

## Miss Black Maryland Graduates Dental School



*Ashlee Thomas, the reigning Miss Black Maryland USA, is now Dr. Ashlee Thomas. Thomas earned a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree on May 19, 2017 from the University of Maryland School of Denistry. Thomas says she is honored to be among the six percent of African-American dentists and growing percentage of women dentists who graduate each year. (See article on page 12). Courtesy Photo*

# Hosanna School Museum holds Juneteenth Celebration

Darlington, Md.— As part of its 150th anniversary, Hosanna School Museum will hold a Juneteenth celebration festival on Saturday, June 17, 2017 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the museum located at 2424 Castleton Road in Darlington. The festival is free and open to the public.

Juneteenth is a nationally recognized day that commemorates the ending of slavery in the United States and celebrates African American history and culture.

Hosanna's Juneteenth celebration will feature re-enactors, living history presentations, lectures, craft vendors, special activities for children, food trucks, a gift shop and more. Hosanna is partnering on the celebration with the Iota Nu Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., which has hosted Juneteenth celebrations for several years in Harford County.

At the Juneteenth celebration, living history re-enactor Brittany Martin will portray Edmonia Highgate, the first teacher at Darlington School, later called Hosanna School. Highgate, is a historical figure who worked alongside nationally recognized abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, Jermain Loguen and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper.

While preparing for this living history presentation, historians and volunteers at Hosanna have discovered new information about Highgate and her role at Hosanna.



*The Juneteenth Celebration on Saturday, June 17, 2017, is part of Hosanna School Museum's 150th anniversary festivities. Juneteenth is a nationally recognized day that commemorates the end of slavery in the United States and celebrates African American history and culture. Courtesy Photo/Hosanna School Museum*

"Education and achievement in the African American community are important parts of the Juneteenth celebration," said Iris Leigh Barnes, executive director of Hosanna School Museum. "We welcome everyone on June 17 to help us celebrate—in grand festival style—the anniversary of the ending of slavery and commemorate Hosanna School Museum's 150th anniversary this year.

There will be activities for the entire family and a chance to enjoy our beautiful rural setting."

Sponsors of Juneteenth include Harford County Office of Economic Development.

Hosanna School Museum was the first of three Freedmen's Bureau schoolhouses in Harford County. Also known as the Darlington School or Berkley

School, Hosanna was built on land owned by James Paca, the son of Cupid Paca, a free African American who bought 50 acres of land from Berkley to Darlington.

The Freedmen's Bureau funded the construction of the two-story frame building, which was used as a school, community, meeting place and church. Operation of the school was assumed by the Harford County School Commissioners in 1879. Hosanna remained active as a schoolhouse for African American children until 1945.

Three years later, in 1948, Hosanna Community House, Inc. (current owner) was formed. The school building was used as a community meeting place until the late 1950s when Hurricane Hazel sheared off the top floor. With limited funds, the board preserved what was left of the building by placing a roof on the remaining structure. After these repairs, the building was once again a community center, although one-story, used primarily by the Boys Scouts.

Significant restoration of the building began in 1983, and the second floor was added in 2005, returning it to its original two-story structure. Currently it is a living schoolhouse museum, attracting visitors from all over the country. The building is also used for community meetings and events.



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# Guest Editorials/Letters

## Medicare isn't broken; quit trying to fix it

By Paul Downey

Tens of thousands of seniors owe their lives to Medicare's prescription drug benefit, according to a new study from the University of Illinois. The program reduces mortality rates among the elderly by more than two percent annually and it costs far less than government actuaries originally predicted.

Put simply, Medicare's drug benefit is a resounding success. Yet some lawmakers and White House advisors want to overhaul it. The changes they're proposing could put seniors' lives at risk.

Known as "Part D," Medicare's drug benefit keeps costs down by forcing private insurers to compete for beneficiaries.

Here's how the program works. Insurers bargain with drug manufacturers to secure big discounts on medicines. Drug companies are willing to give those discounts, since insurers can make the medicines available to a huge number of customers. Once insurers have secured these discounts, they develop a variety of different plans, with a varying mix of covered medicines, deductibles, and premiums.

Insurers then submit these plans to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for approval. Once CMS approves the plans, insurers can market them to seniors. Seniors then choose between competing insurance plans, picking the ones that best fit their needs. Nationwide, 41 million Part D beneficiaries can pick from nearly 750 different plans. Many of these plans offer premiums under \$20.

Seniors are happy with their choices. About nine in 10 are satisfied with their Part D coverage—and 85 percent say they get good value from the program.

By keeping seniors healthy, Part D reduces mortality and saves taxpayers money. Indeed, by helping seniors adhere to treatment regimens studies have concluded that Part D prevents more than 22,000 untimely deaths each year. By preventing hospital admissions, the program also saves Medicare \$1.5 billion annually.

Fierce competition between insurers has kept premiums much lower than anticipated. In its first decade, the program cost 45 percent—\$349 billion—less than originally expected.

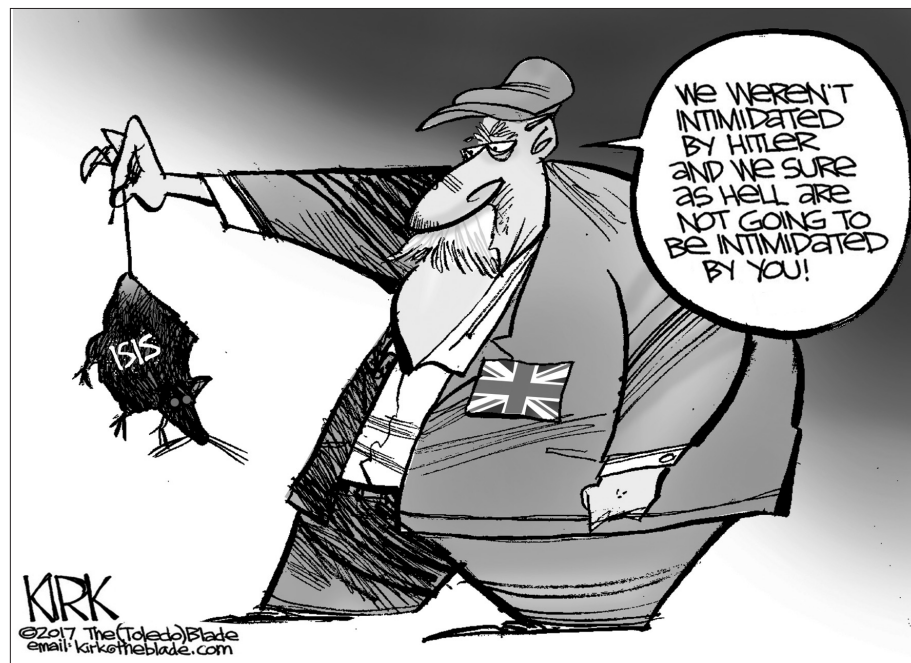
Despite this success, some policymakers are advocating for the federal government to push private insurers aside and negotiate drug prices directly with pharmaceutical companies.

Such a change would likely lead to fewer drug choices for seniors. The Congressional Budget Office already has concluded that the only way the government could secure significant discounts would be to establish a "formulary," or a list of approved medicines. If government officials decide to leave a drug off the formulary, seniors wouldn't be able to obtain it, regardless of which plan they chose.

The Veteran's Administration already uses this formulary model. Government officials decline to include one-fifth of the 200 most-prescribed drugs for seniors on the VA formulary. Veterans who need those excluded drugs have to pay for them out of pocket. If they can't afford them, they're often out of luck.

Seniors on Medicare's drug benefit rarely face such dilemmas. Most Part D plans cover well over 90 percent of popular medicines. Medicare Part D saves lives at a bargain price for seniors and taxpayers. Why change what's working?

