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*Nikki Giovanni says everyone needs 'A Good Cry'*



*Nikki Giovanni, renowned poet, writer, educator, and activist will release her latest book, **A Good Cry: What We Learn from Tears and Laughter**. The new book, possibly Giovanni's most intimate collection yet, recalls the violence that permeated her parents' marriage and her early life, and how she came to live with the grandparents who Giovanni credits with saving her life. (See article on page 10) Courtesy Photo/William Morrow Hardcover*

# Historic Diggs-Johnson Museum to Host Special Presentation

By Stacy M. Brown

The Diggs-Johnson Museum will host a power point presentation on the 40 historic African-American communities of Baltimore County on Saturday, April 29, 2017.

The 10 a.m. event at the recently transformed Cherry Hill African Union Protestant Church in Granite, will include a presentation by Blair A. Diggs, a board member and son of local historian and museum namesake Louis S. Diggs.

The event is sure to draw on, *Our Struggles*, the eighth book by Louis Diggs which documents much of the history of the 40 communities that include Overlea, Chase, Bengies, Back River Neck Road in Essex, Goodwood/Hyde Park in Essex, Hopewell Avenue in Essex, Norris Lane in Dundalk, and Edgemere.

“Overlea is a small African-American community located at the northeast edge of Baltimore City along Belair Road just inside the Baltimore Beltway,” Louis Diggs said. “Overlea began its growth in 1904 when the United Railway streetcar line was extended from Baltimore City along Belair Road to Overlea. The African-American community in Overlea began not many years after the community was developed.”

For example, Cherry Heights, developed in 1909, started with 156 lots, and

by 1915, only six dwellings stood. The streets that made up the community in Overlea included Hazel Avenue, Linden Avenue, Beach Avenue, Cherry Street, Apple Street, First Street, Second Street and Third Street.

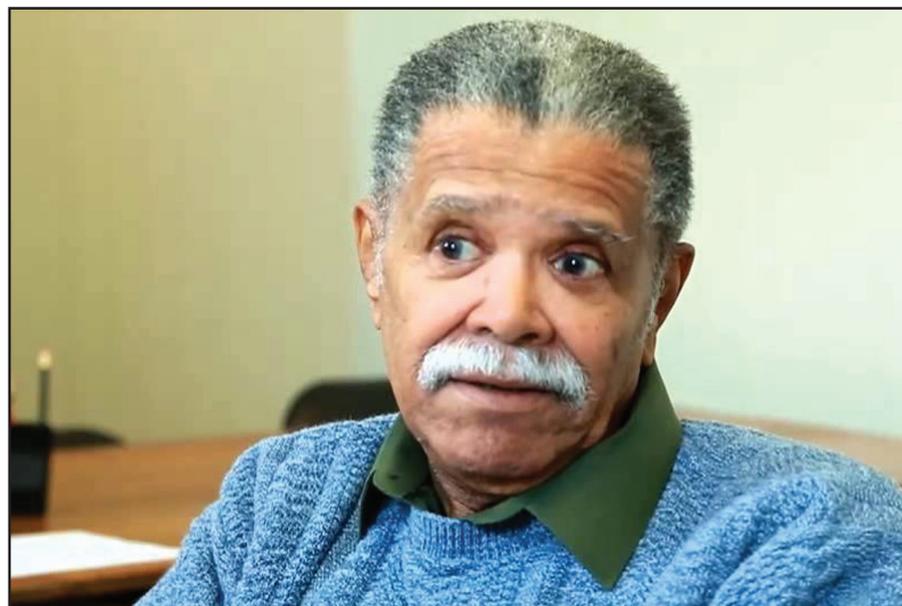
The only African-American church in the community is Emmanuel Baptist Church on Linden Avenue, which was established in 1928.

Known by many because of the large outdoor movie theater that stood for years, Bengies is located a short distance from the Martin Airport and has been the home of African-Americans since the slavery era.

The presentation will include the other communities as well, Diggs said.

A 20-year retired Korean War veteran who retired after an additional 19-year career in civil service, Diggs said he was convinced by his four sons to become a role model at Catonsville High School, which he did in 1990 by becoming a substitute teacher. He eventually taught a class in genealogy.

“In this class, I found that the African-American students from the Winters Lane area were unable to find any information as to when their community began, and very little information of the growth of it,” he said. “When the class ended, these students asked me if I could help them find some of the history of the Winters Lane community. I accepted their call for help.”



*Historian Louis S. Diggs has researched and published 11 books covering much of the history of all 40 African-American enclaves in Baltimore County. He along with his son Blair will share the rich history of these communities on Sunday, April 29, 2017, at the recently transformed Cherry Hill African Union Protestant Church in Granite at 10 a.m.*  
Courtesy Photo

Diggs' research began in earnest and with the assistance of Lenwood Johnson, a planner with Baltimore County, he published the history of the African-American communities in the county.

After nearly 25 years, Diggs has researched and published 11 books covering much of the history of all 40 of the African-American enclaves.

“On April 29, I will assist my son, Blair, a board member, who will share this rich history with a PowerPoint pres-

entation and brief talk on the history of all of the 40 communities with a question and answer period during the activities at the Diggs-Johnson Museum,” he said.

Anyone planning to attend should apply for a parking pass and avoid parking on the adjacent Offutt Road. To request a parking pass, email [louisdiggs2@verizon.net](mailto:louisdiggs2@verizon.net). There is limited parking at the museum.

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# Guest Editorials/Letters

## Black Caucus Analyzes Civil Rights in Trump Era at Forum

By Lauren Victoria Burke, NNPA Newswire Contributor

As lawmakers, community stakeholders and activists protest against current White House policies, members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) hosted a summit on the future of civil rights under the Trump Administration.

There was no shortage of blunt talk during the panel discussion, which lasted nearly two hours. White House policies on police reform, education, voting and immigration were discussed in detail.

"In my humble opinion the greatest threat to civil rights is the current administration," said Roy Austin, the former director of the Office of Urban Affairs, Justice and Opportunity under the Obama Administration. "In record time, the current administration has not only shown a willingness to not defend civil rights, but also an intent to violate civil rights, and at a minimum, an attempt to make it easier for others to violate civil rights."

