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Moms as Entrepreneurs



Tammira Lucas (left) and Jasmine Simms are co-founders of Moms as Entrepreneurs (MAE pronounced "Ma"), a grassroots community based organization whose mission is to provide aspiring entrepreneurial mothers with the resources needed to start or grow successful, profitable businesses with the intent to foster growth within their neighborhoods and reinvest back into Baltimore City communities. Moms As Entrepreneurs Academy provides an 8-week entrepreneurship training program to provide moms with resources in creating a microenterprise through hands-on training programs focusing on life, entrepreneurial and financial literacy skills. (See Entrepreneurial Spotlight on page 7) Courtesy Photo

National Heart Month might be over...

But the beat goes on for making healthy lifestyle choices

By Ursula V. Battle

February was National Heart Month, a month-long observance, which seeks to raise awareness about heart health.

Even though National Heart Month has ended, startling statistics—particularly in the African-American community, convey the need to continue to raise awareness about practicing heart-healthy behavior to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in three deaths in the United States is due to cardiovascular disease. The CDC also points out that nearly half of all African American adults have some form of cardiovascular disease that includes heart disease and stroke.

African Americans are at higher risk. The CDC notes that about two out of every five African American adults have high blood pressure, and less than half of them have it under control.

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), the prevalence of high blood pressure (hypertension) in African-Americans is the highest in the world. Hypertension increases the risk of heart disease and stroke and can cause permanent damage to the heart before symptoms are noticed. This is why heart disease is known to be a silent killer.

“The risk factors for heart disease include hypertension, diabetes, and obesity, all which are over represented in the African American community,” said Dr. Michelle Zikusoka, a cardiologist



Dr. Michelle Zikusoka is a cardiologist with MedStar Medical Group who works primarily out of Good Samaritan Hospital. Courtesy Photo

with the MedStar Medical Group, who practices primarily out of Good Samaritan Hospital. “Hypertension is one of the greatest challenges in the African American community. It has no symptoms. It results in slow changes over time that create stroke and heart failure events.

“Research has shown that it’s tried and true that you have to know your risk factors to decrease a cardiac event. Sometimes, the first manifestation of heart disease is death. It speaks to the importance of prevention and knowing your blood pressure numbers.”

Dr. Zikusoka, is a graduate of the Yale University School of Medicine, and

completed her residency and Fellowship Programs at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Last year, the AHA released a report, which noted that racially and ethnically diverse women with Acute Myocardial Infarction (AMI) have distinct experiences in terms of presentation, risk factor burden, evidence-based care, and long-term outcomes. AMI is the medical name for a heart attack. A heart attack is a life-threatening condition that occurs when blood flow to the heart is abruptly cut off, causing tissue damage.

According to the AHA report, the prevalence of AMI is higher in black women than in all other racial and ethnic groups of women; black women also have a higher incidence of Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD) as the first manifestation of Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) than white women, and their survival rate after out-of-hospital arrest is about one third that of whites.

Dr. Zikusoka pointed out that culturally, African-Americans live on a diet high in fat and sugar—precursors to a plethora of health issues. Smoking is another significant risk factor, she said.

Despite the disparaging statistics and report, Dr. Zikusoka pointed out that the good news is that African-Americans can improve their odds in preventing heart

disease by understanding its risk factors and taking simple steps to address them.

“Too few of us are controlling our blood pressure,” said Dr. Zikusoka. “Working on it includes dietary and lifestyle choices. In general, we as society need a mentality shift. People shouldn’t see their primary care provider only when they are feeling sick, but they need to see them before they become ill for preventative care and training. People need to see their doctor in sickness and in health to know what to do ahead of time. Primary prevention is having risk factors diagnosed, and working aggressively with primary care providers to prevent them.

“The primary care provider can begin the management process and provide a game plan. For example, they can make referrals such as seeing a cardiologist. People also have to take inventory of what they are doing. Our daily lives often make us pick up what’s fast and convenient but this often isn’t what’s good for us. I also recommend exercising, and having a partner to help you along during the journey. We all have to work together.”

For more information about heart health, visit: www.heart.org.



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Guest Editorials/Letters

Why the FDA should think like a surgeon

By Peter J. Pitts

On a visit to her prenatal physician, Margaret Boeme and her husband received unwelcome news—their unborn baby had a spinal tumor. Several doctors recommended the Boemes terminate the pregnancy, but the couple refused to give up. Finally, they found doctors willing to perform a risky open fetal procedure to remove the tumor. Twelve weeks later, Boeme gave birth to a beautiful baby girl.

When surgeons take these risks, it's inspiring. But when the FDA does something similar—in particular, rethinking a new drug's review pathway so that patients without any options can have one—some consider it scandalous.

That's just wrong. Like a surgeon, the FDA should follow proper procedures, always. But those procedures should allow for advances in regulatory science—such as the patient voice.

In mid-September, the FDA approved Exondys 51, the first drug specifically indicated for Duchenne muscular dystrophy. DMD is a rare disease that strikes boys as young as three, atrophying their muscles and eventually taking their lives. While clinical trials were incomplete, they did demonstrate that the drug carries few side effects and holds the potential to slow the progression of DMD.

For patients, the FDA's approval represented a "watershed moment." Until this drug arrived on the scene, DMD sufferers had no viable treatment options whatsoever. Now, they have a chance to live to adulthood. Yet others insist the FDA made a mistake.

Giant insurer Anthem, for instance, claimed the FDA shouldn't have approved the medicine since it did not have sufficient evidence. As a result, Anthem is refusing to cover it. The decision will deprive hundreds of patients of their only chance to reach adulthood.

Two doctors even went so far as to say that the FDA approval represents, a "worrisome model" for future targeted drug approvals. They urged the FDA not to approve drugs just because they "show positive effects on the body . . . without actually making any measurable difference in patients' health."

In the case of medications for common illnesses, these doctors are correct: There is no compelling need for expedited approval but for orphan diseases—serious and life-threatening diseases that afflict small numbers of patients—expedited approval makes every difference.

The FDA should continue its rigorous scrutiny before granting approval to new medications. But when patients with rare diseases plead with the FDA to clear a drug that's proven not to be harmful and holds the potential to be helpful—well, then it would be cruel if FDA policy prohibited it.

The approval of Exondys 51 does not mean a free pass for bad science. Rather, it shows that the FDA is rightly supplementing its scrupulous review process with a dose of compassion for patients. By balancing the need for speed, accuracy, and improved public health, the agency has taken the next step towards a 21st century, entrepreneurial regulatory system and positioned itself as an innovation accelerator.

