

THE BALTIMORE TIMES

Vol. 32 No. 24

April 13 - 19, 2018

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication

Baltimore's 'Little Big Shot' Continues to Help Veterans



Tyler Stallings, age 6, shops for underclothes and other clothing items for female and male homeless veterans, in preparation for a delivery to the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training (MCVET). Tyler raised thousands of dollars through his GoFundMe campaign to purchase a large supply of spring items and toiletries, which he selected from the Baltimore-based nonprofit's wish list. After appearing on NBC's "Little Big Shots," which is hosted by Steve Harvey, Tyler purchased and packed everything from new shirts and pants to soap, washcloths, lotion, razors, shaving cream, toothbrushes and toothpaste. Since Tyler often donates to MCVET, some veterans who utilize services there appeared in Tyler's "Little Big Shots" segment. When the show aired on March 25, 2018 and April 1, 2018, the public was able to see the home schooled first grader receive a Little Big Shots Humanitarian Award for Season 3, because of his ongoing support of American veterans in need. Many viewers responded by helping Tyler by donating funds to help MCVET and to thank veterans through Tyler's Give Back to Veterans fundraiser. Tyler has been thanking America's heroes with special gifts, raising awareness and providing critical items for homeless veterans, since he was four years old. (See article on page 11) Courtesy Photo/Andrea Blackstone

Driving + Inexperience + Texting = Trouble

By Richard Lichenstein, MD

This article is part of the #STCPreventionMatters campaign from the University of Maryland Medical Center. For more information about the campaign and the Center for Injury Prevention and Policy, visit: umm.edu/PreventionMatters.

Distracted driving is a growing problem with deadly consequences. In 2015 in the United States, almost 3,500 people were killed and 400,000 injured in car crashes involving distracted drivers.

We live in a society that is more and more connected with social media. It is easy to use—and addictive. The connection feels essential—and drivers often become anxious if they receive a text and do not see it or respond immediately. This adds to other distractions such as eating, changing the station on the radio, looking at GPS, or anything that takes your eyes from the road or your mind from driving. The problem is even worse for young drivers who are avid users of social media but are also inexperienced drivers who are more prone to crashes.

Simply put, distracted driving is driving while doing any another activity that takes your attention away from driving, including:

- Visual: taking your eyes off the road
- Manual: removing hands from the steering wheel
- Cognitive: taking your mind off driving

A distraction like texting is one of the most risky situations since it involves these three major types of distraction.

Young Adult Brains Not Fully Developed— One might think that doing



other tasks while operating a vehicle can be as simple as walking and chewing gum at the same time. But driving safely takes all of our attention when we are behind the wheel. A typical drive may involve paying attention to the road and cars ahead, recognizing changes in light and weather, interpreting what the cars to your side or ahead are doing, and planning and making appropriate reactions when any of these factors change.

From a developmental standpoint, the brain is not fully developed in people until they reach their mid- to late-20s, putting young drivers at particularly high risk. Young drivers are already inexperienced with all of the skills

required for driving, including recognizing and handling different types of situations on the road. Additionally, teens are more likely to participate in risk-taking behavior, possibly setting the stage for disaster.

Consider how harmless it may seem to look down for ‘just a second’ at a text while driving. Studies show that the second is actually more like five seconds, and that at 55 miles per hour, the car is traveling the length of a football field—a distance where anything can happen.

Even when eyes are off the road for a few seconds and the car is travelling at slower speeds, the unexpected can occur with serious consequences.

The Multitasking Myth— Although many people are confident in doing several things at once, multitasking is a myth when it comes to driving. Even if a driver’s eyes are on the road, there may be “inattentive blindness” from the distractions of listening to music or a podcast, or attending to a passenger’s comments. Studies show that the entire road may not be processed by the brain in these situations and important cues to prevent crashes may be missed.

Serious Penalties— In Maryland, there are laws against distracted driving and using hand-held cell phones while behind the wheel. If you are found using a cell phone and/or looking down to text, you can get a ticket that carries an \$83 fine for using the phone and an additional \$70 fine specifically for texting. A distracted driving crash will also cost you three points on your license, and if that crash results in a fatality, you can be fined up to \$5,000 and sentenced to one year in prison (Jake’s Law).

What Parents Can Do— Although laws are helpful, the best thing parents can do is model good behavior and put away their phone. The primary objective is to get to your destination safely. Parents should have a meaningful conversation with their teen about the dangers of distracted driving. Research has shown that parents are the most important influence on a teen’s driving behavior.

Richard Lichenstein, MD, is a professor of pediatrics at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, a pediatric emergency physician at the University of Maryland Medical Children’s Hospital, chair of the Teen Safe Driving Coalition in Maryland and chair of the State Child Fatality Review Team.

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

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

How High Schoolers Can Boost American Business

By JD Hoye

Finding skilled workers is an ongoing challenge for American businesses. Media reports tend to focus on the lack of science, tech, and math skills but more than four in 10 business executives complain that too many job applicants lack "soft skills" like creativity, teamwork, and communication. Indeed, a full half of the nation's hiring managers say the college graduates they meet are short on "critical thinking and problem solving" skills and the ability to pay adequate "attention to detail."

Closing this soft skills gap is critical. Fortunately, business leaders don't have to wait on schools or colleges to step in—they can easily take action on their own.

It all starts at the local high school. With well-designed internship programs, businesses can help young people acquire the full range of skills they need to be successful throughout their lives.

While many employers have internship programs for college students and recent graduates, smart companies will get a head start on building a workforce by identifying and developing even younger talent.

Employers who have already opened their door to high school interns have witnessed the contributions that young people bring to their businesses from day one. A recent survey found that 45 percent of those who offer internships to high schools were "very likely" or "completely likely" to extend full-time job offers to their former interns.

As David Bilodeau, a senior member of the technical staff of Verizon, explains: "[Students] don't have any preconceived notions of what you can and can't do, and that's invaluable." He estimates that Verizon makes a "tenfold" return on its investment in interns. One in four business leaders say they get fresh ideas from their high school interns.

I know from personal experience what high school interns bring to business. The organization I lead, NAF, helps high school students qualify for and obtain intern slots at top companies like Verizon, Capital One, and Marriott.

