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Generation Hope Provides A Future for Teen Moms and Dads

By Stacy M. Brown

Fewer than two percent of teen mothers earn a degree by age 30. It's a statistic that Maryland resident Nicole Lewis wants to help change.

A former homeless teen parent, Lewis founded Generation Hope, a nonprofit that selects teen mothers and fathers who have displayed academic achievement and a desire to go to college to become scholars in the organization's scholar program.

Each scholar in the program receives tuition assistance, one-on-one mentoring, intensive case management and wrap-around services, including free tutoring, trainings and fun social events throughout the year. Generation Hope also provides free childcare for scholars at all events.

"We have 90 percent persistence rate from year-to-year— meaning 90 percent of our scholars stay in our program and in college each year— and 70 percent of our scholars earn a 2.5 GPA or higher," said Lewis, a graduate of the College of William & Mary. "When I told my parents I was pregnant, our house was thrown into turmoil. When you throw a crisis on top of an already fragile situation, it can cause everything to explode and that's what happened."

As a teen mother who overcame homelessness and a drug-infested environment, Lewis honed her skills in communications and nonprofit management to start Generation Hope in 2010.

Lewis, who in 2014 received honor as a CNN Hero, proved relentless in her drive to overcome many adversities.

Continued on page 11

Nicole Lewis founded Generation Hope, a nonprofit that selects teen mothers and fathers who have displayed academic achievement and a desire to go to college to become scholars in the organization's scholar program. Courtesy Photo



Six tips for surviving the season:

When someone's missing from your holiday picture

Pasadena, Md.— Holiday traditions often come with nametags. Bob's mulled cider; Jason's family Menorah; Sue's Christmas newsletter— these are special people, and the role they fill makes these seasonal traditions an integral part of family gatherings and memory making.

When that person has passed away, these once joyful traditions can become painful reminders of their death, especially in the first year. You have only just begun the grieving process when suddenly you're faced with something that triggers deep sorrow— a slow cooker of cider, the first lighting of a Menorah, Christmas cards in your mailbox. Now that Bob, Jason or Sue are no longer there to share in them, each of these simple things is so different.

Grief does not close up shop for the holidays. However, there are ways to cope this time of year. Bereavement counselors from Chesapeake Life Center offer these six tips for surviving the season:

1. Skip out on some traditions this year. Give yourself space and permission to do less during this time. It is the best gift you can give yourself. For example, don't send out the annual card. Your friends will understand. "It is OK to skip a tradition," Sarah Montgomery, Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical said. "It does not mean you are aban-



doing it, you are just putting it on hold. You can resume it any year."

2. Do the tradition in a new way. There may be traditions you want to continue, but it's too painful or awkward. For example, maybe it is difficult to decide whether to hang your loved one's stocking or leave it in storage. Instead, do it differently. "You can hang his or her stocking and invite family and friends to write notes or memories to place in the stocking," Montgomery said. "Then, as a family, you can read

the memories out loud and preserve them from year to year."

3. Make an escape plan. Amy Stapleton, Licensed Graduate Professional Counselor, suggested that if you do decide to attend a holiday activity, make an escape plan. That way, if you experience a wave of grief, you can step away for a few minutes, or even leave. Rather than riding with someone, you may wish to drive yourself or use a ride service so that you can leave early if you need to.

4. Re-evaluate your traditions. "Grief has a unique way of giving us the permission to really evaluate nearly everything, including the holidays," Stapleton said. Consider what parts of the holidays you enjoy and what parts you don't. Let go of what doesn't serve you any longer.

5. Take time to reflect. In this busy

time of year, everyone expects us to be...busy. It can sometimes feel like a competition to see who has baked the most cookies, mailed the most cards or attended the most parties. It can be tempting to join in as a way to avoid your feelings of missing your loved one. Instead, Susan Coale, Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical and Director of the Chesapeake Life Center suggested that you set aside time to quietly reflect on your feelings, on memories of holidays with your loved one or even on things you would like to be sharing with them now. Write your loved one a letter, look at pictures or take a moment to shed a few tears. All of these are healthy ways to experience and reflect on your feelings.

6. Above all, communicate. Communicate what you can handle comfortably during this time to your friends and family. "Let folks know that you might need to take a break from festivities after a while," Roberta Rook, Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, said. Let them know it's not because you don't want to be with them, but because you need the time to recharge and gather yourself. Tell them whether or not it's alright for them to talk about your loved one. Make them aware if you need to make changes in your role in family holiday responsibilities. "By relating your needs, you minimize the chances for misunderstandings and hurt feelings," Rook said.

There is no right or wrong way to handle grief, just like we each celebrate the holidays differently. Decide what is right for you and do it. You also have every right to change your mind, even a few times.

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Guest Editorials/Letters

Lessons from the African American vote in Alabama

By Dr. John Warren

San Diego Voice and Viewpoint/NNPA Member

The African Americans who have convinced themselves that one vote doesn't matter, should take a very close look at what happened during the recent special election in Alabama. In spite of the endorsement of President Donald Trump and the extremely conservative white voters who supported Roy Moore, Doug Jones, the Democratic candidate won the for the United States Senate seat vacated by Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Jones was the first Democrat elected to represent Alabama in the U.S. Senate in 25 years. How he won is very important to African Americans across this nation.

Exit polls showed that 98 percent of African American women who voted supported Jones and 93 percent of African American men who voted chose the Democratic candidate. The Jones' victory by 1.5 percent clearly shows that, without the black vote, Jones wouldn't have won the special election. Equally important is the fact that this degree of African American voter participation in an off-season special election, demonstrates what we can do, when we choose to get involved. African Americans cannot allow "voter suppression" tactics, like additional photo identification requirements, to deter us from going to the polls.

According to Nonprofit VOTE, "In all but two states, voting age citizens convicted of a felony are barred from voting for some period of time." In Washington, D.C., Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Utah, the voting rights of returning citizens are restored automatically once they're released. In Florida, Iowa, Kentucky and Virginia, ex-offenders are forced to petition the government to have their voting rights restored.

African Americans are disproportionately affected by voter suppression tactics and laws, which deny ex-felons the right to vote; that's why we should be focused on "voter registration" and not candidate endorsements at this stage of the game. We cannot allow apathy and indifference to take the place of the hard won battle for voter participation on the part of African Americans. Just as we rallied and voted for President Barack Obama, we must rally and vote against the policies and political candidates promoted by the Trump Administration. We have to do whatever it takes to defeat those who would continue to support a system of economic inequality dressed up as tax reform that ultimately harms the majority of Americans.