Like Margaret Boeme's surgeons, the FDA should take a chance when the situation demands it, and like her surgeons, the FDA should be applauded for doing so.

Peter J. Pitts, a former FDA associate commissioner, is president of the Center for Medicine in the Public Interest.



Letters to the Editor:

Editor:

Re: Trump Jeopardizing National Security

As a former Naval Intelligence officer, I am concerned about the current administration's adverse impact on our national security.

It appears that Trump campaign aides, including former Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, contacted Russian officials during the Presidential election, and this might have compromised our democratic election process.

Flynn was forced to resign because of his contact with the Russians.

An organizational change imposed by Trump is the appointment of Stephen Bannon, an extremist right wing political advisor to the National Security Council (NSC). This could adversely impact military decisions and delay our responses to military threats because Bannon does not have any knowledge of military affairs and he could intervene

with NSC decision-making processes.

Trump continuously accuses our intelligence agencies of leaking classified information to the press, and he has berated our intelligence agencies for the poor intelligence on Iraq's military arsenal under Saddam Hussein.

We need our intelligence agencies to alert our military, the Trump Administration, and Congress on the status of adversarial governments and their military capabilities, deployments and threats.

The security of our country could be in jeopardy due to the disruptive tactics and blame game used by the Trump Administration against our intelligence agencies.

Donald Moskowitz
Londonderry, NH

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Letters to the Editor, The Annapolis Times, 2513 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD. 21218 or email: btimes@btimes.com

The Art of the Deal: President Trump Loves Confusion and Chaos

*By Roger Caldwell
NNPA Newswire Columnist*

In politics, I have been told that you pick your battles, but President Donald Trump has a different theory. He has decided to fight everyone who does not agree with his opinion, and it's probably the worst way that he could have started his administration.

There are over 600 administrative positions that must be filled, and staffers who have been hired are having meetings in the dark, because they don't know how to turn on the lights. There are leaks coming from aides who are questioning if the top staff understands the processes of the White House and/or the federal government.

"While the administration tries to exude confidence and sure-footedness in its opening weeks, it has made multiple embarrassing public stumbles," wrote David Ferguson of "Raw Story," who went on to quote an article from "The New York Times":

"The bungled rollout of his executive order barring immigrants from seven

predominantly Muslim countries, a flurry of other miscues and embarrassments, and an approval rating lower than that of any comparable first-term president in the history of polling has Mr. Trump and his top staff rethinking an improvisational approach to governing that mirrors his chaotic presidential campaign, administration officials and Trump insiders said."

At this point, Trump's most significant political setback in his new administra-

unprepared. This is significant, because it raises questions about how his other executive orders will be defended in court, as lawyers across the nation begin to file lawsuits.

An environment of chaos is not new for Trump, and he appears to thrive on disorder. During the campaign, then-Republican presidential candidate promised that he would drain the swamp and now people are watching it happen every day.

recanted, and shortage of support among Republican senators.

The West Wing is basically empty, and there are small cracks of disappointment and disapproval with the dysfunction of the administration. As the aides support different factions in the administration, someone from the senior staff will become the most powerful.

Many think that Stephen Bannon, Trump's senior advisor, is the architect of many of the executive orders and the top staff person in the Trump Administration with all the power.

Bannon's appointment to the National Security Council has upset America, because now he has unlimited power. With Bannon on the National Security Council, he has a political platform for hateful ideologies instead of the council making critical decisions based upon facts from experts on the ground. Things are a mess, and nearly a month into this presidency, very little has actually been accomplished.

There are still hundreds of jobs to be filled and very few bills have been passed by Congress and sent to the White House. Most con men give the impression that they are rolling, but in this administration, when you roll back the fluff, there is no substance and no one knows what they are doing.

Roger Caldwell is the president and CEO of On Point Media Group, a marketing and public relations firm located in Orlando, Florida. As a stroke survivor, author and community journalist, his passion is national and statewide politics. Follow him at rogerpolitical-blogs.wordpress.com or e-mail comments to jet38@bellsouth.net.

***"An environment of chaos is not new for Trump,
and he appears to thrive on disorder.
During the campaign, then-Republican presidential
candidate promised that he would drain the swamp
and now people are watching it happen every day."***

tion is the 9th Circuit Court ruling against reinstating the president's travel ban. The unanimous ruling from a three-judge panel means that citizens of seven majority-Muslim countries will be able to continue travel to and from the U.S., despite Trump's executive order last month.

Trump's immediate response was an angry tweet: "SEE YOU IN COURT, THE SECURITY OF OUR NATION IS AT STAKE!"

So, now Trump's top staff will hold numerous meetings trying to determine how they can circumvent the Circuit Court's decision and fall further behind in organizing the administration.

Instead of presenting evidence to explain the need for the executive order, Trump's legal team came to the hearing

Trump, the reality TV star, loves confusion, and believes chaos produces the sort of results he likes.

"Read any of those stories and the word 'chaos' jumps to mind. Or 'turmoil.' Or 'dissension.' All of them convey the same thing: "Less than three weeks into his presidency there is a knife fight happening daily among Trump's top aides." wrote Chris Cillizza for "The Fix," a politics blog for "The Washington Post."

Then National Security Advisor Michael Flynn was forced to resign after it was reported that he had contact with Russian officials after the election. Trump's Labor Secretary pick Andrew Puzder withdrew from consideration for the post amidst decades-old domestic abuse claims, which his wife later

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Entrepreneur's Toolkit



Omar S. Mohammad

The Entrepreneur's Toolkit is a resource to help budding and existing entrepreneurs with taking their enterprise to the next level.

Each month, I will provide tools of the trade, take pulse of entrepreneurship, and resources to help you develop personally.

Consider this column your coach for personal and entrepreneurial growth. I welcome ideas or simply questions about entrepreneurship that you need assistance with. This is your space to grow.

Taking Action

I often hear from individuals that are looking to leave their full time job for a journey into the world of entrepreneurship. With television shows like Shark Tank; The Profit; Beyond the Tank; Like a Boss, people are tuned in and taking an interest in starting a business.

Here are some tips to help you get started:

Think before you leap. Here many entrepreneurs start selling a product or performing a service, get a little money coming in and next step, give their pink slip to their employer. If you have made your decision to do this with success, kudos go out to you. I've seen entrepreneurs leave their job too soon. Instead of leaping out, leap out with a plan of action.

So, when is the right time? You will need to determine that. Several guidelines you can use include, but not limited to: your business income exceeds your paycheck for three consecutive months, you have investors that provide funds to cover living expenses for at least six months, or you are just ready to make a life-changing decision and prepared for it and launch.

