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College student's campaign raises over \$11,000 to keep others cool



When college student DaJuan Gay from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore came home for the summer he was concerned that some of his neighbors in Eastport Terrace in Annapolis had to endure 100 degree weather without air conditioning. He posted a message in a Facebook group. Barbara Webber, a local neighbor, called Gay, met him, and created a crowdfunding page to enable other neighbors to donate funds to purchase free, standing air conditioning units for others in need. Over 30 air conditioning units have been given to help Annapolitans who needed help to beat the heat. (See article on page 11)

Courtesy Photo

Pfizer, NNPA partner to spread awareness about Sickle Cell Disease

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Contributor

You really don't know a company, until you know the people who work there.

Those were the introductory words of National Newspaper Publishers Association President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., as he introduced Dr. Kevin Williams, the chief medical officer for Pfizer's rare disease unit, who discussed the impact of Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) in the African-American community.

At the NNPA's summer convention in Prince George's County Md., Williams addressed publishers and others on the serious nature of the illness, an inherited genetic disease that affects hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying protein within red blood cells (RBCs).

"While normal red blood cells are flexible and oval-shaped, individuals with SCD have sharp, crescent-shaped RBCs that have trouble passing through the body's blood vessels, irritating the vessels' lining," Williams said, explaining SCD.

That irritation leads to the production of sticky proteins that cause RBCs to clump together, along with other cells in the blood, and creates blockages in blood flow, Williams added.

"The reduced flow leads to severe pain and organ damage, like the heart, brain, eyes, liver, lungs and spleen—causing the inability to fight certain infections," Williams said.

Sickle Cell Disease is more prevalent among blacks compared to whites.

Statistics provided by Pfizer revealed that one in 14 African-Americans have the sickle cell trait at birth while one in 500 blacks have the diseases when they are born.

An estimated 312,000 children were born with SCD in 2010 while, in 2013,



Dr. Kevin Williams, the chief medical officer of Pfizer's rare disease unit speaks during a session on Sickle Cell Disease at the 2017 NNPA Annual Conference in Prince George's County, Md.

Photo Credit: Freddie Allen/AMG/NNPA

an estimated 176,200 deaths resulted from the disease around the globe.

"Clearly, the disease has had a tremendous impact on the African-American community," said Williams, who along with Pfizer have partnered with the NNPA to raise awareness about SCD.

The first initiative under the partnership is a national poll conducted in collaboration with Howard University's Interdisciplinary Research Team.

The goal is to assess the awareness of SCD, the challenges of living with the disease, and the importance of clinical trial participation in helping researchers succeed in developing potential new treatments.

Pfizer and NNPA publishers also want to bring attention to the everyday suffering of SCD patients, many of whom described the constant fatigue associated with living disease; one participant said that the pain was a never-ending battle,

and it felt like living in Hell.

Studies have also proven difficult, as many African-Americans have avoided participating in clinical trials due to long-standing fear and distrust of the healthcare system.

In a review of 174 sickle cell disease trials, difficulty with enrolling patients was among the stated causes in nearly half of the 30 percent of the trials that were terminated early, Williams noted.

Chavis, Williams and others noted that the partnership between Pfizer and NNPA might help.

"We get an opportunity to work with Pfizer on a commitment to improve the quality of life in black America" said Chavis. "This collaboration with Pfizer provides an opportunity for the NNPA to inform and educate the readers of our 211-member, black-owned newspapers in more than 70 markets across the country on Sickle Cell Disease, an often

misunderstood disease that has a profound impact on the health and well-being of those affected."

He continued: "Together with Pfizer, we look forward to providing sickle cell disease education that can underscore the importance of improving quality of care in the community."

As part of the collaboration, Williams will write a regular column for the NNPA Newswire and BlackPressUSA.com discussing the genetic disorder.

Also, the results from the national poll are expected to be released in September, and Pfizer and NNPA officials are hoping that it will help more African-Americans seek proper health care and obtain better guidelines for treatment.

"We will use the poll to provide additional context...have a better understanding of the perceptions related to clinical trials," said Jennifer Lichtner, the global marketing lead for SCD in Pfizer's rare disease unit.

The poll results and information about SCD will be shared with the NNPA network and incorporated into educational programs at NNPA events.

Pfizer will also post and share information about the poll with a goal toward helping to assist more African-Americans and others in underserved and underrepresented communities.

"At Pfizer, we are committed to delivering life-changing therapies to people living with rare diseases, like sickle cell disease. Our commitment also goes beyond clinical research to supporting the rare disease community through innovative collaborations," Williams said. "Working together, we hope to improve awareness and ultimately address the unmet medical needs of sickle cell disease patients."

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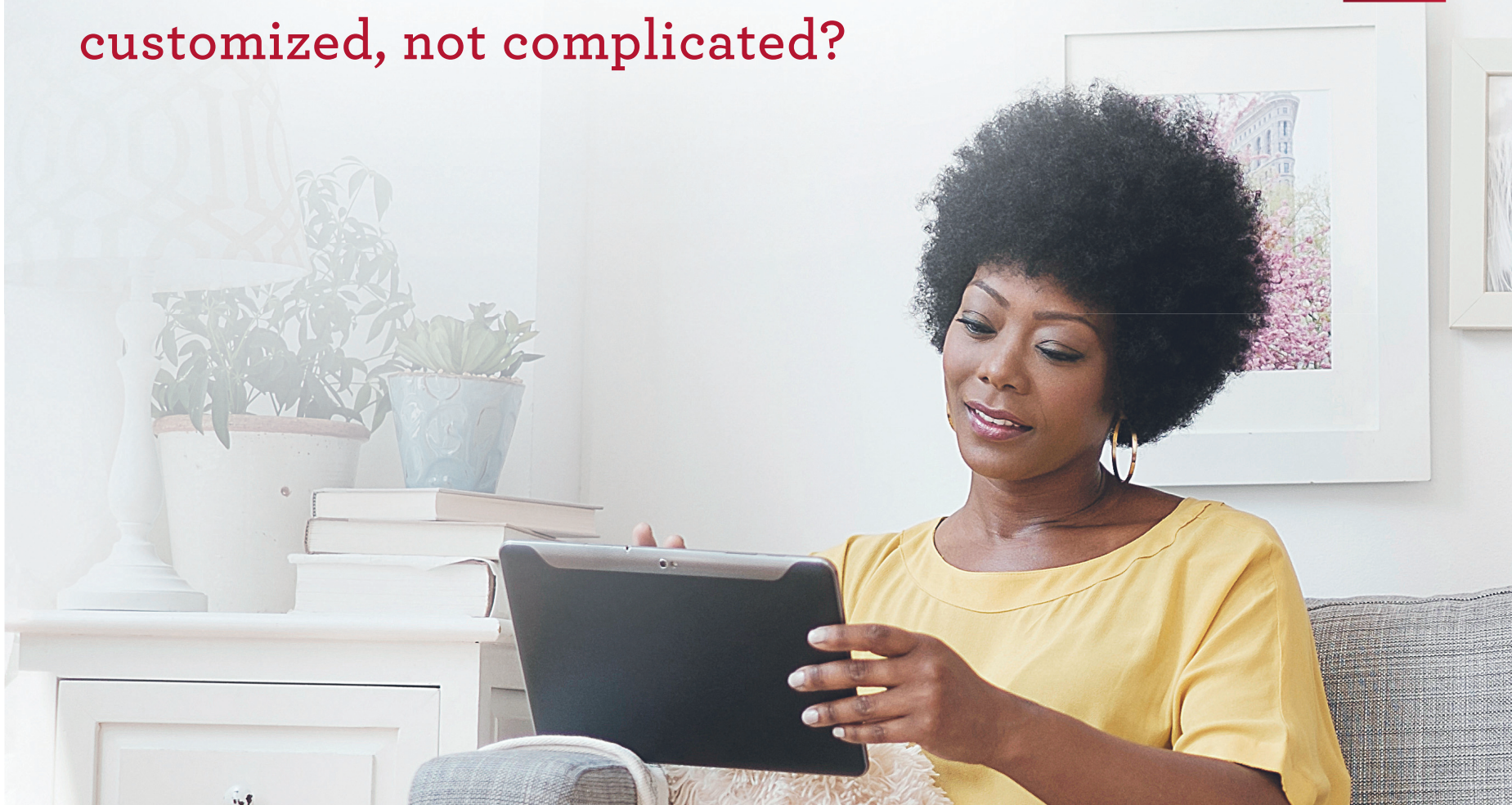
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Guest Editorials/Commentary