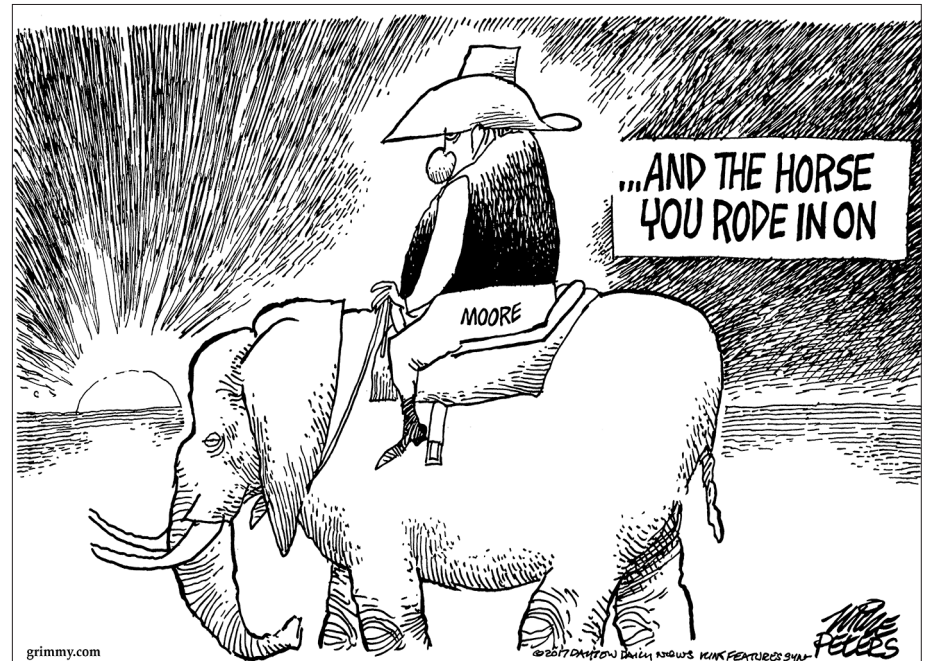
Jones' victory in the special election in Alabama demonstrates that black votes matter and that black voters cast crucial votes in elections, where white voters are decidedly split— that's the real lesson. We make our victories and define our value. Let's not let others do that for us. Every black vote counts and can make a difference in the Deep South and across the nation.

Dr. John E. Warren is the publisher of the San Diego Voice and Viewpoint and a contributing writer for the NNPA Newswire specializing in intergovernmental affairs. The San Diego Voice and Viewpoint is a member publication of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. Learn more about becoming a member at www.nnpa.org.

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Letters to the Editor:

Editor:

Fresh from the successful debut at the John's Hopkins' Turner Auditorium, the stage play *Serenity House: From Addiction to Deliverance* by Baltimore playwright Ursula Battle, offered a close-up and personal look at the opioid epidemic. But even more than that, the coming together of various community entities to highlight the messages in this production is a text-book example of what needs to happen regularly to stem the tide of rampant opioid abuse, addiction and death.

National recording artist Randy Roberts, internationally renowned trio Serenity, and all of the other "up-front" cast members earned standing ovations for their performances. But, many "behind-the-scenes" cast members are deserving of a rousing round of applause for the part they are playing in loosening the grip of opioid addiction.

Behind-the-scenes cast members include the Baltimore Times for providing space in these pages urging readers to learn more about the opioid epidemic.

Working to spread hope, health and healing through harmony, the Unified Voices of Johns Hopkins are another behind-the-scenes partner. Productions like *Serenity House* speak to the very mission of Unified Voices. When we point to the

devastation caused by opioid addiction, we are allowing light into dark places and with that light can come healing.

Also working behind-the-scenes to boost the positive impact of *Serenity House* are staff from the Baltimore County Department of Health, Bureau of Behavior Health/Local Addictions Authority. These dedicated folks work continually to educate the community about the dangers of opioid addiction and how to provide a life-saving response during an opioid overdose. Members of this team were present at each of the performances to answer questions, provide literature and register theatre goers interested in attending a free training session.

Yes, opioid addiction is taking a terrible toll. However, the collective and creative efforts of mass media, the performing arts, businesses, social organizations, public health and entities representing all facets of the community can stem the tide. And, whether up-front or behind-the-scenes, we must all sign on to be cast members in this collective effort.

Dr. Gregory Wm. Branch

Director
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How to have a Merry Christmas!

By Dr. Glenn Mollette

Christmas is the most depressing time of the year for many people. New Year's Eve is another difficult time. There are lots of reasons why depression and suicide rates soar during these holidays. Feeling alone, financial distress, health issues, family problems and the list can actually be long.

Here are some quick tips for you. Keep this column handy for reference over the next two weeks:

Plan to be connected to people during these holidays. Even if it's sitting on the sofa making telephone calls all day, at least you are talking and hearing people. Actually this is a good idea anyway. Make a long list and call people and wish them a Merry Christmas or a Happy New Year.

Divide your list and call some one holiday and the rest on New Year's Eve. Too many people sit back with the attitude, "Well, they haven't called me." Don't worry about that because we are talking about your self-preservation here. Have people in your home whether it's family

or people in your neighborhood. Have them for just coffee and a cookie. Better yet, if you have family, relax and just roll with the holiday punches. There is absolutely nothing else to do on Christmas. Your local convenience store or truck stop might be open but that's it. Enjoy and love the people you might be around—it's only once a year that you are truly stuck all day with them. You can survive it.

Do not fuss about anything. Be nice to everybody. Let the stupid things that people say to you roll off your back. Smile and act like you are having a wonderful time even if some relative is driving you crazy. Just laugh and have fun.

Keep it simple. Don't over spend and don't rack up a big credit card debt. Let other people help you with any cooking, kitchen details and clean up. Share the joy with other people. Most people are happy to chip in and it makes them and you feel better.

Allow yourself plenty of time. My wife starts cooking Christmas dinner two weeks early. She makes something and puts it in the freezer. If she makes one thing every day we normally end up with enough food for the neighborhood. There was a time when she tried to do it all on one day. This drove her and all of us crazy. Last minute cooking, shopping and leaving home late to travel a long trip is all nerve racking and takes some of the fun out of the holiday.

Help one or two people along the way. No one person can save the world but you never know when your assistance might be a miracle for some one. Years ago, a man had tied up all of his money into a house when suddenly he lost his job and had no way to keep the house. The bank secured everything he



owned and there were zero dollars available to do anything. He didn't know what he was going to do including buy groceries or even find another place to rent.

A financially secure man in the town heard about the plight of the other guy and called him into his office one week before Christmas to announce to him he was going to buy his house from him. The man was overwhelmed with joy and was able to eventually secure another place to live, another job and move forward with his life. However for sometime he lived each day feeling and knowing that his life and family were in severe peril. He told me once that what happened was truly a life saving miracle.

