


The Annapolis Times

Vol. 25 No. 49 October 6 - 12, 2017

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication

Trinity A.M.E. Celebrates 136th Church Anniversary



On Sunday, October 8, 2017, Trinity African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) will celebrate its 136th Church Anniversary. The theme of the milestone observance is "Celebrating 136 Years of God's Blessings." The day will feature guest sermons by Retired Bishop John H. Bryant and The Right Reverend Dr. Cecelia Williams Bryant. The Right Reverend Rodrecus M. Johnson, Sr. is pastor of Trinity A.M.E., which is located 2140 E. Hoffman Street in Baltimore. (See article on page 10)

Photo: Ursula Battle

Lutherville teen awarded major prize for his charity work

By Stacy M. Brown

Jordan Yaffe of Lutherville, Maryland, was awarded \$36,000 by the Helen Diller Family Foundation in recognition of his commitment to “tikkun olam”—repair the world.

The teen, along with 14 other young leaders from across the nation, received the national 2017 Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Award, a prestigious honor given to youth leaders who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, community service and action.

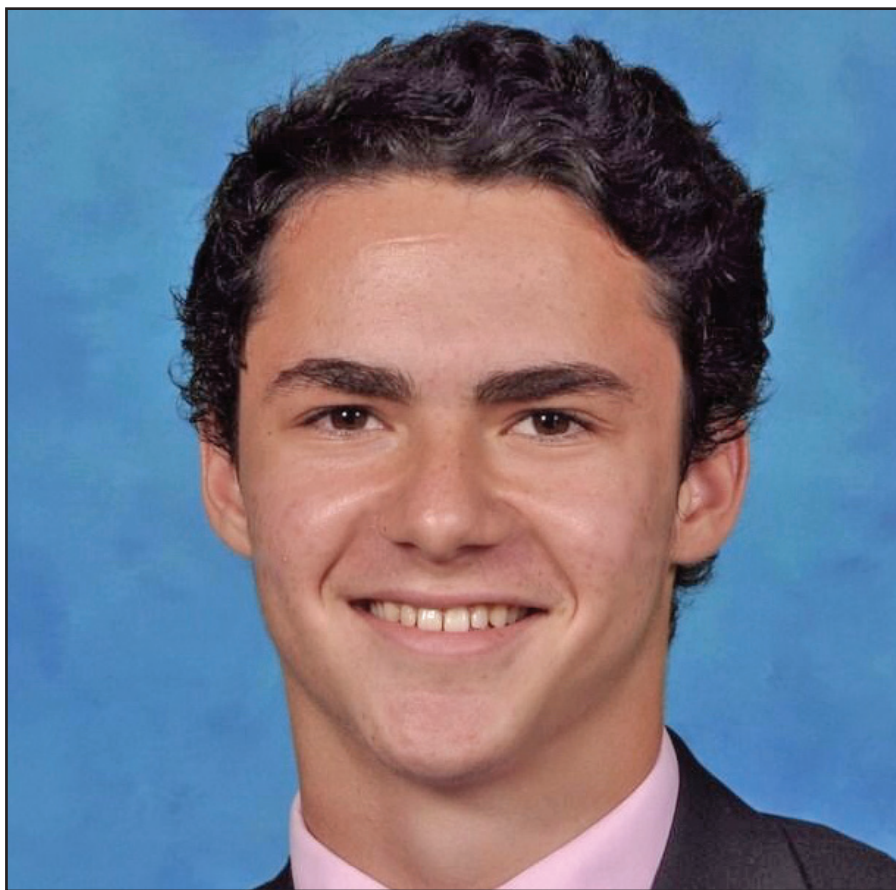
“It is a remarkable honor to be a recipient along with such an amazing group of people,” Jordan said.

“The award and its past recipients represent the commitment to giving to the community that we strive to have ‘Dunks for Diabetes,’ he said of his annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament that raises money for diabetes research.

The tournaments take place in several locations around the country and Jordan honors Fred Brancati, an influential doctor who researched diabetes at Johns Hopkins.

“My next-door neighbor growing up, Dr. Fred Brancati, was an influential researcher in the field of diabetes at Johns Hopkins and he tragically passed away from ALS [Lou Gehrig’s Disease] when I was in eighth grade,” Jordan said. “The year before, during the Spring of 2012, I started Dunks for Diabetes to honor his lifelong work. His story not only still inspires me to grow Dunks for Diabetes but also to give to others, in all facets of my life.”

The money raised by Dunks for Diabetes has gone to the American Diabetes Association, whose mission is to prevent



Jordan Yaffe from Lutherville, Maryland, received the national 2017 Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Award, a prestigious honor given to youth leaders who demonstrate exceptional leadership, community service and action. In 2012, Jordan started his annual “Dunks for Diabetes,” a three-on-three basketball tournament to raise funds for the American Diabetes Association. Courtesy Photo

and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

Jordan has also used a portion of the proceeds from Dunks for Diabetes for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund in honor of Will Hauver and the Diabetes Egg Crack Challenge.

He says Hauver was an individual who had a great and positive effect on many

in the Baltimore community.

The progression of Dunks for Diabetes was evident in its year-to-year growth. Five years ago, 16 middle school teams participated and Jordan was able to raise \$2,000 for the American Diabetes Association. Most recently about 48 teams participated helping raise as much as \$5,000. In total, Dunks for Diabetes has raised \$29,207 and has engaged more

than 1,000 players and 100 volunteers over the last 10 tournaments.

“I am energized by finding a genuine sense of purpose and inspiring others to do the same,” Jordan said.

Jordan and the others were recognized at a luncheon last month, which also celebrated the culmination of a week-end-long series of business strategy workshops, networking and mentoring initiatives, during which award winners exchanged ideas with other socially conscious peers and interacted with Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Award alumni from years past.

The Helen Diller Family Foundation supports programs and institutions throughout the world, with a focus on education, science, and the arts. The Foundation, which has awarded other major grants and gifts to places and organizations like the University of California Berkeley and Santa Cruz and the De Young Museum, annually recognizes top educators in their field and teens doing charity work.

A highlight of the award presentation was the debut of a special documentary-style video, featuring the accomplishments of Jordan and other teens in a behind-the-scenes chronicle of their leadership achievements. Each participant’s projects were showcased illustrating the ability to affect global change through leadership and community and service, and inspiring hope for viable solutions to even the world’s toughest problems, according foundation officials.

“Being recognized has and will continue to motivate me to grow the fundraiser and to make the world a better place,” Jordan said.