Austin continued: "No marginalized group...is safe from what the current administration has already done or appears to be planning to do. Everything we have fought for, and some have died for, is at risk."

Others on the panel echoed the same views on a variety of issues from the "Muslim travel ban" to police reform.

President Donald Trump's Attorney General Jeff Sessions, recently, ordered a review of all the police reform agreements in what will likely be the beginning of decreased federal oversight by the Department of Justice on police departments. The two-page memo was an order to review the oversight decisions by the Department of Justice during the Obama Administration. A Washington Post study in 2016 revealed that in 2015 blacks were shot and killed by police at 2.5 times the rate of whites.

"The backstop that has been the civil rights enforcement of the federal government is no more," said Catherine Lhamon, the chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

On March 22, 2017, seven members of the CBC met with President Trump and handed him the report titled, "We Have A Lot To Lose: Solutions to Advance Black Families in the 21st Century." They challenged him on issues of policing, economics, jobs and education and how federal policies impact black communities.

A week before the March 22 meeting, another Black Caucus member, Baltimore Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) met with President Trump to talk about prescription drug prices and also challenged him on the way he has repeatedly linked black communities with mayhem and violence.

Also joining the Capitol Hill forum were Gavin Grimm, plaintiff in the transgender rights case, Grimm v. Gloucester County School Board; Ron Davis, the former Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services at the Department of Justice; Chief Hassan Aden, member of the steering committee for Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration and former Chief of Police of the Greenville Police Department; Chiraag Bains, a senior fellow at Harvard Law School Criminal Justice Policy Program; and Joe Rich, the co-director of the Fair Housing and Community Development Project for the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

The Capitol Hill forum was hosted by Reps. John Conyers (D-Mich.), Bobby Scott (D-Va.) and CBC Chairman Cedric Richmond (D-La.). Reps. Joyce Beatty (D-OH) Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) and Al Lawson (D-Fla.) also attended. Members of the CBC have become some of the most persistent critics of President Trump since his inauguration in January.

*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. To contact Lauren, email: LBurke007@gmail.com.*



## Letters to the Editor

### Editor:

#### Re: National Volunteer Week

Recently, parents of a pediatric patient hoped to make plans for a much-needed weekend away and asked if we could provide respite care for their child.

Our Volunteer Department sent out a call and within a matter of hours, 13 people signed up to take shifts so that the child would never be alone during the 48 hours his parents were rejuvenating.

This is remarkable not because it is rare but because it is what we have come to expect from the volunteers who help us do what we do. We are not alone.

Across the nation, more than 430,000 trained volunteers gave more than 19 million hours of service to hospices.

April 23 to 29 is National Volunteer Week and every single volunteer deserves our appreciation and grateful acknowledgement.

Hundreds of trained Hospice of the Chesapeake volunteers are working right here in the Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties, giving selflessly to

help people live as fully as possible, even at the end of life. Our community is a better, more compassionate place because of these volunteers.

Even when you're dying, there can be a lot of living to do. Hospice volunteers make more special moments possible for the patients and the families they serve every day. Besides serving as patient care volunteers, we have a cadre of volunteers who serve in other capacities. They work at one of our signature events, help us with paper work, make quilts to be given to one of our Veteran patients at an Honor Salute, offer rides for critical staff in foul weather and in many other ways.

We salute our volunteers, and thank them for the kindness and passion they share with our patients and our staff.

To find out more about our volunteers and the work they do, visit: [www.hospicechesapeake.org](http://www.hospicechesapeake.org).

**Ben Marcantonio**

President and CEO

Hospice of the Chesapeake  
Pasadena, MD.

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## Remember the Chibok Girls!

*By Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson (D-Fla.)*

On Thursday, April 14, 2017, the world marked three years since Boko Haram terrorists burst into dormitory rooms at the Government Secondary School in the northern Nigerian town of Chibok and kidnapped nearly 300 girls simply because they dared to get an education. In the days leading up to this date, there will likely be plenty of headlines devoted to the Chibok girls, as these now young women are famously known. This happens each time we reach yet another sad milestone: 500 days, one year, two years, 1000 days, and counting. Soon after, however, the news reports will fade and this ongoing tragedy will slip once more to the backburner.

The 195 Chibok girls who haven't been able to escape their captives or were not among the 21 released last October, are still the most compelling symbols of the Boko Haram insurgency, but we must never forget that the group has committed increasingly heinous acts in the past three years from which innumerable

victims may never recover. Let me count the ways.

More than 2.6 million people are currently displaced across Nigeria and its neighbor nations in the Lake Chad region, and Nigeria is in the process of building a comprehensive orphanage to house approximately 8,000 children who've been separated from their parents. At least one million children have been forced out of

Chibok girls are not forgotten and to help eradicate Boko Haram and repair the damage it has caused.

I have traveled twice to Nigeria to meet with victims' families and government officials and brought the #BringBackOurGirls movement to the United States. Each week that Congress is in session, lawmakers from both sides of the aisle participate in a "Wear Something Red

close coordination and cooperation in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria," according to a readout from the White House. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson also has reportedly praised the Multinational Joint Task Force's efforts to defeat Boko Haram a "success story," but while the terrorist group may be down, it is far from out.

On June 12, we will mark another milestone in this terrible saga. That is the day the State and Defense departments' five-year plan is due. It also is the deadline for the director of National Intelligence to assess the willingness and capability of Nigeria and its regional partners to implement the strategies outlined. We must use our collective voice to ensure they don't miss this urgent deadline.

By now you may be asking yourself why any of this should matter to African Americans who are fighting their own battles to close the economic and opportunity gaps that still exist here at home and to exercise fundamental rights like the right to vote. Some of you may have never even heard of the Chibok girls. But if we don't, who will? If we don't teach the world to acknowledge that Black lives matter across the globe, who will? Until then, it will continue to cry for victims of terrorism in European nations, the Middle East and even Russia, while African and African-American lives lost go ignored.

*Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus and represents parts of northern Miami-Dade and southeast Broward counties. She serves on the House Education and the Workforce Committee and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.*

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***“More than 2.6 million people are currently displaced across Nigeria and its neighbor nations in the Lake Chad region, and Nigeria is in the process of building a comprehensive orphanage to house approximately 8,000 children who’ve been separated from their parents. At least one million children have been forced out of school. Millions more Africans are at risk of starving to death and countless men, women and children all of ages, both Christians and Muslims, have been kidnapped, tortured, and/or killed.”***

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school. Millions more Africans are at risk of starving to death and countless men, women and children all of ages, both Christians and Muslims, have been kidnapped, tortured, and/or killed.

