

BGE, Ripken Foundation Unveil Eddie Murray Field in West Baltimore



A ribbon cutting ceremony was held to celebrate the opening of the Eddie Murray Field at BGE Park (home of James Mosher Baseball) on Wednesday, November 15, 2017. The new field was constructed by Lewis Contractors and was a \$1.5 million project that reflects the work of many partners in the community to include BGE, The Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation, Ollie's, Bon Secours Hospital, Under Armour, the State of Maryland and James Mosher Associates Inc. Eddie Murray Field at BGE Park features a synthetic turf baseball diamond equipped with dugouts, a backstop, and a digital scoreboard. Located behind James Mosher Elementary, the field will be gifted to and maintained by the Baltimore City Public School system. Photo: (L-R) Cal Ripken, Jr; Mark Butler, CEO Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation; Steve Salem, President Cal Sr. Foundation; Eddie Murray; Allen Meacham; Calvin Butler, CEO, BGE; Del. Antonio Hayes; Valencia McClure, V.P. Governmental and External Affairs, BGE; and Baltimore City Council President Jack Young. (See article on page 12) Photo: Dennis Roberts

Hidden Figures author says history cultivates not just young readers but also the next generation of engaged citizens

Washington, D.C.— Award-winning *Hidden Figures* author Margot Lee Shetterly didn't start out as a history buff. However her book, a number one New York Times bestseller, revealed an innate passion for history and a knack for telling compelling stories about the events that have shaped our country—and our lives.

Her most recent accolade was the 2017 Grateful American Book Prize for her true tale about the early days of NASA. During the 1950s and 1960s, the agency hired African American mathematicians to be human "computers" at its facility in Hampton, Virginia. However, they were given menial positions as pencil pushers, a fate they overcame at a time when the inequities of racism was rampant. *Hidden Figures* shows that the women whose stories Shetterly reveals, proved they were as capable, and maybe even more so— than the next man— for the task of catapulting the first astronauts into outer space.

Hidden Figures is an excellent example of how "humanizing" the facts of history can be whipped into a context that young readers appreciate.

"I've always been a big reader, though as a kid I gravitated towards fiction," Shetterly said. "Over time I came to enjoy epic histories. Working as an investment banker, I spent a lot of time reading financial histories, such as Ron Chernow's biography, *The House of Morgan*. I started to read more general histories as a way of filling in the blanks in my knowledge, and doing so helped me to see the links between my own life and the past. Now, history is far and away my favorite genre."

Shetterly believes history should remain a requirement for young learners. "But, we need to present it as more

than just a dusty old broom closet; history is about learning true stories, and reliving the lives of fascinating people.

"And, the Prize has done a lot to resurrect an interest among young learners in the topic," she said. "Planting the seed of interest in history when kids are young is a way to create a lifelong interest in the topic. And, I think the focus of the Grateful American Prize cultivates not just young readers, but also the next generation of engaged citizens."

No one can deny that Shetterly has a way with words. As she puts it: "If you give people a choice between castor oil and cupcakes, they'll probably choose cupcakes. History as taught in the classroom can be dense, dull, and seem irrelevant to students' lives. What if we decided to teach it as if we were telling stories around a campfire?"

She doesn't dismiss the importance of discipline in the classroom. She agrees: the study of history should be rigorous and require knowledge about dates, names, and places.

"We only have to look at the 'Hamilton' sensation to see how presenting the same information in a different format can have a galvanizing effect. Storytelling is an innately human activity, and remembering the "story" in "history" may be the first step. I also believe telling stories from a variety of points of view brings more readers into the fold, and gives us a broader understanding of America as a country and a culture."

The Grateful American Book Prize was designed to give kids a way to learn about the events and personalities that figure large in the origins and development of our nation. It was created as an inducement for authors and their publishers to focus on authentic works of historical fiction and nonfiction that cap-



*Award-winning author of the book **Hidden Figures**, Margot Lee Shetterly was recently awarded the 2017 Grateful American Book Prize.*
Courtesy Photo

ture the imaginations and interests of young learners.

Shetterly asserts that reading a good story is a delight, and it's "a particularly powerful thing to discover if the story

that so captivated your imagination is also true. History is often taught by leading with dry facts and dates, but we need to heed the words of writer David McCullough: history is all about people. I'm encouraged by the early evidence that interest in history degrees increased sharply in the last year."

Perhaps the 21st Century focus on science and technology can co-exist with the more introspective study of history in our classrooms.

In fact, Shetterly professes that STEM subjects [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] and the humanities are not necessarily diametrically opposed.

"The work of the best scientists and engineers is amplified through clear prose, and the ability to communicate their findings and analysis. Writers are well served by having a degree of mathematical literacy, and the abilities to employ rational analysis and critical thinking. We need writers and scholars who have a knowledge of the history of science and technology. We need scientists with an understanding of the ways in which science and technology have provoked change in our society. I think one approach to improving performance and interest might be to teach history as a required component of STEM subject fields."

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

Confusion shouldn't stop patients from buying health insurance

By Janet Trautwein

This year's Affordable Care Act open enrollment period started on November 1. Millions of Americans will soon visit HealthCare.gov or the online insurance exchange run by their state to shop for 2018 health plans. Many will be confused by what they find.

Premiums have increased significantly. The most popular "silver" exchange plans cost 34 percent more on average, than they did in 2017. Skimpier bronze plans cost 18 percent more. Generous gold plan premiums have risen 16 percent. Many insurers won't offer exchange plans at all. There will be just a single exchange insurer in nearly half of all counties.

Luckily, Americans don't have to settle for exchange plans. They can also buy coverage "off-exchange." And they may want to consider consulting a certified health insurance agent or broker to determine whether exchange or off-exchange plans are right for them.

Exchange plans are generally more attractive for individuals and families who earn less than 400 percent of the poverty level. That's because these folks— individuals taking home less than \$48,240 or families of four bringing in less than \$98,400— qualify for subsidized coverage. But they can only claim those subsidies through the exchanges. Off-exchange plans aren't subsidized. So they may be a better fit for the roughly 40 percent of Americans who earn too much to qualify for subsidies. Some of these plans also generally allow enrollees to visit a wider range of doctors and hospitals. About 5.4 million people purchased off-exchange plans in 2017.

Most people could use assistance when picking a plan. Less than four in 10 Americans are "very confident" that they can select the health insurance plan that's right for them. Only four percent of people can define common insurance terms like "deductible," "co-pay," "coinsurance," and "out-of-pocket maximum."

Health insurance agents and brokers can help these folks understand the benefits and drawbacks of various plans. Most of these professionals have 10 or more years of experience in the industry. Three out of four spend "most" or "a lot of" their time explaining options to clients.

Consumers who have sought assistance from agents and brokers in the past have been extremely satisfied. Nearly 84 percent of people who requested assistance when shopping for plans in 2014 said insurance agents and brokers were helpful. That's a higher satisfaction ranking than any other source of help.

It's easy to see why agents and brokers are popular. They're often able to find better deals than consumers would have found on their own. Premiums are 13 percent lower in counties with the most brokers. Plus, agents and brokers generally don't charge for advice.

