy behind.

As Trump prepares to enter the White House, and with the press corps continuing to try to read into the intentions of the Russian government at the highest levels, we are left with one indisputable fact: Americans, and not Russia, elected Donald J. Trump to be the next president of the United States of America.

Armstrong Williams is the manager and sole owner of Howard Stirk Holdings I & II Broadcast Television Stations and executive editor of American CurrentSee online Magazine. Follow Armstrong Williams on Twitter @arightside.

***“Instead of dwelling and laying blame on others,
Americans must not lose sight of the bigger picture:
our country cast its votes on election day,
those votes were tallied, Donald Trump won
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President of the United States of America.”***

Whether Russian hackers were behind the robbery and publication of DNC emails or not, commentary and speculation about Russian influence is simply that: commentary and speculation. Vladimir Putin did not cast a single vote in the American election, and not one of our intelligence agencies has made the audacious claim that Russians actually impacted the vote count.

According to an assessment publicly released by the U.S. intelligence com-

munity on January 6th, “Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump.” So what? Every country has preferences based upon policy positions and personalities of other nations' leaders. Again, that does not provide even the most remote basis upon which to claim that Moscow impacted the number of American votes cast in favor of Donald Trump.

Clearly, the haughty prognosticators who were dead wrong with their predictions are still reeling from their colossal failure to accurately forecast the election results.

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Baltimore County Native Leads UMMS' Population Health Efforts

By Ursula V. Battle

Stacy Garrett-Ray set her sights on becoming a doctor in the first grade. Growing up, her parents always told her that she could do and be anything.

Today, Dr. Garrett-Ray serves as the vice president and medical director of the University of Maryland Medical System's Population Health Services Organization (PHSO). She is the first person to hold this newly created position in which she hopes to reduce health-care costs and also shift away from volume to quality-based care.

"I want to make Maryland healthier, and drive change in a way that ensures patients are satisfied, and to help them achieve their life goals," said Garrett-Ray, who also serves as president of the University of Maryland Quality Care Network (UMQCN).

In addition to her duties as a primary care physician, her responsibilities include serving as the clinical lead for practice transformation, engaging with clinical providers to improve the quality and efficiency of care, leading the population health interdisciplinary care team and supporting care management efforts. In addition to her administrative duties, Dr. Garrett-Ray will her practice as a primary care physician in one of the system's Community Medical Group sites.

"I get excited every morning," said Dr. Garrett-Ray. "To be able to get up each day and serve in this role is really humbling. I was born and raised in Baltimore County, so for me, it was like coming back home. To return home where I trained, where my family lives, and serve in a position in which I can drive changes that make us all healthier is truly a blessing."

"We are delighted to have Dr. Garrett-Ray rejoin the University of Maryland community," Robert A. Chrencik, president and CEO of the UMMS. "Further developing our population health model



Baltimore County native Dr. Stacy Garrett-Ray serves as president of the University of Maryland Quality Care Network and vice president and medical director of the University of Maryland Medical System's Population Health Services Organization.
Courtesy Photo

is a pivotal piece of our strategy to ensure that all patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time."

The University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) currently includes 12 health systems and hospitals across Maryland, which include the University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center; University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center; University of Maryland Medical Center; and the University of Maryland Shore Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Chestertown.

UMMS also operates Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital as a joint venture with Johns Hopkins and also operates University of Maryland Medical System Health Plans for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

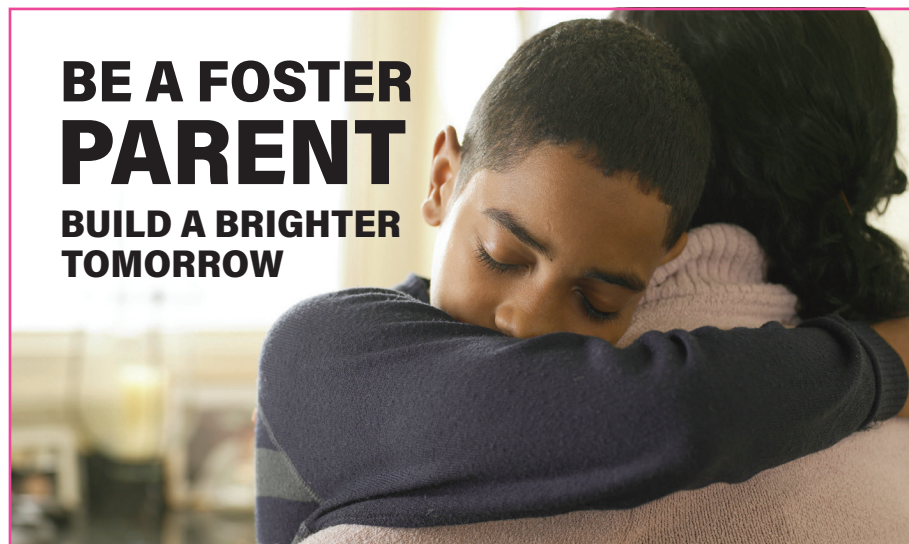
Dr. Garrett-Ray received her medical degree from the University of Maryland