Throw away any pre-conceived notions of interns making coffee; our students work in robotics, plan events, and devise cost-cutting strategies. By the time they finish their internships, they have enough confidence to run social media campaigns, develop business plans, and cold-call sales leads. That's value added for companies—and marketable skills for student resumes.

Reaching out to high schoolers also offers tremendous potential in an area of perennial concern for employers: diversity. Due to structural barriers, too many young people of color never make it to college or leave before they finish. A New York University study found that over "60 percent of the racial gap in college completion rates can be attributed to factors that occur before college." Put simply, companies that look only to college students and grads put themselves at a diversity disadvantage.

These internships benefit students too, of course. Urban Alliance's High School Internship Program provides career training, internships and mentorship to at-risk students in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Northern Virginia, and Chicago. An internal assessment found that completion of an internship correlated with increased rates of college attendance for young men.

And whether college-bound or not, students who have completed a high school internship programs enjoy starting wages 11 percent higher than the average for students who have not been interns.

Companies across the country can play an active role in shaping the talent pipeline and can be confident in knowing that the solution is closer than they realize—in local high schools with perfect hires.

JD Hoye is the president of the National Academy Foundation (NAF).



Commentary

A Dangerous Game of Chicken

By Mel Gurtov

As the "tit-for-tat" trade fight between the US and China escalates, Donald Trump is likely to find that he doesn't "know China" the way he once thought. When he said that during the presidential campaign, he based his understanding of China on one thing: the high rent in Trump Tower that he had exacted from a Chinese bank. Today, he may still assume he can win a game of chicken by upping the ante until the Chinese eventually fold.

However, Trump and his crew don't understand Chinese thinking. The Chinese leadership does not respond well to being bullied, least of all now that they have a means of fighting back. China's commerce ministry said as much in a statement right out of Chairman Mao's playbook. Mao had often said when dealing with "U.S. imperialism": "We will not attack unless we are attacked," Mao often said. "But if we are attacked, we will certainly counterattack."

A ministry spokesman said on April 6, 2018: "The Chinese way of doing things

is like this: We do not pick a fight, but if someone does pick a fight, we will fight resolutely. The Chinese have always been very serious in handling these matters. We mean what we say." And the commerce ministry added in a formal statement: "On the issue of Sino-U.S. trade, the Chinese position has been made very clear. We do not want to fight, but we are not afraid to fight a trade war."

Trump and other U.S. officials are saying the U.S. isn't engaged in a trade war with China. But China's press is already using that term. Perhaps there won't be a trade war; Trump may simply be employing his usual bluster to force more favorable terms of trade. He risks stepping over the line, however.

Trump needs to understand that the U.S. no longer faces the weak China of Mao's time. They mean what they say, and they have the resources to fight back.

This is a time like no other when negotiating differences is important. Playing chicken is a fool's game, especially when the U.S. and China need one another on important international issues, starting with North Korea.

Mel Gurtov, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Portland State University.

Police accountability and qualified immunity

By Laura Finley

The family of Stephon Clark, a 22-year-old unarmed black man who was shot by Sacramento police, has filed a lawsuit in federal court, denouncing his death as yet one more police-perpetrated murder. The officers were responding to complaints about a car prowler when they fired 20 shots in fewer than five seconds at Clark. Eight bullets struck him, primarily in the back, raising tremendous doubt about the officers' claims that he was a threat.

The autopsy indicates that Clark lived for three to ten minutes after being shot, which brings up additional concerns about the six minutes it took for him to receive medical treatment. While the case is a horrific but not surprising example of police shooting first and asking questions later—or more accurately, creating narratives later, it is far from guaranteed that the family will receive any kind of recompense from the officers who killed him.

Police have what is known as qualified immunity, which means it is very diffi-

cult to win lawsuits against them. The idea of qualified immunity makes a certain sense, as it intended to ensure that police do not have to worry about frivolous lawsuits, but in the last several decades the Supreme Court has expanded its protections so dramatically it is, as Justice Sonia Sotomayor has said, a license to kill and an “absolute shield for law enforcement officers.”

ing her seems quite clear.

The Civil Rights Act of 1871, 42 U.S.C. §1983 is a judicial remedy to individuals who suffer deprivations of their constitutional rights. An exception is qualified immunity, which shields state and local law officers from personal financial liability if they acted in an objectively reasonable manner and did not violate clearly established fed-

cases resulted in summary reversals, meaning the Court did not even hold a briefing or conduct oral arguments.

The Supreme Court has used qualified immunity to deny damages to an eighth-grade girl who was strip-searched by school officials who thought she had a rogue ibuprofen pill. It denied damages to a man who was held in a maximum-security prison for 16 days and on supervised release for 14 months, without cause for arrest or intent to use him as a material witness. In another case qualified immunity protected officers who engaged in a clearly unconstitutional no-knock home raid. In all these cases, the court stressed that, while the Constitution had indeed been violated, the government officer could not be held liable.

Ending police abuse is going to take continued vigilance and a multi-faceted approach. But one important way to hold police accountable is for citizens to be able to bring and win civil suits. Today, the playing field for doing so is so deeply tilted toward protecting police that there is no semblance of accountability in the legal realm. Congress can and should remove the “clearly established” interpretation of qualified immunity, at a minimum. Police officers cannot continue to be given free rein to harass, assault, wound and kill simply because others before them have gotten away with it.

Laura Finley, Ph.D., teaches in the Barry University Department of Sociology & Criminology and is syndicated by PeaceVoice.

“The Supreme Court has used qualified immunity to deny damages to an eighth-grade girl who was strip-searched by school officials who thought she had a rogue ibuprofen pill. It denied damages to a man who was held in a maximum-security prison for 16 days and on supervised release for 14 months, without cause for arrest or intent to use him as a material witness.”

Just this week the Supreme Court ruled on another qualified immunity case, reversing a lower court's denial of immunity in a case in which an officer shot a woman four times who was not posing a threat to anyone in her yard. Despite her unthreatening behavior toward the officers and her roommate, Sharon Chadwick, who was there, and the account from another officer on site who said he was still trying to use verbal commands to get Hughes to drop the knife, the Court relied on its usual logic to say that no lawsuit could continue. At least in this case Hughes survived, but that Officer Kisela acted rashly in shoot-

eral law. In an odd piece of what seems little more than literary wrangling, the Court has determined that officers can act unconstitutionally but not violate established constitutional rights, as it is on plaintiff's to show those “clearly established” rights through, guess what? Previous court decisions. If the Court is unwilling to ever rule that constitutional rights are violated in these excessive force cases, then no one can ever document those decisions to build a case. The Court has not ruled in favor of the plaintiff in more than a decade, despite hearing more than 18 cases related to qualified immunity. More than one-third of the

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D.C. museum promotes 'First Amendment' rights

By Timothy Cox

Nestled neatly along historic Pennsylvania Avenue in our nation's capital is a contemporarily-designed facility known as the Newseum. The structure stands as one of the District of Columbia's more uniquely-designed museums.