Consider part-time first. To gain an understanding of business, you may want to start out part-time with a product or service that you create. Or, you can experiment with organizations that have systems and products to sell already in place. A good example is network marketing companies. These organizations have systems that you can plug right into to get started, some have proven products and some have mentors that can help you develop business skills. The investment is far less than the traditional business model of having a location.

Resources to explore. There are millions of links on the world-wide web that provide resources to get started in business. To gain a basic understanding, you may look to community colleges that are incorporating entrepreneurship in its continuing education programs. In addition, the Small Business Administration has a learning portal filled with resources to help you at every level of your business. You can access it at <https://www.sba.gov/tools/sba-learning-center/search/training>. You may also want to speak to entrepreneurs who've been there, done that. You can use your local and social networks to identify entrepreneurs who are willing to share with you.

Next step. Now that you have this information, what action will you take? If you are ready to take action, email me to obtain your complimentary one page action plan.

Omar S. Muhammad is an EN-TREPRE-NEUR and is the director & intrapreneur for the Entrepreneurial Development & Assistance Center at Morgan State University. You can reach him at omarsmuhammad@gmail.com.

An Entrepreneur's Tech Tools

By William Mapp

We live in an amazing time when access to technology can determine the outcomes of our lives. At no other point in time have individuals, corporations, and small businesses had access to the same technological advantages, products and capabilities. Thanks to cheap communications and inexpensive hardware, competition has been fierce.

This column is here to help you, the aspirational and existing business owner, to compete in a far-reaching global economy. I'll share the right mix of techniques and technology to help you find better customers, produce less expensively, protect yourself and your data, and make more money.

Technology is an enabler, not a panacea. You'll gain access to my experiences helping big and small businesses use technology to make themselves more productive and more profitable. Processes must be well thought out, and technology can't be substituted for business sense.

My inaugural tip is a simple one. **Try before you buy.** Technology purchases can be a commitment. Products used for production can be costly to implement, and may require changes to your processes and operations. Even the largest and most stringent companies such as IBM and Microsoft give you the chance to try out their products. In some cases, the trial period can be as long as six months.

Before the trial, plan how you'll use



William Mapp

the product and your conditions for actually purchasing it. Ask for everything you need, and get all the accounts and access you need. This ensures a successful trial period, and helps you figure out the bells and whistles you don't need.

Be careful. While you're trying out the product, don't ingratiate yourself too deep into the product or service. Try out multiple vendors and manufacturers of the same class of product before you buy them and have a plan that help you choose the right product for your business once the trial ends. By being smart about your product trial, you can find products that are the right fit for your business.

William Mapp is the CEO of Studio Codeworks, Inc. and author of the Small Business Owner's Guide to Technology. You can send questions directly to him at will@studiocodeworks.com, and follow him at [Twitter.com/WilliamMapp3](https://twitter.com/WilliamMapp3).

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Entrepreneur Spotlight: Moms as Entrepreneurs

Tammira Lucas (The Cube) & Jasmine Simms (Scrub Nail Boutique)

By Omar Muhammad

The Baltimore Times caught up with entrepreneurs Tammira Lucas (The Cube) to discuss her joint business venture with partner Jasmine Simms (Scrub Nail Boutique)--Moms as Entrepreneurs, a coaching business that aims to empower "mom"preneurs in work and life.

What's your entrepreneurial story?

Jasmine and I (Tammira) knew that moms lacked the resources and motivation needed to start their businesses. Being both moms and entrepreneurs, there were places for entrepreneurs to go but there wasn't a place where mom entrepreneurs could go for resources that will help them balance mommy-hood and business. Women owned businesses are increasing but they are still generating less revenue than male owned businesses because they are still worried about family life. We knew that by helping moms we could help build family legacies and change the statistics of women owned businesses.

What products and services do Mom As Entrepreneurs provide?

We offer a podcast for moms to learn business, balance & babies. We also conduct an eight-week entrepreneurship training academy where we take moms from the mindset of a business to actually launching their business. We help moms grow their businesses while balancing family! In the future, we will have an association of mom entrepreneurs. These association will further build the mom entrepreneurship ecosystem while helping mom entrepreneurs do business with each other.



Entrepreneurs Tammira Lucas, The Cube (left) and Jasmine Simms, Scrub Nail Boutique with their daughters.

What should working moms know about starting a business in your industry?

Starting a social enterprise is no easy job and one thing an individual should know about starting one is that you need to build a strong supportive network. It really is the only way you can grow or sustain in that industry.

How do you maintain balanced among your personal life and business, and other areas of your life? Having the right people around me helps me stay focus as well as knowing the impact that our business have on families. If it keeps you up at night then it's worth fighting for.

What are some of your "go to" business resources?

My favorite business tool is my one page business plan. Each time I have a new idea I go to that to help me map out the business idea. My favorite business book is the Start with Why by Simon Sinek.

What are some wise words you live by?

The sky is not the limit; it's just the beginning!

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Jasmine and Tammira with academy participants at the closing ceremony for the MAE Academy. Courtesy Photos

Matt Elam's struggle will be on the minds of Ravens officials at NFL Combine

By *Turron Davenport*

The fall from grace that former Ravens safety Matt Elam has made is a tale that teams have to be wary of as they interview prospects at the NFL Combine this week. Although it is impossible to forecast exactly who will end up in trouble, it is possible to get a feel for a prospect's personality and what drives them to be successful.

Elam was an All-American safety at the University of Florida after starting for three consecutive seasons. He was widely viewed as one of the top safeties in the 2013 NFL Draft class.

The Ravens selected Elam in the first round (No.32 overall) of the 2013 NFL Draft. As a rookie, Elam showed flashes of the talent that made him a top pick. He started 15 games and registered 77 tackles while breaking up three passes and added an interception.

As it turned out, 2013 was the best season for Elam. He took a major step back and struggled to find playing time in 2014. It was a tough year for Elam. Terrence Brooks was the Ravens third round pick in 2014 and he cut into Elam's game reps. The Ravens coaching staff tried to use Elam as a slot defender in their nickel packages to get him on the field more.

That experiment did not work as it exposed his limited coverage skills. Poor tackling was also a major issue for Elam in 2014. He missed a tackle against a Patriots receiver, allowing him to score a



*Baltimore Ravens safety Matt Elam before a game during the 2016 Season.
Courtesy Photo/NFL.com*

key touchdown in New England's come from behind divisional playoff game that year.