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The Annapolis Times

(USPS 5840) is published every Friday by *The Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore*, 2513 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218. Subscriptions by mail \$60 per year. Standard bulk postage paid at Baltimore, MD 21233.

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

Urgent: Reinstate ban on assault weapons to prevent mass killings

By Reverend Robert Moore

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the nearly 600 victims and their families of the largest mass shooting in US history last Sunday night in Las Vegas. The mass carnage made that city into what can only be described as a war zone. But our response needs to include more than prayers and moments of silence. We need to act to prevent more mass shootings, which are now occurring at an average of more than one per day.

The weapons of choice for such mass shootings are known as assault weapons. They were designed for the battlefield, which is the only place they should be allowed. They can rapidly fire bullets as fast as the shooter can pull the trigger. They were easily adapted by the shooter to become automatic weapons in which a single pull of the trigger can spray bullets with no pause.

The hopeful news in taking on such a monumental but urgent challenge is that New Jersey has banned such weapons since 1991, and they were banned nationally from 1994-2004. Tragically, the national ban had a sunset clause after ten years, so it automatically expired when then President George W. Bush refused to seek its renewal.

New Jersey's Assault Weapons Ban is a good basis for the feasibility of a renewed national ban. In 1993, after the NRA had helped elect an anti-assault-weapons ban majority in the NJ legislature in 1991, large majorities voted to rescind New Jersey's Ban. Then Governor Florio vetoed the rescission, and a vote to over-ride that veto easily succeeded in the NJ Assembly.

Three weeks later, a vote was scheduled in the NJ Senate. We in Ceasefire NJ mobilized intensively in the faith community and elsewhere. Many of the 70 percent of New Jerseyans who wanted to keep the ban urgently contacted their NJ Senator.

What followed was the closest thing I've ever seen to a legislative miracle: not a single NJ Senator voted to rescind the ban! When the Senator who represented our district, who supported the NRA, was asked why he voted to keep the ban, he said it was because he got 2,000 phone calls and 90 percent urged keeping the ban.

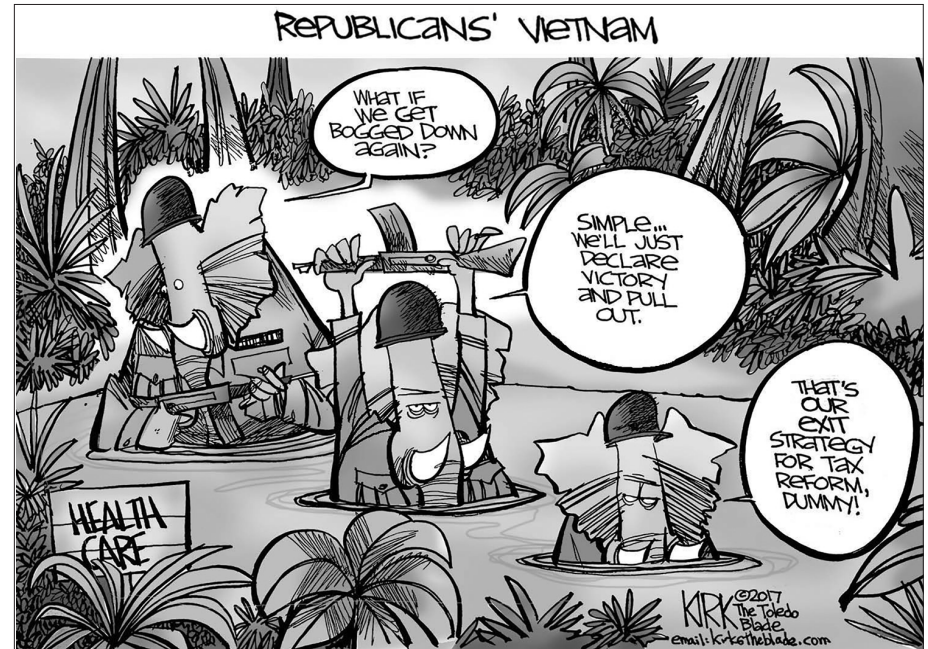
The fact that we were successful in breaking the NRA's stranglehold in New Jersey at least partly inspired the successful effort the next year to pass the National Assault Weapons Ban. Despite that fact that, unlike the New Jersey Ban, that included a grandfather clause, reputable studies showed that the National Ban resulted in a nearly 2/3 reduction in shootings with assault weapons.

We can seek to pass a National Assault Weapons Ban again. We need to press to have it introduced and voted on before the 2018 Congressional elections. In the 2006 midterms, the Coalition for Peace Action, of which Ceasefire NJ is a Project, helped make the Iraq War a litmus test issue, and the majority of those elected were opposed to that war.

Readers interested in learning more or getting involved in such an effort are urged to visit peacecoalition.org and click the Ceasefire NJ icon on the right.

Reverend Robert Moore is Executive Director of the Princeton-based Coalition for Peace Action, of which Ceasefire NJ is a Project.

When sending letters to the editor, your correct name, address and telephone number must be included with your submission. Your letter will not be published without the required information. Please send your letter by regular mail to: Letters to the Editor The Annapolis Times, 2513 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD. 21218 or email: btimes@btimes.com



Community Affairs

MSDE awarded \$45M to strengthen literacy

Baltimore— The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has been awarded a three-year, \$45 million federal grant to help advance literacy in students from birth through grade 12.

The grant is MSDE's largest competitive grant in nearly three years.

The Striving Readers' Comprehensive Literacy Grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Education, will support the State's Comprehensive Literacy Plan (CLP), including pre-literacy skills, reading and writing. The grant will be awarded in three increments, \$15 million each, contingent on funding.

"I believe that every child in Maryland deserves access to a world-class education regardless of what neighborhood they happen to grow up in," said Governor Larry Hogan. "Strong literacy skills are essential to educational success, and this grant will help ensure our students have the tools they need to compete for the jobs of the future."

"Learning starts with literacy, and stronger programs early in a child's life will never stop paying off," said Dr.

Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools. "We are looking forward to the opportunity to provide resources to our local school systems to enhance their literacy programs across reading, writing and mathematics, as well as to increase professional learning development for staff."

The State CLP is based upon five keys: educational leadership; strategic professional learning; continuity of standards' based instruction; comprehensive series of assessments; and tiered instruction and intervention. A statewide workgroup consisting of local system experts and other stakeholders will provide additional input on the Maryland CLP. The first meeting was held on October 5, 2017.

Maryland's local school systems will benefit from the grant, as 95 percent of the funds will be passed to local systems to support their literacy work. The new grant places special emphasis on disadvantaged children, including those living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities. The State's plan targets evidence-based strategies and interventions, and alignment of State literacy plans between learning and literacy for birth to age five with kindergarten through grade 12.