According to Sonya Gavankar, Newseum Director of Public Relations, the mission of the Newseum is "to increase public understanding and the importance of a free press and the First Amendment."

According to the U.S. Bill of Rights, there are currently 27 amendments and the First Amendment is defined as "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

In other words, this law provides freedom of speech and freedom of the press for American citizens.

With that in mind, the Newseum concept was created to "help visitors understand their First Amendment rights and have a better understanding of the importance of investigative journalism," according to Gavankar.

Notably, it was Al Neuharth who conceived the idea of creating the Newseum. He was also the founder of the Gannett-owned national newspaper, USA Today.

Neuharth first founded the Freedom Forum, which is principal financier of Newseum and the Newseum Institute.



The Newseum is located at 555 Pennsylvania Avenue between the Capitol Building and the White House in Washington, D.C. The mission of the Newseum is "to increase public understanding and the importance of a free press and the First Amendment."

Photo Credit: Maria Bryk/The Newseum

Fittingly, the Freedom Forum was established on July 4, 1991. Neuharth died in 2013. He was 89.

The Freedom Forum remains dedicated to a free press, free speech and free spirit and is a nonpartisan foundation that champions the First Amendment, according to the Newseum's website.

The Newseum is a very interactive museum, with seven levels including 15 galleries and 15 theaters. Exhibits include the 9/11 Gallery, which displays the broadcast antennae from the top of the World Trade Center; and a Pulitzer Prize Photographs Gallery, featuring

photographs from every Pulitzer Prize-winning entry dating back to 1942.

Currently the facility is paying photographic homage to the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., which occurred April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee.

Gavankar enthusiastically suggests that people of all ages visit the facility. She encourages tours by church groups, social organizations, senior citizen groups and educators who sponsor school field trips to visit the downtown D.C. building located at 555 Pennsylvania Avenue.

On April 11, 2018, the Newseum celebrated its 10th anniversary in its current location. Previously, the facility was located in Arlington, Virginia.

"We needed a larger footprint," said Gavankar. "The location between the Capitol and the White House is a perfect place to discuss the First Amendment."

The Newseum is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, about the Newseum, call: 202-292-6100 or visit: www.newseum.org.

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AACC employee recognized for leadership and service

Honored by American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

Arnold, Md.— Cassandra Moore, Assistant Director of Admissions and Enrollment Development at Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) was recognized with the 2018 Thomas A. Bliger award recently.

Given by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), the award recognizes members who exemplify leadership and service within the organization.

Moore, who has been with Anne Arundel Community College for 15 years, said receiving the honor is a reflection of the college.

“I’m humbled and grateful for this honor,” she said. “I also want to thank the admissions office staff and colleagues who I work with who work really hard to ensure that we assist every student at this college. This is a hard working group!”

Moore says her participation in AACRAO also has broadened her understanding of the profession and how people conduct the business of admissions and enrollment at other colleges.

Moore has worked across every collegiate level of



*Cassandra Moore, Assistant Director
Admissions and Enrollment Development
Anne Arundel Community College*
Courtesy Photo

admissions, including undergraduate, graduate and community colleges, and is a strong proponent of empowering first-generation students. As part of the Integrated Community Stakeholders Team at Northeast High School in Pasadena, Moore offers informational presentations on college readiness for students and their parents.

“Cassandra does extraordinary work, particularly with the (parents and students at) Northeast High School where she does creative presentations. Her presentations are her trademark at AACC,” said Thomas McGinn, director of Admissions and Enrollment. “This award is a testament to her work ethic and dedication to higher education. Cassandra always jumps with both feet in no matter what she takes on.”

Also, Moore is a 2016 recipient of A Tribute to Women of Color Service to Youth award, the 2015 recipient of the Minority Access, Incorporated Role Model Award for Recruitment and the 2012 winner of the Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce Education in Excellence Award.

She received her AACRAO award at the group’s 104th annual meeting in Orlando, Florida in March.

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Live the life you love!

By Nikki Abraham,
Nucleus Team Member
Positively Caviar, Inc.

“Love the Life You Live, Live the Life You Love” is a quote by Bob Marley that means more to me today than it ever has.

It’s been almost five years since my father passed away, and 11 days since I lost my grandfather. I won’t say it gets easier because the pain of physically not having both of these men in my life is unbearable. After attending both funeral services, I felt a spirit of tranquility simply because of the stories told on their behalf by strangers and loved ones exemplified the kind of men they were and proved that their duties here on earth were fulfilled.

This Bob Marley quote has been going through my mind a lot over this past week as my family and I mourned the loss, and celebrated the life, of my grandfather. When the physical body is gone you are left with the memories to cherish. I now understand that I have my angels watching over me and my number one goal is to make them proud.

While the loss of a loved one is always devastating it should also ignite a fire under you motivating you to live your best life.

Start thinking about the legacy you want to leave on earth. If you were gone tomorrow, what do you want people to say about you? What kind of person will they say you were? What kind of life will they say you lived? These are all thoughts that should cross your mind on a daily basis.

Life is short so, don’t waste your time not fulfilling your destiny. Here are a few factors to keep in mind when it comes to living your best life:

Change your attitude: A pessimistic view can alter your overall outlook on any and every situation. It’s so very important to stay positive each and every day of your life. I understand this may be difficult at times but it’s so important to see the bright side in every situation and encourage yourself. Keep your inner peace, recite positive affirmations and push yourself to reach your goals. Perception is everything; the way you perceive things, the way you see things, is ultimately the way things will play out in your life.

Fill your circle with positivity: Surround yourself with positive people who lift you up. You are a product of your environment therefore; you should always surround yourself with the best.

Be picky about who you keep around



Nikki Abraham,
Nucleus Team Member
Positively Caviar, Inc.
Courtesy Photo

you because people can either inspire or drain you. Find the people that push you, challenge you, make you laugh, make you better, and make you happy.