Black parents have to get into the ESSA game

By Shawnta S. Barnes, NNPA/ESSA Guest Columnist

Back in May, I traveled to Chicago and saw “Hamilton: An American Musical” about founding father Alexander Hamilton. During Act II, Hamilton’s adversary Aaron Burr was upset, because he was excluded from “the room where it happens.” He wanted to be involved in the important decisions, the policy decisions. Knowing my 18-month Teach Plus Policy Fellowship was coming to an end on June 23 and after reflecting upon my fellow education blogger David McGuire’s piece “The Silent Black Voice in Education,” I wanted to make sure I took advantage of any opportunity to be in the room where it happens, so I put my name on a list to be part of one of Indiana’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) working groups. I was excited to later learn that I was selected as a member of one of the technical working groups.

ESSA is the reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and replaces No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Each state is tasked with submitting a plan to the U.S. Department of Education detailing how ESSA requirements will be implemented in its schools. Before Indiana’s plan was drafted, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) took measures to ensure voices from around the state were heard. Community meetings were held across the state in each of Indiana’s congressional districts. The IDOE created five technical working groups: accountability, assessment, educator effectiveness, school improvement, and student supports. I was part of the student supports group. In May and June, the groups made recommendations for the plan and in July the groups will have the opportunity to read through the section they worked on and provide comments.

On Friday, June 30, the IDOE released its first draft of the state’s ESSA plan. In addition to the working groups, the public also has the opportunity to provide feedback. After feedback is considered, the plan will be submitted to Governor Holcomb for review. The IDOE plans to submit the final version to the U.S. Department of Education on September 18, 2017.

Towards the end of the song, “The Room Where It Happens” Alexander Hamilton tells Burr:

*When you got skin in the game, you stay in the game
But you don't get a win unless you play in the game
Oh, you get love for it, you get hate for it
You get nothing if you
Wait for it, wait for it, wait*

I definitely have skin in the game; I’m a parent and an educator. If you are part of our community, you have skin in the game, because the plan implemented under ESSA will shape our community’s children, our future leaders. A few have asked, “Why do you even want to get involved? It won’t matter.” One key point I learned during my policy fellowship is when policy is shaped and decisions are made, it takes collaboration and compromise and you won’t get everything you want. If you don’t participate or “play in the game,” you won’t be able to move the needle. You won’t be able to make any change.

Don’t just wait around and see what happens. If you would like to get involved, go to <http://www.doe.in.gov/essa> to read Indiana’s ESSA plan draft. Learn more about the Every Student Succeeds Act at nnpa.org/essa.

Shawnta S. Barnes is a literacy coach for Indianapolis Public Schools, an adjunct instructor at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis School of Education, and a 2016-2017 Teach Plus Teaching Policy Fellow. Previously, Barnes taught English grades six to nine, and has been an elementary English language learner teacher.

DUMBO



Commentary

We have and "us" problem

By Pastor P. M. Smith

"Not everything that is faced can be changed but nothing can be changed until it is faced!" —James Baldwin

Baltimore, we have a problem!

The problem has been described with several different adjectives. The most dominant one is "crime." Baltimore has a "crime" problem.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports, Baltimore has recorded over 300 homicides in the last two years, and the murder rate this year will exceed the murder rates for the previous two years.

In 2015, there were 344 homicides in the City of Baltimore. This marked the highest number of homicides since the 1990's. According to the statistics offered by the Baltimore City Police Department, 320 of the victims were African-American. And in 2016, of the 318 murders, 293 of the victims were African-Americans.

If you are a native Baltimorean, I think that it is fair to say that we have an "US" problem. If you love this city (like I do), you will realize that we have an "US" problem.

If you are an African-American, you must admit that we have an "us" problem. We are killing "us" at a rate that we would never tolerate if such violence were perpetrated on us by anyone outside of our race— we would be in the streets shouting "Black Life Matters!"

In many of these murders and assaults, both the victims and the perpetrators were black. The reality is that the crime problem is a "black" problem. In 2017, homicides are up, shootings are up, street robberies are up, aggravated assaults are up, and car jackings are up.

These crimes impact my community (the African-American community) more than any other in this city. I know that no one wants to say it, but somebody has got to say it to our beloved community— we have an "us" problem!

It is my conviction that the people most immediately affected by a problem should be the first to acknowledge, admit, address and attack the problem. After all, not every problem faced can be solved, but none of our problems can be solved until we face them. Let's face our "us" problem!

P. M. Smith is the pastor of Huber Memorial Church in Baltimore.

Silence is unacceptable:

High-prescription drug prices hurt the black community

By Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (D-Md.)

Nearly a decade ago, Clinton Crawley, a Baltimore resident and one of my constituents, was diagnosed with diabetes. Clinton has done everything his doctors asked—he eats well, he exercises and he takes his medication. Although Clinton has employer-sponsored health insurance, the cost of his medication—more than \$1,000 each year—places a significant burden on his finances.

Crawley is not alone. Over the past decade, 90 percent of brand name drugs have more than doubled in price. In 2014, U.S. prescription drug prices jumped 13 percent. That year, Americans spent \$1,112 per person on medication while Canadians spent \$772 and Danes spent \$325, and nearly one in five Americans have reported not being able to afford the medication they were prescribed. Simply put, the pharmaceutical industry's greed is hurting the American people.

The issue of high prescription drug prices has a severe impact on the African

American community. As the saying goes, “when America catches a cold, black America gets the flu.” African Americans suffer from chronic diseases at higher rates than other groups.

African Americans are 40 percent more likely than Caucasians to have high blood pressure, and the rate of diagnosed diabetes is 77 percent higher in our community. In 2014, African Americans were nearly three times more

likely than Caucasians to die from asthma-related causes than Caucasians. African Americans at every education level are also paid less than their white counterparts. These factors place African Americans in a double bind—we are more likely to suffer from an expensive chronic disease and we earn less money with which to pay for our health care, including skyrocketing prescription drug prices.

“African Americans at every education level are also paid less than their white counterparts. These factors place African Americans in a double bind—we are more likely to suffer from an expensive chronic disease and we earn less money with which to pay for our health care, including skyrocketing prescription drug prices.”

likely to die from asthma-related causes than Caucasians. African Americans at every education level are also paid less than their white counterparts. These factors place African Americans in a double bind—we are more likely to suffer from an expensive chronic disease and we earn less money with which to pay for our health care, including skyrocketing prescription drug prices.