It gets worse. In addition to engaging in the human trafficking of women, forcing them into sexual and domestic slavery, the insurgents also use children as suicide bombers. Even ISIS, to whom Boko Haram has pledged allegiance, has expressed concern that the group goes too far.

As a mother, a former educator, and indeed, a human being, I have felt heartbroken, shocked and angered by the daily horrors our West African sisters and brothers have been forced to endure. The actions of the world's most deadly terrorist group have also emboldened me to use my voice and every resource available in the fight to ensure that the

Wednesday" social media campaign that helps maintain pressure on the Nigerian government to keep working to negotiate the release of the remaining Chibok girls and pull out all stops to defeat Boko Haram.

On December 14, 2016, President Barack Obama signed into law legislation that Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) and I sponsored that directs the U.S. secretaries of State and Defense to jointly develop a five-year strategy to aid the Nigerian government, the Multinational Joint Task Force created to combat Boko Haram, and international partners who've offered their support to counter the regional threat the terrorists pose.

In a telephone conversation between President Donald J. Trump and Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari in February, the two leaders pledged "to continue

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# Towson's Hussman Center hires dedicated volunteer

By Stacy M. Brown

Approximately 50,000 youth with autism transition each year to adulthood and only half of them continue with formal education or enter the workforce after high school.

Clifton Crawford III used to be included in that number. At 28, he has never had a job and has never had his own money—that is until Towson University's Hussman Center for Adults with Autism broke the mold and offered him employment.

When he arrived at the Hussman Center, Crawford enrolled in fitness classes designed especially for adults with autism. That's where he found a passion!

Not only did he become a regular in the Wellness Center fitness gym, he also thrived by volunteering to set up, break down and clean equipment for exercise classes.

This year, Wellness Center interim director Dr. Ray Stinar thought Crawford should be paid for his hard work.

Crawford's special needs required TU's HR department to work with some out-of-the-ordinary circumstances, but they were up to the challenge, Stinar said.

Finally, Crawford received a payday.

The Hussman Center for Adults with Autism at Towson counts as one of just a few facilities in the country that specialize in the needs of adults with autism. The center addresses the development of social, workforce and independent living skills.

"I discovered that Clifton had been volunteering at the center once a week, helping Tiffany Harrison, the current leader of the autism fitness program, set up for classes and cleaning equipment for the past several years," Stinar said.

"I felt if we could develop a part-time job for him, this could be a very positive force in his ability to have a meaningful day. As a result, through our foundation account at the Wellness Center, I could contribute, allowing us to fund his part time position," Stinar said, noting that



**Dr. Ray Stinar, interim director, Towson University's Hussman Center for Adults with Autism; Chacquita Crawford; Clifton Crawford; and Tiffany Harrison, exercise physiologist and leader of the autism wellness and fitness program at Towson University's Hussman Center.**  
Courtesy Photo/Towson University Hussman Center

Crawford now works three days a week part-time and, at age 28, has his first paid job.

Harrison says she came to know Crawford in 2012 because he stood out as a strong leader always willing to help. In 2014, she selected Crawford as a Wellness Center volunteer.

"He takes his role and responsibilities seriously, always acting with compassion and thoughtfulness. He's motivated is truly curious and enjoys others," she said.

The check represented a special moment for the Clifton and his mother, Chicquita Crawford—particularly as many recognize the month of April as National Autism Awareness Month.

"I like helping others and I like listening to certain music as I work, when possible, and throughout other activities to help gain more energy," Clifton Crawford said.

"Everyone seemed so proud. I just like

helping others out. I told my mother that she had enough excitement for the both of us," he said, adding that his first paycheck really was no big deal.

Crawford works cleaning exercise equipment, showing students correct exercise forms and assisting individuals by adjusting weights. He is also responsible for washing, drying and folding laundry and cleaning the lint trap of the dryer machine.

His mother couldn't be prouder.

"As a mom, I find that I have extremely mixed emotions with everything, depending on the day and time," Chicquita MB Crawford said. "It is exciting, rewarding, challenging, time consuming and even nerve racking, at times; as I am constantly concerned

about him. Both of us find ourselves addressing mixed emotions as we move forward in life; trying to better understand each other and accepting each other's challenges and successes as we work very hard preparing him for the world ahead. It is a team effort."

When others acknowledge her tenacity and dedication toward supporting her son with autism in living a fulfilling and purposeful life, she stands firm in her acknowledgment of God's infinite plan.

"Children are a gift from God," she said. "We should be blessed to have them. Those parents selected to parent special needs children are the truly special ones. Besides, at least I know what my child is doing and where he is 99.9 percent of the time. I'm truly blessed."

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MedStar Harbor Hospital, Teleconference Room  
3001 S. Hanover St., Baltimore, MD 21225

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Central Church of Christ  
4301 Woodridge Rd., Baltimore, MD 21229

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**Monday, May 1, 2017 | 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

State Center Complex, Room L-1  
201 W. Preston St., Baltimore, MD 21201

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**Monday, May 15, 2017 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

Humanim at the American Brewery  
1701 N. Gay St., Baltimore, MD 21213

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**Monday, May 1, 2017 | 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM**

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Randallstown Community Center  
3505 Resource Dr., Randallstown, MD 21133

Transit to this location: Local Bus No. 54

**Wednesday, May 3, 2017 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

Community Engagement Center,  
University of Maryland, Baltimore  
870 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201

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**Saturday, May 20, 2017 | 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

War Memorial, Assembly Hall  
101 North Gay St., Baltimore, MD 21202

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# Ozzie Newsome could tap Alabama pipeline once again in 2017 NFL Draft

By Turrion Davenport

The Baltimore Ravens are approaching the 2017 NFL Draft with a few holes to fill. The team needs to find a linebacker to pair with All-Pro C.J. Mosley on the inside. They also need to add depth to their cornerback group.