Do what you love: What sets your

soul on fire? If you are not feeling content or fulfilled, then it’s time to make a change. You were put on this earth with a purpose and your ultimate goal should always be to live your best life. Always push yourself to make your loved ones and yourself proud. Never settle for what is not destined for you and don’t allow the cards you’re dealt to determine where you end up. Your legacy is that important.

Losing someone will remind you just how short life is. You only have one life to live— what will your legacy be?

Positively Caviar, Inc. is non-profit organization focused on intensifying the message of positivity and optimism. Each month, a member of The Nucleus Team writes a column focused on mental and physical health tips, scientific studies, nutrition facts and stories that are positive in nature to support a purposeful and positive lifestyle. To learn more about the organization, The Nucleus Team or how you join our positive movement, visit: staybasedandpositive.com.

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- Light Street Branch Library (1251 Light Street Baltimore, MD 21230)
- Cherry Hill Branch Library (606 Cherry Hill Road Baltimore, MD 21225)
- Washington Village Branch Library (856 Washington Blvd, Baltimore, MD 21230)
- Baltimore Metropolitan Council of Governments (1500 Whetstone Way, Suite 300 Baltimore, MD 21230)

The EA also can be viewed by appointment at the MDTA (Melissa Bogdan at 410-537-5675) and Baltimore City DOT offices (Nikia Mack at 443-984-4094).

For more project information contact Melissa Bogdan at 410-537-5675.

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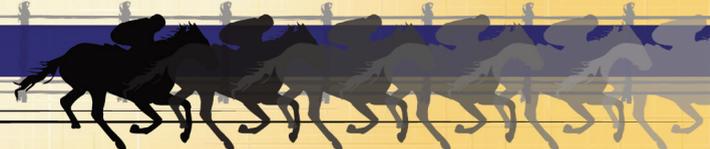
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'The Path to Wealth'

Millionaire May McCarthy Shares Spiritual Practices for Success

By Tiffany Christina

What if you could live from financial overflow instead of from paycheck to paycheck? What if you discovered a way to live comfortably within your means and pay all your bills on time? What if you could check something off your bucket list and pay Peter and Paul every 30 days? What if the weight of all your financial burdens, or aspirations, could be lifted with a shift in your perspective?

In her book, *The Path to Wealth: Seven Spiritual Steps to Financial Abundance*, best-selling author May McCarthy gives insight into how people can discover the answers to those all-too-familiar hypotheticals within themselves. Over the course of 30-plus years, McCarthy has cofounded and helped grow six successful companies as large as \$100 million in annual revenue. McCarthy attributes her ever-expanding success to waking up, and staying connected, to the awareness of the Chief Spiritual Officer (CSO) within and allowing it to guide her in the implementation of spiritual principles in her personal and professional life.

"[In the book], I talk about using intuition as a tool--this wonderful gift from our spiritual Source, from Divine Intelligence, that will guide and direct us to take steps to achieve our goals," said McCarthy, who's latest title *The Gratitude Formula: A 7-Step System to Create A Life You Love*, offers a definable, practical system for people to use every day to achieve success in virtually any aspect of life.

On April 22 McCarthy will be in Baltimore offering a two-hour "Path to Wealth" workshop experience at the One God One Thought Center for Better Living (OGOT). McCarthy's presentation will encapsulate how she learned to marry a consciousness of Spirit with finances.

McCarthy says taking the first step on "the path" requires partnering with one's own intuition. She also advises people to give their intuition a name. This level of



May McCarthy
Author, speaker, entrepreneur
Courtesy photo

communication with yourself impresses upon the subconscious an elevated sense of awareness that allows people to better sense the right next step to take.

"Listen to your gut, no, really listen to your gut," said McCarthy. "Like an instinct or a strong thought...when there is a message through somebody else that's resonating with you...those are all ways that you can receive these intuitive messages, and you have to take action. As you start to give attention to getting leads and taking steps, leads are going to show up more often."

The Rev. Bernette Lee Jones, spiritual advocate and senior minister of One God One Thought Center invited McCarthy to the Center after experiencing a "Path to Wealth" workshop in Montego Bay, Jamaica, at the Universal Foundation for Better Living's annual Panorama of Truth conference last August. The message she received from McCarthy, resonated so deeply within, that she wanted to share this experience with the people of Baltimore.

"[Her message] accords so well with what we teach here at OGOT about universal spiritual principles and their applications in a practical New Thought Christian environment. May's message is broadly accepted, respected, and sought after globally as more people rec-

ognize and seek to know how to live a spirit-driven, financial experience of abundance," said Jones of the inspiration for extending the invite.

At the upcoming workshop, attendees can expect to learn how to work in partnership with intuition, separate job responsibilities, and experience more fun and freedom to focus on their part of the job and achieving greater levels of abundance and freedom. The workshop covers spiritual practices that can anchor anyone on the path to wealth. Consistency is paramount, suggests McCarthy, so addressing fear with positively charged words is a strategy she will also teach.

"Some people are living lives that their words have created and they are not the lives that they want to live, but they are kind of unconscious to the fact that they've been using the wrong words, and they're stuck with the life

they live now," said McCarthy. "Now the good thing about that is that they can use different words in this wonderful partnership with Spirit/Source to live a different life that they do want to create."

Jones said inviting McCarthy just felt like the perfect move.

"What resonated with me was her consciousness of what I call "spirit-driven leadership." Her ability to use that successfully in her businesses and her willingness to express it and articulate it, and share it in the broader context of our society."

"One of the things that is very important but that people particularly in our community struggle with is how to abundantly grow your finances and manage that from a spiritual directed perspective. And that to me, is a significant and timely issue in our community."

The Path to Wealth: Seven Spiritual Steps for Financial Abundance and Freedom!

Sunday, April 22nd
12noon - 2:30pm

Join the One God One Thought Center for Better Living, 3605 Coronado Road, Baltimore, MD 21244 as we host best selling author, business strategist and motivational speaker, May McCarthy as she shares her action plan to reach success in all areas of your life!

May McCarthy

\$25.00/person

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Baltimore's 'Little Big Shot' Continues to Help Veterans

By Stacy M. Brown

At just six-years-old, Tyler Stallings is helping to change the world.