Crawley's experience, and those of millions of Americans nationwide, is unacceptable at a time when the 10 highest paid pharmaceutical industry CEOs took home \$327 million in a single year. President Trump was right when he said that these companies are “getting away with murder.”

America—to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices. We asked for the president's support and feedback on our bill. Four months later, despite the president's enthusiasm during our meeting, we are still waiting to hear from him.

Instead of working with me and Rep. Welch, there are now reports that President Trump is poised to issue an executive order that would grant many wishes directly from the pharmaceutical industry's wish list. This executive order would be a betrayal of the president's promise to the American people.

There is something wrong with this picture, and the American people know it. A majority of Democrats, Republicans and independents want Congress and

President Trump to make lowering the cost of prescription drugs a “top priority,” and 92 percent of all Americans want Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices.

While I am disappointed by the president's silence, I am undeterred. I am still fighting hard in Congress to address this issue. Rep. Welch and I recently joined Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) to introduce the “Improving Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs Act”—a comprehensive approach to lowering prescription drug costs. Our bill would improve transparency in drug pricing and manufacturing; allow Medicare to negotiate for lower prices in Part D and require negotiation for certain high-cost drugs; allow the importation of safe, affordable prescription drugs; help generic drugs reach the market more easily; and cap the out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs in private insurance plans.

I still hope that we will gain the support of the President and our Republican colleagues on this issue. This is not a Democratic or Republican issue, this is a moral issue. Are we the type of country that values people over profit, or are we a country that values profit over people? The American people have made it clear where they stand. They want Congress to work together to fix this problem. Continued silence in the face of so much hardship and suffering is simply unacceptable.

Rep. Elijah E. Cummings is a Democratic congressman from Baltimore and the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Follow him on Twitter at @RepCummings.

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Nita Key Enrichment focused on saving music in N.C. schools

By Taylor Burris
NNPA/DTU Journalism Fellow

“College should not make you or break you,” said Shanita Ollison, a 27 year-old “artpreneur” and the founder and owner of Nita Key Enrichment. “Just because you didn’t go to college doesn’t mean you can’t be a manager of a multi-million dollar company.”

Ollison continued: “You can do anything you put your mind to, whether you go to college or not. Nothing is promised; you’ve got to have that drive. You’ve got to have that ambition.”

Nita Key Enrichment is the first, black music enrichment company in North Carolina.

When she was 21-years-old, Ollison decided that she needed to jump into the fight to save music and arts education in her community. After taking on church gigs, a handful of positions teaching music and other odd jobs, she founded Nita Key Enrichment, to serve the children of her community.

Ollison, also known as “Nita,” continues to break down barriers as one of the youngest black women in her field.

Ollison’s investment in the arts for youth comes at the perfect time as music and arts education is losing ground and funding in public schools.

According to a 2012 report by the Department of Education, many students that attend schools in high-poverty, urban school districts still lack access to music and arts programs.

Following national trends, music and arts programs in North Carolina face similar threats.

According to The Times-News, due to budget shortfalls in 2011, Transylvania County schools in N.C. faced the elimination of 100 percent of all off-campus band, music, and clubs competitions.

Recently, The Citizen-Times reported that N.C. state legislators and the governor are working to reduce class sizes, a move that could have a negative impact on arts and music education in the state’s public schools.

“Education groups are increasing pressure on state lawmakers to pass legislation they say is needed to avoid poten-



Shanita Ollison is the founder and owner of Nita Key Enrichment, the first, black music enrichment company in North Carolina to serve the children of her community. Research has shown that music helps children improve reasoning, language, intellectual development and can also serve as an outlet to handle anxiety.

Photo Credit: Taylor Burris/The Carolinian

tially laying off as many as 4,500 art, music, physical education and foreign language teachers,” The News & Observer reported. “North Carolina school leaders say they may have to cut art, music, physical education and foreign language classes in elementary schools to help pay for new smaller class sizes in kindergarten through third grade that are supposed to start in July.”

Ollison said that music education is not being taken seriously and the benefits of exposing children to the arts are also being ignored.

“[Music] provides a healthy outlet for children,” said Ollison. “Music helps with hand-eye coordination, memorization, raising test scores, and adds a sense of achievement.”

Research has shown that music helps

children improve reasoning, language, intellectual development, and can also serve as an outlet to handle anxiety.

Ollison has partnered with with local schools to create after school music enrichment programs and started a non-profit, Music Is Life, that serves children who can’t afford voice and music lessons. Ollison’s work revolves around instilling the value of learning about all aspects of music including theory, note value, composition, and notation.

The Pamlico County native has reached out to a number of public figures to join her cause including former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Thad Lewis, Miss Black North Carolina Chanda Branch, and Debra Antney, the former manager of rapper Gucci Mane and mother to rapper Waka Flocka.

Ollison has also partnered with North Carolina Central University (NCCU) to begin a five-week “STEAM” (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) program. Working with NCCU and Sisters In Power, a women’s empowerment organization, will provide music education classes later this summer.

Despite push back from some N.C. school officials and the tragic deaths of her father and sister, the young artpreneur continues to press on, inspired by her fiancé, her three year-old daughter and families touched by her work in the community.

“When the schools take something out, we’ve got to put it back in,” said Ollison. “We need legislators to [get] behind music education.”

Ollison said that if people imagined a world without art and design, they might have a different perspective on arts education.

“I challenge you to never listen to the radio again, never look at architectural designs again,” said Ollison. “I challenge you to sit there a whole day and not benefit from the arts. I challenge you to do without the arts and let’s see, if you would change your mind.”

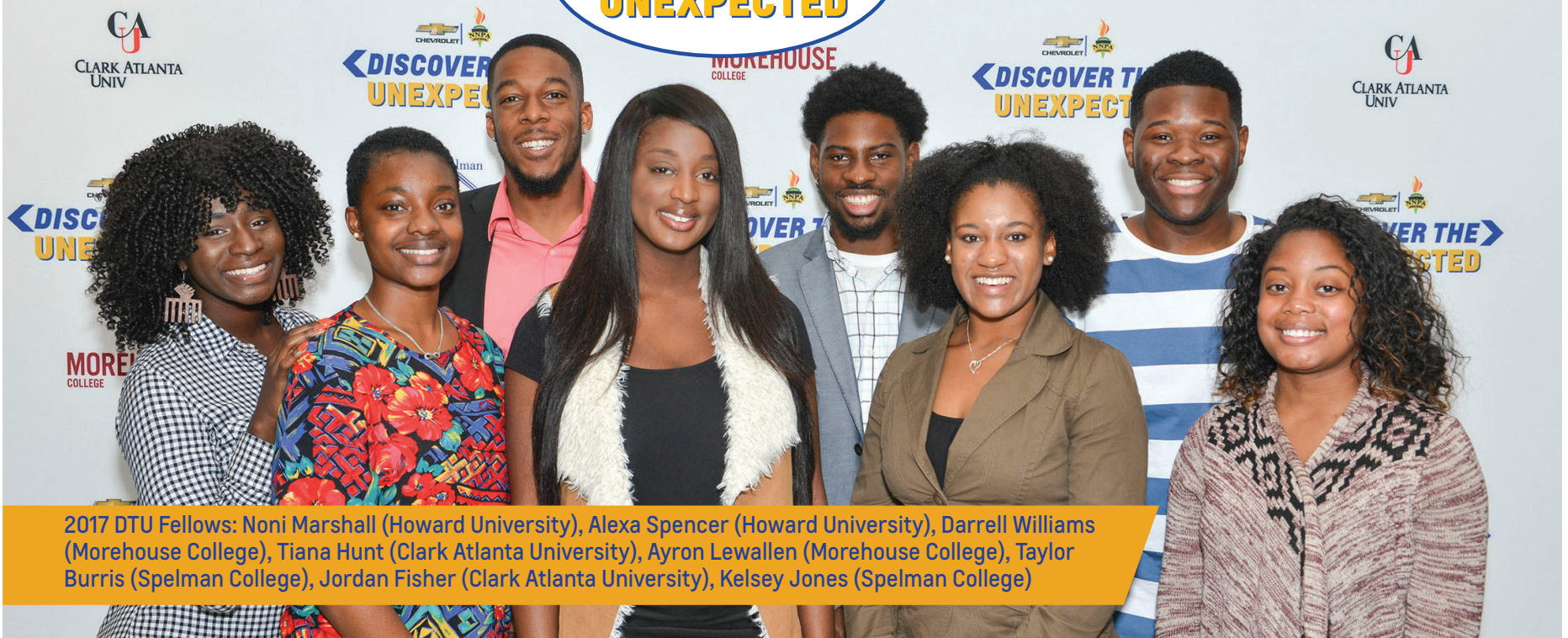
Taylor Burris is a 2017 NNPA/DTU Journalism Fellow and Spelman College student, who is creating content for The Carolinian this summer. Follow Taylor on Twitter @tburris24.