School of Medicine, completed her residency in the UM Department of Family and Community Medicine and served on the faculty at the School of Medicine from 2003 to 2012. Board-licensed in Family Medicine, Dr. Garrett-Ray spent more than five years as a physician at the University Care – Edmondson Village practice in Baltimore City.

For the past six years, Dr. Garrett-Ray has held a number of leadership positions at the Veterans Health Administration developing and implementing new clinical programs.

"I attended amazing schools, and had amazing people around me. I told them what my passions were, and they supported me," said Garrett-Ray. For me, this job is a combination of all my passions, which is marking a difference in my community and helping people to live longer, healthier lives. Ultimately, this impacts the earth, and I am truly grateful to be in a place that allows me to make such a positive difference."

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Rho Xi Omega Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. MLK Day of Service

By Brenda Bowe Johnson

Lovely Lane United Methodist Church was a bustling scene of service this week as members of Rho Xi Omega Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and young members of the Baltimore County Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., filled 400 backpacks with nutritious food and snacks to be distributed to homeless children in Baltimore City schools.

Keeping with the national theme of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority "Launching New Dimensions of Service," the local chapter focused its service efforts on family strengthening, educational enrichment and fiscal responsibility.

"Currently there are 3700 homeless children in Baltimore," said Chrisian Wilson. "There is a tremendous need for services. If organizations, churches, and others get together to provide this service, we could possibly eliminate the problem."

The Rho Xi Omega Chapter joined Christian and his wife Pamela who have operated Hearts Place Services, a ministry at Lovely Lane, for six years. Each

weekend during the school year, they oversee the distribution of food bags to homeless children for the weekend. The children pick up food each Friday before leaving school. The bags were stuffed with cartons of milk, cereal, bread, peanut butter, jelly, granola bars and snacks.

Also during the day, members of Rho Xi Omega continued to serve the community by focusing on "Fiscal Responsibility" at the Guardenzia long-term treatment facility, Women with Children Unit. This service event included three separate components: Building a library for the children who reside in the center. The organization set up the library with donated books and magazines for children of all ages; members provided the mothers with financial literacy information; and providing the mothers with materials and helping them to build their own dream boards.

Although this day of service was a way of honoring Dr. King, the services of Rho Xi Omega will continue with the collection of seasonal wraps, hats, gloves and



Members of the Rho Xi Omega Chapter fill bags with cartons of milk, cereal, bread, peanut butter, jelly, granola bars and snacks, which are distributed to homeless children in Baltimore City schools as part of the day of service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Courtesy Photo*

scarves for children and adults.

The activity chairmen for this event were Au'Sha Washington, vice-president program; Corene Myers, Childhood Hunger Initiative; Judith Britton, Million

Backpacks Committee; Karen Heywood-West, president, Baltimore County Chapter, Jack and Jill. The President of Rho Xi Omega is Dr. Scheherazade Forman.

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New academic programs give students head start in college

By Ruth Young Tyler

For Woodlawn High School students Morgan Tate and Tatyana Brown, their academic future looks promising thanks to a global, nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the achievement gap, high school students have a greater opportunity to attend college and experience new opportunities.

AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program was founded more than three decades ago with one teacher in one classroom. Today, the program has favorably impacted over 1.2 million students in 44 states and 16 countries/territories.

The AVID program is dedicated to implementing research-based strategies and curriculum to educational institutions. Annually, the programs provides more than 30,000 educators with training and methodologies that develop students' critical thinking, literacy and math skills.

Working in conjunction with AVID, the Early College Program (ECP) is a magnet program offered to Baltimore County Public School students entering 9th grade during the 2017-2018 school year.