Ravens General Manager Ozzie Newsome played college football for Alabama before the launch of his Hall of Fame NFL career. Newsome has tapped his former school numerous times while with the Ravens and there is a good chance Newsome could add another player from Alabama starting with the No. 16 pick in the draft. Here are some prospects that could be the next player to go from Alabama to Baltimore:

**Jonathan Allen (DL)**— If the Ravens decide to trade up to get a prospect, Allen would be an ideal target. He brings experience in a similar scheme and has the versatility to play anywhere on the defensive front.

Allen is a true impact player, using his violent hands to quickly get into the backfield. The Ravens could use a jolt to the pass rush after trading Timmy Jernigan to the Eagles.

**Reuben Foster (LB)**— Foster is considered to be a top 10-prospect. There are medical issues that could cause him to drop in the draft. He has a history of shoulder stingers. It would not be likely for him to make it past the Ravens if he tumbled into the second half of the first round.

Foster's coverage skills as well as sideline-to-sideline pursuit would be a welcome addition after the Ravens lost Zachary Orr to retirement.

**Marlon Humphrey (CB)**— Humphrey is possibly the most physical cornerback in the 2017 draft. He relishes



Alabama linebacker Reuben Foster (10) lays a big hit on Clemson quarterback Deshaun Watson during the National Championship game as cornerback Marlon Humphrey (26) looks on. Courtesy Photo/AL.com.

opportunities to make plays against the run and beat up receivers at the line of scrimmage preventing them from getting into their routes.

While he may not have the ball skills to register a lot of interceptions, he is still a solid cover corner that fits the Ravens tough guy mindset.

**Tim Williams (OLB)**— Williams was a force as an edge pass rusher at Alabama. He gets a tremendous jump off of the ball, forcing offensive linemen to hurry out of their stance.

Given the release of Elvis Dumervil and the need for more pressure on the quarterback, Williams would be an ideal fit as a situational pass rusher. He is at his best when he is unleashed and able to solely focus on hunting down the quarterback.

**Ryan Anderson (OLB)**— Anderson is another edge player that would fit the Ravens. He is not the speedy pass rusher that Williams is, but he will use his strength

and sheer effort to get to the passer.

Terrell Suggs had a solid season in 2016, but how much longer he will be able to go remains to be seen. Anderson would be a solid option to eventually take over for Suggs.

**ArDarius Stewart (WR)**— At 5' 11" and 204 pounds, Stewart is built like a running back. Stewart brings physicality to the receiver position and would be most useful as a slot receiver.

The Ravens would be able to use him on screens and jet sweeps to get him the ball in space and allow him to gain yards after the catch. Stewart has the toughness to go across the middle and make tough catches in traffic. Having lost Steve Smith Sr. to retirement, Baltimore needs some toughness on the offensive side of the ball.

**Dalvin Tomlinson (DT)**— Tomlinson is another player that could help the Ravens defensive front. He is more than capable of occupying two gaps, which is what Baltimore wants their guys up front to do so the linebackers don't have to deal with offensive linemen.

Like Jernigan, Tomlinson can locate the ball quickly and is eager to chase down running plays.

Don't forget: O.J. Howard (TE) and Cam Robinson (OL) are great prospects too.





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# Baltimore & Me

## Community Policing in Baltimore: Faith-based leaders join forces with police in prayer, outreach



Tiffany Ginyard

*This is part one of three part series*

A preacher's kid, Angel Williams wasn't "in the streets," but having grown up in Baltimore's infamous Park Heights community, she's very familiar with how to move through them without being of them.

For her kids, she said, she wanted better. So when she finally left Baltimore 15 years ago, she vowed never to return. However, war cries from the heart of her hometown soon caught up with her in Texas and called her home.

Williams alludes to Romans 7:23 to contextualize her reason for going back on her word: "Paul said 'the good that I would do, evil is ever so before me.' So, he found himself battling within. I feel like that's where Baltimore is at right now. Baltimore is at war with itself. What's happening right now is coming from within. This is inside stuff, and we can't run away from it; we have to deal with it."

The mother of five has come back simply to give back, and volunteering with the Baltimore City Police Department as a civilian chaplain is her way of dealing with what she left behind.

Her job is to be a bridge between the police and the community. She is currently assigned to man the hospitals in the Western District— St. Agnes and Bon Secours. As an intake coordinator for cancer patients at her day job, she is in familiar company.

The general divide between the community and the police is no secret. Trust left the streets a long time ago, when funds for PAL Centers and Officer Friendly initiatives were cut, recreation centers closed down, and zero tolerance tactics overrode the ethics of community policing.

As the body count for this year's homicides increase exponentially, the writing is on the wall: Real love is cooperation, and divisiveness is death. While politics and statistics have their place, restoring a

sense of humanity among us all is of the essence.

"A lot of people have lost respect for officers; they don't realize that the officers go through what the people in the community go through," Williams said about her experience working with the faith-based program of the Baltimore Police Department Community Collaboration Division. In January, she graduated with the Civilian Chaplain Academy's third class.

"You have to be available. You have to always be willing to serve. This is a calling and when you've been called to do it, you become a servant to whomever, and you have to walk in the spirit of humility."

This is the kind of outreach Baltimore City Police Chief Melvin Russell had in mind eight years ago when he cast his vision for a faith-based initiative to curb crime in the Eastern District, where his humble beginnings as a police officer began.

"The goal was to get all of the churches together to meet at the district," said Det. Quintese Green, one of Russell's day oners.

I remember thinking, 'these people are not going to listen to you and you're not going to be able to do it.' A lot of people had their doubts but he did it. Cause he never gave up.

"He had us go and get every phone number, every address of every church, and have them meet him at the district" said Green. "We had about 80 pastors or clergy meet at the Eastern, and he cast his vision. And it was simple. In order for Eastern district to transform, they were going to all have to come out from their congregations and come together."

After a year or two, crime in the district reached an all-time low, Green said. "And everybody wanted to know how he did it. All he did was encourage the faith-based community to do their part."



*Pastor Eva Sapp (left), a BPD Chaplain Academy alum with recent graduate Angela "Angel" Williams at the commencement ceremony for the BPD Civilian Chaplain Academy's third class.*  
Courtesy Photo

Russell's charge was well received and with this momentum, the mission of the BPD's traditional chaplaincy has expanded to support the work of police in the community with ride alongs; community outreach; assisting officers and civilians on first-responder calls; and are able to offer their training to intervene between civilians and law enforcement during critical situations to perhaps minimize opportunities for injustice.