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2017 DTU Fellows: Noni Marshall (Howard University), Alexa Spencer (Howard University), Darrell Williams (Morehouse College), Tiana Hunt (Clark Atlanta University), Ayrton Lewallen (Morehouse College), Taylor Burris (Spelman College), Jordan Fisher (Clark Atlanta University), Kelsey Jones (Spelman College)

Our DTU Fellows are busy connecting and collecting amazing stories from the African American community! This year, Discover the Unexpected presented by the all-new 2018 Chevrolet Equinox in partnership with the National Newspaper Publishers Association includes students from Howard University, Spelman College, Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta University. Check out the inspirational stories and exciting videos from our 8 DTU Fellows from Atlanta, Washington D.C., Raleigh and New Orleans.

#discovertheunexpected

DISCOVER MORE OF THEIR STORY AT NNPA.ORG/DTU

Ravens safety Eric Weddle expects to have the best year ever!

By Turron Davenport

Veteran players reported to training camp for the Baltimore Ravens on Wednesday, July 26, 2017 and took to the field for the first time on Thursday. Camp can be a grueling and tedious process for veteran players.

Now entering his second season in Baltimore, free safety Eric Weddle is happy to come back. He wants this season to be one of the best ever for the Ravens.

"Every year is a great opportunity, but even more so this year. We're always having fun, always pushing each other," Weddle explained back in June. "It's been a great offseason, just the participation, the work we've put in, and it's showing out on the field. We need to carry it over and keep pushing it and be ready to have our best year ever."

The window may be closing for Baltimore, as several aging stars are moving into the twilight of their careers. Before it closes, Weddle wants his teammates to see what is in front of them and take advantage.



Eric Weddle #32 of the Baltimore Ravens runs onto the field before the game against the New York Jets at MetLife Stadium on October 23, 2016 in East Rutherford, New Jersey.
Courtesy Photo/NFL.com

"We have a great opportunity and we have depth. Just seeing it mold together as OTAs went on and minicamp— of what we can become, but it's only going to happen if we strive to be great," Wed-

dle explained. "We strive to keep each other accountable, including myself. You can't have a day off [or] a bad practice, if you want to be the best. Everyone has that mentality."

The Ravens got off to a strong start last year, opening the season at 3 - 0. They ended with an 8 - 8 record— out of the playoffs for the second consecutive season.

Not making it to the post season was unacceptable to many players on the Ravens. With aging veterans such as Terrell Suggs (15th season) and Joe Flacco (32 years old) working towards the back end of their careers, no season can be taken for granted.

There has already been some roster turnovers due to retirement. Weddle only got to spend a single season with one of his best friends and former teammate Steve Smith Sr. He isn't making any excuses for this season.

"Coming up short last year, that's on everyone's minds. Nothing is guaranteed in this league," Weddle said. "We understand that we can't have a year not be successful because a lot of changes had happened. We want to make [good] and give ourselves the best chance to win a bunch of games, and be the best unit out there."

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Baltimore man reflects on life as Orioles fan 'before' Camden Yards

By Timothy Cox
Special Correspondent

When James Batty sits on the deck of his senior citizens home in Northwest Baltimore, he sometimes reflects on the times when an empty baseball field across the street, once housed a massive edifice, known as Memorial Stadium.

"I actually worked there two different times— first from 1957 to '59. Then, I came back in the mid-1960s," said Batty.

Now 76, he worked as a vendor first while in high school, selling popcorn, peanuts and hot dogs.

"Minors couldn't sell beer," he recalled. "So I was too young the first time."

His walk somewhat slowed now, and while assisted by a cane, Batty's mind remains razor-sharp. He easily recalls the times when the stadium consistently attracted sold-out crowds and fielded world-championship caliber teams.

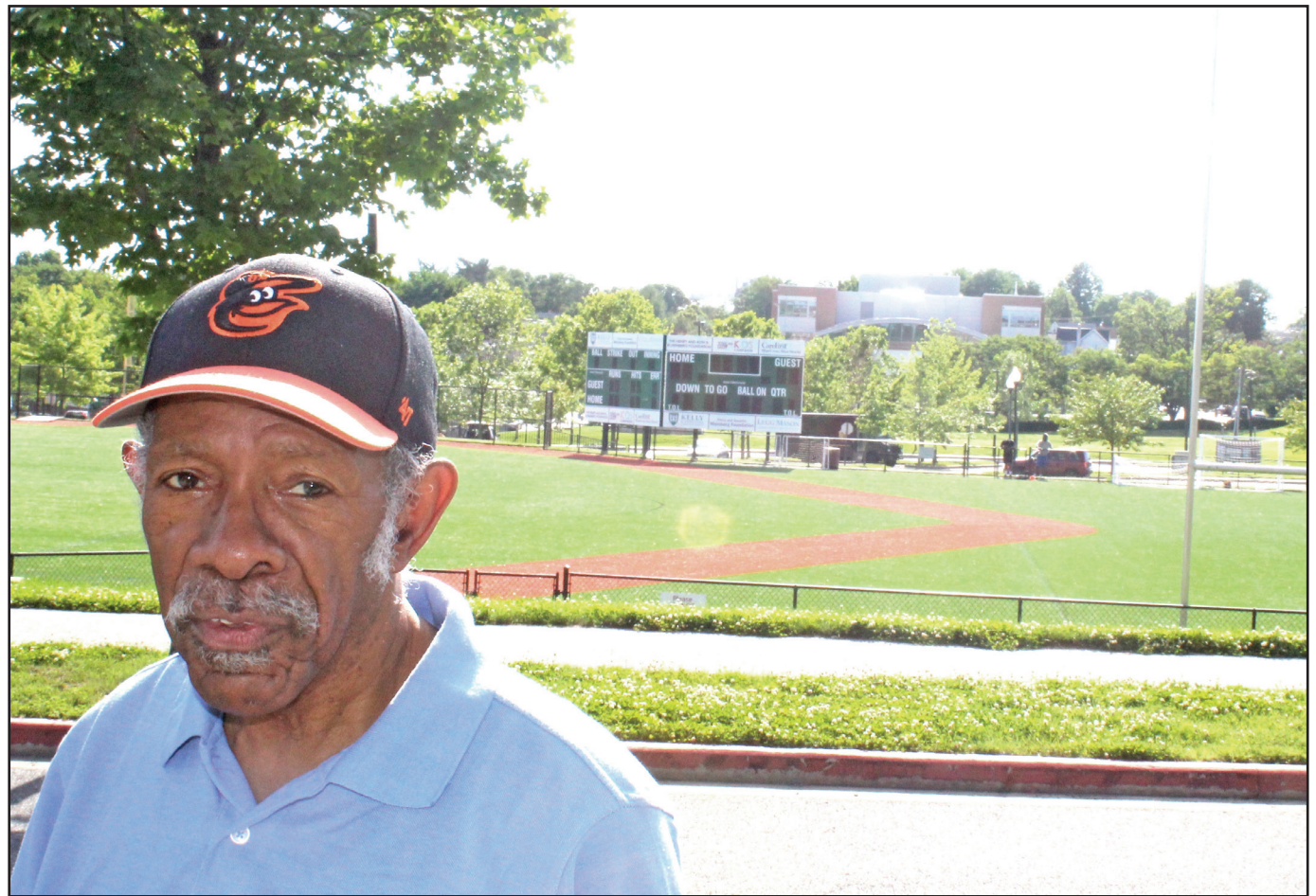
"I really recall the 1958 (MLB) All-Star Game, he said. "That one had Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, Micky Mantle."