Endorsed by Baltimore County Public Schools Superintendent S. Dallas Dance, ECP is a partnership with the Community College of Baltimore County. ECP allows students to participate in high school and college courses, simultaneously. Students have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma, an associate's degree or up to 60 credits towards a Bachelor's degree, tuition free.

The Early College Program (ECP) begins its first cohort Fall 2017 at Woodlawn High School and is the first of its kind across the country, according to Principal Georgina Aye.



Preparing for college is a gradual process for Woodlawn High School senior Tatyana Brown (left) and sophomore Morgan Tate (right) while participating in the school's Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program.

Courtesy Photo

Woodlawn High School has 220 students enrolled in the AVID program, and plans to welcome 125 new freshmen into the early college program in the 2017-2018 school year.

To date, over 1,000 students have successfully completed the AVID college program at Woodlawn High. Statistics indicate that 80 percent of those students have pursued their education at four-year schools and other programs.

Sophomore Morgan Tate and AVID student president Tatyana Brown both agreed that the AVID program has created a "family-like environment" for them.

"There is no doubt in my mind that I will be college ready when I graduate from Woodlawn High School," said Brown, Class of 2017.

Brown said the AVID strategies she learned has helped her with organizational skills and academic success.

According to the Early College High School Initiative Impact Study, 86 percent of the students who participated in

[a similar] program graduated from high school compared to 81 percent of other students. The study also revealed that two years past high school, 25 percent of the students had earned a college degree compared to only five percent of other students.

Tasked with empowering students to become college ready, Stephanie Little, the AVID coordinator at Woodlawn High School says some of the students never knew college was an option for them. Little also says the program allows the students to have greater opportunities for academic success.

"I believe programs like AVID and the Early College Program create gateways to success," said Principal Aye. "Our students need exposure to this vast world of opportunities and options."

Many of the students attending Woodlawn High School will be the first generation to attend college.

"This is exciting because it creates a cultural, instructional and climactic shift," said Aye.

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Do as I say, not as I do. Really?

By Danielle Lindner

We've all heard that old familiar phrase from our parents, "Do as I say, and not as I do." We may have even used it a few times with our own children. If you think about what we are saying to our children, what message are we really giving them?

Basically, we are saying do not learn by my example. Don't hold me to a high standard of behavior. It doesn't matter how I treat others as long as you follow my directive. I don't really care about how I am perceived as long as you just listen to my rules of conduct.

We are telling our children that although we might not treat others with respect and kindness, they should. We are telling our children that although we act like a bully or go on a tirade when things don't go our way, they should not. We are telling our children that although we are really angry and nasty when we lose a game, they need to be good sports



Our children cannot be expected to be considerate and caring of others, if they don't have an example of someone to emulate. Children are smart. If mom or dad don't act kindly towards someone, they don't feel the need to either.

Photo Credit: Metro Grapics

and be a team player. We are telling our children that good behavior is not

important enough for us to exhibit it, just something they should do because we say so.

I often tell my two girls, when you start dating (after 40 hopefully!) it's important for you to be with someone who is respectful to everyone. When you go out to a restaurant, see how they treat the staff. If they are rude, dismissive or unkind to a waiter or waitress, they will one day be unkind to you. Showing disrespect, especially towards someone who is trying to help them, is more than telling. A person who does these things is likely someone who feels superior to others, someone who most likely was a schoolyard bully at one point in their life, and will remain that way unless something dramatic happens to change them otherwise.

What do we do now as parents who want our children to grow up to be kind, caring, and empathetic individuals? We start by being one.

We can't expect our children to be considerate and caring of others, if they don't have an example of someone to emulate. Children are smart. If mom or dad doesn't act kindly towards someone,

they don't feel the need to either. In fact, when children see a parent acting like a bully, they may in fact want to show dad or mom that they too can be nasty and forceful. Children love the approval of their parents. They may feel that their father or mother will be proud of them if they emulate their parents' behaviors.

While there are some exceptions, such as a child having a medical reason for struggling with empathetic behaviors, when children see their parents being a team player, being kind to others, showing empathy and embracing the diversities of others, they too will want to please their parents by acting in much the same way. And if you find your child taunting another child or being mean to someone else, address it immediately! If you child is very young, use puppets or dolls to roll play situations. Ask your child how they think the other child, who is being taunted, feels. Ask them how they would feel if someone was being hurtful to them.