Lawmakers seek to end triple-digit interest on payday and car-title loans

By Charlene Crowell
Communication Director,
Center for Responsible Lending

A group of Capitol Hill lawmakers are combining efforts and influence to legislatively crack down on predatory lending, nationwide. Seventeen Members of the U.S. House and eight U.S. Senators are supporting companion bills that would slash the cost of payday and car-title loans from their typical 300 percent annual interest rate to no more than 36 percent—the same rate protection that Congress first provided military families in 2006.

Today, 90 million Americans living in 15 states and the District of Columbia benefit from enacted rate caps of 36 percent or lower. But in the other 35 states, residents remain vulnerable to triple-digit interest rates that average 400 percent nationwide on an average loan of only \$350.

When consumers use their car titles as collateral for a larger and equally costly loan, a loss of personal transportation occurs when borrowers can no longer

keep up with the spiraling high costs.

If enacted, the legislation is expected to have an immediate impact on payday and car-title loans, but would ensure that all consumer financial services would end cycles of debt that trick and trap unsuspecting consumers into long-term debt. The bicameral effort is led in the U.S. Senate by Senators Dick Durbin of Illinois and Jeff Merkley of Oregon. Their leadership counterparts in the

would take advantage of them through predatory lending practices that can wreak havoc on people's lives and perpetuate a cycle of indebtedness," said Cohen. "Both justice and morality dictate that reasonable caps on interest be enacted to protect borrowers from devious lenders."

From the Deep South, to the Pacific Coast, and westward to the mid-Atlantic and Midwest states, state payday interest

when it comes to state legislatures, reform efforts are often thwarted by the industry."

Already more than 40 national, state and local organizations have jointly written their members of Congress in support of the legislation. Signers of the correspondence include civil rights organizations, labor, consumer advocates, and research institutes.

In part, the letter states, "Veterans, seniors, women, and communities of color are most often targeted for exploitation by these unaffordable high-cost loans... While the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is expressly prohibited from setting a rate cap, Congress is not and should do so. A federal rate cap puts all creditors on a level playing field without undermining any additional consumer protections in the states."

Durbin said that, despite the economic gains we have made as a nation in recent years, many working families continue to struggle.

"For some, payday lenders offer a quick way to make ends meet," said Durbin. "But their outrageous interest rate caps and hidden fees can have crippling effects on the people who can least afford it."

Merkley noted that the bill's simple, straightforward approach will protect consumers and ensure that families aren't bankrupted by high interest rates and hidden fees.

Charlene Crowell is communications deputy director with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.

"Today, 90 million Americans living in 15 states and the District of Columbia benefit from enacted rate caps of 36 percent or lower. But in the other 35 states, residents remain vulnerable to triple-digit interest rates that average 400 percent nationwide on an average loan of only \$350."

House of Representatives are Matt Cartwright of Scranton, Pennsylvania and Steve Cohen of Memphis, Tennessee.

"Predatory lending disproportionately harms people who are already struggling financially," noted Rep. Cartwright, where in Pennsylvania these types of predatory and high-cost loans are already banned by state law. "This consumer-friendly legislation would provide relief from exorbitant fees for many low-income consumers across the country."

Rep. Cohen, Cartwright's House colleague, felt similarly.

"Throughout my career, I have always worked to shield people from those who

rates range as high as 662 percent in Texas to California's 460 percent, and Virginia's 601 percent. Likewise, in the Midwest, the states of Illinois, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin have comparable high interest rates that all exceed 400 percent. In Alabama and Mississippi, two of the nation's poorest states when it comes to per capita incomes, payday interest rates are respectfully 521 percent and 456 percent.

"What we have encountered across the country is that when voters are given the chance to support a rate cap, large majorities consistently say 'No' to debt-trap lending," said Yana Miles, senior legislative counsel with the Center for Responsible Lending. "Conversely,

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Baltimore City Public Schools Superintendent lays out blueprint for success

By Stacy M. Brown

Over the past 14 months Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises says she has worked hard to address the many issues facing Baltimore City Schools, which she heard about from community stakeholders and others.

Santelises, who took over more than a year ago from Gregory Thornton, says she has worked in step with the district's new blueprint, which lays out how officials, educators, parents, students and others will move toward the ultimate goal of building a generation of young people with the skills, knowledge and understanding to succeed in college, careers, and the community.

"Not just here in Baltimore, but wherever they go in the world, whatever they do after they graduate high school," Santelises said.

This year, Baltimore City Schools is pursuing a comprehensive approach designed to ensure that all students have access to high-performing schools that "meet their needs and interests, no matter where they live in the city," Santelises said.

The blueprint is designed to focus on three key areas. "Student wholeness, literacy, and staff leadership," Santelises said.

She noted that those three areas are intertwined in that, if students are motivated and excited about learning and they have the foundational skills to think critically, analyze deeply and express themselves powerfully with adults around them who encourage them to persist and excel, they will be positioned to move steadily toward high school graduation and post-secondary success.

"The way we do our work is as important as what the work is," Santelises said. "We're really trying to shift that culture," Santelises said.

Santelises, 49, has spent close to three decades focused on building high-quality teaching and learning to help students excel, including her tenure as chief academic officer for Baltimore City Public Schools from 2010 to 2013, according to her district-issued bio. She returned to Baltimore City schools in July 2016



Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises was appointed superintendent of Baltimore City Public Schools in July 2016. Dr. Santelises is the district's fifth superintendent in a decade.
Courtesy Photo

after serving three years as vice president for K-12 policy and practice at the Education Trust, a nonprofit focused on closing the achievement gap experienced disproportionately by African-American, Latino, and Native students and those from low-income families.

Championed by some as a true role model, Santelises first came to city schools in 2010 from Boston, where

she served as assistant superintendent for a network of 23 pilot schools. She also held the position of assistant superintendent for teaching and learning and professional development in Boston.

Santelises began her career in education as director of professional development placement with Teach for America in New York.

Throughout her career as an educator, academic and administrator, Santelises says she has been steadfast in her belief that excellence in urban education is achievable at scale.

"Our students have the same capacity for success as any other students," she said. "We must communicate and demonstrate our complete confidence in that capacity, by charting a pathway to success for each individual child. The real challenge is ours— as educators— to hold ourselves and our students accountable for their achievement."

Becoming the district's fifth superintendent in a decade allows for skepticism because of the high-turnover rate at the position, but Santelises has her share of believers.

In a previously published interview, Freeman A. Hrabowski III, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, called Santelises' hiring a good move by the district.