Having grown up on the west side of Baltimore on Vine Street, Batty says he never imagined he would someday live on the same property where Memorial Stadium was once located. The structure was built in 1950 and razed in 2001.

In addition to the senior housing facility, the mixed-use property houses a new YMCA and an athletic field used by youth soccer, lacrosse and baseball players. The property boasts an athletic field that's sponsored by the Cal Ripken Sr. foundation, and uses the original diamond set up as did Memorial Stadium. The original home plate was relocated to Camden Yards when the new stadium opened in 1992, according to Bill Stetka, Orioles Alumni Director.

"They did a really good job in developing the area that once housed the old stadium," said Stetka, who formerly served as the team's Public Relations director before assuming his current role nearly ten years ago.

Batty studied to be a cabinet-maker at Baltimore's George Washington Carver High School, where he graduated in 1959. He retired from the City of Baltimore, having worked in the city's waste-



James Batty first worked as a vendor at Memorial Stadium while in high school, selling popcorn, peanuts and hot dogs. His highlight was having worked the 1958 MLB All-Star Game. Now at age 76, he lives in an assisted living facility on the same grounds where Memorial Stadium was located. He faithfully wears his Orioles hat each spring and says he'll always remain a "Birds" fan.

Photo by Timothy Cox

water treatment department.

"Somebody's got to do that job, and I did it," he smiled.

One of Batty's many neighbors at Ednor Apartments at Stadium Place is Thomas "Tom" Gilk. At 66, Gilk said he resided in NYC, before relocating to Baltimore as a teenager. The retired chemical operator said he too is a long-time baseball fan, and recalls World Series trips for the Orioles.

"They won in '66, '70 and '83, but lost to the Pittsburgh Pirates in '71 and '79. They were singing 'We Are Fam-a-lee,' yea those teams were good but those were all good games— very competitive," he said.

Batty's highlight was having worked the 1958 MLB All-Star Game. On that July 8 night he witnessed the likes of Mickey Mantle, Bill Skowron and Nellie

Fox for the American League, while Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, Ernie Banks, Stan Musial and Warren Spahn graced the National League roster. Batty faithfully wears his Orioles hat each spring and says he'll always remain a "Birds" fan.

"They've had some tough times lately, but overall, they've got a great organization, he said. "But," he added, "I'll still always remember Frank Robinson, Brooks Robinson, John "Boog" Powell, Eddie Murray, Jim Palmer and Cal Ripken— they were the all-time greats."

Batty also worked as a vendor for the Baltimore Colts before the team left for Indianapolis in 1984. He proudly recalls seeing the likes of Johnny Unitas, Lenny Moore and John Mackey, in their iconic blue and white jerseys and horseshoe-logo hats. He said he enjoyed the warm-

weather baseball seasons' verses the cold-weather NFL schedule.

For the record, Stetka said Memorial Stadium was never in disrepair, but the ball-club needed a venue that could compete with the modern stadiums of the 1970s such as Riverfront (Cincinnati); Three Rivers (Pittsburgh) and Busch Stadium (St. Louis). The large red-brick structure behind right field (at Camden Yards) was formerly a warehouse owned by Baltimore and Ohio Railroad company, which now houses the Orioles' administrative offices.

Camden Yards was once a large railroad loading area where trains off-loaded materials and goods. A sister warehouse is located in Cincinnati, where the Ohio railway route ends, according to Stetka.

Fashion enthusiast opens Maryland's first Clothes Mentor

By Stacy M. Brown

Suzanne Delica says she has always had a passion for fashion. As a young girl, she even crafted outfits for her Barbie dolls out of unique socks and ribbon.

Now, at 29, Delica will open what she says is Maryland's first Clothes Mentor in Columbia, called Cachet Mode LLC, which does business as Clothes Mentor. She is helping local women re-purpose their gently used clothing in exchange for a whole new wardrobe or cash on the spot.

The grand opening is scheduled for 11 a.m. on Thursday, August 10, 2017 at 8865 Stanford Boulevard in suite 125 in Columbia, Maryland.

"I had the classic [Barbie] dolls and I absolutely loved dressing them up for every scene in my Barbie adventure," Delica said. "My mom would eventually teach me how to sew so that I could complete my looks with a touch of professionalism. Reflecting on this time makes my life choices come full circle, now ... the entrepreneurial spirit was also undeniable, considering my family's merchant roots and my parents being self-employed. It was only natural that my next life venture would be to start a fashion business—two of my favorite topics."

Mostly, Delica says she acquired her entrepreneurial spirit from her father, a Haitian immigrant who opened his first business in America more than 40 years ago. She opened her first business in 2007, an online women's clothing boutique she promoted with fashion shows at her university, when she was 19.

Upon graduating from college with an engineering degree, she took a job as an electrical engineer for a nuclear technology company where she hoped to eventually move into a marketing role. When that didn't pan out, she started looking for business opportunities in franchising. When she learned about Clothes Mentor, she says she knew she found her next business.

"It was a Cinderella fit. Their business was exactly what I was good at, and what I enjoyed," Delica said. "I get to help local women make money by cleaning out their closets and fill their wardrobes with high fashion items at a fraction of the retail price."

Delica noted that she grew up in an environment where individuals are exhorted to choose a career path and stick to it. She said she struggled with competing interests.

"I recall my science fair projects in middle and high school teetering between the mysteries of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics and my fascination with electricity and electromagnetic energy," she said. "Yet, most of my afternoons were spent dancing at home for hours in front of the television or radio."

Delica said one reason for her interest in Clothes Mentor was that resale has become a \$17 billion industry and, over the past decade, Clothes Mentor has paid local women more than \$180 million for their gently used items. She said Clothes Mentor of Columbia makes it



*Suzanne Delica at her store in Columbia, Maryland
Courtesy Photo/Clothes Mentor*

easy for customers to donate their unwanted clothing to local charities.