If a child is older, sit down with them and let them know that you are not proud of their behavior. Tell them that you won't tolerate it and will impose consequences if that behavior continues. The consequences should be something meaningful. For example, have them volunteer at a local charity for a few hours. Have them come up with their own community project to spearhead. Let them work with you to clean out closets and donate unneeded items to a group they feel excited about. Show them that you care about others and care about how other people are treated. And finally, catch your children being good. When they are acting nicely, when they are doing something kind, let them know how great that makes you feel and how proud you are of them.

Danielle Lindner is an author, educator and founder of The London Day School. She is the creator of Miss Danielle's Preschoolbuds® Books and TV Series which can be seen on Amazon.com and on her YouTube Channel.

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Port Discovery hosts 'I Have A Dream Weekend'

By Deborah Bailey

Families flocked to Port Discovery last weekend in search of a meaningful way to honor the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Many were pleasantly surprised to walk into an array of planned activities sponsored by the children's museum to help young patrons better understand the history and culture of the times.

Tracey and Clyde Walker from Baltimore County came looking for MLK activities to engage their children Eywa, 2, and Zariah, 4.

"[We] came out to celebrate MLK Day and bring the children out to something child-friendly," said Tracey Walker. "I was actually grateful that they had something going on. I was shocked, actually, to see that they had a list of activities all day and to open the museum on Monday when they are usually closed really stood out to us."

Children of all ages--from Upton to as far away as Pennsylvania --walked and skipped through the halls of Port Discovery from Saturday, Jan. 14 through the official King Day celebration on Jan. 16.

"I liked making something," Walker's young daughter Zariah beamed as she completed her quilting square with the help of volunteers from the African American Quilters of Baltimore, one of the many partners that helped Port Discovery Staff re-created the life and times of Dr. King.

"When we have special events like, [the] 'I have a Dream Weekend,' we engage community partners to come in and teach children things that they might not have been able to engage in otherwise. These are great opportunities to learn from different partners that are here in the community," said Sarah Zimmerman, Port Discovery Outreach and Education staff.

The African American Quilters of Baltimore and the Museum of Negro Baseball Leagues Inc. are two long-time community partners that have participated in Port Discovery's MLK activities for at least a decade.

"We've been doing this union between the museum and our organization for 10 years. A lot of the children come back each year," said Paula, longtime member of the African American Quilters organization. The theme for this year's quilt project was "Our Beloved Community." "We try to encourage the children to look at things in their community that are positive, inspirational and fun and put that on their quilt," Paula said.

The weekend's events also featured children from Northwood Elementary School posing as living historical figures in a project titled Living Museum of African-American History and arts and crafts workshops for children who wanted to create a birthday card for Dr. King.

"I've heard so many of the children say, 'It's about celebrating somebody who did so much,'" said Lisa



Tracey and Clyde Walker from Baltimore County with their children Eywa, age two and Zariah, age four, making quilting squares at Port Discovery during MLK Holiday Weekend Celebrations.



Ray Banks Exhibits manager of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum of Maryland has hosted exhibit at Port Discovery's MLK Celebration for ten years.



Casey and Lilyrose Emeogo join Zoey and Kyle Zylestra, and Ethan and Gavin Wang in creating birthday cards for Dr. Martin Luther King at Port Discovery's MLK celebration. Photos: Deborah Bailey

Swayhoover, outreach education associate for Port Discovery, in describing the range of sentiments children expressed while creating their MLK cards—the one exhibition that brought children of all backgrounds to-

gether to write their reflections on Dr. King's life.

"It's very important to build that tolerance. I'm so happy that Port Discovery is making the effort to spend the time to celebrate [Dr. King] today and this weekend."

A Good P.L.A.S.E. to start off the New Year

Baltimore Co. official hosts fundraiser to fight homelessness

By Ursula V. Battle

January 1 marks the beginning of a New Year. However, for supporters of Dr. Gregory Wm. Branch's annual Project P.L.A.S.E. (People Lacking Ample Shelter and Employment) fundraiser, this day also brings a memorable time of great food, fun, and fellowship - all while supporting a worthwhile cause.

Dr. Branch serves as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for Project P.L.A.S.E. Inc., whose central office is located on Frederick Avenue in Baltimore. The organization addresses homelessness in Baltimore by providing transitional housing, permanent housing and supportive services to homeless adults. Their vision is to eliminate homelessness.