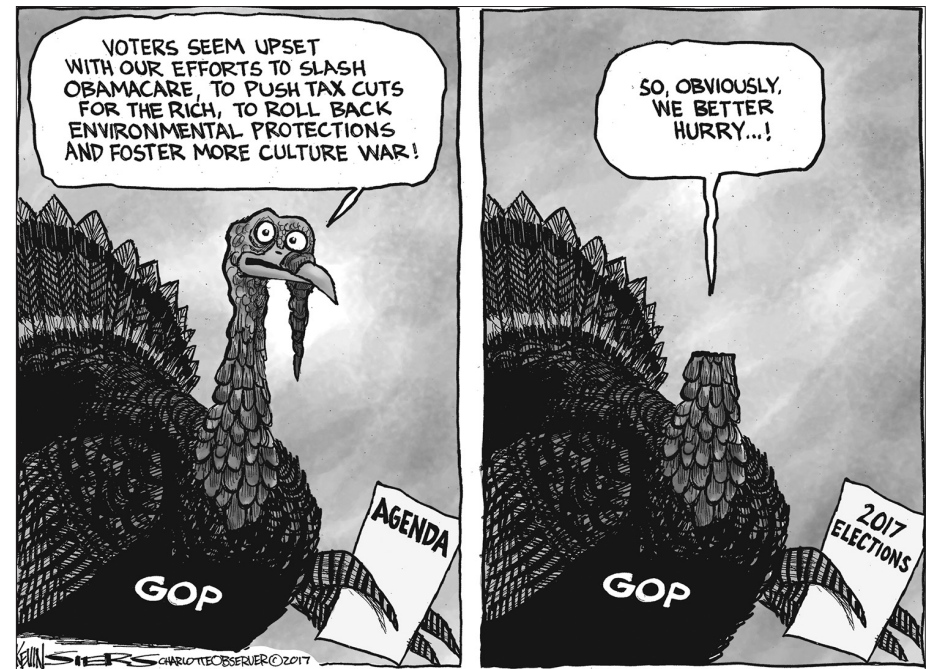
These professionals play a pivotal role in helping people sign up for coverage. In California, for instance, agents and brokers signed up 525,000 people for exchange plans in 2014. That represented 40 percent of the state's total exchange enrollees.

Their services will be even more important this year, given some recent changes to the Affordable Care Act. This year's open enrollment period in HealthCare.gov only runs 45 days, until December 15. In past years, it ran until late January, and will run longer this year in some state exchanges. The federal Department of Health and Human Services is also not spending as much on advertising open enrollment this year. So fewer people may even be aware that they need to sign up.

By helping people sign up for either exchange or off-exchange plans, brokers and agents can ensure a larger, more representative pool of enrollees. That will help stabilize the individual market and reduce future premium spikes.

Americans only have a few weeks to decide on a 2018 health plan. They can ensure they make the right choice by calling in some professional help.

Janet Trautwein is the CEO of the National Association of Health Underwriters.



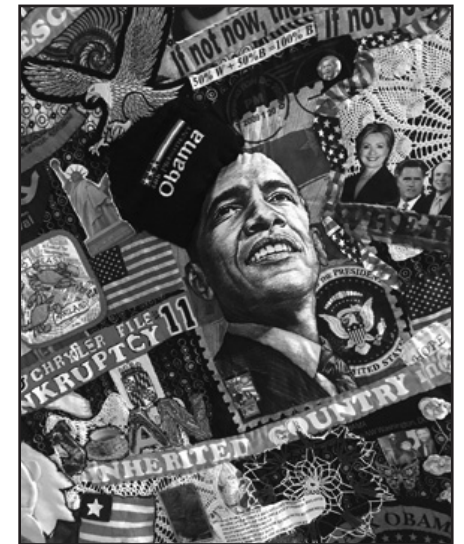
Community Affairs

New exhibition opens at Reginald Lewis Museum

Baltimore— "Freedom: Emancipation: Quilted & Stitched" is an exhibition of documentary-style story quilts that celebrates the contributions, lives and legacies of people of color in Maryland. The quilts are creations by fabric artist Joan M.E. Gaither, Ph.D. and include several works that consist of community collaborations facilitated by Gaither.

The experiential lives and contributions of "People of Color" are viewed in the context of smaller communities, in particular, to a broader story of slave emancipation, history and culture in Maryland.

The quilts featured in Freedom: Emancipation Quilted & Stitched are presented as collective stories connected to a continuing struggle for freedom in our shared greater American story. The work speaks to a place in many communities— telling one's own story, telling the stories of others, and finally, helping others to find and



A Journey to the White House by Joan Gaither is part of the "Freedom: Emancipation: Quilted & Stitched" Exhibit at the Reginald Lewis until February 28, 2018.

Courtesy Photo/RFL

tell their own stories within the context of one collective story.

The Reginald Lewis, which is located at 830 E Pratt Street in Baltimore City is Maryland's largest museum focused on the state's African American history and Culture.

NAACP report on air pollution misses the mark

By Uni Blake, Scientific Adviser,
American Petroleum Institute

The health of African American communities is a genuine cause for concern in our country, but attacking the natural gas and oil industry is the wrong approach and detracts from the real work that should be done to reduce disparately high rates of disease among African Americans. Let's be clear—the natural gas and oil industry is:

- Committed to the health and safety of the communities where it operates and to its workers.

- Leading the way on reducing U.S. greenhouse gas and other air emissions.

- Supporting millions of well-paying jobs—one of the most important factors in the well-being of Americans.

Recently, I read a NAACP paper that accused the natural gas and oil industry of emissions that disproportionately burden African American communities. As a scientist, my overall observation is that the paper fails to demonstrate a causal relationship between natural gas activity and the health disparities, reported or

predicted, within the African American community.

Rather, scholarly research attributes those health disparities to other factors that have nothing to do with natural gas and oil operations—such as genetics, indoor allergens and unequal access to preventative care. The objective should be to address the underlying socio-economic factors that contribute to the disparities, and one of the best vehicles is via the good jobs the natural gas and oil industry supports.

“Rather, scholarly research attributes those health disparities to other factors that have nothing to do with natural gas and oil operations—such as genetics, indoor allergens and unequal access to preventative care. The objective should be to address the underlying socio-economic factors that contribute to the disparities, and one of the best vehicles is via the good jobs the natural gas and oil industry supports.”

More specifically, the paper misleads on the information associated with asthma and cancer prevalence by conflating industry-associated emissions, hazards and risks. When we review health data from the states where energy development is occurring, we see a different outcome. For example, the latest Pennsylvania Department of Health data shows asthma hospitalizations among African Americans have decreased significantly at a time of increased natural gas production in the state.

Let's look at some facts:

- Thanks to increased use of clean and abundant natural gas, carbon dioxide emissions from power generation have fallen 25 percent since 2005, and emis-

sions from energy use across the entire economy are at their lowest levels in nearly 25 years. The use of domestic natural gas also is playing an important part in reducing other emissions, including nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide. Both are important developments for everyone's health.

- The industry has improved its fuel products, eliminating lead in gasoline and reducing its sulfur content by more than 90 percent from 1990 to 2016.

- Ambient benzene concentrations

not a direct public health concern, methane is an important greenhouse gas that the industry is working to reduce even more.

- The industry is committed to making continuous improvements in the environmental performance of its operations and products, spending more than \$320 billion on these improvements since 1990. Between 1990 and 2015, U.S. refiners alone spent \$160.1 billion on improving their facilities.