The heat was on Elam to deliver a return on the first-round pick the Ravens used to select him. General Manager Ozzie Newsome was vocal about his expectations for better play by Elam going into the 2015 season.

Elam returned to the Ravens in better shape and appeared to be moving around as fast as he did as a rookie. The Ravens had signed Will Hill and Kendrick Lewis to be the safeties, but Elam figured to see the field in sub packages. Unfortunately for Elam, his season was

over before it ended. He tore his biceps during camp and was out for the season.

The Ravens declined to pick up the fifth-year option of his contract in 2016. Eric Weddle signed a large contract with

Baltimore and Lardarius Webb moved from cornerback to safety. Weddle and Webb became the starters, pushing Elam to a reserve role once again.

A knee injury during the preseason kept Elam off of the field until November, which led to another disappointing season. The Ravens didn't have any plans of bringing him back in 2017.

Elam's NFL career is now in jeopardy after his recent legal troubles. He was charged with one count of marijuana possession, one count of possession of marijuana with intent to sell or deliver, one count of possession of a controlled substance and one count of reckless driving.

The Ravens released the following statement regarding Elam's arrest: "We are aware of the arrest of Matt Elam," the Ravens said in a statement. "Matt is not in our plans for the 2017 Ravens."

Rest assured, the Ravens will have Elam's fall from grace in mind when talking to prospects at the Combine.

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Anthony Michael Hobbs' Naga Pixie wins 2017 BIFF Kidz Shorts award

Baltimore— Multi-awarding winning actor/filmmaker Anthony Michael Hobbs' Naga Pixie won the 2017 Bonita Springs International Film Festival (BIFF) Kidz Shorts Award. The comedy/adventure short also won the 2016 Gary International Black Film Festival Best Youth Film award.

Naga Pixie is the second of three films that Hobbs has produced under his company Imagination Lunchbox.

The Bonita Springs International Film Festival was held at the Arts Center of Bonita Springs, Fla. The BIFF's mission is to create experiences that discover extraordinary films from around the world. It presents over 70 carefully selected narratives, documentaries, animations and shorts, and Hobbs' short won in the youth category.

Anthony Michael plays Jason who, along with friends, tries to figure out why a Pixie (played by Trinity Breanne Perio) is always nagging them about not hurting animals and respecting nature. Naga Pixie also stars Trey Feledy (Alex Hamilton), Kayla Johnson (Serena



(Left) Anthony Michael Hobbs (Right) Cast members of Naga Pixie (left of tree-top to bottom) Noah Thomas, Anthony Michael Hobbs and Trey Feledy (right of tree-top to bottom) Kendall Clark, Kayla Johnson and Amanda Trinh.

Courtesy Photo

Keith), Kendall Clark, Noah Thomas Amanda Trinh, Danny Palmer and Thomas Johnson.

Hobbs' first short film One Nation was screened at 10 national film festivals and

won four awards. It is an inspirational film about a boy named Steven who along with his five friends (Jeffrey, Spice, Hope, Rose, and Brianna), decide that they need to give back to members of the Armed Forces returning to the United States.

Last year, Anthony Michael hosted the youth awards presentation at the October Film Festival in New York. He has also served as spokesman for the Root Branch Academy's Youth Film Festival and former NFL player Joel Gamble's Career Scholars Program.

Hobbs has garnered six awards from Global Stars Network for his acting skills. He is best known for his role as a young Frederick Douglass in the 2013 Emmy Award nominated "The American Experience: The Abolitionist," a PBS Special mini-series and a starring role in the DreamWorks documentary "How to Train Your Dragon: Dragons and Dinosaurs."

On April 30, 2017, his production

company will host the first annual Imagination Lunchbox International Children's Film Festival (ILICFF) at the Arbutus Community Hall of the Volunteer Fire Department in Maryland.

The event aims to showcase and honor short films produced by youth, for youth and starring youth. It will offer an industry expert panel for discussion, and a Q & A session for visiting young filmmakers.

Held in partnership with the 18th annual Uplifting Minds II (ULMII) entertainment conference (www.UpliftingMinds2.com), the ILICFF will offer a ULMII Honorary Award for the most uplifting film. Submissions for short films are open now and will close at the end of March.

For more information about Naga Pixie, One Nation or the Imagination Lunchbox International Children's Film Festival, visit: www.anthonymichael.com or www.ImaginationLunchbox.com.

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Dress casually, bring your own glove and use the Home Plate Plaza entrance to Oriole Park on the southwest corner of the ballpark.

Resumes are also recommended.

The Cordish Companies, MWMCA hold 4th Annual Black History Heroes Awards

*Baltimore Times Publisher Joy Bramble
among Honorees*

By Ursula V. Battle

In celebration of Black History Month, The Cordish Companies' Live! Casino & Hotel and the Md. Washington Minority Companies Association (MWMCA), honored Baltimore Times Publisher Joy Bramble and other leaders throughout Maryland and DC who have made significant contributions to their respective communities.

Bramble and the other leaders were honored during the 4th Annual Black History Heroes Awards. The event took place on Thursday, February 23, 2017 at Live! Casino & Hotel located at 7002 Arundel Mills Circle in Hanover, MD.

The program was held at Live! Center Stage and included networking, and an awards program and presentation. Antonio Freeman, NFL Super Bowl champion and Baltimore native was also among the honorees, and served as the event's Keynote Speaker. The evening also included food and entertainment, which featured a tribute to the Jackson 5.

"I am very honored, and feel very privileged to receive the Black History Heroes Award," said Bramble. "This is a very distinguished award among a group of very deserving people. The name of the award makes it extremely special to me. There are so many Black heroes who are never recognized. I feel very privileged to receive this award, and happy to be honored among such an outstanding group of people."

Bramble also praised the philanthropic efforts of The Cordish Companies, which includes helping to fund a new Judy Center at Arlington Elementary School in Baltimore City to help pre-school children and their parents in that community.

"I am really proud of The Cordish Companies," said Bramble. "They are really investing in the community. As a former teacher, I applaud what they are doing at Arlington."

In addition to Bramble and Freeman, honorees of the 2017 Black History Heroes Awards were:

Millie Brown, founder, A Mother's Cry; Helen Dale, Strategic Staffing Coordinator, Maryland Transportation Authority; Lisa Ennis, president, Eccentric's The SPA Sanctuary; Dr. C. Vernon Gray, president, C. Vernon Gray & Associates; Isiah "Ike" Leggett, County Executive, Montgomery County, MD; Sandra (Midge) Matlock-Williams, manager, Maryland Centers/Center Supervisor, USO of Metropolitan Washington-Baltimore; Ricky D. Smith, Sr., Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer, Maryland Aviation Administration/BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport; and



The 4th Annual Black History Heroes Awards Honorees. The group was honored on Thursday, February 23, 2017 at Live! Casino & Hotel located at 7002 Arundel Mills Circle in Hanover, MD for their contributions to the community. Courtesy Photos

Rev. Dr. Willie F. Wilson, Pastor, Union Temple Baptist Church.