*Paul Downey is the president and CEO of Serving Seniors.*



## Letters to the Editor:

**Editor:**

**Re: European Immigrant Problems**

A truck assault in Berlin Germany is one of many problems Germany is experiencing with 1 million Middle East and North African immigrants, mostly young males, who are committing murders, robberies and assaults on German Christians and Jews, especially women; and Chancellor Merkel wants to take in another 1 million. The German interior minister said German citizens with dual nationalities who are terrorists and/or a threat to national security should be deported.

These people come from a different culture, and their loyalty is not to Germany. They do not respect native Germans and consider them infidels to be converted or made to pay tribute or killed.

Germany is reaping the whirlwind of what it sowed in the 1930s and 1940s when it murdered about 25 million

European Christians and Jews, especially Russians and Poles. Since then Germany has tried to make up for its barbarism and guilt complex by opening its borders to lawless migrants.

The United States should pay attention to the immigrant problems in Germany, France, Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands, Belgium and other European countries, and implement strict immigration policies to bolster our security and prevent potential terrorists of any background from entering our country.

**Donald Moskowitz**  
Former AG2 and LT,  
U.S. Navy  
Londonderry, NH

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## *GOP and identity politics in the black community*

**By Raynard Jackson**  
*NNPA Newswire Columnist*

The Republican Party continues to miss the mark when it comes to engaging the black community.

For those Republicans, who fastidiously claim they don't believe in "identity politics (IP)," let me give you a piece of advice: Stop It!

Politically speaking, IP is a campaign based on the particular needs of a specific group of people that will give them the rationale or incentive to vote for your candidate.

For example, a Republican candidate would campaign in the black community on issues like entrepreneurship, civil rights, voting rights, etc.; whereas the same candidate might campaign in the Hispanic community on issues like entrepreneurship, immigration and cultural assimilation.

Far too many Republicans assert that "we are all Americans and all want the same things: jobs, education, safe neighborhoods, etc." This is all true, but a ridiculously bland message when it comes to outreach in the black community.

While core messaging should be a constant for all candidates, the way you communicate that message has to be crafted based on the audience you are addressing.

In business, we call this market segmentation. This is most often done with the S-T-P approach; which is segmentation, targeting and positioning. Once you segment the voters, blacks, Asians, Hispanics, etc., you then create a targeted campaign to speak directly to each individual group; finally, you position your messaging in a way that will resonate with that group.

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***"Republicans must first and foremost persuade blacks that conservatism is not incompatible with civil rights, voting rights and equal opportunity, but rather these issues are a fundamental part of conservatism."***

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McDonald's is a classic example. Their objective is to sell their Big Macs to the American people, so their TV commercials are all trying to convince the country to buy their product, but they also are smart enough to use IP or market segmentation to achieve their stated objective— selling more hamburgers.

So, it makes all the sense in the world for McDonald's to use black actors when advertising on BET and Hispanic actors when advertising on Univision. This is the commercial application of identity politics.

When have you ever seen men selling women undergarments in Victoria Secrets commercials? That's right, you haven't.

Republicans have become so data driven that they no longer have any vision.

It's not enough for Republicans to reflexively spout out buzz words and phrases like: "We are the big tent party"; "the party of Abraham Lincoln"; "We believe in lower taxes, smaller govern-

ment, more individual freedom," yada, yada, yada.

Republicans must first and foremost persuade blacks that conservatism is not incompatible with civil rights, voting rights and equal opportunity, but rather these issues are a fundamental part of conservatism.

Republicans must, by their actions, demonstrate that black businesses tend to flourish when Republicans control the levers of government compared to when Democrats are in power.

I wrote about this, in 2012, in a piece

for Black Enterprise. Democrats and the Obama Administration have done very little for black-owned businesses over the last eight years.

Republicans have a huge opportunity to engage directly with the black community on the specific issue of entrepreneurship. Not only are these black businessmen fervent supporters of abolishing the capital gains tax, accelerated depreciation (writing off all capital purchases in year one), and lowering the corporate tax rate, but they also want to be relieved of all the onerous regulations imposed on them by Obama's reign of terror on small and minority businesses.

According to the University of Georgia's Selig Center for Economic Growth, "Black buying power is \$ 1.2 trillion; which would make black America the 15th largest economy in the world in terms of gross domestic product (GDP)." That is equivalent to the size of Mexico.

Two years ago, the Aspen Institute and

"The Atlantic" released a poll that was stunning. According to their poll, blacks represent the largest group in the country that "believes that the American Dream is attainable with hard work."

So, to those Republicans, who think that blacks are just waiting for more government programs and more hand-outs, I say, you're wrong.

The black community is open for business and willing to engage with the Republican Party, but when will the party address the issues we are interested in, not the issues that they think we're interested in?

We need access to capital, our fair share of government contracts, which is mandated by law, a seat at the decision-making table and input in to policies that affect the economy.

And what will the party get in return for doing business with the black community? The party will see blacks voting for Republicans in double digits. The party will see a growth in financial contributions from leading businessmen, who currently see absolutely no value in contributing to Republican campaigns or entities. The party will also get fresh perspectives and new ideas from the top thinkers in the black community; who are also the "real" leaders within our community.

But most importantly, the party will find that the black community is already in sync with its business agenda; the GOP simply needs to extend a sincere invitation.

Come on Republicans. What in the hell do you have to lose?

*Raynard Jackson is founder and chairman of Black Americans for a Better Future (BAFBF), a federally registered 527 Super PAC established to get more blacks involved in the Republican Party. BAFBF focuses on the Black entrepreneur. For more information about BAFBF, visit [www.bafbf.org](http://www.bafbf.org).*

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# Jubilant BCCC graduates determined to pay it forward

By Deborah Bailey

There was a lot of whooping, a little bit of hollering and endless hugs and tears of joy on display at the Lyric Opera House this past weekend. The jubilant sounds were the sweetest music to the ears of the Baltimore City Community College's 2017 graduating class. The city's only public community college concluded the college's 70th anniversary year with graduation ceremonies held in midtown Baltimore.

BCCC's 2017 graduates range in age from 18 to 70 and hail from 100 countries including: Belarus, the home of class valedictorian Larysa Paliashchuk, who traveled from a small town in the Eastern European country to study at BCCC. Paliashchuk expressed love and gratitude for BCCC and the opportunity it represents for students from many cultures and experiences.

"All of us came from different backgrounds, families and upbringings. We all have different stories to share. But today, we're graduating as one," Paliashchuk said.

Mayor Catherine E. Pugh, the keynote speaker for the occasion, recounted the tenacity and endurance BCCC graduates displayed to make it successfully to graduation.

"I know that for many of you this has not been easy. Some have struggled, working every day trying to make sure family needs and obligations were met," Pugh said.

Pugh's speech was punctuated with "amens" and affirmations of "yes that's right" from the audience as she encouraged graduates to continue the next chapter of their lives with the same resolve used to juggle multiple priorities and steer through obstacles to arrive at graduation.



(Left) BCCC Nursing graduate Denise Burrus-Moseley overcame a personal health crisis—a stroke—to receive her degree in person at the 2017 commencement ceremonies on Saturday, June 3, 2017. (Right) The Class of 2017 graduates are greeted by Dr. Gordon F. May, BCCC president and CEO, and college trustees during commencement ceremonies.

Courtesy Photos/BCCC

"Others slipped into classrooms between getting children off to school and helping them with their homework in the evening and working eight hour shifts. Regardless of your struggle, today you all have arrived at the same place. You may not have come here today at the same pace—but you all are here," Pugh affirmed.