- The natural gas and oil industry supports 10.3 million jobs across the country—jobs that pay for health care, good nutrition, livable homes and more. Tens of thousands of our current employees are African Americans, a number that is projected to grow significantly in the future.

- Natural gas and oil companies are invested in the communities where they operate. Our employees live, work and raise families in these communities.

In short, the natural gas and oil industry demonstrates its commitment, every day, to ensuring the protection of human health, safety and the environment for all Americans while providing millions of American families the benefits of affordable, reliable energy.

Our industry is a leader in reducing emissions and is committed to continuing that progress in the future through the use of data, new technologies and equipment—each reflecting our companies' desire to strengthen the communities where they operate.

Uni Blake is a scientific adviser in regulatory and scientific affairs at the American Petroleum Institute. As a toxicologist her focus includes exposure and risk assessments as they relate to environmental and public health. She lives in the Northern Neck of Virginia with her husband and children.

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Not All Wounds Are Visible:

A Community Conversation – Let’s Talk About Addiction, Substance Abuse

By Donna Jacobs, Dr. Eric Weintraub and Dr. Christopher Welsh

Addiction, substance abuse and drug overdoses are a growing epidemic across America, with more than 64,000 overdose deaths nationally last year. The increase in overdose deaths of more than 20 percent is a bigger jump than over the previous four years combined, and the rate of deaths in 2016 increased in every quarter. For every 100,000 residents in America, nearly 20 died of drug overdoses in 2016, compared with a rate of 16.3 the year before, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Maryland is not immune to this serious public health challenge, with more than 2,000 fatal overdoses statewide in 2016, a number that tragically has risen steadily since 2010.

Heroin addiction is not a new concern locally—it has been present in Baltimore for many decades. However, for many clinicians on the front lines, the severity of illness and frequency of overdose deaths is the worst it has ever been. The United States saw an explosion of opioid medication use beginning in the 1990s. As various efforts were put in place to curtail the availability of prescription opioids, it became more difficult and expensive to obtain prescription opioid pain medication, leading many people to switch to cheaper and more accessible heroin. Over the past several years, the emergence of illicitly manufactured fentanyl (itself a potent pain medication), which is often being combined with heroin, has added another degree of danger to the already terrible national epidemic.

Physicians at the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) Emergency Department (ED) report treating an average of more than a patient a day for an overdose, up from 0.5 patients per day as recently as 2015. Peer Recovery Coaches working in the ED see 20-30 patients per day and assist them with getting help for their substance-related problems.

The Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse at the University of Maryland Medical Center and School of Medicine treats hundreds of patients with opioid use disorder on a daily basis in three hospital-based clinics. Clinicians help thousands of patients per year who are admitted to the various services in the medical center. Through telemedicine, clinicians also provide treatment to individuals in Garrett, Washington, Frederick and Caroline counties.

Earlier this year, Governor Larry Hogan signed an executive order declaring a State of Emergency in response to the state’s overdose crisis. And in late October, President Donald Trump declared a public health emergency over the opioid epidemic that is killing tens of thousands of Americans each year.

Hopefully both of these actions will lead to additional funding, policy changes and additional support for various overdose prevention and response programs in place at hospitals such as we have at many of the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) hospitals, including here in Baltimore at the UMMC University and Midtown campuses. The situation will hopefully also improve with increasing public education, reductions in use of opioid pain medication and culture changes and additional treatment opportunities for individuals with substance use disorders.

On Wednesday, November 29, 2017, UMMS and the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) are hosting “Not All Wounds Are Visible - Let’s Talk About Addiction and Substance Abuse,” a free community conversation designed for community members to hear from and ask questions of physicians and other health care professionals about addiction and substance abuse.

Topics will include: An overview of addiction and substance abuse including non-opioid addictions, and discussions of the current opioid epidemic, and What Is Recovery? Time will be set aside for a Question and Answer session for each topic. In addition, Dr. Jason Ramirez, author of “The Hard Way: A Doctor’s Fight Against Addiction, Poverty and Depression,” will conclude the program discussing the challenges of growing up as the child of heroin-addicted parents. Dr. Ramirez is Assistant Professor of Family & Community Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine

and Director of Inpatient Family Medicine at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

“Let’s Talk About Addiction and Substance Abuse” is being held at the UMB Campus Center, 621 W. Lombard Street in downtown Baltimore from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The free event includes breakfast for all attendees and a resource fair with vendors from the substance abuse, addiction and recovery communities. The event is also being live broadcast at several locations across the state in partnership with University of Maryland Medical System hospitals and private partners, including in Towson, Bowie in Prince George’s County, Charles County in southern Maryland and on the Eastern Shore. Individuals interested in attending may register at www.umms.org/communityhealth or by calling 1-800-492-5538.

Donna Jacobs is Senior Vice President, Government, Regulatory Affairs and Community Health – University of Maryland Medical System.

Dr. Christopher Welsh is Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Maryland School of Medicine and Medical Director of the University of Maryland Medical Center’s Substance Abuse Consultation Service.

Dr. Eric Weintraub is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Division Head of Alcohol & Drug Abuse at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and a specialist in addiction psychiatry at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

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Let's Talk About Addiction and Substance Abuse

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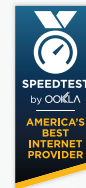
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Educators join forces to create new public charter school in Baltimore County

By Stacy M. Brown

Jessie Lehson and Casey McDonough have little problem acknowledging that there are great schools that already exist in Baltimore County. However, the two friends haven't always been sure if those schools were the right fit for their families. They also agree that private schools were just a bit out of reach.

Now, they say that they believe they've come up with an answer: the Watershed Public Charter School (WPCS), which they founded this year and have enlisted the help of other stakeholders.

The friends are rallying community support to bring what they call an innovative public school to the county.

"Our founding group is comprised of parents, educators and community leaders who are all passionate about WPCS for different reasons," Lehson said. "For some of the parents in the group, it's about creating a school they are excited to send their children to, for the educations in the group, it's about working within the public school system to create an environment that they're passionate about, and, for the community members in the group, it's some of both."

For Lehson, a professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art, it's a culmination of years of work in both education and nonprofit administration. She is a passionate believer in the importance of strong and accessible public education for all and she feels that WPCS is a path to partner with the school district to effect positive change in the community.

McDonough is a graduate of Ball State University who moved to Baltimore after accepting an internship. The married mother of two future county school students is also passionate about WCPS, Lehson said about her friend and partner in the new venture.



Board Member, Kristie Matthai, offers free face and body painting to future students at Watershed Public Charter School at a summer yoga play date at Honeygo Regional Park in Baltimore County. Courtesy Photo

"The prospectus was submitted and accepted in May 2017 and the board is hard at work on the full application for charter which will be submitted in January," she said, noting that enrollment would open in November 2018 with a proposed opening date scheduled for the fall of 2019.

While the foundation hasn't yet determined a location for the school, they are actively seeking a spot with ample outdoor space that is accessible to as many

parts of the county as possible.

"We have spent the last year building partnerships with nonprofit organizations, universities, nature centers, county agencies and community groups," Lehson said. "This past summer, we held multiple free family-friendly play dates at regional parks and nature centers all across Baltimore County." One of the foundations of WCPS' educational philosophy is place-based education, which emphasizes experimental

and community involvement, so outreach will continue to be a part of the school's mission, she said.