"During my initial call with NTY (the organization that franchises Clothes Mentor stores), a senior executive made the comment, 'all the stars have aligned for an opportunity such as this.' It just made sense," Delica said.

"Clothes Mentor's concept, my personal aspirations, the timing, my professional background, my life vision and even the location we chose—all made it come together. Franchising with a leading brand like Clothes Mentor seemed like a smart and a lucrative decision."

College student's campaign raises over \$11,000 to keep others cool

By Andrea Blackstone

DaJuan Gay, a 20-year-old college student who attends the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), can vouch for the power of using social media to make a positive community impact.

During summer break, Gay felt concerned that battling high temperatures is problematic for his neighbors who reside in Eastport Terrace in Annapolis, because some do not have any air conditioning. Gay lives in the public housing complex community with his mother, Heaven White.

Gay posted a message about his neighbor's plight in a Facebook forum where Annapolitans interact with each other online. His comments sparked a swift solution. Volunteers united to raise money to purchase free, standing air conditioning units for individuals in need through crowdfunding. The campaign is still going strong.

"We started it ("A Cool Campaign") just last Thursday (July 20, 2017). I simply made a post in the Eastport (Neighborhood) Forum group on Facebook, and asked people to reach out to their elected officials. All I wanted was attention to be brought to these underserved communities," Gay said. "They (residents of Eastport Terrace) don't have air conditioning, they don't have decent playground equipment and things like that. I see that so much more could be done in this community."

Gay says some neighbors who are hard-working single mothers, elderly people who cannot work, and disabled individuals cannot afford to buy air conditioning units themselves.

Barbara Webber responded to his post on the Eastport Neighborhood Forum. Webber, an Annapolis native who has been involved in community projects for over 25 years, told Gay not to listen to the naysayers who initially voiced negative opinions about his concern.

Webber met with Gay in person to help him take action. She suggested that setting up a crowdfunding campaign could raise money to purchase air conditioners. Their initial goal was to help 25



Volunteers meet at Home Depot in Annapolis to pick up air conditioning units, deliver them to local residents, and set them up. Over 30 air conditioning units have been given to help Annapolitans who needed help to beat the heat.

people. After another forum member encouraged others to come together for the cause, Gay says that things took off. Hearts softened, too.

"That night we [collected] \$1,600," Gay said, "And then, when I woke up the next morning, we had \$4,700 in the account for this fundraiser. I could not believe it. Overnight that happened and we've just been continuing to raise money."

As of July 25, over 45 freestanding air conditioning units have been delivered to people who needed them. Gay added that an individual who has multiple sclerosis and is a stroke survivor, received a free air conditioner. "A Cool Campaign" continues to impact Annapolitans with help from volunteers and donors who are answering the call to help. Kiddie pools, water, ice, fans and portable air conditioning units have also been donated to help others beat the sweltering heat.

"We started with Eastport Terrace and that's where we're immediately going, but what happened through the project that took off so well on social media is that people from other neighborhoods are calling and asking [for help]. We're just going to keep pushing that money to help as many people as we can," Gay said. "There are a lot of people in the city who don't have central air and it really, really, really shocked me."

Volunteers for "A Cool Campaign" led by Gay, walked through Eastport Terrace on July 24. They counted 22 homes with central air and 56 without. They plan to



During a walk to determine how many Eastport Terrace residents had air conditioning, A Cool Campaign volunteers were welcomed by these neighbors. The mother said that her children were able to sleep in their bedrooms for the first time, thanks to the air conditioner that was delivered because of the community fundraiser. Courtesy Photos

continue to raise funds to deliver at least 10 more air conditioning units this week. Since residents from other Annapolis communities are reaching out for help to obtain air conditioning, the group plans to buy as many air conditioners as donations will allow.

Webber even hopes other communities will replicate "A Cool Campaign's" model.

"Because DaJuan lives in the (Eastport Terrace) neighborhood, his focus has been who needs them [there]. His mom has lived there a long time so they have teams up to identify the most vulnerable

people first. Our priority was elderly, disabled, people with little children and then everybody else after that," Webber said. "If you put passionate youth and experience together in the community, you make miracles happen. DaJuan is a born leader. He doesn't give up, and he cares deeply about his community. That's a winning combination—that's our future."

The price of each air conditioner is \$260. If you would like to donate to "A Cool Campaign," visit <https://fundly.com/urgent-a-c-for-maryland-needy-a-cool-campaign>.

MTA believes new Baltimore LINK is definite improvement

By Stacy M. Brown

After nearly two years of planning, the new Baltimore LINK service kicked off with major changes and a complete overhaul of the city's bus system.

While Governor Larry Hogan's \$135 million transportation makeover left many bewildered when the service began last month, the governor's office says that even though it may take riders a little time to get used to, ultimately, they believe that the new system is a major improvement.

"The goal of Baltimore LINK is to meet the needs of today's transit riders," said Sandy Arnette, the director of media relations for the Maryland Transit Administration.

"To accomplish that goal, the Maryland Department of Transportation had to overhaul the entire transit system that was based on the old trolley lines to connect to today's job centers," Arnette said. "Anytime you change an entire system, it is going to take time for our riders to learn the new system. We know change is hard, but should get easier once riders are comfortable with their new routes."

Among the key components of the new Baltimore LINK is CityLink— 12 high-frequency, color-coded bus routes that officials say will improve reliability, and better connect riders to Amtrak, Commuter Bus, Light RailLink, MARC Train, Metro SubwayLink and other services in Baltimore and the surrounding suburbs. The CityLink busses are scheduled to run every 15 minutes during peak service hours.

Signs at bus stops have also changed. All of the approximately 5,000 signs have been replaced by new ones that show the route, where the buses are



Maryland Department of Transportation overhauled the entire transit system that was based on the old trolley lines to connect transit riders to today's job centers. After two years of planning, the new Baltimore Link kicked off with major changes last month. MTA officials say that even though it may take riders a little time to get used to, they believe that the new system is a major improvement.

Courtesy Photo/MTA

going, when, and how often.

Additionally, dedicated bus lanes have been added to provide efficient bus transportation through downtown Baltimore, and officials say that MTA is improving the transfer experience for riders across the system with amenities like real-time information signs, new bus shelters, improved lighting, more informative bus stop signs, bike racks, improved safety and bike- and car-sharing options for last-mile connections.

"We're seeing high demand on several of our bus [routes] and we're adding service to meet that demand," Arnette said.

As an example of MTA meeting the

high demand, more service has been added in both directions on the CityLink Orange, CityLink Pink and CityLink Blue lines. The MTA has also added service to LocalLink 34 in Baltimore County, which they say should accommodate passengers traveling to Green-spring Station.

"Moving forward, we encourage our riders to continue this active dialogue," Arnette said. "To date, we have engaged more than 100,000 people and know that together we can create the best transit system for the Baltimore region."

The dedicated lanes are indeed helping to move buses faster through the normally congested downtown area on new,

red dedicated bus lanes, according to MTA officials.

"Our riders are experiencing the benefits of getting to work faster and, as pointed out in a recent television news report, a trip from West Baltimore to the Amazon Fulfillment Center in Southeast Baltimore took 90 minutes," Arnette said. "Under BaltimoreLink, that commute time was cut nearly in half to 50 minutes."

MTA officials are continuing to encourage riders to learn the system to find out how Baltimore Link can best work for them by logging on to: baltimorelink.com or mta.maryland.gov.