You probably aren't in the position to just buy somebody's house in order to financially save them but maybe a good word, a small financial gift, or even try-

ing to help somebody find a job might be miracle life saving acts that you might give to someone.

Christmas only comes once a year if we are blessed to see and enjoy the day. Be thankful! Give thanks to God Almighty for His blessings. Don't give ugly gestures to people on the highway. Be nice to Republicans and Democrats and Independents and all other parties—at least on Christmas.

We need more joy, smiles and happiness in America. Do your part. You are one person. If every person contributes we can truly all have a very Merry Christmas!

Dr. Glenn Mollette is President of Newburgh Theological Seminary in Newburgh, Indiana. His syndicated column appears in all 50 states. To contact him, email: GMollette@aol.com.

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Baltimore celebrates 'Project Runway' model competition winner Liris Crosse

By Dareise A. Jones

Baltimore's best and brightest in the fashion, entertainment and media industries, stepped out "runway ready" to celebrate the success of plus-size model Liris Crosse at the posh Tell Tale restaurant in downtown Baltimore.

It was the first Sunday in December just a few days after it was revealed that Crosse was the winning model of Season 16 "Project Runway" during the reunion show.

Crosse was ecstatic and grateful to be back in her hometown surrounded by family, friends and well-wishers, who were proud to share the joy of her noteworthy accomplishment.

As the model competition winner, Crosse will be featured in an upcoming fashion spread for Marie Claire magazine. She is also looking forward to continuing to motivate and educate aspiring and working models through her "Life of a Working Model" boot camp, which she describes as "a safe place for people who want to get quality information from a trusted professional who has continuously broken barriers in the industry."

Crosse, who currently resides in New York, was born and raised in Randallstown, Baltimore County just a short drive to Baltimore City, and she still feels connected to the people and area where she grew-up.

Crosse joined the cast of this season's "Project Runway" in part, to continue her mission as a trailblazer in breaking barriers in the modeling industry. Her win is noteworthy because in its sixteen seasons, "Project Runway" has provided significant exposure, education and experiences for participating designers and models, but this season was the first time the show included models of varying sizes (0-22).

Crosse says some designers on the show experienced difficulty in creating fashionable pieces for plus-size models, but she is proud she was able to expose them to the different needs a curvy woman has when it comes to fashion.

Kenya Freeman, one of the designers this season, nailed the Avon challenge



(Left) Season 16 "Project Runway" model competition winner Liris Crosse who was born and raised in Randallstown in Baltimore County, Maryland **(Right)** Designer Michael Brambila with model Liris Crosse and mentor to the designers, Tim Gunn. Brambila placed 6th overall on Season 16 of Project Runway. **Photo Credit: Barbara Nitke/Greg Davis**

with Crosse as her model. Crosse said she felt "powerful and modern" in Kenya's design. Crosse and Freeman are now talking about possibly creating a fashion line together.

Crosse has appeared in Essence, Vibe, and Volup2 magazines among others; she has graced runways around the world with her confident strut and has appeared in several films and television shows including "The Best Man" and "The Wire."

She says she has always been in love with fashion and having her picture taken. When she was a little girl and her dad, Reverend St. George Crosse, was running for Congress and had a photographer come to their house to take pictures for his promotional material, she posed for some shots. That photographer told her parents she should model, which she says "planted a seed in my head that I could do it!"

So, she learned everything she could about the business until her father gave her his blessing to pursue a career in modeling after she graduated from Randallstown High School.



Liris wearing Michael Brambila's design depicting evil for the Good and Evil Challenge in Episode 5

She is very excited about her forthcoming book, "Make the World Your Runway," which she says will include tips and tools to help everyone exude confidence and professionalism on the "runway of life."

Crosse is proud of her win because she believes "It's a win for women everywhere, but especially for plus-size women. It's a win for Baltimore; it's a win for black women. It's a win for change [in the fashion industry] and how we [will] be represented. The average size of a woman in America is a size 16 and she's hardly [ever] able to see herself in media."

Baltimore is very proud to celebrate with Crosse and will continue to follow her journey as she fights for more diverse representation in the fashion industry.

Follow Crosse's journey as she continues to motivate, slay on the runway and break barriers in the modeling industry at: www.lirisc.com and @lirisc on IG, FB, Twitter and Snapchat.



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New entrepreneurship training program now accepting applications

Baltimore County, Md.— Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) will host an information session for the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Program from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, January 3, 2018, at CCBC Owings Mills located at 10300 Grand Central Avenue. The event is open to the public but registration is required.

Interested small business owners who are seeking ways to accelerate growth, network with other small business leaders, and drive results with proven business strategies are invited to attend the information session, which will feature alumni from the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Program who will share their experiences with attendees.

Register is available online at: <https://tinyurl.com/january-3-info-session>.

The free information session is offered in partnership with Goldman Sachs, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Johns Hopkins University and Morgan State University. Goldman Sachs and Bloomberg Philanthropies have committed \$10 million in Baltimore to support a business management and education program for business owners who are past the start-up phase and are poised for growth.

The Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Program is an entrepreneurship, training program that provides business fundamentals through the lens of the business owner's relevant experiences. The curriculum focuses on practical business skills, including negotiations, finance, employee management and marketing. Program courses are offered at CCBC, Johns



Hopkins University and Morgan State University, and program tuition is offered at no cost to the business owner.

Applicants who are qualified and selected for the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Program will receive a hands-on education in business growth, access to highly-trained business professionals, comprehensive one-on-one business advisory services to assist with the development and implementation of a business growth plan, and an expanded peer network of small business owners nationwide. Business owners whose businesses have been operating for at least two years, the company has two or more employees, and the organization generates \$100,000 in annual revenue are encouraged to apply. Applications will be selected, in part, based on the business's potential to grow and create jobs in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

Applications for the next class of 10,000 Small Businesses in Baltimore are being accepted through January 9, 2018, with classes scheduled to begin in mid-April. Business owners can apply at www.10ksbapply.com.



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Ravens still have outside chance of making the playoffs!

By *Turron Davenport*

There was a time when it seemed like the Ravens were at an all-time low earlier this season. Protests during the National Anthem in London sunk the team to a new low with some of their fans in late September— followed by a 44-7 loss to the Jaguars, only made things seem worse.

However, that was a long time ago. Ravens fans are still filling up M&T Bank Stadium to see their team as they make a playoff push. At 8-6, the Ravens still have an outside chance to make the postseason.

Head coach John Harbaugh has always been one to focus on controlling the things they can control. That being said, the goal is simple. Win their last two games, which come against the Indianapolis Colts and Cincinnati Bengals at home, then let the rest figure itself out.

Harbaugh is looking forward to playing in front of the home crowd.