The public charter schools receive the same per pupil allotment as a regular public school, however they don't receive any funds for their facility, transportation and other like needs.

"The school is operated by a nonprofit foundation that will fundraise for additional costs," Lehson said.

Further, the founders envision the school serving grades kindergarten through eighth grade when fully operational, but when the doors first open, they expect to start with students in grades kindergarten through third grade.

"The school will grow with its students and add a grade level each year," Lehson said. "If we stick with our initial plan, we will have just under 400 students," she said.

WCPS will use innovative, hands-on curriculum in core subjects and link disciplines together into larger multidisciplinary projects, according to Lehson.

The school's values are play, exploration, imagination and unstructured outdoor activity and will incorporate daily recess for students at all grade levels.

"There is scientific evidence that spending time outdoors can reduce hyperactivity and has a soothing effect on children, especially those suffering from attention deficit disorder," Lehson said.

"While modern education reforms place a heavy emphasis on highly-structured, standardized curricula, abundant evidence suggests experiential education is a powerful tool for firming student understanding of core concepts, improving academic performance and attitudes toward self, school and learning."

For more information about the Watershed Public Charter School, visit: www.watershedpcs.org.

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New diversity officer at AACC aims to keep college headed in right direction

By Stacy M. Brown

Dr. Deidra Dennie has one title but the description of her job quickly reveals that she wears many hats.

In an effort by the college administration to further the school's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusive excellence, Dr. Dennie was recently named as the college's new chief diversity officer.

"My job entails a lot of things," she said with a laugh. "But, basically, I provide leadership and strategic direction in creating a climate here at Anne Arundel Community College that's welcoming, inclusive, respectful and free from discrimination and intolerance."

Dennie takes on a significant leadership role in meeting the needs of the college's increasingly diverse student body while also helping to build what school officials say is a more welcoming and inclusive climate on campus.

"I've been here seven weeks and a lot is going on," Dr. Dennie said. "If you ask me to identify the biggest task, I'd say I can't do that just yet, but planning, directing, implementing, coordinating and implementing are big things."

Dr. Dennie noted that diversity is about people and what Anne Arundel Community College is doing with individuals shows that the school values all cultures.

"Equity is the Golden Rule, which is to treat people as you want to be treated and taking a step back to evaluate how we're doing things and whether it's the right thing to do," said Dennie, who arrived at Anne Arundel Community College from Armstrong State University in Savannah, Ga., where she was the director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

While at Armstrong State, Dennie developed and oversaw programs, services and initiatives aimed at recruiting and retaining more faculty, staff and students from diverse and under-represented populations.

Among her initial priorities at Anne Arundel Community College is to meet with as many students, college employ-



Dr. Deidra Dennie
Chief Diversity Officer
Anne Arundel Community College
Courtesy Photo/AACC

ees and administrators as she can to understand how to continue leadership and vision in diversity, inclusion and equity in Maryland.

The diverse nature of the student population at Anne Arundel Community College continues to rise. Nearly 37 percent of credit students this fall have identified themselves as part of a racial or ethnic minority, according to a news release.

"This is a college that is already rich in diversity and I want to build on that foundation," Dr. Dennie said. "I'm eager to make some meaningful connections with the students, staff and everyone at AACC. I want us to work together to build more bridges to make this an even more welcoming college community for everyone who comes here."

Anne Arundel Community College was among the first community colleges in the nation—and the first in Maryland—to have a chief diversity officer, when James Felton was hired in 2014. Since then, the college's commitment to diversity has earned several national awards including the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine in 2015 and 2016, as well as the 2015 Charles Kennedy Equity Award from the Association of Community College Trustees.

"For me, it's all about authentic leadership and transparency and I don't want there to be any confusion," Dr. Dennie said. "We have to decide whether we are headed in the right direction and what we need to do is to make sure that we are headed in right direction."

A Mother's Cry holds Thanksgiving Event at New Waverly AME

By Ursula V. Battle

Over 300 women impacted by violence among attendees

Three men handed turkeys from the back of a truck parked outside of a church to dozens upon dozens of women. On the upper level of the church, hundreds of women dined on a delicious dinner that included chicken, mashed potatoes and cranberries.

Downstairs a steady stream of women were given a bag of groceries that included stuffing and potatoes. They dined, they laughed, they hugged, they cried. This was the scene on Saturday, November 18, 2017, inside and outside of the New Waverly United Methodist Church located at 644 E. 33rd Street in Baltimore City.

That day, more than 300 women impacted by violence were given all the trimmings for a Thanksgiving meal and served dinner. The event was organized by Millie Brown, founder of A Mother's Cry, an organization that supports mothers who have lost their children to violence.

"Three hundred women, all who have been impacted by the violence on our streets attended this event," said Brown. "There were mothers from Roberta's House, and the State's Attorney's Office, along with mothers who lost sons, grandmothers who lost grandsons, and children who lost fathers."

She added, "Others who were in attendance came to support them. We also fed and gave food to those who needed some help for the holiday."

According to Brown, donations came from a variety of sources, including Maryland Governor Larry Hogan.

"The Governor's Office donated 250 turkeys and Salva Foods donated another 125 turkeys," said Brown. "A total of 375 turkeys were donated along with 375 bags of groceries. Giant Food donated the non-perishable items. Johns Hopkins' catering department donated the hot food that was served. Tyrone Sherrod donated t-shirts to the mothers."

Brown also praised the efforts of Kevin A. Slayton, Sr., Pastor of the New Waverly United Methodist Church and



(Top) New Waverly United Methodist Church members and other volunteers serving the mothers and other guests dinner. (Above left) Volunteer Patrick Moore hands out a turkey. (Above middle) Tyrone Sherrod of "We Imagine" holds up a "Live to 100" t-shirt. Sherrod distributed the shirts to the mothers during the event. (Above right) Ben Malmin, Lead Pastor of City Harbor Church; Millie Brown, founder of A Mother's Cry; and Steve McAdams, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives.

Photos by Ursula V. Battle

his congregation.

"The church members served and also donated non-perishable items," she said. "Brother Gary Cole was also a tremendous help, as was Ben Malmin of City Harbor Church."

Malmin, is Lead Pastor of the church, which is located in Hampden.

"My favorite activity every year is giving groceries away to families who have suffered murder, because it matters to God," said Pastor Malmin. "God said from the beginning that the blood cries out from the streets to Him. He cares when His loved ones die. How we lament matters. There can be redemption, healing and joy. There is so much pain in Baltimore City and to see these faces smiling

is bigger than a cancer cure."

Donyelle Brown lost her son Louis Cody Young on July 1, 2017. Cody, 22, was the stepson of prominent Baltimore attorney Warren Brown.

"It was a senseless act of violence at a gas station," said Brown as her eyes welled up with tears. "Ms. Millie took me under her wings. I started the Cody Young Foundation and she is going to help me through the process. She is dynamic for the mothers. I am amazed at the amount of work she does, and truly blessed. She does a lot, and the city really needs this."

Steve McAdams, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives also attended the event.