"2017 is my 15th year hosting this event," said Dr. Branch. "Homelessness, has very little to do with brick and mortar. Homelessness is actually 'relationshiplessness.' We are trying to help the most vulnerable people to not only get a home, but to rebuild their relationships."

He added, "My best friend, Anthony Allen, IV was an employee of Project P.L.A.C.E., and introduced me to the organization. This cause is near and dear to my heart."

The event drew an estimated 100 people, which included Baltimore County Councilman Julian E. Jones Jr., Pastor P.M. Smith of Huber Memorial Church on York Road in Baltimore, and Pastor Alex O. Stone and First Lady Irene Stone of Olivet Baptist Church on Edmonson Avenue in Baltimore. Heaven 600 AM on-air radio personality Dr. Shirley K. Russell and her daughter Shirlethea "LeLe" Holmes, and author Stella Adams also attended the event.

The expansive menu included fried chicken, oatmeal, shrimp, jambalaya, peas and rice, homemade biscuits, sausage, ham, collard greens cabbage, macaroni and cheese, and vegetable ziti. Musician David White also played the piano during the event, while Holmes sang along.

"The goal of this year's event was to raise as much money as possible for The Beacon House Square Project, which is a school building that was purchased on Frederick Road," said Dr. Branch. "The plan is to convert the building into housing for the homeless."

Beacon House Square's target population will be homeless men and women with either a history of mental illness, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, or other needs. The facility will house four men and 12 men in dormitory style living.

Project P.L.A.S.E. serves the most vulnerable and underserved, including persons with mental illness, HIV/AIDS, addiction, developmental disabilities, and



Dr. Gregory Wm. Branch and Jeff Mayzck during Dr. Branch's annual Project P.L.A.S.E. fundraiser.

Photos: Ursula V. Battle



First Lady Irene Stone and Pastor Alex O. Stone of Olivet Baptist Church are longtime supporters of the annual event.



Vashtied Brown and Shirlethea "LeLe" Holmes



First Lady Irene Stone and Pastor Alex O. Stone of Olivet Baptist Church are longtime supporters of the annual event.

ex-offenders and aims to empower each individual to function at the highest level possible.

The organization's philosophy is to stand with and serve marginalized and underprivileged individuals and families who lack access to resources in the larger community. Project P.L.A.S.E. offers emergency housing, and 24-hour supported supervision and case management for residents. The organization also provides residents with three meals daily, linens, bus tokens when available, assistance with medical appointments, and clothing as needed.

"Since I started hosting this fundraiser, we have been able to raise approximately \$50,000 for Project P.L.A.S.E.," said Dr. Branch, who also serves as Director of Health and Human Services for Baltimore County. "This event has become a tradition, and start's the New Year off in a positive way. I thank all of those who support this effort year after year, and have joined me in taking an active step in helping to eradicate homelessness."



Musician David White plays the piano as Carolyn Jenkins looks on.

Baltimore-based music video earns Grammy nomination

By Stacy M. Brown

A music video shot in Baltimore has earned a Grammy nomination for an up and coming R&B artist who has been compared to greats like Sam Cooke.

Leon Bridges' "River," which has been described by MTV and others as healing and hopeful, has been nominated for Best Video at the upcoming awards show which will be broadcast live by CBS on February 12, 2017.

"Getting the Grammy nomination was exciting and a bit unexpected as historically the category tends to favor more pop driven videos and videos with bigger budgets and productions like Beyoncé's 'Lemonade,'" Bridges said.

Competitors for the award just happen to include "Formation" by Beyoncé and "Up & Up," by Coldplay.

"The nomination was shocking too, because we're at the end of my album cycle and I was sleep when I got the text message, it was something I didn't expect," Bridges said.

The video for the song, which is on Bridges' album *Coming Home*, was set in Baltimore after the unrest following the death of Freddie Gray. It takes viewers to Sandtown-Winchester, Penn-North and other inner city Baltimore locations.

Bridges sits in a motel room playing a guitar as footage from the city's uprising plays on the television set. The video depicts a baptism, a man with a bloody shirt leaving a crime scene and a mother and son who have lost a loved one.

Bridges and video director Miles Jay say they wanted to capture the real and raw story.