"This event was a Black Heroes Award program, and one of the things I have done over last 30 or 40 years was to work on behalf of minority businesses," said Dr. Gray who was the first African-American elected to the Howard County Council and the former Administrator of the Howard County Office of Human Rights. "I am honored to receive this award. It's good to be honored among people who do things because they have a passion for them and want to give back to the community. We want to make a difference. It's great that The Cordish Companies wanted to recognize our efforts."

The Cordish Companies' Live! Casino & Hotel is one of the largest commercial casinos in the country, and features more than 200 live action table games dining and entertainment.

"This event is a highpoint of the year for the Live! family, as it allows us to bring together some of the most notable influencers, trailblazers, and mentors that are making significant contributions throughout the region," said Robert J. Norton, President, Cordish Global Gaming Group."

Wayne Frazier is President of the Md. Washington Minority Companies Association.

"The Cordish Companies believes in giving back, and as of this year, they have given more back to the community than any other casino," said Frazier. This is just a small token in recognizing those who have come before us and have done great things over the course of their lives in religion, health, education, business, athletics, and politics. All of those areas were represented here tonight."

He added, "The recognition of Joy Bramble of The Baltimore Times was one of respect for Joy who

founded a woman-owned business in a male-dominated industry. She founded the newspaper, endured, and overcame all of the obstacles she had to face. The publication is still viable and going strong today."

The Baltimore Times publication was birthed on the kitchen table of Bramble, and her husband, The Rev. Peter Bramble, in November 1986. The Brambles began printing "positive stories about positive people" and watched their company grow from a one-computer operation in their kitchen to one of the largest circulated African American publications on the East Coast.

Today, readers enjoy The Baltimore Times, The Annapolis Times, newspapers, as well as a host of events and activities such as Health Expos, educational forums, workshops and seminars directed toward communities most affected by the disparities in healthcare, business, finance, and other areas that impact the quality of life.



Wayne R. Frazier, Sr. president, Maryland, Washington Minority Companies Association (MWMCA); Luwanda Jenkins, VP Government and Community Relations, The Cordish Companies; and Kevin Kamenetz, Baltimore County Executive.

Civic Works Revitalizing Park Heights with Planting Day

By Stacy M. Brown

For more than 20 years, local nonprofit Civic Works has worked to strengthen Baltimore's communities through education, skills development and community service. Lately, the organization has partnered with Park Heights Renaissance to create a green space for children who attend school nearby.

Last March, former Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake announced the city was seeking a master developer to redevelop at least 49-acres in the Park Heights community, a diverse 1,200-acre area that includes 12 neighborhoods, schools and recreational assets, two commercial districts, Sinai Hospital and Pimlico Racetrack.

Much of the work is taking place along Pimlico Road and Thorndale Avenue by AmeriCorps members, community residents, local artists and volunteer groups who work to create and maintain thriving community spaces.

"Civic Works' Community Lot Team got started on the revitalization work in Park Heights around June of 2016, after being approached by the Baltimore Office of Sustainability," said Jenny Katz, Civic Works' Lot Team director.

On Saturday, March 25, Civic Works and others will participate in a community planting day, keeping in line with Civic Works' Community Lot Team's mission to transform vacant and abandoned lots in Baltimore City into community gardens and green spaces.

Already, four garden spaces and art by local artist Adam Stab have also been installed.

The work is being done with the help of AmeriCorps members, community residents, local artists and volunteer groups who work to create and maintain thriving community spaces.

Additionally, Civic Works is helping to revitalize the 4700 block of the Park Heights corridor where vacant houses once stood.

"Instead of open dirt with nothing else, there's been grass seeds planted and shrubs and a few trees already," said AmeriCorps worker and longtime Park Heights resident Tony Dickens. "On the



A new gathering space at 4701 Park Heights Avenue for children waiting at bus stop after school. Courtesy Photos/Civic Works



The revitalized Pimlico Triangle Garden awaiting art made by students of the US Dream Academy.



The revitalized Pimlico Triangle Garden awaiting art made by students of the US Dream Academy.

one side, we've put in a stone patio area where we will have some benches to sit and there will be some art work."

"The Baltimore Office of Sustainability tapped Civic Works to help beautify the block once the houses were torn down," Katz said. "This involved creating four separate garden areas, installing stone patios shaped like flowers, and planting shrubs and other greenery. This block will serve as an illustration of what's possible for Park Heights. It will serve as a model for the revitalization of more blocks to come."

The recipient of such honors like the Standards for Excellence designation by

the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations and being named an innovative AmeriCorps program by Innovations in Civic Participation, Civic Works has proven to be an effective organization lauded for doing a phenomenal job in serving local youth in need of a Corps experience and completing project work deemed invaluable to the surrounding communities.

The nonprofit provides Baltimore-based job training that prepares program participants for employment, having placed 600 individuals in jobs, and providing 4,000 AmeriCorps members with service opportunities.

Civic Works also has helped to create a more sustainable, economically viable and environmentally responsible agriculture sector in Baltimore by growing 60,000 pounds of fresh produce and planting approximately 25,000 trees.

"On a fundamental level, neighborhood greening can help build property value and create a safe and clean space for children to play," Katz said.

The community work is vital for homeowners and other residents, allowing for a renewed sense of pride, Dickens said.

A lot of the homes that are falling apart [and] dilapidated in the area are eyesores. At the very least this is a morale booster for the neighborhood because we won't be seeing so much of the abandoned structures anymore," said Dickens, who hopes to attract more local volunteers.

"I'm pushing for our residents who live here to join in and get involved," he said. "If they do, if they put in their sweat and hard work then they'll probably be the ones who won't hesitate to speak up if someone comes in and tries to destroy this. They'll be like me, grateful to Civic Works for coming in here, stepping up and contributing to our neighborhood."

For more information about Civic Works, to volunteer or make a donation, visit: www.civicworks.com

NKF-MD Providing Free Kidney Health Assessments

Free test identifies adults at risk for kidney disease and raises awareness of risk factors

Lutherville, Md.— In conjunction with National Kidney Month, the National Kidney Foundation of Maryland (NKF-MD) will provide free Kidney Health Risk Assessments (KHRA), Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at the Brancati Center Health Awareness Hub located at 900 N. Washington Street in Baltimore.