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Coppin State wins Blackboard Catalyst Award for student success

Baltimore— Coppin State University (CSU) has been named the winner of the Blackboard Catalyst Award for Student Success, which honors individuals and/or institutions whose creative program application has led to increased retention, increased completion, and/or improved outcomes.

Founded in 2005 by education technology leader Blackboard Inc., the annual Catalyst Awards recognize and honor innovation and excellence in the Blackboard global community of practice, where millions of educators and learners work every day to redefine what is possible when leveraging technology. Winners are selected by a cross-functional team of experts from Blackboard.

A four-person team from CSU— University President Dr. Maria Thompson; Mr. Prasad Doddanna, Director of Information Systems; Dr. Ahmed El-Hagan, Vice President and Chief Information Officer; and Dr. Dionne Curbeam, Director of Instructional Technology Department— will be honored alongside other Blackboard Catalyst Award winners during BbWorld 2017; Blackboard's annual user conference to be held July 25-27 in New Orleans.

"It is gratifying to have the work we've been undertaking to enhance the level of student success recognized," said Dr. Thompson. "Our focus has been on democratizing data and investing in analytics and we've seen a positive outcome related to our Fall 2016 freshman enrollment. Our creation of a student success council was also instrumental to our overall success."

"Blackboard is proud to recognize this year's Catalyst Award winners for their commitment to leveraging technology to improve the education experience," said Bill Ballhaus, Chairman, CEO and President of Blackboard. "We look forward to continuing to work with these educators and institutions to support learner success, and to share best practices widely for the benefit of the education community."

Rambling Rose

Free festivals in your neighborhood



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hi there! How are you all doing? Hope you are enjoying this season of outdoor fun and living. There is so much going on right in your neighborhood—and it's free! I checked out a few things for you and I discovered no matter what part of the city or county you live in there are free festivals, carnivals, flea markets, concerts and farmer's markets, and shows with live bands, DJ's, vendors of arts & crafts, food, jewelry, clothes, fruit, vegetables, flowers and plants, and just about anything you could possibly want or need.

There are a couple of events that you will have to get a ticket to participate such as the "Roast & Birthday Celebration for Larry Lancaster" with Roast masters featuring renowned comedians: Ms. Maybelle; Howard G, Rickey Shackelford; Henry Jonez, Stilletto, Big Shorty, Sonny Fuller and Ray Diva. Special performance by Panama Band at the Forum Caterers, 4210 Primrose Avenue, Sunday, July 30, 2017 at 4 p.m. For tickets, call 410-808-5801 or 443-226-9157.

Go out and enjoy the free monthly concerts located in Union Square Park. Take your blankets and chairs and enjoy free live music on Sunday, July 30, 2017 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Liberty Live Family Outdoor Concert and vendor shopping hosted by Liberty Road Business Association, last concert is Friday, July 28 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.—rain or shine! Free to the public! Bring your folding chairs with you.

Live music is back on the "Avenue" every Thursday from 7-10 p.m. "Jam & Juice" at the Arch Social Club, 2426 Pennsylvania Avenue, the historical private club that is absolutely beautiful inside. Join the "New World Out Reach Jazz Orchestra" for a "Happy Hour & Jam Session," musicians are welcome! Bring your sax!

My dear friend James Hamlin and his family welcome you to their well-known, popular "The Avenue Bakery" on Pennsylvania Avenue and Baker Street. The Royal Theater & Community Heritage Corporation, of which James Hamlin is the founder of presents a "Courtyard Music Series" giving you a taste of jazz with live entertainment the first Saturday of every month through September right in the courtyard of the Avenue Bakery and it is free. Food, wine, beverages, etc are on sale. Any donation you give will help rebuild the Royal Theatre. Don't forget to take your folding chairs and enjoy, it is free.

Check out the "Eight Annual Jazz/R&B Show Under the Stars Extravaganza" (an adult-only event & Cure for Cancer Fundraiser) hosted by Rosalyn Gaines on Saturday, August 5, 2017 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. at The Lorraine Garden, 1021 Hartmont Road Catonsville, Maryland. Bring your own lawn chairs, tented seating to protect you from the sun and rain. There will be live entertainment, great DJs', vendors with jewelry, clothing, crafts and artwork. For more information, call 443-413-1470.



Terry "Big T" Williams & Vann Durham, Blues guitarist and vocalist will perform on Sunday, July 30, 2017 at the Union Square Festival at Union Square Park located at 31 S. Gilmore Street from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.



The 24th Annual Hamilton Street Festival takes place on Saturday, July 29, 2017 from noon to 6 p.m. between the 5500 block of Harford Road and 2900 block of Hamilton Avenue. There will be arts & crafts, food vendors, two stages, 12 bands with live entertainment and DJ stage!



The Mayo Family Bluegrass Band will perform at the Druid Hill Park Farmer's Market at 3100 Swann Drive in Druid Hill Park on Wednesday, August 2, 2017. The Farmer's Market begins at 3 p.m. and is open until 7 p.m.



The Otherworld Jazz Group will perform at West Square, Mount Vernon Place, 699 Washington Place from 7-8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 2, 2017.

Well, my dear friends, there is more, but I am out of space. This should be enough to keep you busy. Remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474

or email me at rosapryor@aol.com.
UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSI-
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Odessa Rose's 'Water In A Broken Glass'

By Ursula V. Battle

Sculptor "Tonya Mimms" finds herself attracted to her high school female friend "Meyoki Outlaw." Tonya struggles with her sexuality and subsequently immerses herself in her artwork. She ultimately buries her emotions deep within her sculptures. She searches for ways to move past Meyoki and finds the answer in "Malcolm Holland," a tall, handsome man who owns an accounting business. She and Malcolm begin dating, and Tonya believes she can finally leave her past behind in high school.

However, she soon meets the statuesque and beautiful "Satin Pierce," while shopping in her Pennsylvania Avenue bookstore. Once again, Tonya finds herself torn between her emotions for a woman, while still very much wanting to be with a man. However, this time she can no longer bury her feelings within her sculptures, as her past has once again resurfaced.

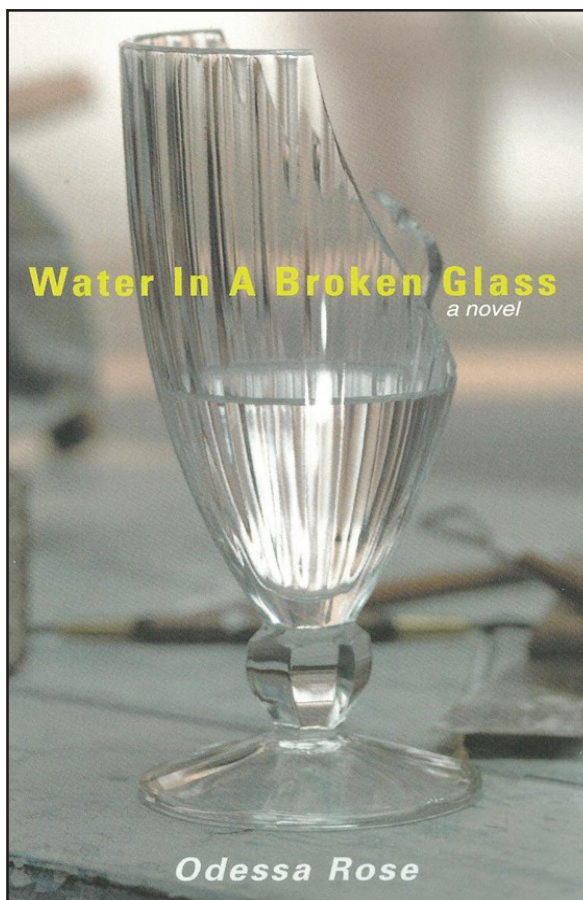
With Baltimore City as its backdrop, this is the storyline for "Water In A Broken Glass," a book written by Baltimore native Odessa Rose, which is being adapted into a film called Water.