Student Success Center Advisor, Tanya Deshields celebrated as intensely as her graduates and their parents when students were called to the stage to receive their degrees.

"To see the success of students who graduate from Baltimore City Community College [is] what we look forward to each year," Deshields said. "A lot of our students have different struggles, different challenges and to see them make it to the stage to graduate means they are overcomers."

Ultimately, BCCC graduations are fam-

ily affairs. For Denise Burrus-Moseley, like many other BCCC graduates, graduation day is as much a milestone achievement for family as it is for the graduate.

Denise's husband sat quietly on the edge of his chair, waiting for his wife to be called to the stage. Burrus-Moseley suffered a stroke just two weeks before graduation, but Dennis said she insisted on being present for the ceremony. So the family sprang into action to support her on her special day.

"We had to roll her in from the nursing home. She just had to come here," Moseley said.

Denise, who earned her Associate of Science Degree in Nursing has worked for 32 years as a nurse and was determined to take her love of caring for others to the next level.

"She went through so much to get this degree. She's done a fine job. She

deserves it," Moseley beamed. "My daughters, her grandchildren and all of her loved ones are so proud to see her here today."

Like many newly minted BCCC graduates, Regine Gambrell, a Baltimore native is on her way to "paying it forward" for Baltimore, as Mayor Pugh encouraged during her speech. Gambrell, who earned her Associate of Arts in Allied Human Services, hopes to open group homes for children in Baltimore after obtaining her bachelor's and master's degrees in social work.

Exuberant and with degree in hand, Gambrell summed up the pride and possibilities expressed by her fellow BCCC graduates.

"It feels really, really good. It feels like I can do anything," she said, glowing. "I'm not going to stop because this world really needs me."

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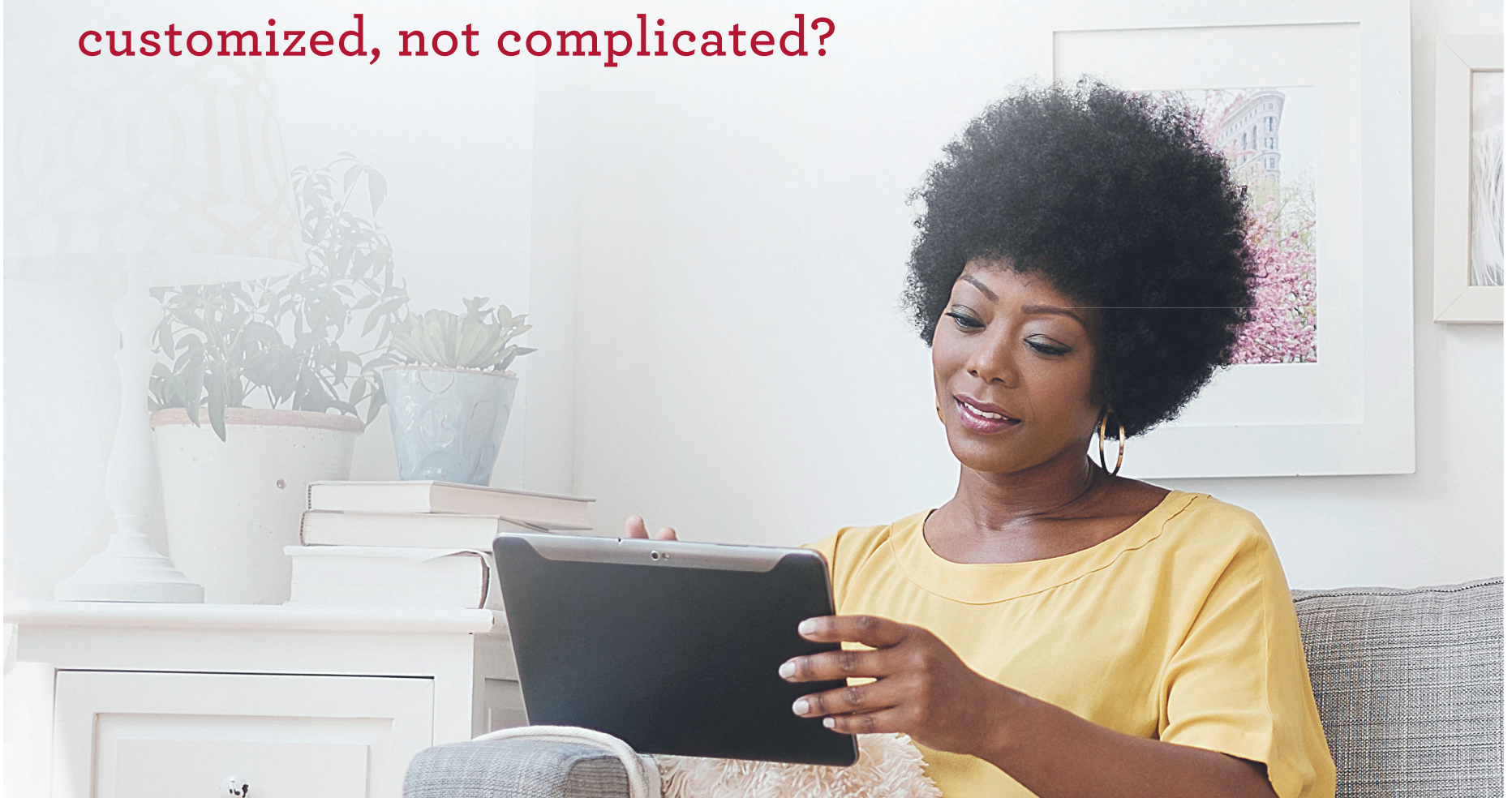
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# Defensive tackle Brandon Williams ready to show he is a team leader

By Turron Davenport

Brandon Williams signed a five-year, \$52.5 million contract with the Baltimore Ravens, which includes a \$12.5 million signing bonus, \$33.8 million guaranteed, and an average annual salary of \$10.5 million.

However with the big contract, comes big expectations.

Now entering his fifth NFL season, Williams is one of the veteran players on defense and will be expected to step up as a team leader. Ravens head coach John Harbaugh has been impressed with what he has from Williams so far during Organized Team Activities (OTAs).

"I see it in the weight room, I see it out here on the field, and I see it in the meeting room," Harbaugh said after OTAs last week. "We are expecting a dominant player, flat-out. He has the capability of doing that. I expect him to be a leader. He is a young guy, but he is the leader of that group. I expect him to be great." Elvis Dumervil and Terrell Suggs have been the defensive leaders over the last few seasons. Dumervil was released and recently signed with the San Francisco 49ers. Although Suggs is still the team's top pass rusher, Williams is ready to take on the role of team leader, especially for the defense.

"We have a bunch of leaders on the team. But, yes I do. I feel like I have to carry the D-line on my back. I am trying to get to know the guys a little bit

more—the new guys a little bit more," Williams explained after practice last week. "Just whoever I can teach, help or whatever, I am definitely ready for it. I feel like we are going to be a great cohesive unit this year, and we are going to get things done."

The large contract that Williams signed motivates him to show that he is worthy of being a top paid player on the team. As a former third-round pick out of Missouri Southern, a Division II school, Williams has come a long way. The road doesn't stop here; rather it is only the beginning.

"The next step for me, I feel like, is to just get better. People say, 'Oh you got a contract, and now you can kind of relax.' There is no relaxing," Williams said. "It is actually that you got the contract, so now you have to earn your keep. So, now you have to push the gas a little bit harder and kind of get as much as you can out of yourself to show people, 'Hey, I earned this.' It is not like they just gave it to me. It is because I actually do what I have to do every day."