"I wanted to showcase that through all of the injustice, there's real hope in the world and what better place to show that than in Baltimore," Bridges said. "We could have gone in many different directions with the video because, when I wrote the song four or five years ago, I wasn't thinking about Baltimore but the honest story of the black community in Baltimore struck me and Miles also knew some folks personally."

Jay discovered that Baltimore would serve as the perfect location for the video when he was researching a feature film project.



R&B artist Leon Bridges has been compared to greats like Sam Cooke. The music video for his song "Rivers," which was shot in Baltimore after the unrest following the death of Freddie Gray has been nominated for the Grammy Award for Best Video. The video takes viewers to Sandtown-Winchester, Penn-North and other inner city Baltimore locations. The upcoming awards show will be broadcast live by CBS on February 12, 2017.

Courtesy Photo

"Baltimore is a bit of a different world. I saw what was being portrayed in the media but then hung out with people, went to their homes and I wanted to tell stories of what happens to people after you see them on the media," Jay said. "So much of the video was, me trying to pull from the source of Leon's emotions and what he was trying to convey. And, besides, 'River' is one of my favorite songs of the year."

The lyrics for the song include: "In my darkness I remember/Mama's words reoccur to me/Surrender to the good lord/And he'll wipe your slate clean..."

A review by MTV noted that the video intensifies that feeling brilliantly by anchoring it to racial injustice and the resilient spirit of the Black Lives Matter Movement.

The video features glimpses into a candlelight vigil and speaks to the resiliency of the city's black communities, a Rolling Stone magazine review noted.

"The river has historically been used in gospel music as symbolism for change and redemption. My goal was to write a song about my personal spiritual experience," Bridges said. "It was written during a time of real depression in my life and I recall sitting in my garage trying to write a song which reflected this struggle. I felt stuck, working multiple jobs to support myself, and my mother. I had little hope and couldn't see a road out of my reality and the only thing I could cling to in the midst of all that was my

faith in God and my only path towards baptism was by way of the river. I want this video to be a message of light. I believe it has the power to change and heal those [who are] hurting."

As he prepares to attend the 59th annual Grammy Awards, Bridges continues to work on his follow up album and has one wish—to work with Miles more because he took such a tasteful approach to their project, which is definitely something he says he needed.



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SECU initiatives continue to support community

SECU continues Points for Pediatrics and the United Way, and adds Love Blanket Project to its community initiatives

Linthicum, Md.— As part of its commitment to take banking in a different direction through strong community support, SECU is expanding its partnership with the University of Maryland Medical Center.

For the fifth consecutive year, SECU, Maryland's largest credit union, will donate \$5 to Points for Pediatrics and the University of Maryland Children's Hospital for every point scored by the University of Maryland Men's Basketball Team during the Terps' 2016-17 regular season.

Last year, SECU donated \$11,760 to Points for Pediatrics as the Terps scored 2,352 points during the regular season. That donation brought SECU's four-year total to nearly \$45,000.

In addition, SECU donated \$5 to the Love Blanket Project for every "like" it received on its Facebook page last month. The Love Blanket Project part-



Forty-nine SECU employees and their family members and friends ran in the annual Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and raised almost \$4,000 in support of breast cancer research, education, screenings and treatment programs.

Courtesy Photo/SECU

ners with Deaf Initiatives to make and donate blankets made from unused t-shirts. These blankets are then donated to children and adults at local hospitals, such as the University of Maryland. By the end of the campaign, SECU donated \$1,135 to the Love Blanket Project.

SECU also recently raised nearly \$45,000 for last fall's United Way

campaign. SECU volunteers participated in United Way's Annual Fall Day of Action, tutoring kids at Reading Partners Baltimore, serving food to the homeless at Our Daily Bread and My Sister's Place Women's Shelter, and throwing a party for disadvantaged children at St. Vincent's and Villa Maria.

SECU was also involved in the Walk a

Mile Experience, an interactive activity in which participants assume the roles of family members living at or near the poverty level and are then challenged with making life decisions while overcoming a lack of resources and navigating a confusing support system. United Way offers this volunteer program to corporations, nonprofit partners, and members of the community as a tool to build awareness and understanding of the poverty-related issues facing our region.

Finally, 49 SECU employees and their family members and friends ran in the annual Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. The SECU team raised almost \$4,000 in support of breast cancer research, education, screenings, and treatment programs.