"She's an innovator with the commitment to see big ideas through," Hrabowski said. "She's devoted her career to changing the status quo," he said.

Santelises says change won't occur overnight, but steady improvement should become evident.

"The goal is educating a generation of Baltimoreans to lead; along the way, we have benchmarks," Santelises said. "A method of steady improvement toward that goal is really what the public can expect."

"The other piece is that we have these outlines— a blueprint— that the community should expect to see, she continued. "We've outlined things for every stakeholder group, what their roles are, what individual roles are and it gives you a picture of what you should be able to see as a result of the hard work."

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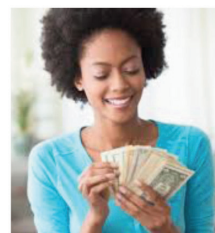
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Greyhound expands service from D.C. to Baltimore, New York

Dallas— Greyhound, the largest provider of intercity bus transportation in North America, is expanding operations from Union Station in Washington, D.C.

Greyhound is adding more Express departures to Baltimore and New York's Port Authority Bus Terminal, as well as creating a new non-stop route to New York's George Washington Bridge Bus Station. The expansion nearly doubles the number of daily departures from Union Station that Greyhound operates.

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The wheels are falling off the Ravens in Baltimore

By *Turron Davenport*

After starting the season with a 2-0 record, the Baltimore Ravens were looking forward to a winning year.

The team has been the darling of Baltimore after replacing the Colts who moved to Indianapolis. And, after winning two Super Bowl Championships, the Ravens have been the best show in town.

Loyal fans come out in full force to show support for their team at pep rallies before games and other events. Few cities have the same kind of bond the Ravens have with Baltimore. However, suddenly things have started changing.

Starting with Colin Kaepernick last year, players began to kneel during the playing of the National Anthem before games as a stand against social injustice towards people of color.

President Donald Trump called out the NFL for allowing players to kneel during the National Anthem. He encouraged fans to leave stadiums if they saw a player not standing when the National Anthem was played before games.

NFL teams responded by locking arms when the anthem was played in week 3. The Ravens were one of the teams that took it a step further when they got down on one knee in London, England.

Back home, Ravens fans were appalled by their team's pregame actions and to

make things worse, the Ravens played one of their worst games in team history. Jacksonville handed them a 44-7 loss. The team wasn't the same without two of their best players— left guard Marshal Yanda and defensive tackle Brandon Williams. Both players suffered injuries that have kept them out of the lineup.

More importantly, fans in Baltimore expressed their displeasure with the Ravens by burning team apparel and game tickets. The franchise canceled their pep rally before the week 4 game against their archrival the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The team hoped a game against the Steelers would restore interest from their fans but that was not the case.

Attendance was down at M&T Bank Stadium and the Steelers handed the Ravens a 26-9 loss, adding salt to an already gaping wound.

The common denominator in both losses was poor play by quarterback Joe Flacco. He passed for only 28 yards against the Jaguars and was benched in favor of backup quarterback Ryan Mallett after throwing his second interception in London.

Against Pittsburgh Flacco threw two more interceptions in front of the home crowd.

Head coach John Harbaugh is trying to stay focused on what has been happening on the field despite the tumultuous



Fans reach out to dejected Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco after the team's 26-9 loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers on Sunday, October 1, 2017 at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore.
Courtesy Photo/nfl.com

circumstances surrounding the team. He feels the direction the team goes is going to depend on Flacco.

"In the end, as far as what happens on the field, it comes back to the quarter-

back," Harbaugh said on Tuesday.

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Grammy winning musician brings her unique style to Baltimore area

By Timothy Cox

Musician Rhiannon Giddens, a Greensboro, N.C., native, achieved international acclaim in 2010 with a Grammy Award yet, she remains somewhat mystified as to why her music has yet to catch-on with more African-Americans.

During a recent visit to the Baltimore bedroom community of Frederick, Maryland, she showcased her unique blend of bluegrass, folk, jazz, blues and soul at the intimate Weinberg Center for the Arts in downtown Frederick.

Backed by a sextet featuring her vocalist-sister and nephew/hip-hop rapper, Giddens entertained a sold-out audience full of some of her largest supporters—a crowd reflecting about 95-percent white people.

Two of the few black people who attended the show were musician Royce Folks and his sweetheart, Kenya Watkins. The twosome drove from their home in Richmond, Virginia, to catch the act, because a recent performance in Richmond had sold-out.



The Rhiannon Giddens Band featuring Rhiannon Giddens on vocals/banjo/fiddle; Jason Sypher, bass; Jamie Dick, drums; Dirk Powell, piano/guitar/fiddle/accordion; Hubby Jenkins, mandolin/banjo/guitar/bones; Lalenja Harrington, vocals; and Justin Harrington, rapper/vocals performed on Sunday, October 1, 2017 in Frederick, Md. Photo by Timothy Cox

“We realize there’s not a lot of blacks who are into her music. I think it’s just because they’re not familiar with her stuff,” said Folks, the bass player and bandleader with Richmond-based Bush-league (blues) Band. “If they get a chance to hear her, they’d change their minds.” “It’s all about her vibe,” said Watkins,

who manages Folks’ band. “Rhiannon is here to educate people about the roots of American music. She plays the banjo, but she lets people know that the banjo has African roots. It’s just a matter of time—blacks will catch-on. She just needs to keep doing what she does so well.

Along with her original quartet, the

Grammy-winning Carolina Chocolate Drops, Giddens and that group—a self-described string band—actually formed on the premise of espousing the fact that African-Americans were the original purveyors of indigenous American music styles—bluegrass and folk.

During a recent interview, Giddens revealed that during her live tours, her audiences are typically void of African-Americans. She noted that fact again, following her October 1 performance in Frederick.

“It’s true. My fan base is mostly white. I’ve been doing this for ten years, but I don’t get much love from the black press. I’ve been trying to break in, but it has been very difficult,” she admits.

At the Weinberg Center, formerly the Tivoli Theater, which opened in December 1926, Rhiannon and crew performed flawlessly in an intimate room which seats about 1200. Though recently renovated, the room’s interior shares a close resemblance to the acclaimed Fox Theater in downtown Atlanta, Georgia.

To echo Watkins’ earlier statements, I believe that if Giddens stays the course, in time, she will ultimately realize a significant increase in support from black people.

To learn more about Rhiannon Giddens and her music, visit her website: www.rhiannongiddens.com. You will be directed to performances on YouTube and her music available on iTunes or Facebook/RhiannonGiddensMusic.