Ravens defensive tackle Brandon Williams celebrates after making a defensive stop during the 2016 NFL season. Photo is courtesy of NFL.com

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# New Beginnings: Genesis 4U promotes female entrepreneurship

By Ursula V. Battle

Referencing Genesis, entrepreneur Erica Massenburg credits the first book in The Bible for being the impetus for starting her company, Genesis 4 U.

“Sometimes, women who may have gone through a difficult circumstance or time in their life, might feel like that [its] the end and want to give up,” said Massenburg. “But I want women to see that with the help of God, doors can be opened that could lead to a pathway for a new beginning.”

She added, “Ultimately, I want women to seek ways to come out of disparaging situations by seeing other women in business. By being exposed to female entrepreneurs, my hope is that these women can be encouraged, and take the necessary to take to start their own businesses.”

Massenburg says that she and her husband Hasson Massenburg Sr., co-founded Genesis4U in 2014.

“We are always looking for ways to give back to the community,” she said.



*Erica Massenburg is the co-founder of Genesis 4 U, an organization that encourages and promotes female entrepreneurship. Courtesy Photo*

Genesis 4U recently held an event at the America Cancer Society Hope Lodge at 636 Lexington Street in Baltimore

The networking event, entitled, “Better Together We Soar, Part 2,” drew several entrepreneurs who shared information about their products, services, tips and other information.

“I was primarily looking at starting an avenue for women to come together, not just to sell, but to network,” she said. “I wanted women to get information to better themselves, mentally and physically. I also wanted to help promote and serve as an avenue to bring women together to share information with one another so we can grow. When we don’t work together, it stifles our growth. When we work together, we can soar.”

She added, “The vendors felt they got a lot out of it. They got to network with one another and got to learn from one another. They got tips and trips about marketing and growing their businesses. That was a plus. The goal of this event was to provide another avenue to build relations and entrepreneurship within our community. God has given me a heart and desire to help others and I will

continue to do so.”

According to Massenburg, proceeds raised from the event benefited the American Cancer Society. Barbara Cooper was among those who attended the event.

“I was truly touched,” said Cooper. “Erica held this event to help other women soar. It was an encouraging and uplifting event.”

Massenburg, 43, is a native of Baltimore. She attended Western Senior High School. She earned her BS from Villa Julia College and an MBA from Johns Hopkins University. She and her husband have two children, Hasson, 14 and Trinity, 12.

The participating vendors were: Free By Me, Sassy Shots, Magnolia Vine Jewelry and Accessories, LuLa Roe Clothing, Initials Inc. Personalized Accessories, Total Life Changes, Rebellious Graphics, Heavenly Cleaning Services, LLC, Dione Glam Jewels, Sweet Treats, Mary Kay, and Hair Chemistry.

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# Non-profit fighting childhood obesity with local youth triathlon and duathlon

By Stacy M. Brown

Baltimore-based International Association of Black Triathletes (IABT) will host a youth triathlon on Saturday, June 25, 2015 at Druid Hill Park.

Organization officials note that childhood obesity is a growing problem in the United States with studies showing that American children, particularly those from economically distressed regions, often don't have access to a proper diet or exercise regimen.

"The current obesity rates for high school students are 11.5 percent; in 10 to 17 year olds, 15.1 percent; and for two to four-year-olds who are WIC participants, 16.5 percent," said Dr. Tekemia Dorsey, a nationally certified race director and executive director of the IABT. "These numbers remain on the rise, and looking at the [current] rates of adult obesity, the rates for youth will be much higher when they venture into adulthood."

Further, Maryland has the 31st highest adult obesity rate in the nation, according to report, "The State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America," which was released last year.

Maryland's obesity rate stands at 28.9 percent, up from 16.9 percent in 2000 and 10.8 percent in 1990.

"Childhood obesity did not just seemingly become such a major problem, it has always been a major concern. Unless or until a person or an organization highlights it, it is simply viewed as another problem, although lives are impacted by it directly in communities and across the country," Dr. Dorsey said.

While the fight against childhood obesity isn't new, IABT counts as the first organization to battle the health disparity through multi-disciplined sports—triathlons, duathlons and Youth Aquathons—in Maryland and in Baltimore, according to Dr. Dorsey.

"National organizations such as USA Triathlon, which we are affiliated with, is also using multi-disciplined sports to fight the good fight against obesity and to make a difference in communities," she said.

Formed in 2012, IABT started as a



(Above) The youth pictured received medals, swag bags and a Certificate of Completion for taking part in IABT's Overcoming Childhood Obesity through Multi-Disciplined Sports Programs.

Facebook group where African-American athletes gathered to support one another through training, events, nutrition and other activities.

In 2014, a core group decided to make more of an effect beyond a social group, so they transitioned into an organization.

Over the last five years, IABT has helped more than 100,000 individuals.

"In January, 2016 we began cross training a group of Baltimore City youth as triathletes, teaching them how to swim, working with them in cycling and improving their run, while also working on strength and conditioning, and nutrition as athletes and individuals," Dr. Dorsey said.

Two of those athletes were brothers new to the country, still considered immigrants. In their native home, Africa, they excelled at soccer and running but not much else.

"After two months of training, the eldest brother, Ismail, wanted to take part in his first duathlon event. The event was held in Hagerstown and he came in 1st place in his age group and qualified to go to National Duathlon Championships," she said.

On June 25, 2017, the inaugural IABT

Youth Triathlon, Duathlon & Splash N Dash Event for ages six to 15 will be held at Druid Hill Park with an eye toward combatting childhood obesity.

"Not every youth is going to play or even feel comfortable with mainstream sports such as football, basketball, softball, tennis or even track and field," Dorsey said. "Most youth who are obese or lack a sense of self choose not to be active, leading to poor health outcomes in many cases."

The beauty of multi-disciplined sports is that they are universal to all, regardless of age, shape, size, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, or academic level, Dorsey noted.

"We hope to demonstrate to youth and [their] parents that there are alternative ways to get healthy and active. They can



IABT junior athletes placed first, second and third in their respective age groups in a Youth Aquathon in Columbia, Maryland in summer 2016. (Left to right) Halee (11 - 3rd Place); Heaven (12 - 2nd Place), Leiliani (13) is still learning to swim and came to support her teammates; and BJ (9 - 1st Place). Courtesy Photos/IABT

do it as a family as well," she said.

For more information about IABT or to register for the event, visit: [www.active.com](http://www.active.com) or [www.theiabt.org](http://www.theiabt.org)

# Maryland State Youth of the Year to Compete in New York

By Stacy M. Brown

Anne Arundel County resident, Sydney Williams was named Maryland State Youth of the Year by the Boys & Girls Club of America, an honor that will allow her to compete in the Northeast Regional Finals in New York on Monday, June 19, 2017.

A victory there means Sydney would advance to the National Youth of the Year Gala in Washington, where one young person will be named Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Teen Spokesperson.

"I was truly shocked because there were some amazing candidates this year, but I felt proud of the fact that all of my hard work was paying off," said Sydney, a junior at Indian Creek Upper School in Crownsville who was awarded \$5,000 for her victory.

After high school, she plans to attend an Ivy League School where she'll pursue her dream of becoming an obstetrician.



Sydney Williams of Anne Arundel County was named Maryland State Youth of the Year by the Boys & Girls Club of America. Courtesy Photo

"I'm really happy that I get to represent the Boys and Girls Club for the state of Maryland and I'm excited to go on to regional competition," she said, crediting her parents with her success. "Whatever my goal, they are always there to help me through the process."

The Youth of the Year title counts as the most prestigious honor bestowed upon an exemplary young person in recognition of leadership, service, academic excellence and dedication to living a healthy lifestyle, according to a news release issued by the club.

"We are extremely proud of our daughter. At a young age, Sydney have set personal goals for herself to strive for success in academics, sports, and being a good steward in her community," said Sydney's mother, Antonia Williams.