"It is very painful because your children are your heart and soul," said McAdams. "We wanted them to know we are here for them. Ms. Millie is helping people through the grieving process. There is a lot of collateral damage when someone is lost to a violent act. It affects family, friends, and neighbors. Ms. Millie reaches out, brings people in, and helps them. I don't think you can put a value on helping to stabilize somebody."

Brown says that her son, artist Will Brown plans to give each mother a portrait of their child, and that she is planning a Christmas event for the mothers,

For more information about A Mother's Cry, call 443-303-6289 or send an email to brownmillie98@gmail.com.

Take a 'Holly Jolly Trolley' Tour this holiday season

Baltimore— Trying to find a way to get into the holiday spirit? Take a tour aboard the Holly Jolly Trolley!

Royal Sonesta Harbor Court Baltimore, located in Baltimore's beautiful Inner Harbor, will once again partner with ZBest Worldwide to present the Annual Holly Jolly Trolley Tours, beginning Friday, December 1, 2017 at 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. through December 31, 2017 with extended weekends and additional hours between Christmas and New Year's Eve. The two-hour tours, hosted by a Baltimore Rent-A-Tour professional guide, will take guests in and around Baltimore City to experience the glitter, light displays, decorations and holiday spirit of Charm City.

The decorated trolley, which holds 26 guests will embark and disembark at Royal Sonesta Harbor Court's Espresso Café at 550 Light Street thirty minutes prior to departure. Guests are welcome to stop in the café for holiday themed beverages, packaged wine and food for purchase.

The Holly Jolly Trolley Tour will take riders through the adorned streets of



Downtown Baltimore, Harbor East, Fells Point, Canton, Mt. Vernon and Hampden's 34th Street Christmas Festival of Lights. Along the way, riders can listen to their favorite holiday music and learn a little local history from an expert guide.

Tickets are \$29.95 for adults (13+) and \$15.95 for kids (12 and under) and

Holly Jolly Tour Dates & Times

Friday, December 1 — Sunday, December 3
Thursday, December 7 — Sunday, December 10
Thursday, December 14 — Sunday, December 17
Thursday, December 21 — Sunday, December 31
Tours depart at 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Pick-up and drop-off in front of Royal Sonesta Harbor Court Hotel's Formula Espresso Café at 550 Light Street on the Inner Harbor in Baltimore

include the tour and candy canes. For more information, dates and times or to purchase tickets, visit: www.2017hollyjollytrolley.eventbrite.com or call 410-768-1148, ext. 2.

As part of the Holly Jolly Trolley Tour campaign, Royal Sonesta Harbor Court will offer guests a special 15 percent off

dinner and/or food in the bar area in the Explorers Restaurant located on the second floor of the hotel with the purchase of a tour ticket.

Additionally, discounted parking (\$10) is available in the hotel garage by presenting the ticket stub in Formula Espresso Cafe.

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BGE, Ripken Foundation Unveil Eddie Murray Field in West Baltimore

By Stacy M. Brown

Shortly after the demonstrations and unrest rocked Baltimore following the death of Freddie Gray, the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation decided it was time to step up its efforts in West Baltimore.

The organization has done just that with various community-oriented functions and its latest venture, a youth development park that will provide children with a safe place to play.

Along with Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE), the foundation unveiled The Eddie Murray Field at BGE Park in West Baltimore on Wednesday, November 15, 2017.

The field will serve as a fun and safe place for youth and the home of James Mosher Baseball, the oldest continuously operating African-American youth baseball league in the United States, according to foundation officials.

“After the unrest, we made a commitment to helping West Baltimore because it was the most effected community in the city,” said Steve Salem, the president of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation. “This is the first of five parks that we’ll be opening in West Baltimore and we’re so excited to give children a safe place to play, grow, and be kids.”

BGE officials say the park will also provide children mentorship through sports and recreation. To underscore that, Baltimore Orioles legends Cal Ripken Jr., and Eddie Murray, were asked to attend the unveiling.

“Every child deserves a positive environment where they can play and grow while surrounded by caring adults who can teach them important life lessons like teamwork, respect and personal responsibility,” said Cal Ripken Jr. “We are excited to bring this ballpark to the deserving kids and local community of West Baltimore. To be able to dedicate this park to my dear friend Eddie Murray makes today extra special.”

Ongoing programs at the field will help keep kids safe by providing a positive outlet, mentorship opportunities and a variety of activities that teach life skills.

“Like the James Mosher Baseball League, BGE has deep roots in Baltimore, and we are extremely proud to provide this legacy gift to the city we have called home for more than 200 years,” said Calvin G. Butler Jr., chief executive officer for BGE. “This youth development park will have a lasting impact on young people by providing them with a healthy environment where they can build skills and experiences necessary for success as adults.”

Eddie Murray Field at BGE Park features a synthetic turf baseball diamond equipped with dugouts, a backstop, and a digital scoreboard. Located behind James Mosher Elementary, the field will be gifted to and maintained by the Baltimore City Public School system.



Eddie Murray Field at BGE Park, home of James Mosher Baseball

Photos Courtesy of Walter Douglass

BGE’s support of this and other corporate citizenship programs is made possible through the use of Exelon shareholder dollars.

Other project partners include the State of Maryland, Ollie’s Bargain Outlet, Under Armour, FIELDS, Bon Secours, Baltimore Health System Foundation, T. Rowe Price Foundation.

Since 2009, the Ripken Foundation has created 74 completed parks across the country in 21 states, including 11 parks located throughout the Baltimore area. Additionally,

the Ripken Foundation continues to reshape the relationship between law enforcement and youth in Baltimore communities through its “Badges for Baseball” juvenile crime prevention program.

Salem says James Mosher Baseball has had such a tremendous impact on the community, which is one reason the Ripken Foundation enjoys supporting the league.

“For generations, they’ve been able to provide youth with a support system while teaching them valuable life lessons through the game of baseball,” Salem said. “Their commitment to the game and to bettering the community is truly remarkable. The coaches deserve this field, the kids deserve this field, and the community deserves this field.”

James Mosher Associates Incorporated
Request your presence to celebrate the opening of
Eddie Murray Field at BGE Park Home of James Mosher Baseball
(A Ripken Foundation Youth Development Park)



Wednesday, November 15, 2017 3:30 p.m.

James Mosher Elementary School
2400 West Mosher Street Baltimore Maryland 21216



Baltimore Orioles legends Cal Ripken, Jr and Eddie Murray at unveiling ceremony.



*James Mosher Baseball members and other stakeholders
Photos Courtesy of Walter Douglass*



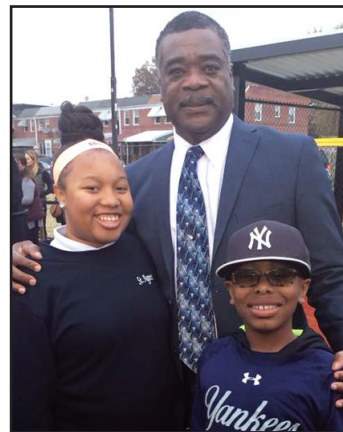
Calvin G. Butler Jr., CEO, BGE.