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Trinity A.M.E. Celebrates 136th Church Anniversary

Bishop John Bryant and Rev. Dr. Cecelia Williams Bryant to Preach

By Ursula V. Battle

On Sunday, October 8, 2017, Trinity African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) will celebrate its 136th Church Anniversary. The theme of the milestone observance is “Celebrating 136 Years of God’s Blessings.” The day will feature guest sermons by Retired Bishop John H. Bryant and The Right Reverend Dr. Cecelia Williams Bryant.

The Right Reverend Rodrecus M. Johnson, Sr. is pastor of Trinity A.M.E., which is located 2140 E. Hoffman Street in Baltimore.

“I have served as pastor for nearly seven years, and being a part of such historic value is a major blessing from the Lord,” said Pastor Johnson. “Trinity A.M.E. was involved in the Civil Rights Movement, and Martin Luther King, Jr. actually came to the church. Frederick Douglass spoke on the church’s platform.”

He added, “Trinity started with just one corner of the block, which was the Sunday School building. Now, the church takes up a quarter of the block. Since 1881, Trinity A.M.E. church has stood as a pillar of strength and hope in the Baltimore community.”

In 2013, Trinity A.M.E. was given Historic Landmark status by the state of Maryland and the City of Baltimore. The church’s community programs include a weekly food pantry, a partnership with Collington Square Elementary School, a citywide Back-to-School supplies drive, and a “Friday Night Live” youth program.

Rev. Dr. Bryant will preach during the 10:45 a.m. morning service, while Bishop Bryant will deliver his sermon during the 3:30 p.m. afternoon service. Rev. Dr. Bryant is a Spiritual Director, Missionary and Women’s Empowerment Leader with a Global Vision. She is founder of the A.M.E. Church in the Ivory Coast, and co-founder with her husband, Bishop Bryant, of the A.M.E. Church in India.

Bishop Bryant has pastored three



The Rev. Rodrecus M. Johnson, Sr. is Pastor of Trinity A.M.E., which is located 2140 E. Hoffman Street in Baltimore. Courtesy Photos

churches, Bethel A.M.E. Church, Fall River, Maine; St. Paul A.M.E. Church, Cambridge, Maine; and Bethel A.M.E. Church, Baltimore, Maryland. Under his pastoral ministry, 103 men and women have entered the Christian Ministry. Bishop Bryant has been a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, having preached the gospel for over 55 years. He is currently on staff at Payne Theological Seminary as a Mentor for the Doctor of Ministry Degree Program.

Bishop Bryant and Rev. Dr. Bryant are the parents of The Rev. Dr. Jamal Harrison Bryant and The Rev. Dr. Thema Simone Bryant Davis.

“We are excited that two major giants in their own right will come and celebrate with us,” said Pastor Johnson. “They are very close to my heart. They are my former pastor and First Lady. I thought it would be a



Retired Bishop John H. Bryant will deliver a guest sermon (3:30 p.m. service) as part of Trinity A.M.E.’s 136th Church Anniversary celebration.

blessing for them to come and be a part of our 136th Church Anniversary service.”

Pastor Johnson is a native of Charleston, South Carolina, and served in the United States Coast Guard. He joined the rank of Ministers at Bethel A.M.E. Church under the pastorates of Bishop Bryant and Bishop Frank M. Reid III.

In May of 1991 Rev. Johnson became an Associate Minister of Waters A.M.E. Church under the pastorate of the Rev. Ronald E. Braxton, and has served in several other areas of the A.M.E. church leading up to his pastorate at Trinity. He and his wife of 40 years, the Rev. Robin D. Johnson have three children and three grandchildren.

Trinity’s daylong celebration also includes dinner, which will be served between the morning and afternoon services. Pastor Johnson talked about another highlight of the church’s anniversary celebration.

“We will be recognizing all of our seniors,” said Pastor Johnson. “We call them our ‘Young Plus.’ In my ministry, there are two areas very dear to me, which are often left out – our young people and our seniors. Sometimes, we tend to forget we did not get to where we are by ourselves. Our seniors helped paved the way. We are going to celebrate them.”

Pastor Johnson said the services are open to the public, and he is inviting all to attend.

“John 3:16, which resonates in my spirit all the time, tells us, ‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,’” said Pastor Johnson. “I make sure, and it is my goal that everyone has the opportunity to choose God as their personal Savior. Jesus ministered to the community and they came and followed him. I have got to direct everyone back to the Word of God. The true history is that we are standing on God’s Word. Whosoever is inclusive of everyone. From that persons are birthed into ministry and future ministers and churches are produced.”

'The Color Purple' Tour Starts in Baltimore

Broadway revival of hit production opens at The Hippodrome Oct. 17

By Ursula V. Battle

The North American tour of the Tony Award®-winning Broadway revival of "The Color Purple" opens in Baltimore on Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at The Hippodrome Theatre at the France-Merrick Performing Arts Center. The Hippodrome Theatre; CareFirst® BlueCross BlueShield Hippodrome Broadway Series will run through Sunday, October 22, 2017.

The Hippodrome Theatre at the France-Merrick Performing Arts Center is located at 12 N Eutaw St in Baltimore City.

Based on the Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel and the Warner Bros./Amblin Entertainment motion picture, *The Color Purple* is adapted for the stage by Tony- and Pulitzer-winner Marsha Norman with music and lyrics by Brenda Russell, Allee Willis and Stephen Bray.

Cast members from the 2016 Broadway revival lead the touring company, including Adrianna Hicks (Aladdin, Sister Act - Germany) as "Celie", Carla R. Stewart (Ghost – National Tour, Rent - Regional) as "Shug Avery" and Carrie Compere (Holler If You Hear Me, Shrek the Musical – National Tour) as "Sofia".

"I am so excited about coming to Baltimore," said Stewart. "We are kicking-off the tour there, and it's going to be great. I am proud to be a part of this show. I am encouraging everyone to come out and give us the opportunity to tell the same beautiful story in a different way."

The revival of *The Color Purple* opened to great acclaim in summer 2013 at London's Menier Chocolate Factory, followed by a Broadway bow on November 10, 2015 at the Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre. *The Color Purple* went on to win two 2016 Tony Awards, including Best Revival of a Musical, two Drama Desk Awards, including Outstanding Revival of a Musical, the 2017 Grammy Award® for Best Musical Theater Album and a Daytime Emmy®.



Based on the Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel and the Warner Bros./Amblin Entertainment motion picture, The Color Purple is adapted for the stage by Tony- and Pulitzer-winner Marsha Norman. Courtesy Photos

The Color Purple played 483 performances on Broadway, closing on January 8, 2017.