"We're looking forward to the next two games. We're looking forward to our crowd. We've only had six [games] at home so far. We've had eight on the road already," Harbaugh said on Monday, December 18, 2017. "We're hoping we play our best football on the last two games of the season. We're going to need to play our best football to accomplish what we're trying to accomplish. We love for our crowd to be at their best, too. Be excited, and make it a really tough environment to play in for our opponents."



Ravens head coach John Harbaugh greets fans after a team win at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore during the 2017 NFL season.

Courtesy Photo/NFL.com

The Buffalo Bills and the Tennessee Titans also hold 8-6 records. Having lost to the Titans in November, Baltimore would lose a tiebreaker to Tennessee if they finish with the same record.

The Titans finish up the season with tough games against the Rams and Jaguars in Tennessee. Both games will be difficult to win.

Tennessee is ahead of Baltimore and Buffalo based on conference record. The Titans' 7-4 is better than the Bills' and the Ravens' 6-4 records. The Bills travel to New England to play that Patriots this week and finish up with a game against

the Dolphins in Miami. Buffalo is currently the No. 6 seed in the AFC playoffs, just ahead of the Ravens.

Buffalo is ahead of Baltimore based on the strength of victory (.409 to the Ravens' .321). So as of now, the Ravens are on the outside looking in.

The Los Angeles Chargers are also in the mix. They lost to the Kansas City Chiefs in Week 15 and now hold a 7-7 record. After a rough start, rookie head coach Anthony Lynn has helped the Chargers rebound from a 0-4 record. They finish the season with a road game in New York against the Jets before returning home to host the Raiders. The Chargers have to win and hope that the Ravens or Titans lose at least one game if they want to get a wild card slot.

To win the AFC West Division, the Chargers need the Chiefs to lose twice. That's unlikely as the Chiefs host the Dolphins this week and travel to Denver to face the Broncos in the season finale.

The AFC playoff seeds are almost set. There is still hope for Ravens fans. A playoff appearance would mean a return to the postseason for the first time since 2014.

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Local designer launches 'Knock Out Kidney Disease' bracelet collection

Lutherville, Md.— New Vintage by Sam, a Baltimore-based accessory and apparel brand has “returned to the ring” with a powerful combination of style and philanthropy.

Fusing vintage, art and modern design, the company has recently launched its second Knock Out Kidney Disease (KOKD) collection of bracelets with “purpose-filled” trinkets to benefit the National Kidney Foundation Serving Maryland and Delaware.

“Kidney disease is a year-round devastating epidemic that impacts 30 million people everyday, including one in nine Marylanders and 2,175 Delawareans on dialysis,” said Pattie Dash, executive director of the National Kidney Foundation Serving Maryland and Delaware. “We are so appreciative of the KOKD collection for spotlighting kidney health awareness in an artistic way.”

Designed and handcrafted locally, the collection mixes the Foundation’s signature orange color with metal bits, natural agate, quartzite, hematite and crystal detail “to help shine light on

kidney health awareness.”

“These bracelets are two gifts in one for just in time for the holidays and the perfect color combination for any Baltimore Orioles fan,” Dash added. “It’s a beautiful keepsake for your loved one and the purchase benefits the patients we serve who are living with kidney disease.”

Each special trinket possesses its own unique design, staying true to the New Vintage by Sam culture of individuality, while each complementary combination of beads and charms has its own meaning and healing properties consistent with the theme of holistic well-being. “Each bracelet in the KOKD collection is simple, yet so intricate and detailed with various materials, personality accents and healing minerals to encourage peace and love energy while telling a colorful story,” Smith said. “It is a privilege to create this conscious collection of trinkets geared to helping spread awareness about kidney disease.”

The “mompreneur” and fashion artisan from Randallstown, wants “to utilize her



creativity to leave a lasting impression on her community and individuals alike.”

Introduced to fashion and design at an early age, Smith taught herself how to draw and create wearable art. In high school, she participated in several local fashion shows and productions as both a designer and model.

While attending Morgan State University, Smith continued to hone her design skills while pursuing a degree in Health Education. Shortly after graduating in

2007, she created New Vintage by Sam.

Smith strives to align her artistry with philanthropy and this particular cause is personal as her father has diabetes, a condition that often leads to kidney disease and her grandmother had kidney failure. With that in mind, 20 percent of the proceeds from each KOKD sale will be donated to the Foundation. The collection is currently available online at <http://www.newvintagebysam.com/product/kokd-collection> and www.kidneymd.org.



Renard Gardner's company, Vessel Electric, is growing thanks to BUILD College, a BLocal program designed to help local minority- and women-owned construction businesses excel.

For a Stronger Baltimore

BLocal is a commitment by 27 Baltimore-area businesses to leverage their collective influence to help strengthen the city and create opportunities for Baltimoreans. In the initiative’s first year, BLocal partners, led by Johns Hopkins University and Health System and BGE, invested at least \$86.1 million through their construction and purchasing activity supporting local and diverse businesses.

Find out more about our first-year progress at blocalbaltimore.org.



BUSINESSES PARTNERING
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Bowie State University alumnus makes Forbes '30 Under 30' list

By Andrea Blackstone

Bowie State University (BSU) alumnus, Dior Ginyard, was recently named to Forbes magazine's '30 Under 30' list in the sports category for 2018. The prestigious list spotlights 600 young innovators, leaders and entrepreneurs across 20 categories where 30 honorees are selected in each of them.

Forbes reported that over 15,000 online submissions were received. The under four percent acceptance rate of nominees who are under thirty years old is a reminder that Ginyard is regarded as one of the best sports leaders in the country.