"The fact that she was even recognized cannot begin to express how overjoyed and pleased," Williams said. "As parents, we face the challenge of keeping both of our children focused on accomplishing whatever goals and dreams they have for themselves when they are constantly surrounded in an environment of distractions such as social media and peer pressure."

Williams noted that an open line of communication is kept with her children, which has helped in facing any challenge that has presented itself.

"Sydney has a younger brother named Mason who thinks his sister is, as he says, awesome," Williams said.

Usually one of the first students at school and among the last to leave daily, Sydney is a junior counselor of the Anne Arundel County Boys and Girls Club; plays varsity soccer, Lacrosse and basketball. She is also a board member and a volunteer at the Chrysalis House Inc., a treatment facility for women with substance abuse; a member of the National

Society of High School Scholars Honor Society; and a member of the Student Government Association.

"[All of] these activities and still managing to maintain a 4.2 GPA—in my opinion, this sets her apart from other young people her age because she pushes herself," Williams said.

Sydney called her family "remarkably strong, resilient people."

She also praised the staff at the Bates Boys & Girls Club, whom she says dedicate their time to ensure that children across Anne Arundel County have a safe, nurturing environment to go to.

"The Boys and Girls Club is genuinely a place where children have the ability to flourish because of the nurturing, caring environment, and I know that without the Boys and Girls Club of America I would have never thought myself to be capable of achieving anything," Sydney said. "My success started at the Boys and Girls Club, a sentiment that I am sure millions of boys and girls across the country agree on."

When asked if she feels nervous going into the Northeast Region Finals she said to a certain extent.

"More so than nervousness, I feel excitement," she said. "Making it to Regionals is an amazing opportunity, and I'm anticipating making lasting connections with other Youth Leaders."

When asked what advice she might provide other potential young leaders, Sydney replied, it's important they are not afraid to take risks and try new things.

"You never know what opportunities may arise from it. I would also tell them to never be afraid to advocate for themselves and to fight for what they believe in," she said. "Every great leader that has changed the world started somewhere and the next one could be you."

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# Miss Black Maryland Graduates Dental School

By Stacy M. Brown

Ashlee Thomas, the reigning Miss Black Maryland USA, is now Dr. Ashlee Thomas.

The beauty queen began her undergraduate career at Howard University, majoring as a physician's assistant. Now she is ready to embark on a career as a pediatric dentist.

"Over time, I really admired the career path of my dad, and the ultimate impact he was able to leave everyday with his patients," said Thomas, who earned a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree on May 19, 2017 from the University of Maryland School of Dentistry in Baltimore. "I decided to go to dental school my sophomore year ... I've had an amazing experience."

The most challenging aspect for Thomas has been the sheer volume of work she's had to do over the past four years.

"Dental school or any professional school for that matter require a lot of endurance and focus so I'm happy to finally have completed this chapter," she said.

The desire to work with children, whom she refers to as the most honest and kind individuals, helped to motivate Thomas and her decision to compete for Miss Black Maryland and Miss Black USA was motivated by a desire to help others.

"My drive really stemmed from wanting to give back to the Baltimore community. I had volunteered with organizations with school and decided this would be my way of having an even greater platform. I also thought competing in another pageant would be a lot of fun," she said.

Besides being very smart, Thomas possesses a natural internal energy that, in addition to her excellent organization skills, allows her to be active in extracurricular activities, said Dr. Clemencia Vargas, an associate professor in the division of pediatric dentistry at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry. "Ashlee's passion for working with and for children has made this year as Ms. Black Maryland very enjoyable for her.

She was a great role-model to numerous children," Vargas said. "Now, another factor that I think made Ashlee successful is her warm personality— she is a delight to work with."

The field of pediatric dentistry is a friendly specialty and there is an increase in the number of residency positions, which makes the profession more accessible, according to Dr. Vargas.

"There is not really one single reason why pediatric dentistry has become so popular," Vargas said. "Dental procedures for children are much less traumatic than 20 years ago, thanks to new materials and wide use of nitrous oxide. A factor we can't ignore is that pediatric dentists have among the higher salaries among dental professionals," she said. That may bode well for Thomas and her many charitable efforts at UMB, in the community and as Miss Black Maryland.

Thomas is part of the Student National Dental Association, whose local chapter won the 2016 Chapter of the Year Award and she's helped the organization with oral screening fairs at elementary schools, walking buses, and fundraising efforts.

"I was invited [last month] to be a celebrity reader at the Reginald Lewis Museum after a visit and tour a few months prior," Thomas said. "The Reading Fair was a great way for kids to come out and learn more not only about their culture but the importance of literacy and I had a great time."

The sky remains the limit for Thomas who says her biggest advice to others would be to eliminate any self-doubt.

"You will encounter obstacles and people that make you think you can't be anything you want and the worst thing you can do is believe it. Dream big," she said.

Thomas also says she is honored to be among the six percent of African-American dentists and growing percentage of women dentists who graduate each year.

"I encourage our young men and women to not be discouraged by their environment but look forward to a future in education and prosperity," she said.



*Ashlee Thomas engages in community activities during the 2015-16 academic year while she was a student at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry and during her reign as Miss Black Maryland USA.*

Courtesy Photo/University of Maryland School of Dentistry

## New Season, New Renovations, New Outreach

# *Lots of Action is Happening at Baltimore Center Stage*

By Ursula V. Battle

Baltimore Center Stage has announced its exciting 2017-2018 theatrical season, has recently undergone a yearlong \$28 million renovation, and continues to extend its reach into the community with initiatives such as its Mobile Unit, which takes performances into underserved areas.

Behind the scenes, directing it all, is Artistic Director, Kwame Kwei-Armah. Now in his sixth year at the theatre, which is located on 700 Calvert Street, Kwei-Armah talked about all of the action that is taking place at Baltimore Center Stage.

“It was a steep learning curve when I got here,” said the Great Britain native. “I had never been an artistic director before or a gatekeeper. It has been filled with huge learnings, but the challenges have made me stronger. I’m terribly proud of the fact that the things I said I would do when I got here, have been done.”

He added, “We have opened up the building, which I believe makes it more inviting, and are doing more daring work. I felt the building was not as inviting and as energetic as it could have been. We launched a capital campaign and began to renovate. We want to provide access to all, and for people to feel invited when they come in. We also changed our lobby to make it more open and congenial.”

The dramatically reimagined first floor lobby holds a concierge box office and redesigned bars and cafes. The central two-story atrium leads to a second-floor dining area, new and remodeled restrooms, flexible lounge spaces, and areas outfitted with the latest technology for projections, community talk-backs, forums, and live-streaming events. “Flavor” at Baltimore Center Stage serves lunch or dinner beginning two hours prior to each performance.

The Pearlstone Theater on the first floor has been updated with new lighting and sound capabilities. The Head Theater has been completely redesigned,

and features a seating plan with multiple configurations, so theater seating can potentially be different for every show based on the demands of the productions.

Other changes at Baltimore Center Stage include the addition of ‘Baltimore’ to its name, a new logo, and a new website.

“We are digging deeper into community,” said Kwei-Armah. “What’s important for me is to see an augmented community center where multiple communities can come together and commune through the arts. I want this art form to be accessible to as many people possible, and I want more people to be a part of the Baltimore Center Stage family.”

He added, “We have to look after each audience specifically and generally. I came here because I wanted to produce plays I thought were good, but that would also speak to my cultural end. I wanted the African-American community to feel more invited through shows such as Jazz and Twisted Melodies.”