For the past two years, Tyler has been packing "hero bags" with snacks, water and other critical items for veterans at the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training (MCVET).

The youngster's initiatives are funded through proceeds from Kid Time Enterprises, which Tyler serves as the honorary CEO.

While donning a superhero cape during fundraisers, Tyler has also used funds from a book he has written to help MCVET and other veterans' organizations.

And, just last month, Tyler appeared on the hit NBC TV Show, "Little Big Shots," with Steve Harvey.

"I always wanted to be on his show and I got to meet Mr. Harvey and he was funny, but nice," Tyler said about meeting the host of the show that focuses on notable children, whether they are talented or doing good, in the world.

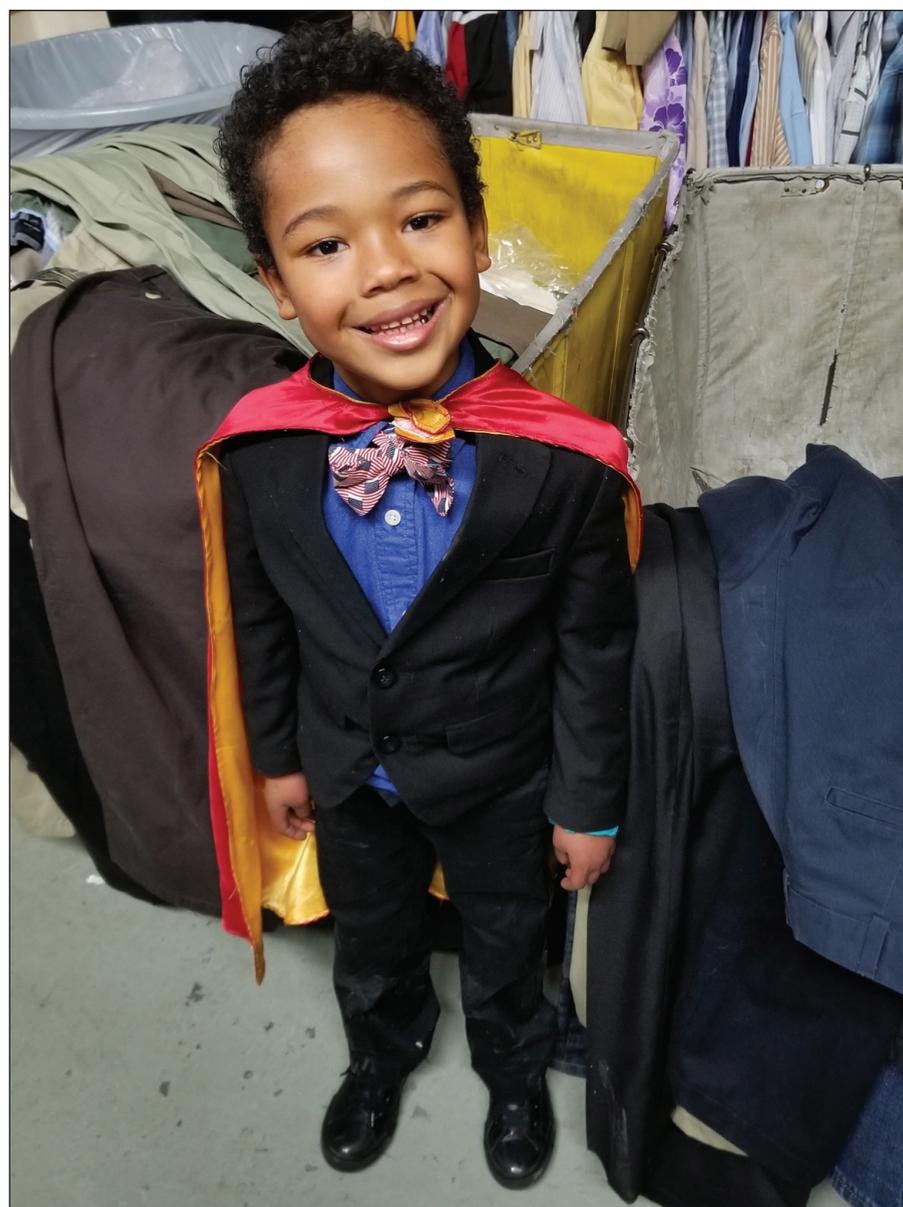
Mostly, the appearance was an opportunity for the ambitious philanthropist to help fight against homelessness for veterans, particularly those at MCVET, a national nonprofit based in Baltimore that provides comprehensive services and support to homeless male and female veterans from across the country.

"He has a big heart for MCVET," said Jeffrey Kendrick, MCVET's executive director.

"He is what we must look forward to in the future. His commitment has stood out and it isn't something you see a lot because a lot of people say they want to give back, but when you see Tyler's level of commitment ... I'm awestruck."

Tyler takes a strong cue from his mother, Andrea Blackstone who says he was initially motivated after seeing YouTube videos about homeless veterans.

"He wanted to help, and he asked why they were homeless," Blackstone said. "He wanted to buy a house for each of



Tyler Stallings, 6, visits the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training (MCVET) while a large, donated supply of clothing and toiletries to help homeless veterans who are students in MCVET's program are stored. Tyler raised thousands of dollars through his GoFundMe campaign to purchase these spring items for the Baltimore-based nonprofit's wish list, after appearing on NBC's "Little Big Shots" television series on March 25, 2018 and April 1, 2018.

Courtesy Photo: Angela Byrd/MCVET

them and I told him we couldn't afford to do that, but we came away with something we could do and I'm so proud of him."

Tyler has also delved into the book, publishing world, authoring the book, "Tyler Goes Around the World," a children's book he wrote with Blackstone.

"He didn't like to go to sleep at night, so I created a game to teach him about places in the world, imaginary things, and we'd fly around the world and we studied about different places," Blackstone said. "We'd discuss these different places at night and he'd be so eager to go to bed. It became easier for him to learn more about the next thing and then the next thing and he's always loved books and I really wanted him to embrace literacy, so I was proud that he wanted to write his own book."

Tyler used the proceeds from the book to donate to veterans and his mom said he's working on more projects in which he'll be even more independent.

"I want to help all of the veterans," Tyler said. "Even if they aren't homeless—I wish I could help them all. That's what I want to do in the future."

With his efforts that include a book and an appearance on "Little Big Shots," Tyler has already raised thousands of dollars but to him, he said it seems like millions.