"It was a busy fall for SECU," says Carmen David Mirabile, Assistant Vice President of Marketing at SECU, "but it is our honor to be involved with so many programs that are doing so much to make a difference in the community in which we live and work."

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Housing Choice Voucher program ends, city housing ‘crisis’ continues

By Stacy M. Brown

Demand for the Housing Choice Voucher program assistance has outpaced supply of the federally funded vouchers, a dilemma that has led the Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership to close its waiting list for applications. The nonprofit will stop taking applications for the vouchers on March 31, 2017.

“We made the hard decision to close the waiting list so we could not create false expectations for families already on the list or those who will want to apply in the future,” Alison Bell, the Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership’s executive director, said in a statement.

The waiting list already has more than 10,000 families because of the limited availability of the vouchers.

Currently, the organization provides about 3,500 families with housing vouchers, paying rental assistance on their behalf. Last year, the program provided about 400 additional families with vouchers and it anticipates helping at least that many this year and in 2018, according to Bell.

“Unfortunately, there are people on our waiting list who may never receive a voucher and the opportunities available through our housing mobility program,” she said. “The federal government gave our program a limited number of vouchers, and although we would love to be able to provide assistance for many more families, we are only able to serve as many as the federal government funds.”

The organization will not consider reopening the voucher waiting list until at least 2020.

Formerly known as the Section 8 program, the Housing Choice Voucher program is federally funded and a locally administered initiative, which helps low-income families, people with disabilities and the elderly to afford



Baltimore residents have until March 31, 2017 to apply for a housing voucher. The federally funded program will close after that date until at least 2020.
Courtesy Photo/Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership

housing in the private market. The program provides a housing subsidy on a participant’s behalf to private market landlords to help pay a portion of the rent.

This is the first time the waiting list has ever been closed. Bell noted that placement on the waiting list doesn’t affect a family’s eligibility for any other affordable housing programs. Also, it is separate from the Baltimore Housing Mobility Program, which was created by the historic *Thompson v. HUD* housing desegregation class action lawsuit filed on behalf of 14,000 African-American public housing residents in Baltimore who sought to eradicate the legacy of nearly a century of government-spon-

sored racial segregation in the region that had left poor Black families locked in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.

A partial settlement was reached in 1996, and the program began serving families in 2003. A final settlement of the lawsuit was approved in November 2012 and set a limit of approximately 4,400 vouchers for the program.

Baltimore families seeking housing can still apply for homes in the city’s public housing complexes even as Bell cautioned that there is a lengthy waiting list there, as well.

New developments being planned will create additional affordable housing units.

“There is clearly an affordable housing crisis in Baltimore and the need far outpaces the availability of affordable, safe housing,” Bell said. “We urge the federal government to consider additional support for the housing voucher program to meet this urgent need both here in Baltimore and around the country.”

Interested families may still pick up an application at the BRHP’s office, which is located at 20 South Charles Street, Suite 801, in Baltimore from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Families may also download an application at www.brhp.org or call BRHP’s application line at 667-207-2102. Mailed applications must be postmarked on or before March 31, 2017.

“What we see out there is an affordable housing crisis, particularly in the rental market in cities big and small, and we don't have the resources necessary to fill that gap.” —Julian Castro

Annapolis unifies in celebration of MLK Day, educator honored

By Andrea Blackstone

The City of Annapolis and the Annapolis community continued their collaboration to commemorate the life and work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the 3rd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Parade and live concert on Jan. 16. Enthusiastic parade goers of all ages lined West Street toward the City Dock area as the United States Naval Academy Marching Band, the Annapolis Police and Fire Honor Guard kicked off the lively celebration.

Helen Chambers, a well-respected leader and retired educator, was included in the lineup. Riding in a Corvette, she proceeded down Main Street with a smile. Chambers, the parade's grand marshal, worked in the education field for 62 years. While seated near a stage on Main Street, where local bands performed a post-parade concert, Chambers later explained that she saw numerous people whom she had not seen for a long time. She heard many voices call her name on the mild January afternoon.

"It was an unusual experience, because I have been to parades and watched them in other places, but never have I been involved so that I could see people who were watching the parade, and the enthusiasm of the people, and the appreciation of the people... People wouldn't believe it," Chambers said. "I felt awesome just being a part of it, and I was so glad to have been selected."

Chambers founded the head start in Anne Arundel County in 1965. Additionally, she served as the Anne Arundel Community Action Agency's first director, and later formed the Little VIP Day Care Center in Parole. Many young people who began their educational journey under her guidance are now graduates of top tier colleges.