“Jazz,” which plays at Baltimore Center Stage through June 25, 2017, is directed by Kwei-Armah, and is based on the novel by Toni Morrison. “Twisted Melodies” is written and performed by Kelvin Roston, Jr. and directed by Derrick Sanders. It is based on the life of 1970s soul singer and composer Donny Hathaway, and ran at Baltimore Center Stage March 17, 2017 through April 5, 2017.

Baltimore Center Stage’s 2017-2018 season is comprised of the following shows: “The Christians”; “Shakespeare in Love”; “Lookingglass Alice”; “Skeleton Crew”; and George Orwell’s “Animal Farm”. Another show, which has not yet been announced, will also be included.

“The shows we are presenting are geared towards a wide variety of audiences,” he said.

Kwei-Armah is also an award-winning playwright. His piece “Marley”, played at Baltimore Center Stage in 2015, and drew sell-out audiences.



*Kwame Kwei-Armah, Artistic Director at Baltimore Center Stage.*

Photo by Ursula V. Battle



*Jasmine Baxter, Vivian Barnes, Tosin Olufolabi, and Kwame Kwei-Armah during the Opening Night Party for Jazz, which runs at Baltimore Center Stage through June 25. Photo by Tyrone R. Eaton*

“Marley just played in Birmingham, England, and will transfer to a commercial run,” he said. That is the equivalent of Broadway.”

Kwei-Armah said through Baltimore Center Stage’s Mobile Unit, Marley traveled to Pennsylvania and North Avenues.

“I think we have reconnected to the community in a positive way,” he said.

“Through the Mobile Unit, we take shows to disenfranchised areas and reach the homeless and other audiences. We also have discussions around our plays with the community. It’s all about facilitating conversations about issues that are important to the community.”

For more information about Baltimore Center Stage, visit <https://www.center-stage.org>

# Baltimore & Me

By Tiffany Christy

## Community Policing: A time to pray

*This is Part III of a three part series about Community Policing*

When I walked into a community meeting in Harlem Park one night for a story I was working on, I stumbled across a story about the Baltimore City Police Department that didn't make national news.

I didn't expect to be welcomed into the circle of police officers, citizens and members of the city's clergy, standing hand-in-hand under the sound of Baltimore City Police Chief Melvin Russell's voice. They had gathered to pray.

Chief Russell's words stirred my soul with such conviction, that I had to meet him. I was expecting to shake his hand after the meeting adjourned. Instead, he greeted me with a warm hug and introduced me to his right hand, Det. Quinesse Green, who gave me the story behind the BPD's Faith-Based Program, an initiative of the department's Community Collaboration Division focused on bridging the relational gap between police officers and members of the community.

"Without prayer the city won't change," said Green. "We deal with all denominations of religions but the one thing that they have in common is prayer. They all pray. Everybody, may not be a believer, but when times get hard they turn to the church. They look for spiritual guidance. They turn to their faith based entities for help.

"In order for the eastern district to transform [churches] are going to all have to come out from the confines of their congregations and come together," she said of the program's origin on Baltimore's east side.

The BPD's Faith-Based Program was developed from the spiritual premise that prayer or mindful meditation, changes things. In the beginning, Chief Melvin Russell, the program's visionary, and a member of the clergy himself, sent out a call to action to religious leaders in Baltimore to reach beyond the pews

of the church to share the ineffable message of faith with people who may not ever step in a church or subscribe to a religious affiliation.

At the time, 80 clergy members joined his efforts, according to Green, to fight crime and restore community relations in the Eastern District.

"After a year or two, crime in the district reached an all-time low," Green said. "And everybody wanted to know

and flesh out, any crime problems together, before they snowballed. It came easy."

That was 2008. Today, the mission to heal the heart of the city continues to expand. As officer-in-charge, Det. Green manages the day-to-day operations of the faith-based Program. One of her main tasks is to recruit civilian chaplains and organize training for them at the Community Collaboration Division's civilian chaplain academy, where faith-based leaders learn the basics of law enforcement and community policing through a series of rigorous workshops and riding alongs with officers on call. This training, Green says, prepares them to fulfill their purpose to the BPD. Upon graduation, civilian chaplains are asked to commit 20 hours a month in at least

the city. Part of the service responsibility of civilian chaplains is to identify designated areas in the city to set up prayer altars, currently housed in schools, hot spot areas in the city, neighborhoods that are plagued with crime, office buildings, and of course, churches, according to Green.

"These chaplains organize congregations and people in the neighborhood so that the prayer altars are manned 24 hours a day, praying for our city and the needs of the people in the district where the altars are set up," she said.

At press time, 103 civilian chaplains from across the city and as far away as York, Pa., have committed their time to this crusade of enlightenment headed by the BPD. The ultimate intention of the program is to have a team of chaplains in each of the 216 sectors of the city's nine districts.



**Baltimore & Me columnist Tiffany Christy takes a selfie with Chief Russell (far left), Detective Quinesse Green (first row, third from the right) and Baltimore City Police officers involved in the department's faith-based program, an initiative of the department's Community Collaboration Division focused on bridging the relational gap between police officers and members of the community.**  
Photo by Tiffany Christy

how he did it.. All he did was encouraged the faith-based community to do their part. He got everybody to work together to get whatever projects that were on the table done. It was a set up where communities organizations, churches, and schools would get the memo so that we could jump in front of

one of three areas of service pathways outlined by the program— community engagement, street outreach or ride alongs with officers.

A typical day for Green usually begins with checking the pulse of outreach efforts launched by the program's clergy and ends with a prayer walk somewhere in

"We want all areas of the city covered with chaplain," said Green. "The goal is to have the city covered with prayer."

To learn more about how to join this city-wide prayer and outreach initiative contact Det. Green at [quinessegreen@baltimorepolice.org](mailto:quinessegreen@baltimorepolice.org).



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# Book Review: The Hate U Give

By Morgan Reid

Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give* is a young adult novel that fully speaks to the sense of confusion, rage and powerlessness in the African-American community regarding police brutality and poverty, both symptoms of the racism that still exists in America.

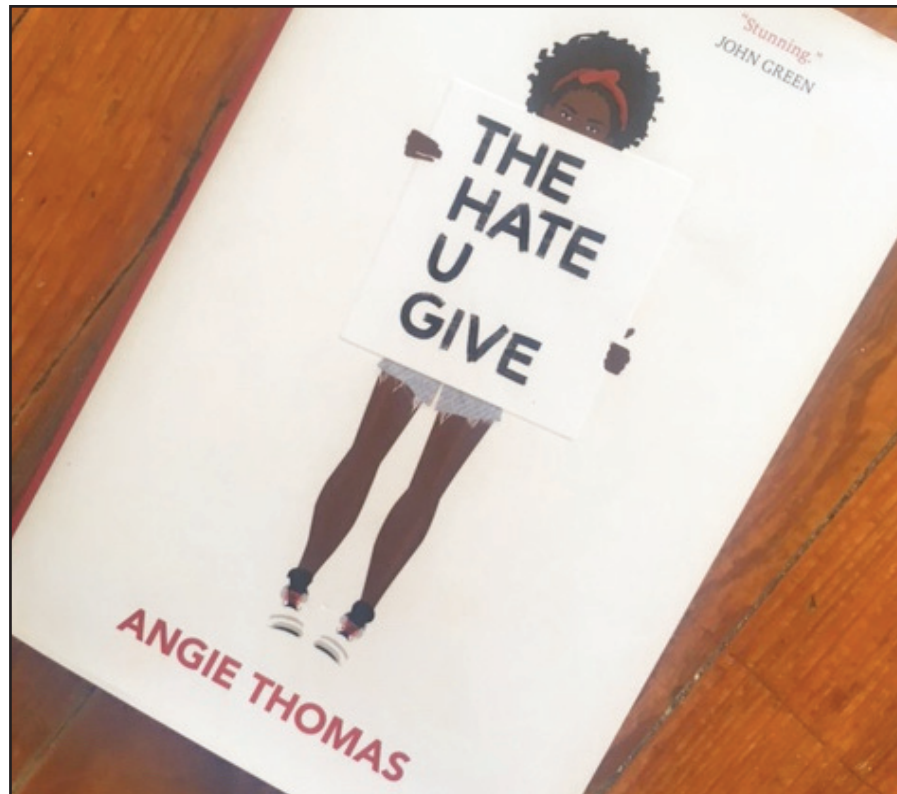
Starr Carter, a young teen girl who lives in Garden Heights, a black neighborhood considered 'the ghetto,' rushes out of a party amid the sound of gunshots with her childhood friend, Khalil. While driving home from the party, Khalil is pulled over by a white police officer because of a broken taillight. What should have been a routine traffic ticket turned deadly when the police officer shoots Khalil in the back.