"I believe that we as chaplains are bridging the gap in the community and with the officers. We are that advocate to speak on behalf, and maybe say what they officers can't say, said Williams. "We are here to breathe the breath of life back into the city of Baltimore to where people don't look at it and see gloom and doom." Det. Green encourages every faith-based

leader in the city to at least sign up for the training so they can get the police perspective. Whether they get on board with the division's collaborative efforts, join the program or not, they will gain invaluable insight that will equip them to participate in effecting change in the community.

"Even if they come to the training and decide it's not right for them," she said. "At least they got the training, and that's huge."

*Tiffany Christy is an urban educator, youth advocate, and multimedia editor and producer. She enjoys capturing the beauty of her beloved Baltimore in words and pictures. Follow her at on Facebook/tiffany.ginyard and visit her blog, Fly Lxf, at www.flygirlnetwork.org/blog.*

# Nikki Giovanni says everyone needs ‘A Good Cry’

By Stacy M. Brown

Contradiction can be a good thing—sometimes.

At least that’s a working theory of famed poet, activist, educator and author Nikki Giovanni, who for more than 30 years has held a unique place on the American stage.

“The older you get, writers have to contradict themselves. It’s incredibly important especially for poets because we write from our emotional experience and we’ve learned something,” said Giovanni, 73, whose fiery, humorous and reflective voice has informed the national conscious and charmed the hearts of millions.

This fall, Giovanni will release her latest book, *A Good Cry: What We Learn from Tears and Laughter* (William Morrow Hardcover, \$19.99).

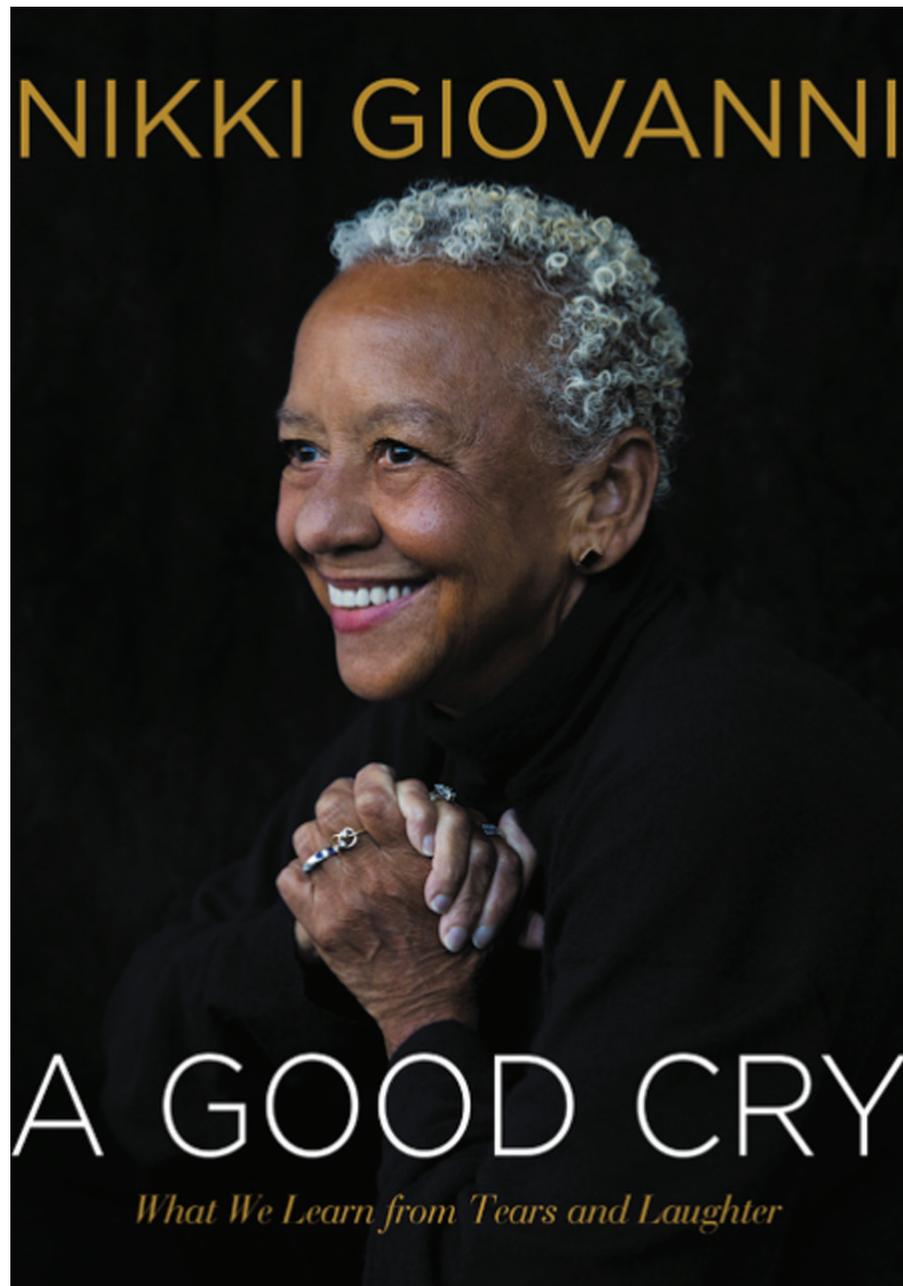
The new book, possibly Giovanni’s most intimate collection yet, recalls the violence that permeated her parents’ marriage and her early life, and how she came to live with the grandparents who Giovanni credits with saving her life.

“Grandpa was in love with grandma until the day he died and grandma helped me to get through a lot,” Giovanni said of her childhood.

Born in 1943 in Knoxville, Tenn., Giovanni now makes her home in Virginia. She first grabbed national attention as part of the Black Arts Movement of the late 1960s.

After graduating with honors from Fisk University in 1967, Giovanni traveled back to her childhood home in Cincinnati and established the city’s first Black Arts Festival. She then penned the poems that are included in her first self-published volume, 1968’s, “Black Feeling, Black Talk.”