Barrett Chambers helped to carry the grand marshal banner for his grandmother, Helen Chambers.

"It's an honor because they're not only honoring my grandmother, but the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.," Barrett Chambers said.

Chambers, set the tone for commemorating the life and work of King. The parade, which was organized by civilians



Terrell Freeman, left, leads a libation ceremony. Darius A. Stanton, right, serves as the new Chair of the Annapolis Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade Committee. Stanton wants to continue bringing the community together in peace, love, and unity.

Photos: Andrea Blackstone



appeared to renew the spirit of collaboration, togetherness, community morale, and legacy in Annapolis. Priscilla Montague, the parade's creator, served as this year's co-chair.

Darius A. Stanton is the new chair of the Annapolis Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade committee. He will serve as the event chair until 2019, when he plans to pass the baton to an incoming replacement.

"It is so important for us to create a pipeline of leadership in our community, and there is plenty of talent. They just need the chance to lead. Look at what King did before [he turned] 40?"

Stanton mentioned the value of bringing the community together, after a record year of violence in the city of Annapolis, and a presidential campaign which has divided America. Stanton fur-

ther explained that Annapolis had its first homicide in the city in the early morning of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. In spite of this, Stanton feels that the celebration of love continued. He said that it opened up hearts.

"We pray that our love will continue to prevail over all violence and negativity on every level in the world," Stanton also said.

Mayor Michael Pantelides participated in the parade, which was hosted by the City of Annapolis. The event was created under his administration. In addition to a lineup of local officials and businesses, various organizations and individuals participated in this year's celebration. Terrell Freeman drummed and also led a libation ceremony, while saluting the Creator and an-



cestors, as their names were called. Like Stanton and Freeman, other Annapolitans volunteered to pay homage to King's dream of equality, while celebrating the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood, upholding unity, and recognizing exemplary leadership.

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TMCF launches new center with gift from Charles Koch Foundation, Koch Industries

Center for Advancing Opportunity will support HBCU researchers and work with Gallup to understand, and inform pressing issues in fragile communities

Washington, D.C.— Recently, the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) launched a new center committed to expanding educational, social and economic opportunities in fragile communities through original research and direct engagement with residents.

The Center for Advancing Opportunity, supported by a \$25.6 million gift from the Charles Koch Foundation and Koch Industries, will provide undergraduate scholarships, graduate fellowships, and grants to faculty working to establish university-based research centers on education, criminal justice, entrepreneurship, and other issues impacting opportunity in fragile communities. The Center will also partner with Gallup to capture the sentiments of individuals living in these communities.

"This is a momentous partnership. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are uniquely positioned to lead the field in this research," said Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., president and CEO of TMCF. "There are thousands of fragile communities across the United States where there are tremendous barriers to opportunity. And it's important to recognize that lasting change to strengthen these communities must begin at the local level. We are proud to come together with the Charles Koch Foundation and Koch Industries to help members of these communities identify and study the challenges most signifi-

cant to them."

"Education transformed my life, and I've committed to do all I can to give others that same opportunity," said Charles G. Koch, chairman of the board and CEO of Koch Industries Inc. "TMCF has made that same commitment. TMCF is giving students and scholars the chance to discover new ways to overcome barriers holding too many people back. As they succeed, so does our society."

The Center will advance opportunity through the following activities:

- Original Research: Supporting faculty at HBCUs working to develop research centers studying critical issues.

- oThese campus research centers will help bring together multiple faculty members interested in education, criminal justice, and entrepreneurship.
- oSupport for the campus research centers will include funding for research initiatives and undergraduate students studying these topics.

- Scholarships: Awarding scholarships to HBCU students pursuing careers in education, sociology, economics, and criminal justice research and fellowships that will allow graduate researchers to study and research issues related to barriers to opportunity.

- On-Campus Programming: Supporting HBCU faculty working to bring speakers such as entrepreneurs, educators, and economists to campus to facilitate conversations for students about removing barriers and advancing opportunity.

- Research and Polling: Partnering with Gallup to create an opportunity index that will capture real sentiments of individuals living in fragile communities and foster public dialogue.

- The State of Opportunity in America Forum: Convening HBCU researchers, faculty, and other national thought leaders annually to examine research findings and develop solutions.

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