Allen Meacham, 91, (left) is one of the original founders of James Mosher Baseball in 1960 and Mark Butler, CEO of Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation



Steven Salem, President, Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation



Dee and Donovan with Eddie



Walter Douglass and Ackneil Muldrow



Lieutenant Governor Boyd K. Rutherford



Baltimore American Indian Center receives 2017 Maryland Heritage Award

Baltimore— In conjunction with American Indian Heritage Month, Maryland Traditions, the folklife program of the Maryland State Arts Council, is pleased to announce that the recipient of the 2017 Maryland Traditions Heritage Award in the category of “Place” will be the Baltimore American Indian Center.

An awards ceremony will be held at UMBC’s Proscenium Theatre on the evening of Saturday, December 2, 2017. The public is cordially invited to attend. Free tickets can be reserved through the UMBC University Tickets website.

The Baltimore American Indian Center (BAIC) has stood the test of time in Upper Fells Point. Originally founded in 1968 as the American Indian Study Center, it once primarily served as a resettlement resource for Indians who had migrated to the city seeking employment.

“The center was created to give us a place like home so we could stay connected and keep our culture alive,” said Linda Cox, a daughter of one of the founders of the BAIC.

Today, members of Baltimore’s American Indian community have, for the most part, relocated to areas outside of the neighborhood immediately surrounding the BAIC- a neighborhood that had at one time been popularly referred to as “the reservation.”

The BAIC now functions as a cultural magnet, which draws this dispersed community back in. Offering weekly culture classes, annual pow wows, a full-fledged community museum, a multipurpose meeting space and more, the BAIC continuously sustains the living cultural traditions of American Indians and Alaskan Natives of the Baltimore region.

Each year, UMBC’s New Media Studios, in partnership with Maryland Traditions, produces a short documentary about the Maryland Heritage Award recipient in the category of “Place.” This year is no exception. The first public viewing of this new documentary will take place during the awards ceremony.

“This recognition has really come at a crucial time,” said Ashley Minner, a member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina who grew up in the Center and who now works as a folklorist for Maryland Traditions. “The Center is in transi-



(Left to right) Louis Campbell, Celest Swann and E. Keith Colston on S. Broadway in front of the Baltimore American Indian Center in Upper Fells Point. The center is the recipient of the 2017 Maryland Traditions Heritage Award in the “Place” category.

Photo by Edwin Remsberg

tion and so is the neighborhood. It’s a joy to be able to present this honor to representatives of a place that has been so important to my own growth as a human being and as a member of our community.”

“The Maryland Traditions Heritage Awards are the state’s highest honor for those who teach, practice or steward our living cultural traditions,” said Maryland Traditions Director Chad Edward Buterbaugh. “By taking time to recognize the people, places, and practices that are vital to Maryland folklife, we also celebrate the diversity that makes Maryland such a unique place to live.”

Other 2017 Maryland Heritage recipients are: in the category of Person, documentary story quilter Joan M.E. Gaither of Anne Arundel County; and in the category of Tradition, the Deal Island Skipjack Races and Festival.

The ceremony concludes with a country blues concert by the Phil Wiggins Blues House Party. Bandleader and harmonica player Wiggins, of Montgomery County, is the recipient of a 2017 NEA National Heritage Fellowship, the nation’s highest honor in the folk and traditional arts.

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Third Annual Annapolis Chocolate Binge Festival & Holiday Market

Everyone loves chocolate and Annapolis' will be celebrating by filling West Street with local chocolatiers ready to help chocoholics get through the holiday season. On Sunday December 3, 2017 from noon to 5 p.m. on the first blocks of West Street will be the third annual Annapolis Chocolate Binge Festival, featuring family friendly entertainment, chocolate, holiday shopping and the lighting of West Street's BGE Holiday Light Canopy.

Start off the December holidays season with some fun and indulge your sweet tooth at the third annual Annapolis Chocolate Binge Festival, to benefit the Annapolis Arts District and We Care and Friends. The day is loaded with family friendly fun. There is a giant gingerbread house moon bounce for the kids, a giant snowball run where you can race your friends, you can roast marshmallows and make smores at the fire pit in the middle of West Street with the Annapolis Fire Department, get a balloon animal, drink hot coco with the police department and visit Santa. Santa will be collecting new toys, coats and hats for the We Care and Friends Holiday Party for local kids in need.

Take a chocolate tour along West Street with two dozen vendors selling various chocolate specialties, including chocolate caramels, cakes, chocolate bars, truffles, fudge, cookies, candies, hot chocolate, fondue, martinis and more. Some of the local and regional chocolatiers include Dear Coco Chocolate, Salazon Chocolate, Tuxedo Hill Chocolate, Heritage Chocolate, Moonshine Chocolate, Kilwins Chocolate, Cakes by Rachael, Otterbein Bakery, Annapolis Caramel Company, CoCo Couture, Happy Chicken Bakery, Foxtrot Chocolates, Sweet Heats Patisserie, Moondance Cookies, Parfections Chocolates, Sweet Piggy, Harper Macaw and more.

You can also complete your holiday shopping at the holiday market at the Annapolis Chocolate Binge Festival featuring dozens of local craftspeople with a



BGE Holiday Light Canopy
Courtesy Photo

wide range of handmade items including jewelry, pottery, candles wood turnings, glass ornaments and more. Plus visit the galleries and shops in the Annapolis Arts District and throughout Annapolis for other unique gifts.

The entertainment starts off at noon on two different stages on West Street with a grand finale at 5pm with the grande illumination of the

BGE Holiday Light Canopy over West Street. Admission is just a \$5 suggested donation for adults (kids are free with parents). While supplies last,

everyone making a donation will get a complimentary Hot chocolate from the PoPo at the air stream camper.

Plenty of easy parking is nearby on at Whitmore Parking Garage, Gotts Court Parking Garage, Knighton Parking Garage and the State Parking Garage. Plus the free Circulator bus will bring you right to the festival.

The Annapolis Chocolate Binge Festival is brought to you by the Inner West street Association and managed by Evans Management LLC. They also bring you the First Sunday Arts Festivals, Annapolis Fringe Festival, Dinner Under the Stars and manage the Annapolis Arts District.

For more information please visit www.annapolischocolatefestival.com

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Christmas Village in Baltimore Celebrates 5th Anniversary with new Inner Harbor Tree Lighting

Baltimore— Christmas Village in Baltimore will again transform West Shore Park (501 Light Street) into a traditional indoor and outdoor German Christmas Market, open between Thanksgiving, Thursday, November 23, 2017 and Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24, 2017.

The Baltimore and DC metro regions are invited to enjoy holiday sights and sounds with two Christmas trees; thousands of twinkling lights; entertainment; live music on two stages; children's activities; and 50+ vendors. Shop for high-quality, international and local gifts and decorations. Warm up with a glass of warm mulled wine or hot chocolate while enjoying the great variety of European food and drinks. Exciting additions for the season will include a new Thank You for Serving Weekend, new outdoor Santa's workshop, new Ho Ho Happy Hour, new shopping vendors and other surprises. Christmas Village will also debut their Official Tree Lighting Ceremony in partnership with local schools and feature new decorations.

"Christmas Village cannot wait for Baltimore's holiday season to start," said Christmas Village project manager, Nancy Schmalz. "We are excited to introduce many new holiday surprises for our guests, including brand new decorations, a new outdoor workshop for Santa and a brand new Tree Lighting Ceremony. Our team also looks forward to honoring our veterans, and our active service men and women, with a special Thank You for Serving Weekend!"