By the mid-1970s, Giovanni had established herself as one of the leading poetic voices, according to biography.com. She has won several awards including “Woman of the Year” from Ladies Home Journal in 1973 and made several television appearances, including the African-American arts and culture show, “Soul!”



Courtesy Photo

During the 1980s, she spent much time touring. Giovanni also taught at College Mount St. Joseph and Virginia Tech Uni-

versity, where she still works as a professor. Recently, Giovanni has produced several new works, including “Jimmy

Grasshopper Versus the Ants,” “Rosa,” and “Acolytes.” She also shared a memorable friend-

***“It’s a skill. You have to learn to cry.”***

**—Nikki Giovanni**

ship with the late Maya Angelou and the two formed a bond that included friendly

kitchen competition.

“We’re not competitors in terms of poetry, but we were competitors in terms of food,” Giovanni said. “We lived about two hours away and she’d call me up and say she’s making chicken and some fancy dressing and I’d say, ‘You know, you’re a good cook, but I’m a better cook and your chicken needs a little more lemon,’” Giovanni said, and laughed.

Two years ago, Giovanni suffered a seizure, which not only led her to discovering the benefits of crying – as her new book suggests – but it may lead to the naming of a new disease, she said.

“It’s one of those seizures where you forget things and you have to come back into them,” she said. “My doctor said I have high blood pressure and eat too much junk. I told him that I had a seizure because I never learned to cry and if you don’t learn to cry, you can’t get all of those emotions out. I told him one day there will be a disease called ‘Nikki’ and that he would be the one to invent it.”

A good cry could help most, Giovanni argues.

“It’s a skill. You have to learn to cry. Men, in particular, need to let those emotions out otherwise they’ll be kicking the dog or something,” she said.

Giovanni, a noted activist, said she’s proud of the Black Lives Matter Movement. She said she doesn’t offer them any advice and doesn’t believe older ones should.

“I think our job was done. My generation had to take down signs that said, ‘Colored waiting rooms,’ and we took down segregation. We couldn’t take down racism so we have to allow the young ones to do their jobs,” Giovanni said.

“What I’m looking for as an old black woman is the new music. Black people have bought a sound from the spirituals to hip-hop that explains what’s going on,” she said.

“There has to be a new sound because hip-hop is now classic so something else has to come in that’s protesting. I’m hoping that I live another 10 years to hear what that is because I know it’s going to be good.”

# Life in Baltimore: Polishing Our Pearls in Charm City

## *AKAs to host 86th North Atlantic Regional Conference*

*By Dr. Brenda Bowe Johnson*

By the end of next week, the city will be colored in pink and green, as more than 5,000 members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. convene for the 86th North Atlantic Regional Conference (NARC) April 26-30, 2017. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is the nation's oldest service organization for college-trained African American women.

Under the theme, "Polishing Our Pearls in Charm City," the conference will feature opportunities for members to render services, experience the enchantedness of the Inner Harbor, conduct the business of the region, and build leadership skills.

NARC chairman, Tracey Barbour-Gillett states, "It's been fourteen years since the conference has been held in Baltimore. We are excited to highlight the great things happening here in Baltimore, and we have several Baltimore-specific experiences planned for attendees. The level of support of members in the metro area has been outstanding throughout the planning process."

According to North Atlantic regional director Meredith L. Henderson, this is the largest regional conference ever.

"It is only fitting to return to Baltimore boosting the economy and including a community forum to discuss violence in Baltimore which mirrors many of our communities across the nation," she said.

Panel discussions will provide our members with take-aways to implement in their communities. The community at-large is invited to attend a rousing and provocative forum that will focus on the unlawful police killings of black people, the discrimination in the criminal justice system, the disparities in employment, education and health services in black communities on Saturday, April 29, 2017 from 9 a.m. to noon at Carter Memorial Church of God in Christ, the topic: featuring and Former Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, and a member of the sorority, will moderate



*Left to right: Dr. Nadine Finigan-Carr, Registration Co-Chairman, Arla J. Bentley, Vice-Chairman Operations, Leslie Smith, Vice-Chairman Social; Lavdena A. Orr, Vice Chairman Program, Mona Calhoun, Secretary, and Monica L. White, Registration Chairman. Tracey Barbour-Gillett, Chairman of the North Atlantic Regional Conference (seated).*

*Courtesy Photos*

erate a panel discussion on the topic: "Ending the Violence and Building Healthy Communities." The panel will feature elected officials, policy makers, U.S. Representative Anthony Brown, who is the keynote speaker.

"Generally our regional conference is all business however, this conference is different in that our NARC will feature a number of programs open to the public and designed to provide opportunities for our young people," said Henderson, referring to the Diversity Career Fair scheduled for Thursday, April 27, 2 to 6 p.m.

That evening, from 7:30 to 9:30 pm, the public meeting will welcome dignitaries from Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia regions and members of the PanHellenic Council to honor community leaders who exemplify the sorority's five International Program Targets: Educational Enrichment, Health Promotions, Family Strengthening, Environmental Ownership and Global Impact.

Grammy-nominated R&B artist, Eric Benet will perform in concert Friday evening April 28, 9:00 pm. Area high school students will have the opportunity to meet with representatives from



*Baltimorean Tracey Barbour-Gillett, Chairman of the 86th North Atlantic Regional Conference, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. April 26-30, 2017 at the Baltimore Convention Center.*

Historically Black Colleges and Universities at the HBCU Expo at the Baltimore Convention Center on Saturday, April 29th at 9:00 am. Many students



*Meredith L. Henderson, North Atlantic Regional Director, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. will roll out the "Pink Carpet" for more than 5,000 conference attendees.*

cannot visit the campuses of these colleges therefore information on their admissions processes, and financial aid will be available at the expo.

## Freeway to perform at Kidney Walk

By Stacy M. Brown

Hip Hop artist Freeway, best known for his role as an artist on Jay-Z's Roc-A-Fella Records label, will be the celebrity ambassador during the 15th anniversary of the Greater Baltimore Kidney Walk on Sunday, April 30, 2017.

The event is scheduled for 10 a.m. at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) located at 1000 Hilltop Circle, Lot 22 in Catonsville, Maryland.

For Freeway, the walk is more than just a promotional appearance. After he was diagnosed with kidney failure in 2015, he partnered with the National Kidney Foundation as an ambassador and uses his voice and cultural influence to raise awareness of kidney disease.