The revived show will visit more than 30 cities in its first year on tour. Following the Baltimore performance, the next stop for the tour will be The Fox Theatre in Atlanta, GA from October 24, 2017 through October 29, 2017. Other tour stops include Pittsburgh, PA; Boston, MA; Philadelphia, Pa; New Orleans, LA; Miami, FL; and Lincoln, NE.

"I am so proud to be touring across the country as one of the leading ladies," said Stewart. "Shug Avery is the 'It Girl' Her name is in everyone's mouth. Women can't stand her, and men adore her. She is always looked at from the outside, but not for who she is on the inside. Shug Avery has a grand personality. She also has heartache that she is not proud of. She begins to have heart-to-heart moments with Celie, and together they heal one another."

Stewart made her Broadway debut in

the Tony and Grammy award-winning revival of *The Color Purple* (Olivia/Church Lady). She talked about her journey to Broadway and beyond.

"I did some performing in my church growing up," she recalled. "In my early 20s, I did a lot of background vocals in community theater in Chicago. One day, I auditioned for a woman by the name of June McClean, who did faith-based musicals. She wanted me to read lines, but I wanted to sing. She told me to read those lines or to have a nice day. I did it and got bit by the acting bug. I never looked back."

She added, "When I first started with this show, I was 'Olivia'. It was humbling for me because I didn't have any solo vocal lines. But I humbled myself, and said 'God, this is the part you gave me, and I am going to do my very best.' I focused myself and told the story from my perspective. And now, I am Shug Avery. You never know who is watching you. This has been an incredible

journey, and I am really grateful."

The cast also includes Gavin Gregory (*The Color Purple - Revival, The Gershwin's Porgy & Bess*) as "Mister", N'Jameh Camara (*X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation*) as "Nettie", J. Daughtry (*The Color Purple - Revival, Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*) as "Harpo", along with Darnell Abraham, Amar Atkins, Kyle E. Baird, Angela Birchett, Jared Dixon, Erica Durham, Bianca Horn, Gabrielle Reid, C.E. Smith, Clyde Voce, Nyla Watson, J.D. Webster, Brit West, Nikisha Williams and Michael Wordly.

Tickets for *The Color Purple* may be purchased online at Ticketmaster.com, BaltimoreHippodrome.com, www.ColorPurple.com, by calling 800-982-ARTS, or at the Hippodrome Box Office. Discounted group orders of 10 or more may be placed by calling 443-703-2401 or contact Andrew Springer at Andrew.Springer@broadwayacrossamerica.com

Annapolis native achieves Hollywood dream and returns for Marvel comic book signing

By Andrea Blackstone

Award-winning writer and producer Rodney Barnes recalls walking to a convenience store on the corner of Chesapeake Avenue and 6th Street in Annapolis, Maryland, where he would read comics for hours. The Annapolis native can now add Marvel comic book writer to his impressive resume.

Barnes has worked on projects such as *Everybody Hates Chris* (Chris Rock), *the Boondocks*, and *My Wife and Kids*. He is said to be a rising African American creative in Hollywood.

Barnes returns to the area to launch his first ongoing Marvel comic book series called “Falcon #1” on October 11, 2017, at Twilite Zone Comics located at 18 Crain Highway North in Glen Burnie, Maryland from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The public is also invited to attend an evening social at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, located at 612 Second Street in Annapolis from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Comic books will be available for sale at both venues.

In the seventies, Barnes shared his hobby of reading and collecting comic books with old friends in Eastport such as John “Bumper” Moyer, who owns Twilite Zone Comics.

“Besides the fun of having a number one comic that is signed by the writer—and that’s the memorabilia aspect of that—the kids and even adults will get to see somebody who... made his fame in Los Angeles, and moved there,” said “Bumper,” when talking about Barnes’s upcoming launch event. “A lot of people have that dream. They would love to, in some creative way, go out and be successful and Rodney actually made that dream happen.”

Bumper’s father and Zastrow Simms made Barnes feel like someone in the community cared. He was among youth they took to basketball games and the movies. Barnes recognizes the value of growing up in a supportive place.

“But the big thing for me, I think if I had not grown up in Annapolis, I would not be doing what I do right now,”



Award-winning writer and producer Rodney Barnes grew up in Annapolis. He has worked on projects such as *Everybody Hates Chris* (Chris Rock), *the Boondocks* and *My Wife and Kids*. He is considered to be a rising African American creative in Hollywood.

Courtesy Photo

Barnes said. “Growing up in Annapolis when I did, gave me enough space and had the right ingredients of history, and the tenor and temperament of the community.”

Barnes attended Howard University in Washington, D.C.

His Hollywood dream began in his mid-20s, after a friend asked what he would do if he could achieve his biggest

goal. Barnes replied that he would love to write movies and television shows in Hollywood. He later became a production assistant while working on movies in the area. Barnes met a famous contact in Charlottesville, Virginia, when he worked on a movie called *Major Payne*.

“I met Damon Wayans. Damon and I hit it off, and he asked me what I wanted to do with my career, and I told him that I wanted to be a writer. He gave me an opportunity to work with him for a few years. Eventually, I [went] to California and I worked on the movie, *Bulletproof*. He told me that if I was to take this seriously, I had to move [to California] because that’s what writers do,” Barnes said. “I packed up my stuff and I lived in my car for about eight months and started to ply my trade. By day I would work on movies and TV shows as a production assistant, or assistant director, and then at night I would write. And eventually Damon had a show, *My Wife and Kids*, and he gave me a job as a punch up writer (a script doctor) for a day, and that day turned into 20 years.”

Despite Barnes’s success, he acknowledges his previous struggles trying to survive in California around 1997. Even though he was tempted to come home, he decided to stay and take it day-by-day, after speaking with an encouraging friend. Shortly thereafter, things turned around for Barnes with the opportunity to write for the show, “*My Wife and Kids*.”

“What I’ve come to learn is that if you truly put your heart into something, like really, truly commit, it’s limitless what you can do,” Barnes said.

When Barnes returns to his hometown to celebrate his Marvel comic book project, he says he is open to discussing other facets of his career and the aspirations of budding writers who are seeking advice.

“Now being where I am, and doing what I am doing, I would love to be able to come back and build a relationship with the community,” Barnes said.

For more details about Barnes’s launch party, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/twilitezone.comics>.