Now, in its fifth season, Christmas Village in Baltimore has grown into one of the region's most unique and charming holiday attractions. Authentic wooden huts, a huge heated tent, two Christmas trees, and festive decorations will pop-up on West Shore Park, located in between the Maryland Science Center and the Baltimore Visitor Center. It's the most wonderful time of year on the Baltimore Waterfront, as Christmas Village is located just steps away from popular holiday attractions like the PANDORA Ice Rink (Inner Harbor Amphitheater),



Photo: Russ Brown Photography

and other popular Waterfront Holiday Happenings.

More than 50 local and international merchants are already busy preparing high-quality crafted gifts. Famous German vendor Käthe Wohlfahrt will return with thousands of ornaments, pyramids and limited-edition holiday decorations. With toys, apparel, jewelry, decorations, artwork and more, there will be something for everyone on Santa's list.

Follow the smell of gingerbread and Schnitzel to a full menu of European food, sweets and drinks, including mouthwatering German Bratwurst, Hofbrau Beer, mulled wine, potato latke and other treats. Food and drinks can be enjoyed in one of the seating areas in the large heated tent. Look for a huge food variety this year, with something for everyone!

Santa will move to a brand-new outdoor wooden "workshop" hut, custom

designed by a Christmas Village artist; children and pets are invited to take a photo with Santa at his new location at all times the market is open

Christmas Village in Baltimore's outdoor area is always free for admission. Admission for the heated festival tent is free on the opening weekend. For all other weekends, admission to the festival tent is five dollars for adults 18 and over, while kids under 18 can enter for free. For Baltimore's Dollar or Less Weekend, on December 9 and 10, visitors will enjoy \$1 admission. Christmas Village's website will also feature weekend discount coupons available for download.

For more information, and to spread early holiday cheer, follow @bmorechristmas on Twitter and Instagram, like Christmas Village in Baltimore on Facebook and visit www.baltimore-christmas.com. Final

vendor lists, food and drink menus, themed weekends, special event details and special promotions will be released on the website in mid-November.

Schedule Summary:

First Day: Nov 23, 2017
Opening Event: Nov 25, 2017
Last Day: Dec 24, 2017
Closed: Nov 28, Dec 5 and 12, 2017 (first three Tuesdays)

Hours:

Sunday through Thursday 11:00am to 7:00pm
Friday through Saturday 11:00am to 8:00pm
Thanksgiving Day 11:00am to 5:00pm
Christmas Eve 11:00am to 5:00pm

Location:

501 Light Street
Baltimore, MD 21230
(West Side of the famous Inner Harbor in Baltimore)

Holiday Bazaar & Tea Returns to the Cloisters Castle

Friday, December 8 and Saturday, December 9, 2017



Baltimore— Shop local this holiday season at the Holiday Bazaar & Tea at the Cloisters! Now two days, Friday, December 8 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday, December 9 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Holiday Bazaar & Tea features 100 percent local Maryland artisans selling handmade items inside the historic Cloisters Castle.

Visitors can find unique gifts for loved ones while enjoying the beautiful interior and exterior of the Cloisters. This family-friendly event includes a free arts workshop upstairs where kids can make their own handmade gifts and decorations to take home. Inside the “Tea Room,” visitors can enjoy tea by Solo Te’ Tea, finger sandwiches, fresh fruit, scones, cheese and an assortment of pastries and desserts.

The tea times are 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday, December 8 and 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 9. The bazaar is free to attend and shop, but the tea is \$30. Reservations for the tea can be made by contacting the Cloisters directly, at 410-821-7448.

The Cloisters is managed by the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts and is located at 10440 Falls Road, Lutherville, MD.

Local Maryland artisans and crafters are still being accepted to participate in the bazaar. Interested vendors should visit www.cloisterscastle.com and submit an application by Friday, December 1, 2017 to be considered.



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your health!

New lung cancer drug should help patients live longer

By Stacy M. Brown

In Maryland, 60.3 people per 100,000 are diagnosed with lung cancer and that number increases in Baltimore City to 79.5 per 100,000, according to health experts. Those figures are just for white residents.

“Unfortunately, when it comes to African-Americans, it’s higher,” said Dr. Kashif Ali of the Maryland Oncology Hematology and local expert in Immuno-Oncology.

Approximately 67.6 African-American residents per 100,000 are diagnosed with lung cancer, Dr. Ali said, quoting statistics. That number rises to 81.5 per 100,000 in Baltimore City.

“Genetics is part of it and so is the socio-economic status,” Ali said. “The lack of education in certain communities contributes to it as well. But, over the past couple of years the general incidence have dropped because of education and getting people more educated about the risk of smoking, the benefits of cancer screenings, going to the doctor and catching things early.”

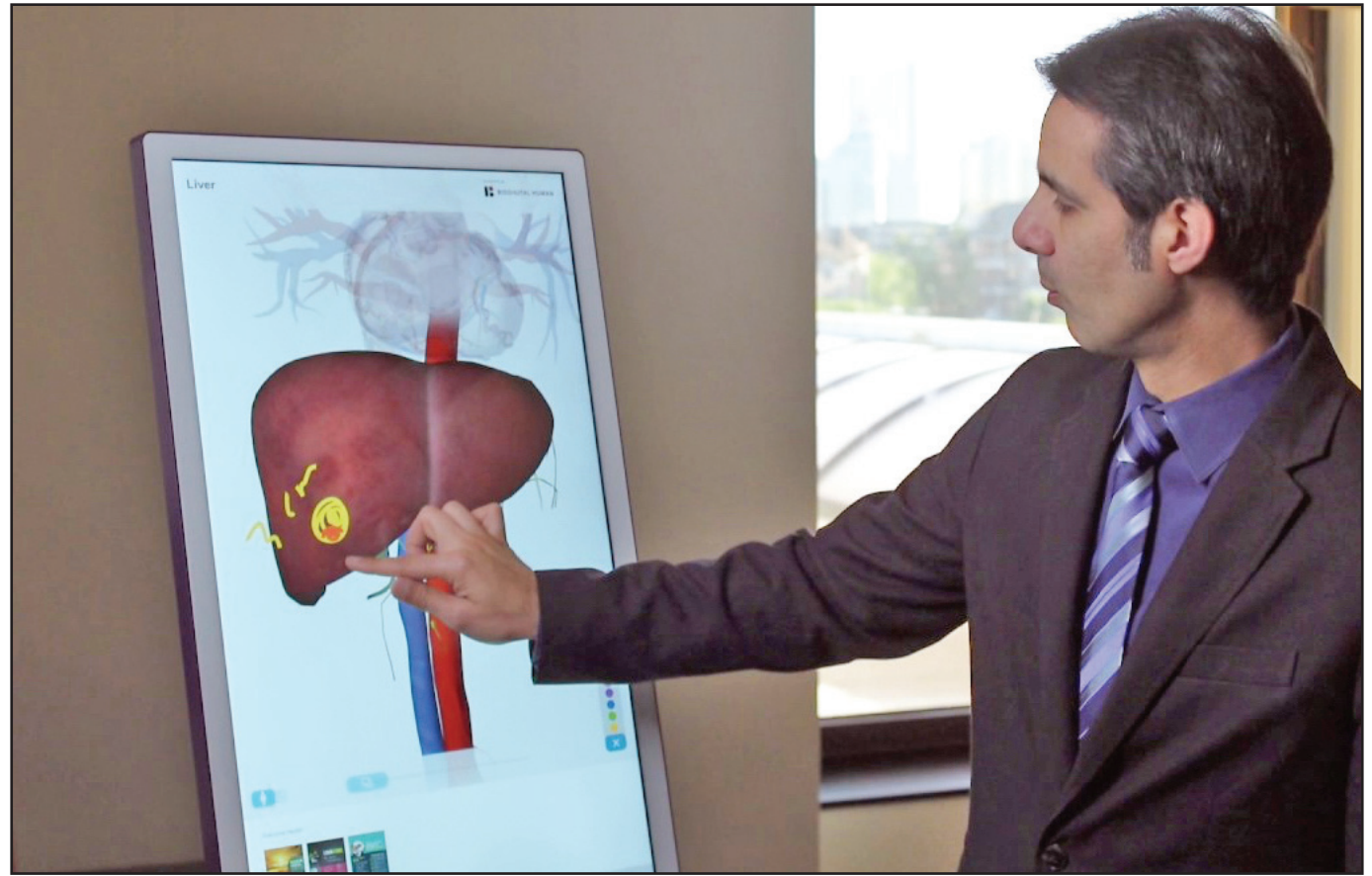
Still, health experts need to do more in communities of color to educate them about the risks of lung cancer, Ali said.