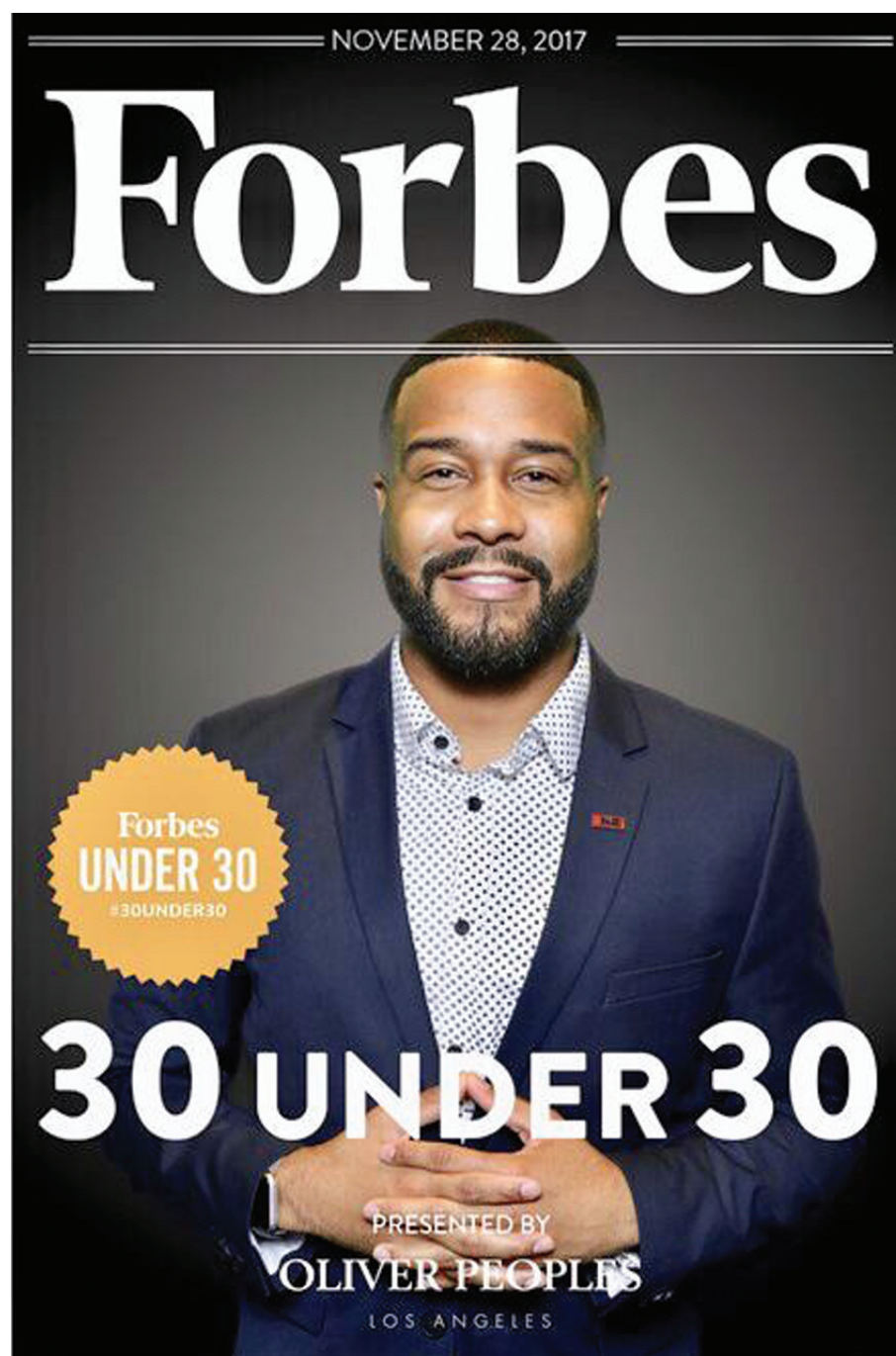
Ginyard, 29, currently assists NFL players to prepare for life after football. The father of one, works as a Player Manager for the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA). He assists NFL players as they transition through and beyond the NFL. Among his specific duties, Ginyard encourages the players to earn their degree, pursue secondary education, or trade school.

After receiving recognition by Forbes, in the last year of his twenties, Ginyard remarked that he now feels like a chip is off his shoulder.

"I've been carrying this burden of trying to... reach this plateau of like success... or I defeated the odds," Ginyard said. "I think it's like putting a bow tie on everything that I've been able to accomplish over the past 10 years."

Behind the scenes, the Prince George's County resident who was raised by a single mother of three children has overcome many adversities. Regina Toler recalled that her highly accomplished son was once a curious, busy kid who was "always on to the next thing." Toler says that keeping God in his life, teaching that whatever challenges came his way could be overcome, and knowing that there was a plan for him were some of the elements that helped her son cope with not having a father around for the majority of his life.

Ginyard is grounded and socially concerned. He is also a President's Volunteer Award Recipient, who was recognized for community service, in-



Dior Ginyard, was recently named to Forbes magazine's '30 Under 30' list in the sports category for 2018. Courtesy Photo

cluding: feeding the homeless and partnering with organizations during former President Barack Obama's administration. has

"I am swelling up with pride. A lot of people don't know that Dior had a brain injury, when he was in college, and for him to go on and to do this is just amaz-

ing to me. I am so proud of him. I am proud of him as a young black man, and I am proud of who he is inside, because he has always remained humble," Toler said, reflecting on her son's professional recognition and personal journey. "It's a miracle that he is here, actually."

A serious brain injury abruptly ended

Ginyard's dream of becoming a professional football player. When he was a freshman attending Frostburg State University, playing football without a helmet led to a cracked skull. After a period of rehabilitation, a bout of depression, transferring to BSU, and facing news that he could no longer play contact sports were among new realities Ginyard encountered.

Ginyard persevered and earned a bachelor's degree in public relations from Bowie State University, and went on to earn a master's degree in management marketing at University of Maryland, University College (UMUC).

Ginyard who faced issues linked to life after football at an early age ultimately found his way back to a sports environment by landing a job at NFLPA. Even though he didn't reach the level of competitiveness that professional athletes experience, he felt compelled to apply for a position at NFLPA, since the job responsibilities aligned with his experience and interests.

"Things came full circle," Ginyard said, upon reflection. "I can now help players deal with transitioning, because that's what I dealt with."

Making the Forbes list was never Ginyard's goal but one of the reasons why he is so elated about winning is because he beat the odds and defied societal stereotypes.

"My goal is to prove that you can have all of the variables and society would say, 'You're not going to be anything,' on top of going to an HBCU where you face those stereotypes, and making the list— and now I have a seat at the table with people that everybody would aspire to go to— and I have a voice now. So now, I feel like I can use this as a leverage," Ginyard said. "Also, if there was a kid out there that was in my situation, when I was younger, if there is a young woman out there that is going to Bowie, or [being] raised by a single mom, I would speak to her or speak to him and say, 'Hey, I did it. You can do it. It's going to take some work, but it is possible, and it's attainable.'"

Generation Hope Provides A Future for Teen Moms and Dads

Continued from page 1

“I ended up leaving my parents home— living place-to-place with my boyfriend, sometimes in his car in the high school parking lot, sometimes on people’s couches” she said. “I was pregnant and I was still trying to get to school every day. It was a really stressful and a difficult time. Right before I had my daughter, we moved into a small one bedroom apartment.”

While still a college freshman, Lewis split with her boyfriend and moved into a family housing apartment on campus where she lived for three years until she graduated.

She would later start Generation Hope and, since its start, the organization has helped provide more than \$400,000 in college tuition assistance and presented college-readiness workshops to more than 600 students.