"Kidney Walk is something that the National Kidney Foundation does in a lot of cities to raise awareness about kidney disease and to raise funds to help support people with kidney disease," said Freeway, who will perform at the event, which will also feature the world premiere of his documentary about life since his diagnosis.

"I got involved when I was diagnosed with kidney failure," said Freeway, the recipient of the 2016 Patient Advocate Award. "I'm thrilled to be working with the National Kidney Foundation of Maryland for the Greater Baltimore Kidney Walk, where we're expecting 5,000 people, including kidney patients, friends and family members and others wanting to make an impact on a growing public health problem."

Nearly 122,000 individuals are waiting for lifesaving organ transplants in the United States, according to figures provided by the National Kidney Foundation, which notes that those numbers were compiled as of January 2016.

The median wait time for an individual's first kidney transplant is 3.6 years and can vary depending on health, compatibility and the availability of organs.

In 2014, approximately 17,107 kidney transplants took place in the country and of those, 11,570 were from deceased



*After he was diagnosed with kidney failure in 2015, Hip Hop artist Freeway partnered with the National Kidney Foundation as an ambassador and uses his voice and cultural influence to raise awareness about kidney disease. He will be the celebrity ambassador during the 15th anniversary of the Greater Baltimore Kidney Walk on Sunday, April 30, 2017.*

Courtesy Photo/NKF-MD

donors and 5,537 came from living donors, according to the National Kidney Foundation.

On average, more than 3,000 new patients are added to the waiting list each month while 13 individuals die each day awaiting a transplant.

"My responsibility is to spread awareness and get as many people as possible to support the Kidney Walk," Freeway said. "If it's showing up or donating money, we need all the support we can get and I'm very involved in the process of spreading awareness on social media and all the other outlets I have access to."

Freeway made his first major appearance in 2000, on "1-900-Hustler," a

track on Jay-Z's Dynasty Roc la Familia album, according to his biography on Allmusic.com.

His debut album was released in 2003 and titled, Philadelphia Freeway. Three years later, the follow up, Free at Last,

was released with a cast that included Cool & Dre, Don Cannon, Dame Grease, and J.R. Rotem.

Despite his kidney failure diagnosis in 2015, Freeway went on to release the 2016 solo album, Free Will.

"Kidney disease definitely affected my career in the beginning and [it] took some time to adjust. The most difficult part of me being a recording artist with kidney disease is having to do dialysis three times a week, four hours a day," he said. "So, if I'm on tour, I have to set up dialysis in every city that I go to. But I try to find a blessing in everything and the good part of it is the dialysis unit that I go to works with me, and sets dialysis up in every city I have to travel to. They are very cooperative with me."

While he is still awaiting a new kidney, Freeway says it's important to reach out and educate everyone on the disease, and participating in the Kidney Walk is just one part of that education.

"I feel as though it is vital for people to know you should keep up with your routine physicals and see the doctor at least once a year for a complete physical," he said. "I was walking around with three of the leading risk factors for kidney disease and didn't even know it."

"I have diabetes which is one of the leading risk factors; I also have high blood pressure, which is one of the leading risk factors. The third risk factor is surprising, but just me being African-American is a risk factor. Knowing is half the battle," he said.

For more information about the Kidney Walk, visit <http://www.kidneymd.org/events/2017-kidney-walks/>.

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## Celebrate National Arbor Day with 10 Free Shade Trees by Joining the Arbor Day Foundation



Nebraska City, NE— National Arbor Day is Friday, April 28, this year, and the Arbor Day Foundation is making it easy for anyone to celebrate the annual tree-planting holiday. Join the Foundation in April and receive 10 free shade trees.

By joining the Foundation in April, new members receive the following trees: red oak, sugar maple, weeping willow, baldcypress, thornless honeylocust, pin oak, river birch, tuliptree, silver maple, and red maple.

The free trees are part of the Foundation's Trees for America campaign. "These trees provide shade in the summer and vibrant colors throughout the fall," said Matt Harris, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Through the simple act of planting trees, one person can make a difference in helping to create a healthier and more beautiful planet for all of us to enjoy."

The trees will be shipped postpaid with enclosed planting instructions at the right time for planting in April or May. The six to 12-inch trees are guaranteed to grow or they will be replaced free of charge.

To become a member of the Foundation and receive the free trees, send a \$10 contribution to Ten Free Shade Trees, Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410, by April 30, 2017, or visit [arbor-day.org/april](http://arbor-day.org/april).

# Rambling Rose

## Calendar of Events



*Rosa Pryor Trusty*

**April 22, 2017**

D&K Entertainment will host Baltimore's Spring Fest Cabaret featuring live entertainment with Rolls Royce, The Delfonics, Supreme's Tribute featuring Sandra Taylor; Panama, BO'NA and Palovation on Saturday, April 22, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Patapsco Arena, 3301 Annapolis Road. The event is open bar and BYOF. For ticket information, call Don at 443-447-2207 or T-Shirt Brian at 410-790-9333.

An Evening with "The Family" and special guest, "Musicians Paradise" at Personality Hall, 2014 Harford Road in Baltimore on Saturday, April 22 from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m. Food is on sale, it is cabaret style; BYOB. For more information, call 410-502-7266.

**April 28, 2017**

Project Team Mom presents on Friday, April 28 an "All White Masquerade Fundraiser" at the Milbrook Community Center, 6806 Milbrook Park Drive in Baltimore. The event includes buffet, cash bar and music provided by DJ Mike Jones. For ticket information, call 443-738-4903.

**April 29, 2017**

Sean E. Merryman Promotions presents Comedy Show & Dinner starring the hilarious Ms. Stilleto, Hot new comedian, Keith Smith; and hosted my Ms. Maybelle on Saturday, April 29, 5 p.m. at the Forest Park Senior Center, 4801 Liberty Heights Avenue. For more information, call 410-215-8893.

Auto Fest Show at Casino at Ocean Downs, 10218 Racetrack Road in Berlin, Maryland on Saturday, April 29 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Open to all years, makes & models. Award Ceremony at 3:30 p.m. Categories: dirt car, rat rods, muscle cars, exotics, race cars, hot rods, tuners, pro street, classics, imports and trucks. It's fun for everyone, food & beverage tents, Dash plaques and it's free to all.