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Baltimore’s own renowned songstress Gabrielle Goodman returns

Baltimore’s own, born and raised renowned, Gabrielle Goodman is a phenomenal vocalist, composer, educator and author who is hard at work on her sixth CD. A graduate of the Peabody Conservatory and longtime Professor of Voice at the Berklee College of Music,

Goodman has recorded four internationally acclaimed jazz CDs one entitled, “Travelin’ Light” and “Until Love” feature her with Kevin Eubanks, Gary Bartz, Gary Thomas, Christian McBride and many other jazz giants. She has toured the world as backing vocalist for Chaka Khan, Roberta Flack, Freddie Jackson, Patti Labelle and Brian Ferry to name a few. She was scheduled to perform live on stage this weekend at the Caton Castle, but her mother is very ill and was put on life support, so the show is canceled. Please keep Gabrielle, her brother David and her family in prayer.

African American Authors & Empowerment Expo at Morgan State University

The African American Authors & Empowerment Expo is holding its 8th annual event on Saturday, October 7 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the campus of Morgan State University in the University Student Center’s Calvin and Tina Tyler Ballroom. The event will feature 60 vendors, as well as hundreds of local and national authors. This massive event is free to the public and includes workshops, speaking panels, authors presentations and live entertainment. I will see you there too.

The Howard E. Rollins Foundation, Inc. Fall Fundraiser

The Howard E. Rollins Foundation, Inc is hosting a dinner and B.Y.O.B.

event on Saturday, October 7m 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. at the Temple Oheb Shalom, 7310 Park Heights Avenue in Pikesville, Maryland. Tickets include dinner, free set-ups, door prizes, 50/50 raffle, and vendors. Howard E. Rollins Foundation is a 501 (c)-3 non-profit organization. Its mission is to continue Howard’s legacy by awarding scholarships and providing cultural and educational programs in the performing or film media arts for aspiring minority and disadvantaged youth. For ticket information, call 443-221-0324.

Porgy & Bess on The Avenue

“Porgy & Bess,” a new musical tribute to the classic opera produced by Dr. Phill Butts and Valerie Cooper. Music arranged by Dr. Vince Corazine will be presented at the Arch Social Club, 2426 Pennsylvania Avenue on Sunday, October 8 at 3 p.m. with a dinner and concert featuring the Dr. Phill Butts Orchestra with Larzine Talley as Bess and Raynard Simm as Porgy introducing Mosthigh as Sportin’ Life and Wifty Bangura as Crown. For more information, call 443-859-0124.

Griots’ Circle of Maryland

The Griots’ Circle of Maryland is sponsoring its annual Love Stories Fundraiser entitled “What’s Love Got to Do with It?” The event will be held on Sunday, October, 8 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the historic Arena Playhouse located at 801 McCulloh Street. The feature performances by Griots: John Carrington, Ophelia Brown-Carter, Bernard Carson, Bob Smith, Gwen Marable and Kay L. Merrill, also there will be African dancing, storytelling, music and door prizes.

Anthony (Dr. Doo-Wop) Ferrell

Well-known DJ & radio personality, known to many as “Dr. Doo-Wop”, or “Doc” from WEAA 88.9 radio station in the early 90’s who had his own show



Concerts for Causes Inc. presents the “Prince Georges Oktoberfest 2017” Beer Wine and Music Festival at Bowie Towne Center, 15606 Emerald Way Bowie, Maryland on Saturday October 14 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free.



Milton Dugger, promoter, singer and band manager with his dear friend Anthony “Doc Doo-Wop” Ferrell, who is a former DJ and radio personality, who is in hospice care at the Loch Raven Genesis Center, 8720 Emge Road. He is unable to talk at this time. Please keep him and his family in prayer.

and later shared the air time with the renowned “Big Jim” Oldies Show in 2010 with his buddy Milton Dugger every third Saturday of the month is in hospice care at the Loch Raven Genesis Center, 8720 Emge Road off of E. Joppa Road. He is in a coma and not doing well. Please send out your prayers for him and his family.

Well, my dear friends, I am out of space, I got to go, but remember if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I’M MUSICALLY YOURS.



Gabrielle Goodman, Baltimore’s own international recording artist show is canceled at the Caton Castle on Saturday, October 7 due to her mother illness and as last reported was on life support. Please keep her and her family in your prayers.



Rosa Byrd’s “All Red Event” at Carlos O’Charlie’s located 3508 Eastern Avenue on Friday, October 13, 9 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Cash bar, light buffet, music and lots of dancing. For more information, call 443-240-6322.

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Baltimore native serves aboard guided missile cruiser in Japan

By Mass Communication Specialist
1st Class Tim Miller, Navy Office of
Community Outreach

Yokosuka, Japan – A Baltimore native and 2004 Chesapeake High School graduate is serving in the U.S. Navy aboard the guided missile cruiser, USS Chancellorsville.

Seaman Alexis Davis is a quartermaster aboard the forward deployed Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser operating out of Yokosuka, Japan. Chancellorsville is one of three cruisers forward deployed in Yokosuka.

A Navy quartermaster is responsible for working on the bridge with the captain to help plot the course ensuring the safe navigation of the entire ship.

"Growing up I learned to go after what you want no matter what is," said Davis. "If you want it bad enough you can definitely make it happen."

With more than 50 percent of the world's shipping tonnage and a third of the world's crude oil passing through the region, the United States has historic and enduring interests in this part of the world.

"Our alliance is rooted in shared interests and shared values," said Adm. Harry Harris, Commander, U. S. Pacific Command. "It's not hyperbole to say that the entire world has benefited from the U.S.-Japan alliance. While our alliance helped stabilize the region after the Second World War, it also enabled the Japanese people to bring about an era of unprecedented economic growth. And for the last six decades, our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen have worked side by side with the Japan Self Defense Force to protect and advance peace and freedom."

Approximately 300 men and women serve aboard the ship. Their jobs are highly specialized and keep each part of the cruiser running smoothly, according to Navy officials. They do everything from maintaining gas turbine engines



Seaman Alexis Davis is a quartermaster aboard the forward deployed Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Chancellorsville operating out of Yokosuka, Japan.
Photo by Senior Chief Petty Officer Gary Ward

and operating the highly sophisticated Aegis weapons system to driving the ship and operating small boats.

Forward-deployed sailors are crucial to the success of the global Navy mission and earn high praise from their leaders.

"I have two older brothers that currently serve in the Navy," said Davis. "Seeing the opportunity that they have influenced me to join myself. I like that I can say I am serving our country— it makes me very proud."

Sailors serving abroad in Japan are highly motivated, and quickly adapt to changing conditions, according to Navy officials.

"Serving in the Navy means ultimately putting someone else's needs ahead of my own," added Davis.

A Navy cruiser is a multi-mission ship that can operate independently or as part of a larger group of ships at sea. The ship is equipped with a vertical launching system, tomahawk missiles, torpedoes, guns and Phalanx close-in weapons systems.