Many of these students are minorities who are the first in their families to graduate college. Today, the organization supports 101 teens, or “scholars,” a number that continues to grow each year.

“Teen mothers and fathers come to our program having already made the decision that they want to go to college. They have already earned their high school diploma or GED and most of them have already applied and been accepted to college,” Lewis said. “So they have made the commitment already. The hard part is staying the course once they’re in college because challenges inevitably come as a young parent, whether it’s losing transportation to class or not



being able to afford childcare. We are helping them navigate those challenges and encouraging them to stay on track to their degree no matter what.”

In March 2015, Generation Hope’s board approved an ambitious strategic plan, which called for significant growth over three years. As a result, the organization will serve more than 100 teen parents in college across the region.

“Growing Generation Hope over the past seven years has definitely exceeded my expectations,” Lewis said.

“I didn’t have any seed money, office or employees back then, but I had an incredible group of people who believed in my vision, and more importantly, believed in the potential of teen parents,” she said. “Now, we have grown to a budget of more than \$1 million, we have an office in D.C., eight full-time employees, and we have helped 30 teen

parents earn college degrees through our program. It is incredible! It took a tremendous amount of hard work, and it has all been worth it.”

Despite the success, Lewis continues to seek more ways to help.

“We are looking to grow the program

in some really exciting ways over the next three years, and in the long term, we hope to explore the possibility of expanding to other cities across the United States.” she said.

For more information about Generation Hope, visit: www.supportgenerationhope.org

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STOP CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN



“Hope for All” lends helping hand to those in need

By Stacy M. Brown

“Hope for All,” a nonprofit with a mission to provide basic human necessities to families and individuals without sufficient economic resources, has served more than 2,000 families in its over 10-year existence.

The nonprofit serving Anne Arundel County, part of Baltimore City and the Appalachian region, has recorded a great response again this year, as both monetary and other donations have poured in.

“The need is the greatest it has ever been,” said Leo Zerhusen, who along with his wife Diane founded the organization.

“In each of our last three fiscal years, we have had a 40 percent increase,” Zerhusen said, noting that the organization started in his home and during the first six years, out of a small 10’ by 12’ office.

Today, Hope for All operates out of a 14,000-square-foot warehouse.

“As a family, we have always believed that we need to give back,” Zerhusen said. “We raised money for the Jerry Lewis telethon for two or three years; we did bike-a-thons for two children; raised funds for Habitat for Humanity and a few other groups.

“The biggest [effect on the couple] was doing a mission trip to Appalachia and seeing the plight of so many American families, especially the children.”

Leo and Diane Zerhusen started by distributing clothing, then toys and games, household linens and then furniture. “We still have outreach missions in Appalachia and we cover all of Anne Arundel County,” he said.

Among the programs offered by the nonprofit is “Turning Houses into Homes,” where they accept community donations to provide their clients a fresh start. They also offer a “Head to Toe” program where the organization provides thousands of Anne Arundel County public school children with well-fitting shoes and essential clothing. A clothing giveaway is also integral to the organization’s mission, according to Zerhusen.

“Hope for All was founded by educators who saw firsthand that students



“Hope for All,” a nonprofit with a mission to provide basic human necessities to families and individuals without sufficient economic resources, has served more than 2,000 families in its over 10-year existence. Courtesy Photo

lacking in basic needs do not have an equal opportunity for success,” he said. “New underwear and socks, basic athletic shoes, clothing for all season, and warm winter coats allow children to attend school, ready to learn. An integral part of our mission is our call to serve children,”

Zerhusen added that his organization also works with the Judy Center to serve populations in need.

“Our mission is to assist families, children, homeless, veterans, disabled, elderly and others in a Christian way who are not able to afford the basic necessities,” he said. “Over the years we have clothed over 20,000 individuals. We discriminate against no one for any reason. The exception would be someone involved in major illegal situations.

“Last year we distributed over \$440,000 in donated and purchased goods. This year it will be about \$550,000.00, if not more.”

Items the organization needs include dressers, end tables, night stands,

kitchen tables and chairs, upholstered furniture without pet hair, smoke, stains, rips, tares, fading, or broken parts; small desks, small bookcases, and there is a big need for lamps. No sleep sofas please!

“So many of our families have little if any overhead lighting. We buy all needed beds. We will spend about \$60,000 for beds and we collect good pots, pans, dishes, bakeware, kitchen utensils, flatware, small microwaves, toasters, toaster ovens, and good useable vacuum cleaners,” Zerhusen said. “We are always in need of new socks, underwear, and athletic shoes so children can attend P.E. Class. We collect new toiletry, hygiene and cleaning supplies.”

Anyone interested in learning how



Leo Zerhusen, and his wife Diane are founders of Hope for All.

they can support Hope for All, visit www.hopeforall.us or email: hopeforall72@gmail.com or call 410-766-0372.



*From the Management & Staff
of The Baltimore Times*

Governor, First Lady, Baltimore Mayor visit Helping Up Mission

Annapolis— Governor Larry Hogan and First Lady Yumi Hogan, along with Baltimore City Mayor Catherine Pugh, visited Helping Up Mission in Baltimore City on Tuesday, December 19, 2017, for a ribbon cutting celebrating the center's newly renovated commercial kitchen and dining hall.

The governor, first lady, and mayor also served the first meals from the refurbished kitchen, which included cucumber salad and traditional Korean pork bulgogi made from the first lady's recipes.

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) provided \$1.4 million through the Shelter and Transitional Housing Facilities Grant Program to support the substantial renovation of Helping Up Mission's shelter to accommodate for future growth. The kitchen and dining room are components of a larger campus that includes 210 emergency shelter beds for homeless adults in addition to other supportive service space. In total, Helping Up Mission provides housing, services, and nearly 1,200 meals daily to approximately 500 men who are homeless and battling alcoholism, drug addiction, or mental illness.



Giving Back, Linda's Legacy: Homeless Drive Seeking Volunteers and Donations



Volunteers with Giving Back, Linda's Legacy collect donations, as well as sort and prepare items to be handed out to shelters and the homeless in Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County. Courtesy Photo

Annapolis— Warm your soul this holiday season by helping Giving Back, Linda's Legacy's mission to bring warm clothes and other necessities to people in need and be a part of a volunteer experience for families and young adults that is meaningful, educational and fun.

Each Holiday Season for over the last 30 years ago, Linda Greenberg has delivered gloves, hats, thermal underwear and other essentials to homeless men, women and children in Baltimore City, and Baltimore and Anne Arundel County.

What started as a trunk-load and a prayer grew into a massive 27 U-Hauls filled truck delivered last year.

Thirty-one shelters were served in 2016, in addition to hundreds living on the streets. This year, you can help Giving Back, Linda's Legacy, with its mission by volunteering time or donating goods or money.