"Since the show aired, he's raised thousands of dollars and the majority has gone to MCVET," Blackstone said. "His GoFundMe campaign has significantly picked up and people have reached out to ask how they could help."

Kendrick says the show appearance was priceless.

"When I came to work the next day, my mailbox was flooded," he said. "Steve Harvey mentioned MCVET in the last two or three sentences and I think people took time to look it up and all of a sudden we had all of this attention."

Tyler donates a portion of the proceeds from any of the items that he sells online to homeless, elderly or disabled veterans and their families.

To make a donation visit www.kid-timecenter-prises.com/p/donate.html?m=0, or www.gofundme.com/uxs2hbc.

"I want to help all of the veterans, even if they aren't homeless—I wish I could help them all. That's what I want to do in the future." —Tyler Stallings

Light City is Back!

Electrifying Festival Illuminates Inner Harbor Through April 21

By Ursula V. Battle

Light City, the nation's first large-scale light, music and innovation festival returns for its third year with the theme "More Love, More Lights!" This year's festival indeed lives up to its 2018 theme, as it expanded to three weekends.

Neighborhood Lights ran April 6, 2018 through April 8, 2018. The Light City art and music festival runs April 14-21, 2018, while the Labs@LightCity social innovation conference will take place April 18, 2018 through April 21, 2018.

The "enlightening" festival is presented by The Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts (BOPA), and is being held at Baltimore's waterfront (from the Inner Harbor to Harbor East).

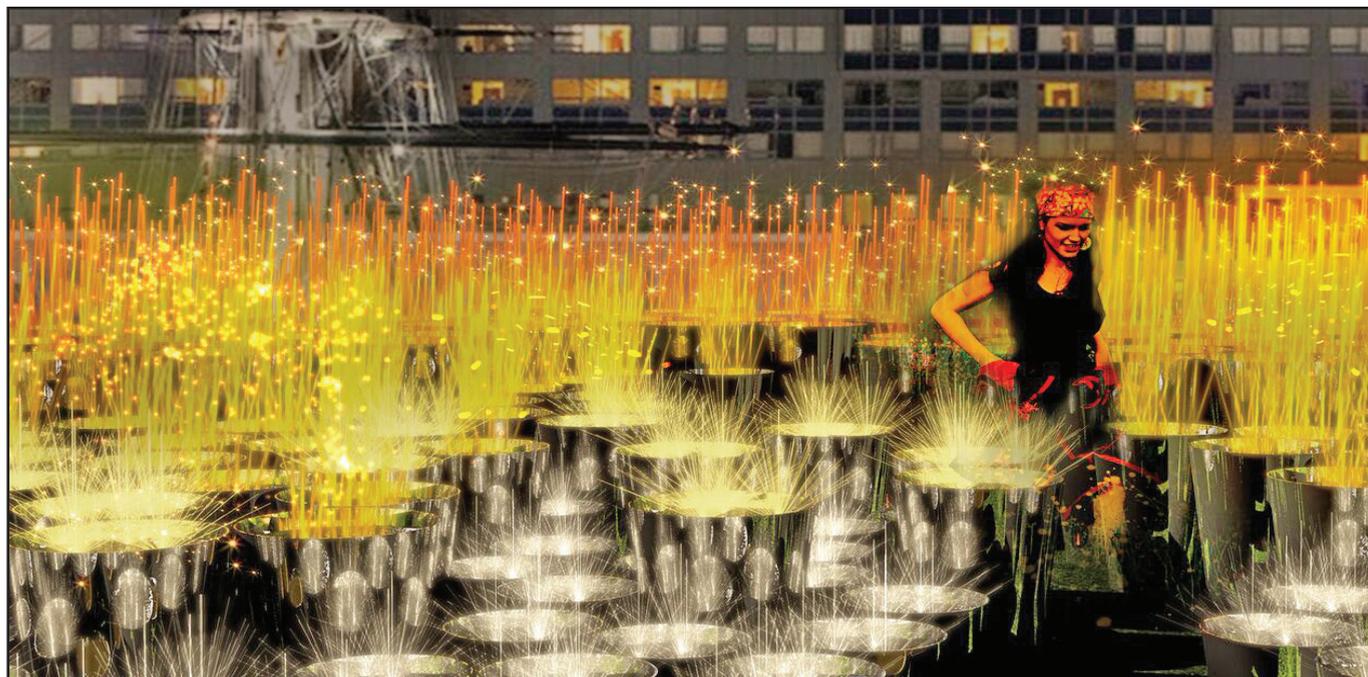
BOPA is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, which serves as Baltimore City's arts council, events agency, and film office. By producing large-scale events such as Light City, Artscape and the Baltimore Book Festival, and providing funding and support to artists, arts programs and organizations across the city, BOPA's goal is to make Baltimore a more vibrant and creative city. Light City is free and open to the public.

All of the 21 light installations on display are brand new to Light City, with distinguished artists hailing from Belgium, China, Canada, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Virginia and Illinois. Ten of the distinguished artists are from Baltimore.

According to BOPA, many of the artworks have overarching themes related to topics such as sustainability, marine life, Baltimore history, social justice, healthy waterways, transformation and relationships.

In keeping with this year's theme, Light City has spread to touch even more Baltimore neighborhoods through expanded Neighborhood Lights and Brilliant Baltimore programs and a new "Eye on Charlie" initiative. Presented by WJZ-TV, "Eye on Charlie" is an original light art piece from 2016 that was created by Tim Scofield, Kyle Mille, Steve Dalnekoff and Will Cocks.

Beginning on April 9, 2018, "Charlie



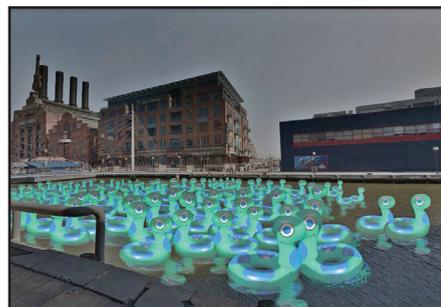
the Peacock" began traveling throughout the city, popping up in different surprise locations. The Peacock is an automated kinetic sculpture measuring 40 feet wide by 20 feet tall and is lighted with 15,000 LED lights.