Open to the public, this free assessment helps identify adults at risk for chronic kidney disease and increases awareness of kidney disease risk factors in the community. The KHRA uses a simple Body Mass Index (BMI) calculation, blood pressure measurement and a short six-question questionnaire to make participants aware of their risk factors for chronic kidney disease.

Participants will receive brief consultations with physicians and dietitians to learn about kidney disease, as well as general nutrition and wellness guidelines.

Kidney disease is the 9th leading cause of death in the United States, killing



more people every year than breast or prostate cancer. While 26 million Americans (1 in 9) live with chronic kidney disease, most don't know it. In fact, 25 percent of the 1,170 people screened in 2016 by NKF-MD demonstrated significant results.

"We'd like to reduce these numbers by spreading the word that early detection and treatment can slow or prevent the progression of kidney disease," said Pattie Dash, NKF-MD's vice president of Mission Advancement.

Toward that end, the Foundation educated nearly 4,200 individuals through community outreach, health fairs and events in 2016.

For information about this KHRA event or NKF-MD's other KHRA events and kidney screenings throughout Maryland and Delaware, call 410-494-8545 or visit: www.kidneymd.org.

Read to Reef Book Club is Back!



Baltimore's young readers with a Pratt Library Card can read aquatic-themed books to earn a free visit to the National Aquarium. In 2016, the inaugural year, 4,770 children participated in the program— reading 23,850 books, which resulted in 9,841 free visits to the Aquarium. Courtesy Photo/National Aquarium

Baltimore— The National Aquarium, in partnership with the Enoch Pratt Free Library, announced the return of the "Read to Reef" book club.

The program, kicked off its third season March 1, 2017 and offers free admission to the Aquarium for participating Baltimore children in the fifth grade and lower with a Pratt Library card.

"Through Read to Reef, our amazing partnership with Pratt Library, we introduce thousands of young readers to the wonders of the aquatic world," said Jenny Hamilton, community programs manager for the National Aquarium. "Reading is not only a cornerstone to a life-long love of learning, it also nurtures skills like imagination, curiosity and compassion. Our city's children will build upon these stories and skills, inspiring a generation to care for our oceans and the creatures that inhabit them."

In 2016, the inaugural year, 4,770 children participated in the program— reading 23,850 books, which resulted in 9,841 free visits to the Aquarium.

"We had an overwhelming response to the program last year," said Enoch Pratt

Free Library Children's Services Coordinator Rachel Peffer. "We're excited to partner with the National Aquarium, once again, to show students that reading can lead to so many rewards in life."

Baltimore children fifth grade and lower can visit their local Pratt Library branch and show their library card to receive a bookmark, while supplies last, and a booklist that suggests aquatic/conservation-themed books to read. Once participants have read five books, they can present their completed bookmark onsite at the National Aquarium to receive admission for the child and up to three guests.

Participants must redeem their visit by June 11; some blackout dates apply. For more information about the Read to Reef book club and the upcoming season, visit aqua.org/read.

Children and parents who are interested in applying for a Pratt Library card may visit: prattlibrary.org/librarycards for more information. For more information about the National Aquarium programs, visit: aqua.org/youaraquarium.

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President Trump Signs Executive Order on HBCUs

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Contributor

President Trump signed an executive order to focus more attention on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) on Tuesday, February 28, 2017.

Although HBCUs comprise just three percent of higher education institutions in the United States, “HBCUs contributed 19 percent of the nearly nine percent of all bachelor’s degrees in science and engineering awarded to blacks in 2010,” according to American Institutes for Research (AIR).

AIR also reported that “By 2010, approximately 33 percent of all black students who earned bachelor’s degrees in mathematics and statistics attended HBCUs, and HBCUs produced nearly 37 percent of all black undergraduates who received bachelor’s degrees in the physical sciences.”

Every president since Jimmy Carter has issued an Executive Order establishing a White House Initiative on HBCUs. The order Trump signed will have a key difference: Trump’s order will move the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, previously part of the Department of Education, into the White House.

During the Obama Administration, the late Dr. George Cooper, headed the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Cooper was succeeded by Dr. Ivory Toldson, who left the post in June 2016 to lead the Quality Education for Minorities (QEM), a non-profit group in Washington, D.C.

A February 27 photo-op with President Trump in the Oval Office and group “listening session” meeting with Vice President Michael Pence with over 60 HBCU presidents was the first meeting of its kind with HBCU presidents and chancellors in at least eight years.

HBCU presidents, who are in Washington, D.C., this week, also have decided to request \$25 billion from the Trump Administration to assist their schools.

At a HBCU president’s reception on

Monday night, Grambling President Rick Gallot told the NNPA Newswire that the priorities of HBCUs are, “spending on campus infrastructure and an increase in year around Pell Grants.”

A senior White House Official in the Trump Administration briefed reporters on February 27 at the White House on moving the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities into the White House and assigning an executive director.

The initiative on HBCUs, “lost track, because they didn’t have the full force of the White House behind them. This HBCU order will do that by repositioning the initiative in the White House,” the senior Trump Administration official said.

The senior White House Official added that the administration wants HBCUs to serve as partners in the President’s urban agenda and that the administration also wants to increase the private sector’s role in supporting and strengthening their participation in federal programs.

HBCUs did not fare well during the Obama Administration. In 2009, the Obama Administration failed to renew a two-year appropriation for HBCUs of \$85 million a year. The money would later have to be restored by concerned Democrats who controlled Congress.

HBCUs collectively lost over \$300 million in grants and tuition after a bureaucratic level decision in 2011 enacted in Obama’s Department of Education made obtaining Parent PLUS loans much more difficult. As a result, 28,000 HBCU students were negatively impacted.

In September 2013, President Obama’s Education Secretary Arne Duncan apologized to HBCU leaders and advocates for the Parent PLUS loan decision. In 2012, Duncan proposed an end to a three-year implementation of summer Pell Grants.

The elimination of summer Pell Grants is an issue HBCU presidents often say they’d like restored. Almost two-thirds of African American undergraduate students receive Pell funding.

In 2015, President Obama proposed



President Donald Trump met with the presidents and chancellors from the nation’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the Oval Office at the White House on February 27, 2017.

Photo Credit: Lauren Victoria Burke/NNPA

two years of free community college without consulting HBCU advocates. Many of those advocates viewed the proposal as a threat to HBCUs. The proposal, which was never enacted by a Republican-controlled Congress, was later changed to include HBCUs.