**April 30, 2017**

Spring Fest on April 30 Benefit Concert at St. Philips Lutheran Church, 501 N. Caroline Street in Baltimore featuring the Voices of Affirmed Odyssey, Serenity, Rebirth and many others. Mistress of Ceremony is Doresa Harvey from Heaven 600.

*Well, my dear friends, I am out of space, enjoy your week and remember, if you need me call me at 410-833-9474. Please send all correspondence, flyers, and press releases to my email: rosapryor@aol.com not by face book. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.*



*Kojo Roney, 13-year-old prodigy jazz drummer and the nephew of Wallace Roney will perform with his uncle at Caton Castle on Saturday, April 22, 6-10 p.m. Kojo Odu Roney has been playing since he was a toddler. Roney was able to play with jazz ensembles by age four and began his professional music career at age eight when he went on his first tour of Europe.*



*Wallace Roney, renowned saxophonist and his quartet will perform at the Caton Castle, 20 S. Caton Avenue in Baltimore on Saturday, April 22, 6-10 p.m. featuring Curtis Lundy with Kojo Roney, age 13, Emilo Modesto, age 17 and Oscar Williams. For tickets, call 410-566-7086*



*Eunice Mosley, Baltimore's own nationally known as an entertainment promoter, freelance writer, now lives in California remembers her roots by bringing to Security Square Mall to Baltimore an "Uplifting Minds II" Entertainment Conference on Saturday, April 22, 1-5 p.m. This form will showcase singers, actors, songwriters and dancers. It is hosted by Heaven 600, Doresa Harvey "Our Mid-Day Diva. The event is free.*



*Ethel Ennis, will be honored by the Sisters Academy of Baltimore at a formal event called "Jazzin' It Up at the Park" on Saturday, April 22 at the Montgomery Park, 1880 Washington Boulevard from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Enjoy a festive evening with a culinary tour of America's great jazz music, gambling room, dancing and live entertainment dating back to the 1920's. For more information, call 410-242-1212 ext.12.*

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## Former Vice President Joe Biden to Keynote MSU's 141st Spring Commencement

Baltimore—Morgan State University President David Wilson announced that Joseph R. Biden Jr., U.S. vice president for two terms in the Obama administration, will deliver the keynote address during the University's 141st Spring Commencement exercises, on Saturday, May 20, 2017, 9:30 a.m., at Hughes Stadium, on Morgan's campus.

Biden is one of four distinguished citizens who will receive honorary doctorates during the commencement: veteran journalist and Morgan graduate April Ryan will be awarded a Doctor of Laws, and philanthropists C. Sylvia Brown and Sheldon Goldseker, and Biden, will receive Doctor of Public Service degrees.

"Morgan State University was founded to strengthen dispossessed communities and broaden the distribution of educational opportunities to talented students who otherwise would be denied," said Morgan President David Wilson. "We are proud to continue that vital tradition into our sesquicentennial year.

"The honored guests who will attend our commencement this year—those on the dais as well as those in the stands—have the same commitment to social advancement and equity that the founders of Morgan had in 1867," Wilson continued. "And now, as then, Morgan is sending its graduates into the world prepared to provide good leadership and meet the great challenges of the future."

Vice President Joe Biden was born in Scranton, Pa., and moved to Delaware with his family when he was 11. At age 29, he was elected to represent Delaware in the U.S. Senate, where he served for 36 years. He served as the 47th vice president of the U.S., from 2009 to 2017.

More than 1,200 candidates will receive bachelor's, master's or doctoral degrees during the commencement, which is a highlight of Morgan's year-long Sesquicentennial Celebration.

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# BGE Marks 10th Annual National Safe Digging Month

*Company reminds customers to call 811 before you dig*

Baltimore— This April marks the 10th annual National Safe Digging Month and BGE reminds all customers and contractors to call 811 to have utility-owned underground lines marked before digging. Nationwide, every six minutes there is damage to an underground utility line because of digging without first calling 811, according to the Common Ground Alliance, the national association that promotes the 811 phone number and safe digging practices. CGA also reports that damages to underground lines have been reduced by 54 percent since the inception of National Safe Digging Month.

Striking an underground electric or natural gas pipe can cause serious injury, damages and service interruptions.

Every digging project, no matter how large or small, warrants a call to 811.

Installing a mailbox, building a deck, planting a tree and laying a patio are all examples of digging projects where a

call to 811 should be one of the first steps.

BGE manages nearly 16,000 circuit miles of underground electric lines and more than 7,000 miles of buried natural gas lines in its region, many of which may cross through residential properties. Properly locating these lines is essential to safely completing a digging job. In addition to BGE's lines, there are underground communications cables, water and sewer lines, and other utilities.

When calling 811, customers and contractors are connected to Miss Utility to provide information about their project. Miss Utility will notify BGE and all member utilities of your plan to dig. The utilities will then mark their underground facilities. In some cases, Maryland law requires a call at least two business days in advance of digging.

Once lines are located, excavators also must understand the markings and look for evidence of unmarked lines, such as water and sewer lines on private property. Sewer clean-outs and water valve covers are examples of equipment that



can indicate the presence of underground lines.

BGE joins the Exelon family of utilities in marking National Safe Digging Month, and is a member of the Common Ground Alliance to share best practices to promote safe excavation and lower instances of damage to underground lines.

For information on digging safely, including how to get lines marked and what to do after lines are marked, watch BGE's Dig Smart video. Excavators can also contact the BGE Damage Prevention team at 410-470-6698 to arrange for free damage prevention training. To learn more visit [www.bge.com/811](http://www.bge.com/811).

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FOR A 2nd CHANCE TO WIN CASH, visit [mdlottery.com](http://mdlottery.com)

\$5

NO PRIZE LESS THAN \$10!

2017

**HOMERUN RICHES**

EXTRA GAME ON BACK!

TOP PRIZE \$50,000!

HOME RUN NUMBERS

YOUR NUMBERS

\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

PRIZE CHECK

MARYLAND LOTTERY



**FOR A  
2nd CHANCE  
TO WIN CASH,  
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Please play responsibly. For help, visit [mdgamblinghelp.org](http://mdgamblinghelp.org) or call 1-800-GAMBLER. Must be 18 years or older to play.