Clues are given out on WJZ-TV and Light City's social media channels daily to hint to Charlie's whereabouts that night. The initiative concludes April 21, 2018. On the final night of Light City, "Charlie the Peacock" will join the festival at the Inner Harbor for closing fireworks.

Labs@LightCity, the festival's social innovation conference, generates a glowing ecosystem of ideas and learning during the day, before the bright lights and live entertainment make Baltimore shine at night. The festival also offers a variety of family fun entertainment and local food and beverage offerings.

Light City's BGE Light Art Walk, transforms the harbor's brick-lined promenade to an interactive playground with awe-inspiring light art installations, performances, concerts, a fun-filled family zone and special moments including an opening night parade and a closing night fireworks finale.

Entertainment along the BGE Light Art Walk includes interactive, illuminated strolling and pop-up performances



Three of the light installations which will be on display during Light City 2018, created by artists from Belgium, China, Canada, France, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Virginia, Illinois and Maryland. (Top) Harbor Memory by XXS Group, rendering by Moya Sun (Above left) The Herd, concept rendering by Kelley Bell (Above right) The Eighth Art Rendering by Erinn E. Hagerty and Adam P. Savje. Courtesy Photos/Light City 2018

and a full schedule of live concerts and DJ sets on two stages. On the Light Up the Night! Concert Stage at the Inner Harbor Amphitheater, headlining acts include Grand Master Flash on Saturday, April 14, 2018 at 10 p.m.; G. Love & Special Sauce Friday, April 20, 2018 at 10:30 p.m.; and Kimbra Saturday, April 21, 2018 at 10:30 p.m.

On the new Club Light City Stage presented by Morgan State University, runs the duration of the festival, and features house, dance and hip hop DJs, along with local talent such as TrillNaturd, Mighty Mark and DJ LoveGoddess.

Festival hours are from 7 p.m. until 11

p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and 7 p.m.- midnight on Friday and Saturdays. For a complete listing of light art and activities found at Light City 2018, visit Light City's website: www.lightcity.org.

The National Great Blacks In Wax Museum will hold "A Light City Celebration Food- Fun-Games- Light Show," featuring a surprise Light City guest on Friday April 20, 2018 from 6 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. at the National Great Blacks In Wax Museum Lot located at 1601 E. North Avenue in Baltimore. Event admission is free, while museum admission is half-off. For more information call 410-563-3404.

From Brokenness to Wholeness:

The WISEorg helping women battle mental illness

By Ursula V. Battle

A tragic event in the life of Thomisha M. Duru, caused her to slip into an abyss of depression, ultimately resulting in a mental breakdown.

“My disorders came from grief and tragedy,” she said reflecting back on the calamity. “In order to address my mental illness, I had to first recognize I was not feeling well. I had to stand in the truth and admit, I was not okay. Others, then began to refer me to services and a Christian-based counselor in Clarksville, MD.”

She added, “My counselor was great. He prayed with me, talked with me, and got me off the couch and out of the bed. He also got me to keep a journal, go to church, and tasked me to participate in activities I enjoyed, but had stopped doing such as bikeriding and painting. He got me to put myself in the environments that spoke life to me. I felt myself slowing coming back.”

Dr. Duru Ed.D., found her way back to mental stability and is now helping other women to do the same. She is the founder of TheWISEorg, Inc., (Women’s Inspirational Self-Empowerment) a non-profit organization, that provides physical and mental healthcare, legal services, spiritual restoration and development, employment readiness and other services to women with mental illness at no cost.

“I found that the best counselors did not accept insurance,” said Dr. Duru who founded the organization in 2016. “I was fortunate enough to be able to pay for the services. This is one of the reasons I started TheWISEorg. I wanted women to have access to the same type of services that I received.”

According to Dr. Duru, the program consists of an eight-week cohort, and works with women with mild to moderate mental disorders. Currently, six women participate in the program, which meets on Saturday mornings. Its spring session started March 17, 2018,



Dr. Thomisha M. Duru Ed.D. is the founder of TheWISEorg, Inc. (Women’s Inspirational Self-Empowerment), a non-profit organization that assists women who are battling mental illness. Courtesy Photo

and concludes on May 5, 2108. Program offerings also include training, Career college admission, GED prep, CPR training and certification, Housing assistance, food, and weekly care packages.

“After suffering my own mental illness, I woke up in an intrinsic pool,” said Dr. Duru. “I realized there were so many women going through what I had just overcome. I realized I had to do something so women could share their experiences, talk about how they were feeling, and to assist them with getting the help they needed without being judged or embarrassed.”

Dr. Duru feels many are unnecessarily battling mental illness on their own.

“A lot of women don’t know what they don’t know,” she said. “What I found is that women are nurturers. They are caretakers, and the glue holding families together. We have become a society where we pseudo-function. We keep going even when we are not feeling well.”

She added, “Mental illness has such a negative stigma, especially in the African American community. Most

associate mental disorders with ‘being crazy.’ I had to step into a space of saying ‘its ok to not be okay’ and to speak in truth. I wanted to help other women do the same though an organization that is a ‘One Stop Shop’ of resources.”

“She added, “I wanted to offer them a safe place to come where they could talk about why they are not feeling well. If we can identify the cause, it can help eliminate the depression and other issues because it’s all a result of something. A person didn’t just wake up with these feelings.”

Dr. Duru is a college professor and is the author of *I Suffered in Silence*, which is available for purchase on Amazon.

“If you don’t get to the cause of feeling depressed or other feelings, they will get worse and manifest,” she said.

“TheWISEorg gets these women from where they are, to where they need to be. We provide a 360-degree approach to work on the whole person. When everything is aligned, a person feels better because you remove fear and anxiety and replace them with hope.”

Dr. Duru, describes her organization as a “start-up,” but is looking to expand.

“This is our first cohort,” she said. “We keep the group of women small so that we can have measurable outcomes and ensure that women get the resources they need. However, we want to expand and grow that number. We are looking for sponsors and donors to support our cause.”

Dr. Duru said she believes her bout with mental illness helped her to realize her true calling.

“I found purpose through my pain and haven’t looked back,” said Dr. Duru. “I love helping others, and TheWISEorg allows me to do that. We teach women to develop new habits to get them out of their brokenness. We help them to heal and that’s a real blessing. I am doing what God purposed me to do.”

For more information about TheWISEorg or if you are interested in being accepted into an upcoming cohort, visit www.thewiseorg.org or call 301-678-3192.