In early 2015, during a meeting with members of the Congressional black Caucus, President Obama expressed what many members later told the NNPA Newswire was a lack of support for HBCUs. President Obama was critical of HBCU graduation rates and loan policies.

In February 2015, President Obama’s own HBCU Board of Advisors Chair, Hampton University President Dr. William Harvey, was critical of the Obama Administration.

“We are not consulted when it comes to policy changes and decisions impacting—in a major way—the institutions on whose behalf we are to advocate,” said Harvey. “It happened with Pell. It happened with Parent PLUS. And, now it is happening with the new community college initiative.”

Regarding their visit to the White House on Monday, that included seeing

President Trump and Vice President Pence, many HBCU presidents said they were happy to see HBCUs receiving attention within the first 100 days of Trump’s presidency, but they were cautiously optimistic.

“There was very little listening to HBCU presidents today. We were only given about two minutes each, and that was cut to one minute, so only about seven of maybe 15 or so speakers were given an opportunity today,” wrote Dillard President Walter Kimbrough detailed in a column posted on Medium on the night of February 27.

The HBCU presidents convened at the Library of Congress on February 28 for an all day session with members of Congress.

Lauren Victoria Burke is a political analyst who speaks on politics and African American leadership. She is also a frequent contributor to the NNPA Newswire and BlackPressUSA.com. Connect with Lauren by email at LBurke007@gmail.com and on Twitter at [@LVBurke](https://twitter.com/LVBurke).

Participants in Port Covington Bootcamp gain skills and employment

By Deborah Bailey

The Port Covington Manufacturing Bootcamp is the start of Sagamore Development's promise to put "skin in the game" of workforce development. The bootcamp is one of several programs sponsored by the company and its partners created to ensure the success of the City's Port Covington Project.

Baltimore City Mayor Catherine E. Pugh joined community and business leaders at an Open House recently to celebrate the bootcamp's second class at the Foundry located in the repurposed City Garage building.

Sixteen participants, including Lionel Hall from East Baltimore, are in the final weeks of an eight-week course in preparation for future employment in manufacturing. Bootcamp classes expose participants to woodworking, welding, textiles, 3-D printing, and CNC machinery (computer numerically controlled), and other manufacturing skills.

"I've always loved working with my hands but the main thing that motivated me to sign up for the bootcamp was that I would be changing Baltimore—making my city a better place," said Hall, when asked what motivated him to participate in the Bootcamp.

"I'm most interested in doing welding. We have great teachers. I'm learning a lot and it's exciting," said Dewayne Hopkins, a participant from the Reisterstown community. "I am trying to start my own business, so the training in construction will help."

Mayor Pugh said the bootcamp is designed to do more than create temporary opportunities.

"The pre-apprentice course is not just about preparing Baltimore workers for jobs; it's about preparing them for careers," said Pugh to the sixteen participants and a room full of bootcamp supporters. "It provides a strong complement to the workforce development programs available throughout Baltimore City."

Bootcamp participants are selected by The Center for Urban Families, and after an orientation period, the participants attend classes four days a week from 10



(Left) Bootcamp instructor Audrey Vandisastle with Bootcamp participants Urek Bradshaw, Hall and Tim Paul (Right) Baltimore City Mayor Catherine Pugh, Sagamore Development staff, boot camp participants and community supporters at an Open House held recently to celebrate the Bootcamp's second class at the Foundry located in the repurposed City Garage building. Courtesy

a.m. to 2 p.m. Staff at The Center for Urban Families personally recruit a participant pool and ensure there is a fit between the program and applicants.

"A huge part of what we do is barrier removal. We understand that people come from a set of experiences that sometimes preclude them from becoming connected to the labor force," said Joseph T. Jones, CEO of the Center for Urban Families.

"The Center for Urban Families is in my district and the work they are doing with this project and to support our city's most vulnerable families is worthy of support," said 7th District City Councilman Leon F. Pinkett III, who came to support the Manufacturing Bootcamp Open House.

Alicia Wilson, vice president of Community Affairs for Sagamore Development Corporation is the force behind the scenes coordinating the Bootcamp partners and managing the start-up of a broad portfolio of community focused programs to follow-through on the company's \$100 million commitment to the Baltimore community was signed last summer. The community commitment agreement between Sagamore Development and the City of Baltimore and community partners represents an unprecedented agreement brokered by

community partners in exchange for support of a \$660 million TIF for the Port Covington Project signed into law in 2016.

"This is a truly unique workforce development and career training program—and it's already seen a tremendous success," Wilson said.

The first eight graduates of the Manu-

facturing Bootcamp completed the program in January and all have obtained full-time employment, according to Wilson.

Male and female Baltimore residents 18 and older are eligible to participate in the Manufacturing Bootcamp. Anyone interested may contact Urban Families at 410-367-5691.

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The Annapolis Times, March 3 - 9, 2017 (www.baltimoretimes-online.com)

Positive stories about positive people!

MY SOUL RADIO welcomes Sheryl Underwood

By Phinesse Demps

Yes! This is the same Sheryl Underwood, the comedian and one of the hosts of “The Talk,” on CBS.

Sheryl Underwood Radio is an all-access pass to entertaining and enlightening conversations about relationships, entertainment, sports and hot topics. The show debuts with interviews with celebrities Marques Houston, Ron Isley, T-Pain and K Michelle. Show officials say more exciting interviews are to come.

“There are a couple of reasons why we are so excited to have Sheryl Underwood as part of our family. She embraces change and technology—[and] the way we listen to radio is changing. In a couple of years, the Internet will be available in [our] cars. Being Internet based, to be able to get someone of her caliber on our station is a huge win for us, as we position ourselves to be your radio station of choice— actually your Soul Station of choice. The other reason Mrs. Underwood is important to us, is

this: She is a credible black female voice in a male dominated industry. We support her movement 100 percent,” said station owner, Corey Bivens.

Sheryl Underwood Radio has a dedicated phone line, 855-Sheryl-1, giving people all over the country the opportunity to interact with the show. The dedicated line is part of a multi-faceted strategy, which will allow listeners to engage with the show.

Sheryl Underwood is a huge supporter of HBCUs, which ties in with the objectives of MY SOUL RADIO (www.mysoulradio.com) and its other media publication Indie Soul Magazine (www.indiesoulmagazine.com) in promoting Historical Black College News and Sports. She received an honorary doctorate of humane letters from Benedict College in Columbia, S.C.