With high profile deaths of unarmed black men and women, which have gained national attention over recent years, it's of no surprise that a novel such as this one has come along at precisely the right moment.

Throughout the novel, Starr wrestles with the burden of having to speak out about the death of her friend, while navigating a second world at a predominantly white school, Williamson.

Despite providing commentary (albeit fictional) on a pressing, hot-button topic about the value of black lives, the novel's colloquial writing style, constant references to 90s pop culture, and the obsession with material items such as Nike Jordans, cheapens as well as detracts from the overall message. It puts a reader unfamiliar with past and current pop culture, and the nuances of African-American vernacular at a disadvantage.

Raising awareness about police brutality and the mixed emotions that accompanies this issue, including respecting



authority versus challenging the abuse of authority is clearly the novel's main focus. The profanity, slang and conversational, matter-of-fact way that the author chooses to relay this message downplays the severity of the role that law enforcement plays in the lives of African-Americans. A younger reader might understand this particular writing style, which easily addresses issues in a blunt and direct way, but it simply lacks emotional depth.

Where Thomas succeeds is in Starr's internal conflict and her struggle with how to identify in two different social environments. Garden Heights is a black 'hood' where the threat of gang violence is always close at hand. Starr is comfortable around people who look like her. She can be herself in Garden Heights

while not having to explain her very existence. Eventually, Starr has to emancipate herself from the mindset that being poor, and coming from 'the hood' is not good enough and is something to be ashamed of.

Around her non-black friends at Williamson, she adjusts her emotions, mannerisms and speech accordingly. There is a battle with how she thinks she is supposed to 'behave' around 'others.' Mastering the experience of being in two different worlds is a relatable obstacle, all too familiar to the average person of color who may find themselves in situations where being the only one, "the token," and the representative of their

race is unavoidable.

Thomas skillfully explores the mental strength it takes to live in a gang infested war-zone where dying is like falling and scraping your foot against a rock's sharp edges. It's inevitable if one isn't too cautious or aware.

The sub-plot consists of a gang leader, King Lord, who reigns over Garden Heights threatening anyone who poses a threat to his drug operation with violence. The code of silence and the 'no snitching' policy is addressed in the plot as being problematic when it refers indirectly to protecting someone who is the main source of violence.

Even though gang violence is mentioned as a symptom of the cycle of poverty, it was all very cliché, predictable and obvious. We've heard it all before in various ways. It would be interesting to see more black writers stepping out of the gang, slave narrative and the dysfunctional family trauma storylines of black life.

If a recent or aspiring recruit of the Black Lives Matter movement, no matter the race, wants to understand the complex history the African-American community has with law enforcement in the United States, *The Hate U Give* is an appropriate starting point to gain some insight. It is fast-paced, funny and easy to devour with a few touching moments sprinkled in. It's a novel of the times but a specific time nonetheless.

It is difficult to foresee if this story will have any lasting impact or true influence, which is truly unfortunate because the subject matter at hand could have been more compelling in the hands of a far more capable writer.

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# Baltimore hip-hop infused, alt-soul group releases debut album 'Soul Searching'

Baltimore—J Pope and The HearNow (formerly Funk Friday) is a hip-hop infused alt-soul group based in Baltimore. As one of Baltimore's best-kept musical secrets, the band's reputation for eclectic composition, deft improvisation, and profound call-to-action lyrical content is built on high-energy live performances.

After years of questions from their loyal supporters, the group has finally finished a studio recording that they are confident will leave the souls of listeners sonically satiated. The debut album, Soul Searching, is a snapshot of a period that saw shifting band members, failed experiments and lessons learned, but also intense moments of inspiration and clarity.

The project was produced by acclaimed Baltimore artist Wendel Patrick (Professor of Hip Hop at the Peabody Conservatory, co-producer of PRX's Out of the Blocks) and is set for release on June 16, 2017 at the Creative Alliance at the Patterson located at 3134 Eastern Avenue in Baltimore City at 8 p.m.

The album release show will feature special appearances by Brooks Long, Love the Poet (Punani Poets), Eze Jackson (Soul Cannon), Wendel Patrick, Queen-Earth, Symantix, Jahiti (BrownFISH), Wordslave (Kelly Bell band), Jonathan Gilmore, Femi the Drifish (The 5th L), Shodekeh and more.

J Pope and The HearNow members include: Jas-

mine Pope (vocals), Jacob Kohlhas (guitar), Dan Samuels (drums), Gabriel Pickus (percussion), Daniel Wallace (saxophone) and Andrew Freed (bass).

The Creative Alliance at the Patterson brings artists and audiences together from diverse backgrounds to experience and participate in the arts. It supports Baltimore-area artists, promotes the city as a center for creative production, acts as a positive force for the community, and advocates for cultural expression rooted in a sense of place.



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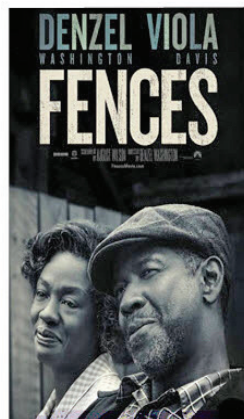
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SOUNDBOX

# Annapolis Youth Services Bureau: Helping Youth & Families

By Raquel Brown, Director, LCSW-C

The Annapolis Youth Services Bureau (AYSB) is dedicated to helping youth and families address individual and family behavioral and mental health issues, as well as substance use related problems.

AYSB implements early intervention, so as to enhance effective functioning and be conducive to the prevention and reduction of juvenile delinquency.

The Annapolis Youth Services Bureau provides the following core services: comprehensive assessment, treatment planning and treatment implementation including formal counseling and therapy to children/youth and their families, by licensed professionals.

Additionally, AYSB provides informal counseling, advocacy and support services; crisis intervention services including suicide prevention; life skills training; information and referrals. In collaboration with the Empowerment Services of the parent organization (Community Action Agency), AYSB also provides case management for the entire family. Substance use prevention, assessment, treatment and referrals are also available. School-based anger management training and support groups are offered as well.

Services are offered in collaboration with community-based programs throughout the Annapolis Metropolitan area are provided as support in the community for the development of strategies to work with children and youth.

The goals and objectives of AYSB include comprehensive formal and informal counseling resulting in



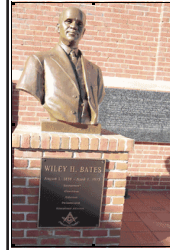
*Services at the Annapolis Youth Services Bureau are offered in collaboration with community-based programs throughout the Annapolis Metropolitan area. For more information about the services available, call 410-626-1800. Courtesy Photo*

enhanced positive behaviors thereby improving the quality of life for individuals and families.

The mandate of DJS is to reduce the rate of juvenile delinquency. AYSB has maintained, over the years, substantial compliance to all COMAR regulations of the State of Maryland.