Sailors play a vital role in the overall military mission around the world.

"The U.S.-Japan alliance remains the cornerstone for peace and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region," said Harris.

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University of Maryland launches coalition application to improve college access

New suite of tools will provide additional level of support for students during the college planning and application process

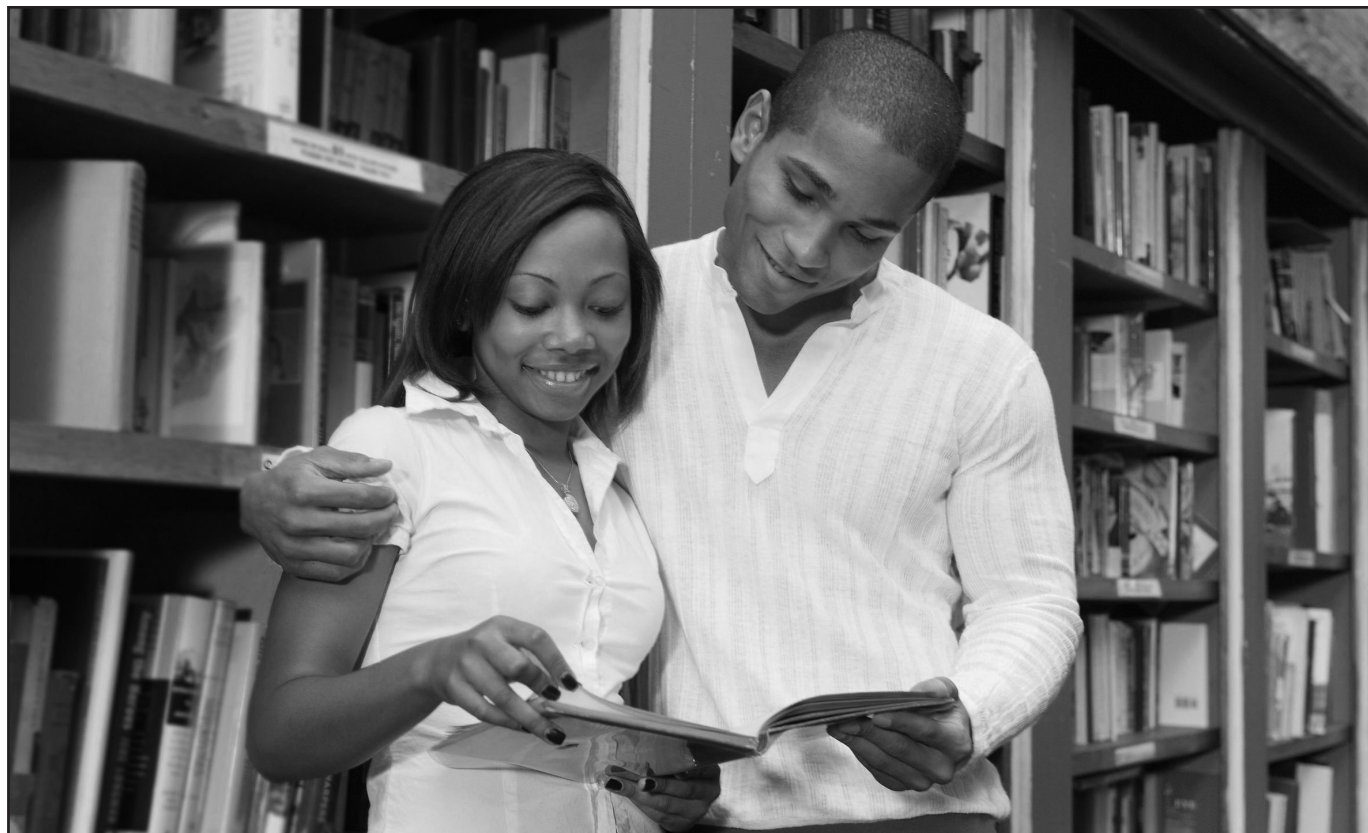
College Park, Md.— The University of Maryland has launched a new application process that includes a free platform of online tools to streamline the experience of planning for and applying to college, developed by the Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success. The Coalition is a diverse group of public and private colleges and universities from across the country with the goal of improving the college admission application process for all students.

“The University of Maryland is committed to making college attainable and affordable for all students,” said Shannon Gundy, UMD’s director of undergraduate admissions. “It’s never too early for students to ensure that they are building the foundation that will allow them prepare for college. This new suite of tools will provide earlier awareness of the college application process to low-income, underrepresented, and first-generation students, and ensure that all students have the support networks they need to be successful in the college application process.”

The Coalition’s college planning and application tools—the Locker, a Collaboration Space, and an Application Portal—are designed to assist students no matter where they are in the college exploration or application process, and help students create a narrative of their high school career well in advance of filing an application.

The Coalition platform includes:

- Locker: a private space for students to



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collect and organize materials throughout their high school career that can later be used to support their college applications, including writing samples, letters of support, records of activities, awards and more.

- Collaboration Space: an interaction tool where counselors, teachers and mentors can support the student’s college search and application through sharing of materials, review, feedback and editing.

- Application: a platform for applying to schools in the Coalition, which fea-

tures a modern, intuitive interface that adapts to a student’s life.

The Coalition application enhances UMD’s holistic approach to the admissions process, considering 26 unique factors. This process considers all aspects of each applicant’s qualifications and offers admission to the most competitive applicants in order to build a vibrant class of first-year students.

The University of Maryland joined the Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success in 2015 with the goal of recasting the college admission process from

something that is transactional and limited in time into a more engaged, ongoing and educationally reaffirming experience. The Coalition represents more than 90 American higher education institutions that share a commitment to providing students with the best possible college experience, beginning with the college application process. Coalition schools provide substantial support to lower-resourced and underrepresented students, offer responsible student financial aid support, and demonstrate a commitment to student graduation.

The Father Academy seeks volunteer fathers

The mission of The Father Academy is to enhance the lives and relationships of fathers with their children through peer mentoring, education and support. The Academy is looking for fathers who feel like they’ve gotten a good handle on fatherhood, as well as fathers who want help. The Father Academy needs dads who are willing to commit to a 9-month program where they will provide each other peer mentoring and education based on the Responsible Fatherhood curriculum. For additional information, contact Christopher Moore at 240-547-9806 or email: chris@thefatheracademy.org or visit the website: <http://thefatheracademy.wixsite.com/thefatheracademy>.

Hospice of the Chesapeake seeks volunteers with 4-wheel drive vehicles

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