Volunteers (no experience necessary) are needed to help sort and pack donated goods at the Anne Arundel County Farmers Market on Riva Road from Tuesday, December 26 to Thurs-

day December 28, 2017, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. This is an excellent way for students to earn community service hours.

Also needed are volunteers to help with delivery runs on Friday, December 29, 2017. We will gather at the Annapolis Park N Ride on Riva Road starting at 8 a.m. and each group will caravan following two trucks to the designated shelter locations. Each group can visit two shelters, distributing goods and food, singing carols and enjoying fellowship.

Giving Back, Linda's Legacy will be collecting new/gently used clothing, all sizes, ages and both genders, shoes, baby items and diapers, bedding, sleeping bags, household cleaning supplies, non-perishable food items and toiletries. You may bring them to the Annapolis Farmers Market on Riva Road from December 26 to December 28.

If you are unable to volunteer or shop, financial donations are always appreciated for use in filling backpacks with essentials. All donations are tax deductible. Please mail donations to Post Office Box 461, Severna Park, MD 21146.

Film Review:

Star Wars: The Last Jedi

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Newswire Film Critic

Wow! This is the event movie of the year. So much action— so much haunting drama and raw emotion. And it doesn't just build to one climax; it crescendos from one climax, to the next and the next, ratcheting up the tension every time. Action/adventure fans will be dancing in the aisles.

There is something biblical about “Star Wars: The Last Jedi.” There's the Old Testament: Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher), Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) and Chewbacca (Peter Mayhew); the New Testament: Rey (Daisy Ridley), Finn (John Boyega) and Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac); Devils: Supreme Leader Snoke (Andy Serkis), General Hux (Domhnall Gleeson) and Kylo Ren (Adam Driver); there's temptation; a hunt for the “Promised Land”; and a desperate escape from the wicked.

On a desolate, mountainous isle, the young warrior Rey begs the aged Luke Skywalker for guidance and help for The Resistance's fighters.

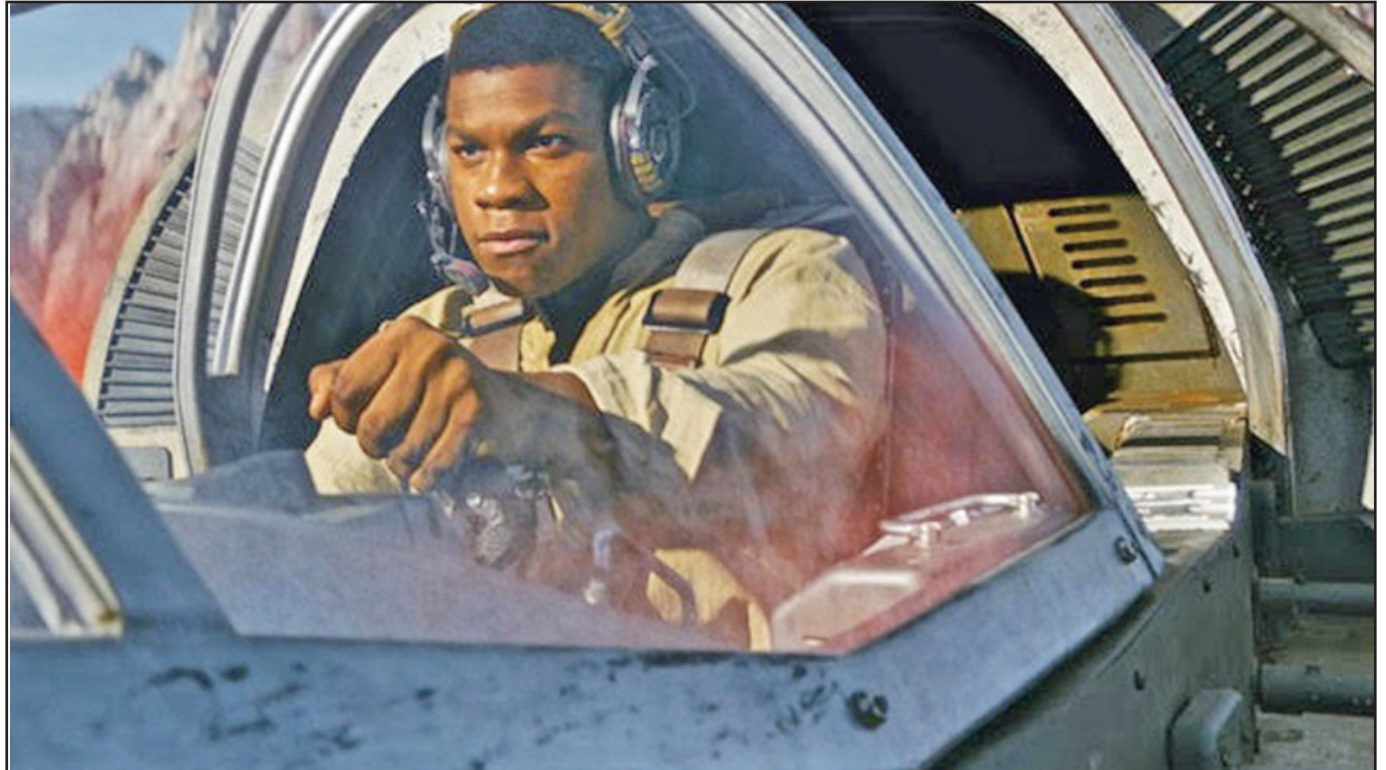
“We need you. We need the Jedi order back. We need Luke Skywalker,” pleads Rey.

She delivers that message from Princess Leia, but the old Jedi is not moved. Meanwhile in outer space, the Resistance is under attack by the First Order and trying to evade them. Finn and Poe go rogue to save the day. Snoke, Hux and Ren are out to crush the rebels.

The very heady, ethereal script by writer/director Rian Johnson (“Looper”) unearths many questions and is stingy with the answers.

Your curiosity will drive you crazy. Only when you are stumped and at wit's end will you find closure. Just know that the wait is worth it.

The editing by Bob Ducsay (“Looper”) and Johnson's inventive direction, measure the drama, action and rescue attempts out in a rhythm that is almost spiritual, like the rhythm of life. Help comes when it is preordained. Characters enter, they embark on divergent



NNPA Newswire Film Critic Dwight Brown says that “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” is the event movie of the year and it gets four and a half of five stars from him. (Above) John Boyega plays Finn in “Star Wars: The Last Jedi.”

Photo Credit: Lucasfilm

paths and head out on enthralling missions. Scenes flow smoothly and have a similar feel, unlike 2015's “Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” when energizing action sequences butted up against too many stagnant moments.