Sheryl Underwood Radio will feature yours truly, Sheryl Underwood, Harry Southerland, James Kelley and executive producer Vic Frost. The show will air weekday mornings on MY SOUL RADIO



from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. The Tune In app and The MY SOUL RADIO app are available from the Google Play Store.

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Tri-County Job and Career Fair at College of Southern Maryland

Job seekers can meet with regional employers at the March 28 event at the College of Southern Maryland

LaPlata, Md.— Anyone looking for a job should plan to attend the 2017 Tri-County Job and Career Fair on March 28, 2017 at the College of Southern Maryland (CSM), in the Business and Industry (BI Building) Room 113, at the La Plata Campus located at 8730 Mitchell Road in La Plata, Maryland.

“The college holds the annual fair as both a service to our students and the community as a whole,” said Lisa Warren, senior associate director of Career Services at CSM. “What people may not know is that staff and faculty from across the entire college join with Career Services and volunteer their time to make this event happen. We genuinely care about the livelihood of our entire community.”

For the second year in a row, CSM will help job seekers prepare for the job and career fair by hosting several free Ready Room events in the weeks leading up to the fair.

“A person can come to the Ready Room and have their resume reviewed and practice interviewing skills,” Warren said. “Sometimes job seekers aren’t sure how to approach a recruiter or what to say; our staff is trained to help you develop this dialogue.”



The Tri-County Job and Career Fair will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Business and Industry (BI) Building in Room 113 at the College of Southern Maryland, La Plata Campus, 8730 Mitchell Road in La Plata, Maryland. For more information, visit: www.csmd.edu/jobfair or call 301-934-7569.

Photo Credit: ClipArt.com

At the fair, job seekers can meet with area businesses and agencies that are looking for employees. Participants can take part in a “Navigating the Federal Hiring Process” workshop presented by

federal government representatives.

Employer registration is available at www.csmd.edu/jobfair. Space is limited. The deadline for employer registration and payment is Friday, March 10, 2017. Job seeker registration is requested but not required. Job seeker registration is also available at www.csmd.edu/jobfair. A list of participating employers is available at the website. There is no cost for job seekers.

The fair hours are from 10 a.m. to 2

p.m. at CSM’s La Plata Campus’ Center for Business and Industry (BI Building) in Room 113.

Ready Room events will be held from 9 a.m. to noon on March 15; 10 a.m. to noon on March 17; and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on March 27 in Room 101 in the Center for Business and Industry (BI Building) at the La Plata Campus.

For more information, see the registration website www.csmd.edu/jobfair or call 301-934-7569.

Chrysalis House Needs Volunteers

Chrysalis House, Inc. is currently recruiting volunteers. If you are willing to spare a few hours a week or a month, we would like to hear from you. If you are 18 years or older, you can play a role in our vision to assist more drug and alcohol recovering women and their children. You must be drug and alcohol free and be willing to sign a statement of confidentiality. In addition, all volunteers are required to pass a criminal background check. We are currently in need of the following types of volunteers: Daycare Assistance, Volunteer Coordinator Assistance, Board Member, Clerical Assistance. Group Facilitators (Computer, Employment, & GED Skills), Grounds keeping/landscaping/gardening, and Building maintenance and upkeep. If interested in volunteering at Chrysalis House, please fill out our Volunteer Application available on the website at: <http://www.chrysalishouses.org/work-with-us> and submit to giving@chrysalishouses.org

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Hate doing your own taxes?

Then you’re in luck! You may qualify for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program at Anne Arundel Community College.

In the program, IRS-certified volunteers—faculty, alums and current students—provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals, generally residents with \$54,000 or less of annual income.

The program runs from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays and 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays until Wednesday, April 12, 2017 in the Careers Building Room 326 at 101 College Parkway, Arnold.

“Our goal is to do 100 returns successfully, e-filed and accepted,” said Reb Beatty, site coordinator, assistant professor in business administration at the college and an active CPA.

To schedule an appointment, call 410-777-2390 or email: hcharrington@aacc.edu.

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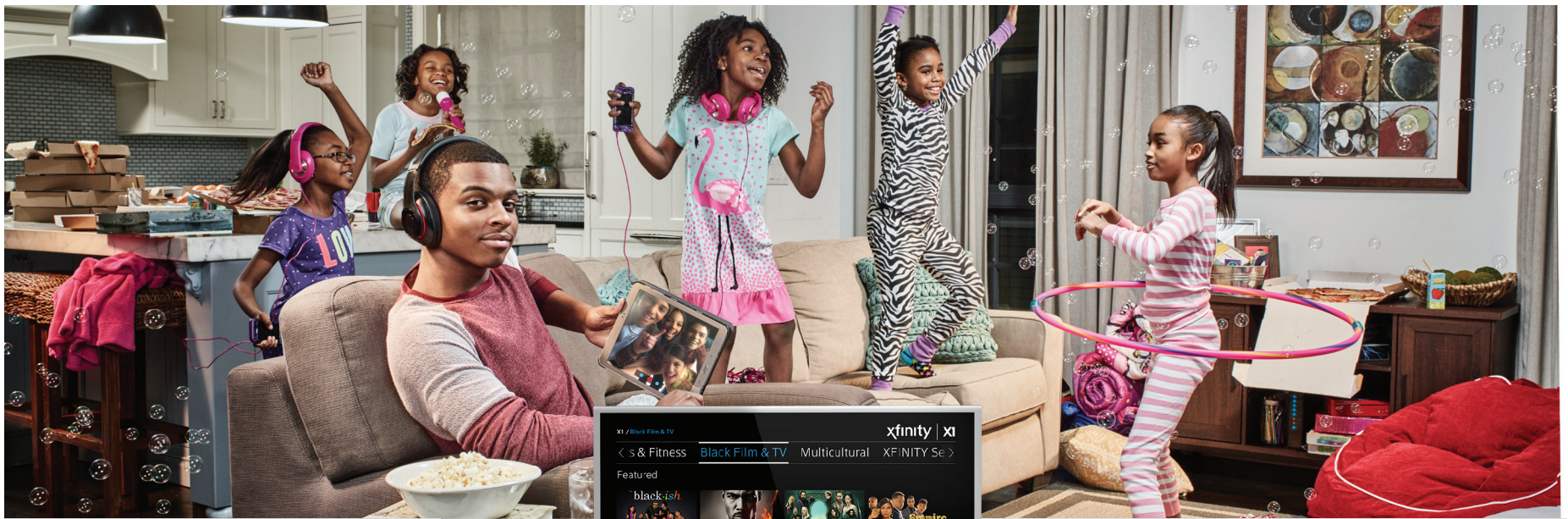
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