Spanish interpreter services are also available. Medical Assistance is accepted and our fee scale assures no one is denied services.

AYSB is located at 92 West Washington Street in Annapolis. Operating hours are Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Evening hours are available by appointment. For more information, call 410-626-1800.



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LIGHT REFRESHMENTS beginning at 2:00pm

Gathering at 3:00 pm

**Our churches, community groups and the Wiley H. Bates High School (1933 - 1966) have always been a source of strength through their close ties. The “old fashion” Church Rally re-establishes those ties to maintain that heritage and legacy. We will have a Roll Call of Churches as they present their annual donations to the Legacy Center. A donation of \$200.00 or more will help support our efforts for seniors and youth programs.**

Guest Choir

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Soloist  
Malcolm Jones

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### Eastport Home & Garden Tour June 11, 2017

Take a walk on the tree-lined streets of Eastport and take a peek into some of the loveliest houses in this neighborhood close to Spa Creek during the annual Eastport Home & Garden Tour on Sunday June 11, 2017 between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Stroll through Eastport's lanes bursting with new spring growth and enjoy these beautiful homes nestled between Spa Creek and Back Creek.

The Eastport Home & Garden Tour is sponsored by the Eastport Civic Association.

For tickets or further details, visit: [www.eastportcivic.org](http://www.eastportcivic.org)  
or email: [tour@eastportcivic.org](mailto:tour@eastportcivic.org).

# Third Annual Summer Leadership Academy and Summer League

Annapolis— Through strong partnerships, a strong team and an enthusiastic group of future leaders, the Annapolis Arts, Sports and Leadership Academy (AASaLA) is returning to the Roger Pip Moyer recreation Center for a summer of basketball and leadership training for the entire family.

Led by regional non-profit, Men Aiming Higher, Inc. (MIH), the City of Annapolis' Recreation Department and supported by a host of other city, state, business, non-profit agencies and organizations, the AASALA will begin shaping the experiences for 180 boys and girls from ages 8 – 17 for the third year in a row.

A kick off event will be held on Saturday, June 17, 2017 at the Pip Moyer Recreation Center located at 273 Hilltop Lane in Annapolis from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

For decades the basketball courts and baseball diamonds at the City of Annapolis Truxton Park and recently, the Roger Pip Moyer center have served as places to bring the community together. Now people of all ages, ethnic and economic backgrounds from the cities of Annapolis and Baltimore, along with Anne Arundel, Prince George's and Charles counties will be able to participate in the Third Annual Wiley H. Bates Leadership Academy & Summer Basketball League.

The program gives families a safe haven in an environment filled with constructive and fun opportunities for youth to interact with youth from around the city, county and state.

“Now more than ever, our young people must learn to implement the ‘Paul Robeson/Wiely H. Bates’ approach of becoming highly talented in multiple areas. We no longer live in a one or two-dimensional society. We live in a global society and must learn to compete in the classroom and on technology platforms from elementary school to retirement,” said Darius A. Stanton, Sr., Board Chair, AASaLA.

Launched last year, the leadership academy provides youth and their fami-



*Academy participant, Raekwon Honeyblue dribbling the length of the court during a 14 and under Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center Summer Basketball League game, last year.*  
Courtesy Photos/AASaLA

lies with the tools to have a productive and eventful summer and includes the Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center Summer Basketball League and Arts program.

Board Chair, Stanton promised that the Academy would continue its activities throughout the school year— one such program is the monthly collaboration with the EMBODI (Empowering Males to Build Opportunities for Developing Independence), a program of the Annapolis Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., which served over 75 youth throughout the program year.

The Academy is being further enhanced with additional components, including: a Parenting University that will take place at half time. The whole family is encouraged to participate in the programs, designed to motivate families to create a positive impact in the community.

The program content was derived from results of a survey of the parents in the community to determine what they



*(Left) Leadership Academy presentation about the environment by Darius A. Stanton, II, a graduate of Duke University and 2016 Summer League Coach. (Right) Academy leaders engage the boys and girls in leadership skills beyond the basketball courts during the Arts, Sports and Leadership Academy, last year.*



wanted to take away from the “PAR-ENTS Half Time Show!”

Jeremy Newkirk, president and founder of Go Virtual Green will focus on leadership development through critical thinking and common core principles by

using technology to explore math, science and reading comprehension.

All participating youth will receive nutritious food and snacks during the academy and all games will be posted once a week at: [www.elifemdia.net](http://www.elifemdia.net).

***“In order to cultivate a set of leaders with legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry, it is necessary that the path to leadership be visibly open to talented and qualified individuals of every race and ethnicity.” —Sandra Day O'Connor***

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# Two of the Governor's Offices to Partner with Harvard's Government Performance Lab

*Lab Will Provide Technical Assistance to Help Implement Justice Reinvestment Projects*

Annapolis— Maryland was recently selected as a finalist by the Government Performance Lab at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in the Lab's 2017 national competition to receive funding from the Social Innovation Fund, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that works with local partners to help Americans improve the lives of their fellow citizens through service.

Out of 27 applications, three states and four cities were selected as the finalists. A full-time fellow from the Government Performance Lab will work with the Governor's Office for Children and the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention for 12 to 15 months on implementing novel criminal and juvenile justice solutions.

"Breaking the cycle of crime and recidivism requires an all-hands-on-deck approach," said Governor Larry Hogan. "Maryland's partnership with the Government Performance Lab, which uses innovative strategies and evidence-based solutions, will help achieve our adminis-



*Maryland Governor Larry Hogan  
Courtesy Photo*

tration's goal of enhancing public safety and well-being for our citizens. We thank the Social Innovation Fund and the Harvard Kennedy School for their role in making this partnership possible."

In May 2016, Governor Hogan signed the Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA) into law. This comprehensive criminal justice reform legislation aims to enhance public safety by reducing Maryland's prison population and increasing investment in programs to reduce recidivism rates, treat substance abuse, and enhance community supervision practices.

The Harvard fellow, along with assistance from the Government Performance Lab, will help implement JRA initiatives with the Governor's Office for Children and the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention through several core projects.

These projects include designing and negotiating outcome-based contracts with organizations providing services that are alternatives to incarceration, integrating performance improvement strategies into law enforcement grants and other JRA programs, and assisting with performance metric development and data integration.

"We look forward to working with the Government Performance Lab to help improve outcomes for Maryland's youth and young adults and reduce recidivism rates by using innovative, performance-based solutions," said Arlene Lee, executive director of the Governor's Office for Children.

"Maryland's partnership with the Government Performance Lab will help us achieve our goal of using data-driven criminal justice strategies to improve public safety and invest in treatment and services," said Glenn Fueston, executive director of the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention. "It is the first time that the competition has made performance improvement technical assistance broadly available to state and local governments, and we are honored to be a part of this partnership."

The fellow will join the two offices around July 1.

The Governor's Office for Children is committed to ensuring that all Maryland children, youth, and families live and prosper in healthy, safe, and thriving communities. The office partners with state agencies, Local Management Boards, and community-based organizations to promote the wellbeing of Maryland's children, youth, and families. The Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention serves as a coordinating office that advises the governor on criminal justice strategies. The office plans, promotes, and funds efforts with government entities, private organizations, and the community to advance public policy, enhance public safety, reduce crime and juvenile delinquency, and serve victims.

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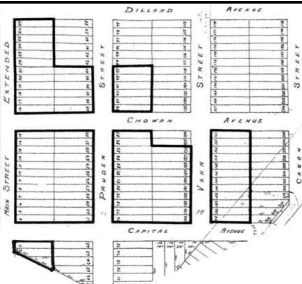


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