There are some slower passages, but they are never boring. Use these opportunities to gather your thoughts, digest what you've seen and take a deep breath. You will need the rest. Your attention will be overpowered by a force that doesn't let you decompress, substantially, for two hours and 32 minutes.

There are moments when you might think, “This is so overwrought. So melodramatic.” Then a glib line is rendered or a wacky scene (wide-eyed urchins screeching) breaks the spell. You laugh for a moment or smirk. Then you jump back into the conflict again, just as a laser slices a villain in half, as a courageous fighter goes down in flames or as two individuals have an intimate telepathic conversation even though they

are eons away from each other.

The script, direction and acting are excellent. The imagery is even better. Some visions will be engraved on your pupils forever. Scenes in Snoke's throne room with blood red walls, warriors in similarly colored uniforms and his gold brocade robe (designed by Michael Kaplan, “Blade Runner”) are indelible. Rickety old fighter planes sand surfing over white salty terrain, leaving a trail of poinsettia red gashes and the sight of galloping alien horse-like creatures will also stay with you. The work by art directors Andrew Bennett and Neal Callow, production designer Rick Heinrichs and cinematographer Steve Yedlin is exquisite. These are the kind of visuals you see in a Yimou Zhang art film (like his “Hero” or “Raise the Red Lantern”), not in an action/adventure movie.

Ridley, Boyega, Isaac and Driver provide an unbridled energy. Yet, it's the heavyweights, the late Carrie Fisher and gray-haired Mark Hamill, who lend a

gravitas that stabilizes this fantasy in an altered reality that's become the heart of the Star Wars saga. There is a mystical presence that is almost cleansing. That essence has endeared this venerable space opera to audiences for 40 years.

For the Star Wars novice, this chapter will be a great introduction. It's easy enough to distinguish the protagonists from the antagonists and the storylines are easy to track, too. For Star Wars aficionados, this entry is one of the most galvanizing, from beginning to end. What an Odyssey. What a crowd pleaser. Wow!

Dwight Brown is a film critic and travel writer. As a film critic, he regularly attends international film festivals including Cannes, Sundance, Toronto and the American Black Film Festival. For more movie reviews by Dwight Brown, visit: DwightBrownInk.com.

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CITY OF BALTIMORE
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NOTICE OF LETTING

Sealed Bids or Proposals, in duplicate, addressed to the Board of Estimates of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore and marked for **GS 16804 – Eastern Clinic Renovations on 1200 E. Fayette** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204, City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M. on **Wednesday, February 14, 2018**. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. The bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates in Room 215, City Hall at Noon.

The Contract Documents may be examined, without charge, in Room 6 located on the first floor of the Abel Wolman Municipal Building, 200 Holliday Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202 as of **Friday, December 22, 2017** and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **\$100.00**.

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

All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be pre-qualified by the City of Baltimore Boards and Commissions. Interested contractors should call 410 396-6883 or contact the Office of Boards and Commissions at 4 South Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. **If a bid is submitted by a Joint Venture (“JV”), then in that event, the documents that establish the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes.** The Pre-qualification Category required for bidding on this project is **E13004 – Rehabilitation of Structures**.

The Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$1,000,000.01 to \$2,000,000.00** A “Pre-Bidding information” session will be conducted at **The Site: 1200 E. Fayette St, Baltimore MD 21202 on Tuesday, January 16, 2018 at 10:00 A.M.**

Principal Items of work for this project are:

- 1. General Requirements**
- 2. Interior Renovations**
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Report reveals racial barriers prevent children of color and immigrant children from reaching potential

By *Stacy M. Brown*

Between 2013 to 2014, just 49 percent of Latino children age three to five in Maryland were enrolled in nursery school, pre-school and kindergarten while the percentage was 63 percent for African-Americans and 65 percent for white children, according to a new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

“These are percentages that should be improved because we know that quality education is often a detriment of success as an adult,” said Nonso Umunna, advocacy director for the Baltimore-based Advocates for Children and Youth, a nonprofit that seeks to improve the lives and experiences of Maryland’s children through policy change and program improvement. “There has to be effort made to ensure that these children are enrolled in order to ensure that they’re active and productive contributors which in turn will benefit the state.”

The report, titled “Race for Results,” measured children’s progress in key milestones across racial and ethnic groups and based on an index using composite scores on a scale of one to 1,000 for comparison.

While there has been some progress, children of color continue to struggle, particularly in areas of economic opportunities and education, the report noted.

Across the country, 18 million youth are children of immigrants or immigrants themselves. Of those, 88 percent are U.S. citizens and 84 percent are children of color.

Statewide, 18 percent of African-American fourth graders are proficient in reading, with the figure at 21 percent among Hispanic children.

Among Maryland’s eighth-graders, 14 percent of African-Americans and 24 percent of Hispanics are proficient at math.

In Maryland, 86 percent of young adults between ages 19 and 26 were either working or going to school. This segment includes those young adults who are refugees, immigrants and those under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

Overall, the report revealed persistent



challenges in opportunities for success and well being hindering children of color and kids living in immigrant families, especially African-American, Latino and American Indian kids. However, Umunna says there are solutions.

“Increasing economic opportunity for all parents, especially for those [who] need additional support, would ensure that they are able to provide for their children, and helps reduce the stress that is often a consequence of financial instability which in turn can affect a child’s mental health and well-being,” he said. “Parents should be made aware of the public assistance programs such as tax credits, food assistance, children’s health insurance and other programs. Also, making earned sick and safe leave a state law, would enable parents to take the time they need to care for their health and that of their children and not have to choose between their job or their family,” Umunna said.

The current immigration debate and climate has complicated matters as there are over 8,000 active DACA recipients in Maryland and of those 45 percent are students with 23 percent in high school and a similar percentage in college.

“The current administration’s DACA decision means that most of these immigrant youth are in limbo and can face the possibility of being separated from the families, losing their jobs and not com-

pleting their education,” Umunna said. “This is not just a possible loss for them but also for the state and city which would benefit from their education and job skills.”

Baltimore and other cities have been identified as locations where immigrant families are welcomed and protected. Umunna says it’s important for immigrant children and their families to feel that they are in a safe and stress-free environment.

“This means that parents can be able to send their children to school without fearing apprehension by Immigration and Custom Enforcement agents who don’t have special permission or warrant and children can come home knowing their parents will be there when they return,” he said.

Further, steps should be taken to address the early care and education needs of children in immigrant families in Baltimore and Maryland, according to Umunna.

“This must include addressing the language and cultural barriers that often hinder immigrant children from progressing and there has to be effort made to hire culturally competent teachers and bilingual teachers to help these children feel welcomed and able to adapt in the educational system,” he said.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.aecf.org/resources/2017-race-for-result>.

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