Currently in production, the film features Billie Krishawn (Tonya Mimms); Toni Belafonte (Satin Pierce); and Wes Hall (Malcolm Holland). Belafonte is the cousin of actor and activist Harry Belafonte. The film also features Victoria Rowell (Aunt Josephine), who portrayed "Drucilla Winters" on *The Young and the Restless*.

Water In a Broken Glass was released September 15, 2000, and is published by La Callie Nous in New York. According to Rose, she decided to write the book after a conversation with a friend and former co-worker.

"She told me she was gay," recalled Rose. "She was afraid to tell me because she thought I would no longer be her friend. I wasn't sure why she thought that, but all of a sudden, the character Tonya Mimms popped in my mind, and I started writing from there."

Water In a Broken Glass illustrates both the complexity and simplicity of art, love and sexuality. According to Rose, the book has received great reviews, reached #6 on the Print-On-Demand Best Sellers list, and was used for a graduate level literature course at Wake Forest University.



"Ultimately, the book is just saying 'to be yourself,'" said Rose. "The character Tonya Mimms illustrates that when people are not being themselves, they put themselves, and their family and friends through a lot of unnecessary turmoil. This book stresses for people to just be themselves, so that they don't hurt themselves and other people."

The film is being produced by Lodge Street Films, which is owned by filmmaker Jamelle Williams Thomas. The D.C. filmmaker is also the film's director. The film's cinematographer is Baltimore native Kirby Griffin.

"Jamelle was in a California film school when the book came out," recalled Rose. "A friend of Jamelle's read the book and really liked it. Jamelle also read the book and liked it. She emailed me, and asked for the



Baltimore native Odessa Rose is the author of "Water In A Broken Glass," which is being adapted into a film.
Courtesy Photos

rights to turn it into film."

Rose said the film stays true to the book.

"I didn't want anything stereotypical going on," said Rose. "Malcolm is handsome and Satin is beautiful. Both are tall, and both have their own businesses. Malcolm and Satin are equal. *Water* was filmed in Baltimore, which is the setting for the book. The film stuck to all of those things, and I was happy about that."

Filming started September 15, 2016 and wrapped up in October 2016. Rose says the film, which is being financed by its creators, investors and crowdfunding efforts will be completed by September 9, 2017.

"That is our projected completion date in order to enter the film into Sundance and other major Festivals," said Rose. "The planned release of the film is summer 2018. I thank Jamelle and all the people who helped bring this book to life. They worked so hard. I hope to see the film played in major theaters one day."

Rose just completed another novel, *Kizmic's Journey*, and is currently working on her fourth novel, which is tentatively titled, *The Subway*. She also plans to re-release her self-published book, *In the Mirror*.

Rose is a member of the Black Writers Guild of Maryland, and is co-creator of the television magazine, *This Is Baltimore, Too*.

"The book's readers say the story seems so real, they can't believe I made it up," Rose said with a smile. "I feel honored and take that as a compliment. I also get letters from people who are going through their own struggles with their sexuality. My hope is that this book and film helps people in some way."

For more information or to purchase a copy of the book, visit: www.odessarose.com.

**Author Talk @ The Lewis
Historic African American Leisure Destinations
Saturday, August 5, 2017 at 1 p.m.
Reginald F. Lewis Museum
830 E. Pratt Street in Baltimore**

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NOTICE OF LETTING

Sealed Bids or Proposals, in duplicate addressed to the Board of Estimates of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore and marked for **Water Contract No. 1314-Oliver Neighborhood & Vicinity Water Main Replacements** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204, City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M. on **Wednesday, August 16, 2017**. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. Bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates in Room 215, City Hall at Noon.

The Contract Documents may be examined, without charge, in Room 6 located on the first floor of the Abel Wolman Municipal Building, 200 N. Holliday Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202 as of **Friday, July 28, 2017** and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **\$100.00**.

Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package.

All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be prequalified by the City of Baltimore Contractors Qualification Committee. Interested parties should call 410-396-6883 or contact the Committee at 4 South Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. **If a bid is submitted by a joint venture ("JV"), then in that event, the document that established the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes.** The Prequalification Category required for bidding on this project is **B02551-Water Mains**

Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$5,000,000.01 to \$10,000,000.00**

A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted at the **3rd Floor Conference Room of the Office of Engineering & Construction, Abel Wolman Municipal Building on August 1, 2017 at 1:00 P.M.** **Principal Item of work for this project are:**

Installation of approximately 18,950 linear feet of new ductile iron Class 54 water 4-inch, 6-inch, 8-inch, 10-inch, 12-inch and 20-inch existing water mains, fittings, valves, and appurtenances, abandonment and/or removal of existing water mains and cathodic protection of 20-inch DIP. Replacement of existing galvanized water service lines with new copper pipes, replacement of small residential meter settings and meter vaults, roadway paving, sidewalk

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restoration, curb and gutter replacement, erosion and sediment control, and maintenance of traffic as required.

The MBE goal is **9%**

The WBE goal is **2%**

WATER CONTRACT NO. 1314

APPROVED:

Bernice H. Taylor

Clerk, Board of Estimates

APPROVED:

Rudolph S. Chow, P.E.

Director of Public Works

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Reginald Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture

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Automated Traffic Violation Enforcement System**

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation has established an Automated Traffic Violation Enforcement System (ATVES). The ATVES includes speed monitoring systems which detect vehicles exceeding the posted speed limit by twelve (12) miles per hour or greater in designated school and work zones, red light monitoring systems which detect vehicles failing to stop for a red light/signal or failing to stop before turning at a red light/signal, and vehicle height monitoring systems to detect commercial vehicles or trucks being operated on a restricted roadway or in violation of a restriction regarding the operation of certain vehicles during certain time periods, at prohibited locations. Based on information from the ATVES, vehicle owners or operators may be cited for violations of Maryland law.

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- Reisterstown Road (Southbound) at Patterson Avenue
- East North Avenue (Westbound) at North Howard Street
- South Monroe Street (Northbound) at Washington Boulevard
- South Monroe Street (Southbound) at Washington Boulevard
- Belair Road (Southbound) at Erdman Avenue
- Erdman Avenue (Eastbound) at Belair Road
- Pulaski Highway (Eastbound) at North Point Road
- North Calvert Street (Northbound) at East Baltimore Street

For further information, please call the Baltimore City Department of Transportation, Automated Traffic Violation Enforcement System at (443) 984-2150 or email ATVES.Project@baltimorecity.gov.

<http://transportation.baltimorecity.gov/automated-traffic-violation-enforcement-system>

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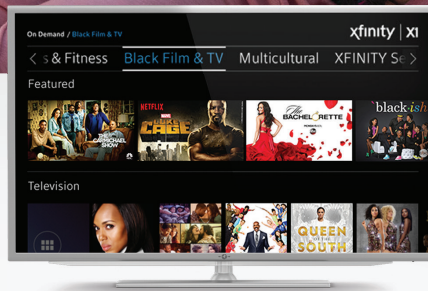
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