Now, health officials have cited new developments in Immuno-Oncology, an innovative area of research that seeks to help the body's own immune system fight cancer that offers hope to patients diagnosed with lung cancer.

Recent information presented by researchers has revealed that patients with lung cancer who are treated with the drug, Opdivo, a type of medicine that uses Immuno-Oncology to help the body fight cancer are now living for three years after diagnosis.

Bristol-Myers Squibb Company announced the three-year overall survival data from two pivotal randomized studies called CheckMate -017 and CheckMate -057.

Those studies evaluated Opdivo versus the chemotherapy drug, docetaxel in patients with previously treated metastatic



In Maryland approximately 67.6 African-American residents per 100,000 are diagnosed with lung cancer and the number rises to 81.5 per 100,000 in Baltimore City. Recent information presented by researchers has revealed that patients with lung cancer who are treated with the drug, Opdivo, a type of medicine that uses Immuno-Oncology to help the body fight cancer are now living for three years after diagnosis. (Above) Dr. Kashif Ali of the Maryland Oncology Hematology in Columbia, Maryland is a local expert in Immuno-Oncology.

Courtesy Photo

non-small cell lung cancer—the most common type of lung cancer.

In CheckMate -017, 16 percent of patients treated with Opdivo were alive at three years versus the six percent treated with docetaxel. In CheckMate -057, 18 percent of patients treated with Opdivo were alive at three years versus nine percent who took docetaxel.

“One of the things we learned over the past few years is that the immune system has the natural ability to fight cancer,” Dr. Ali said. “In general, our bodies develop cells that look like cancers on a daily basis and it’s the type of cell that’s called the T-cell that fights it off.”

In order to avoid being attacked by the immune system, healthy cells are

disguised with molecules that turn T-Cells off whenever they come near. As normal cells transition into a cancerous state, some pick up the ability to coat themselves in these so-called checkpoint molecules, allowing them to put the brakes on even a robust immune system attack, according to one published report.

“If we can activate that ability of immune system to fight off cancers we can do it a lot better and with less side effects compared to other treatments we’ve had in the past which were mostly focused on chemotherapy,” Dr. Ali said. “There are a few drugs that have come out, Opdivo being the one mentioned in the studies and the way this drug works

is the way some of the immune therapy drugs work and what happens is that the cancer cells growing in your body become very smart and they figure out a way to trick the immune system by making a block so when the T-cells come and attack they become inactivated.”

The blocks then prevent the immune system from killing off the cancer cells. Opdivo removes that block from cancer cells preventing T-cells from becoming inactivated, according to Dr. Ali.

“The nice thing about this drug is that it’s actually using your own immune system to fight this cancer instead of introducing toxins like chemotherapy which generally leads to a lot more side effects,” he said.

Modern medical advances have helped millions of people live longer, healthier lives. We owe these improvements to decades of investment in medical research. —Ike Skelton

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BGE joins national effort to combat scammers

“Utilities United Against Scams Day” helps raise awareness and provides customers with essential information to fight back!

Baltimore— BGE has joined forces, for the second year in a row, with electric and natural gas utility companies across the United States and Canada to help protect customers from the long-running scams targeting customers of utility service providers. BGE and the other Exelon utilities, Atlantic City Electric, ComEd, Delmarva Power, PECO and Pepco are committed to educating customers and putting a stop to scamming.

The collaborating energy companies designated November 15 as “Utilities United Against Scams Day.” This day was supported by a weeklong campaign with content focused on exposing the tricks scammers use to steal money from customers, and how customers can protect themselves. The joint effort, which includes utility member organizations such as Edison Electric Institute and American Gas Association, encourages utilities to share these messages to help guard against scam activity.

“BGE proudly partners with utilities across the country to fight back against scammers and help protect our customers from scamming tactics,” said Rob Biagiotti, vice president and chief customer officer for BGE.

“We want to remind our customers that there may be occasions when BGE may need to call or visit homes or businesses for emergencies or to inspect or install equipment, and these situations can always be verified by calling BGE at 800.685.0123.”

When being scammed, a customer typically receives an unsolicited phone call from an individual who falsely claims to be a utility representative. The scammer warns that the customer’s service will be shut off if the customer fails to make a payment – usually within a short timeframe through a prepaid debit card.

Scammers have even duplicated the up-



front Interactive Voice Response system of some utilities, so when customers call the number provided by the scammer, it sounds like a legitimate business. Some of these scammers also use caller ID spoofing to replicate a utility’s phone number.

Red flags for scam activity:

- The scammer often becomes angry and tells a customer his or her account is past due and service will be shut off if a large payment isn’t made – usually within less than an hour.

- The scammer instructs the customer to purchase a prepaid debit or credit card—widely available at most retail stores— then

call him or her back to supposedly make a payment.

- The scammer asks the customer for the prepaid card’s receipt number and PIN number, which grants instant access to the funds loaded to the card.

How to protect yourself

- Utility representatives will never ask or require a customer with a past due balance to purchase a prepaid debit card to avoid disconnection.

- Customers can make payments online, by phone, automatic bank withdrawal, mail or in person.

- Customers with a past due balance will receive multiple shut off notifications – never a single notification one hour before disconnection.

Don’t Get Scammed: Customers can avoid being scammed by taking a few precautions:

- Never provide social security numbers or

personal information to anyone initiating contact with you claiming to be a utility representative or requesting you to send money to another person or entity other than your local utility providers.

- Always ask to see a company photo ID before allowing any utility worker into your home or business.

- When in doubt, check it out. Be skeptical of individuals wearing clothing with old or defaced company logos. If you have any doubts, ask to see a company photo ID.

- Never make payment for services to anyone coming to the door.

Any BGE customer who believes they have been a target of a scam is urged to contact their local police, and call BGE immediately at 800-685-0123 to report the situation.

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