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Organization hosts day of pampering for cancer patients, survivors and caregivers

By Dareise A. Jones

Mikey's Miracle Foundation, which is dedicated to "providing everyday miracles to families with cancer," hosted "A Beautiful Cause," a day of pampering at Salon Avenue in Owings Mills, Maryland, for women currently undergoing cancer treatment, caregivers and cancer survivors on February 25, 2018.

Even though this was the first time that the foundation held an event of this type, the organization will celebrate two years of service in July, this year. In addition to hosting events to benefit people fighting cancer and their caregivers, the foundation provides support in the form of sponsorship and referrals for individual and family counseling, nutrition services, meal planning, professional cleaning services and transportation to and from treatment.

Jade Merritt, founder of Mikey's Miracle Foundation, vividly remembers the day she and her mother were shopping at a department store and she asked her mother to try on some makeup at the MAC counter. Her mother, who was undergoing treatment for colon cancer at the time, declined because she did not feel good about herself. Her mother's skin had changed and the emotional effect of fighting cancer had taken its toll on her. Jade remembers encouraging her mother by telling her she was beautiful. She says that experience inspired her to create "A Beautiful Cause."

Unfortunately, her mother, Michal Sharon Neverdon-Merritt succumbed to colon cancer in January 2016. Yet, through the devastating pain of losing her mother, she created the foundation, which she says has helped her through the grieving process.

"I get to talk about my mom every single day and tell others how amazing she was. What an honor and tribute to her life to be able to bless someone else," the Randallstown, Maryland native said with pride.

Merritt expressed her gratitude for all of the beauty professionals in her network who were eager to provide services and information to participants at the event, including: Dr. Chambers-Harris, founder of Alodia Hair Care, discussed stimulating hair growth after



(Left) Jade Merritt founded Mikey's Miracle Foundation as a legacy to her mother Michal Sharon Neverdon-Merritt who succumbed to colon cancer in January 2016. The foundation provides support in the form of sponsorship and referrals for individual and family counseling, nutrition services, meal planning, professional cleaning services and transportation to and from treatment for cancer patients, cancer survivors and caregivers (Right) A survivor and patient take a selfie during "A Beautiful Cause," a day of pampering hosted by Mickey's Miracle Foundation on February 25, 2018 in Owings Mills.

Photos by Jerri Marie Photography@jerrimariephotography

cancer treatment and the all-natural hair care products in her line; Iyonna Woods, a medical laboratory scientist, discussed the importance of using products with natural ingredients on the hair and skin, like the aluminum-free deodorant provided in her Fancy Free Hair and Skin line of products; Susan Hopson and Paula Sieng, the owners of Nail Candy Shop created beautiful nail designs for the ladies who participated; Nicole Word and Lauren Johnson did makeup; Shanee' Green and Sharia Cunningham provided full hair services; Akos Regal, owner of Regal Clothes, donated beautiful Ankara print head wraps; and Adrienne Munroe, creator of Fabulous Moms Rock and Danicia Ross, owner of Vanity Pink MD provided wardrobe make-overs.

This event was a blessing to many people, including Minister Valjean Gilmore of Morning Star Baptist Church, a uterine cancer survivor who along with eight members of her church's cancer support group, were pampered at the event.

Minister Gilmore started the cancer

support group a few years ago, because she realized the importance of having a connection with others who had survived or were also fighting this awful disease. The group members pray together, support and encourage one another through treatment because no one should have to endure the emotional, spiritual and mental battle that accompanies having cancer alone.

The Western High School graduate who earned a bachelor's degree in Anthropology with a Human Biology Concentration from Temple University and a master's degree in biology from Towson University says that she never imagined she would be in this place in her life at this time. When her mother was diagnosed with cancer, Merritt was traveling around the country conducting clinical research trials and considering a move to Texas. Her plans were put on hold as she helped with her mother's care. A few months after her mother passed away, she had the idea to start a foundation in her mother's memory to provide support

for other families out there going through the same thing.

It was clear to see the joy on the faces of the participants after having their hair, make-up and nails done. One woman, currently undergoing treatment for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma said being pampered was a blessing. She said she felt "elegant and special" and it was needed after having to stay in the house for a long period of time because of the risk of infection.

This was the goal for Jade and Mikey's Miracle Foundation, to uplift those battling cancer and show them that they are still beautiful despite what this disease does to their minds and bodies. A Beautiful Cause was full of love, hope, support and glam—essential elements for motivating those fighting cancer to continue doing so, with a reminder that they are not doing it alone.

For more information about Mikey's Miracle Foundation, the support it provides or to make donation, visit: www.mikeysmiraclefoundation.com.

True crime story of first death row inmate saved by DNA is 2018 One Maryland One Book

Baltimore— Maryland Humanities has selected the book “Bloodsworth: The True Story of the First Death Row Inmate Exonerated by DNA” by Maryland native Tim Junkin as the 2018 One Maryland One Book. It was chosen by a committee of librarians, educators, authors and bibliophiles in February from more than 209 titles suggested last fall by readers across the state under the theme, “Justice.”

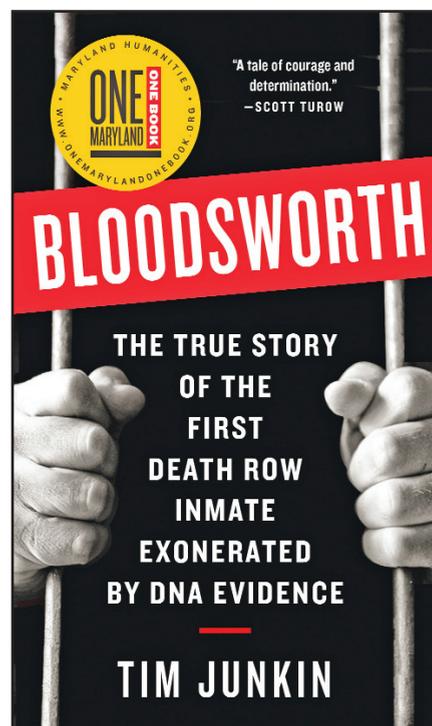
“One Maryland One Book brings together a wide range of residents from every corner of the state,” says Phoebe Stein, executive director at Maryland Humanities. “Selecting a compelling book that centers on a Maryland native, written by a local author, adds an exciting layer to the program. I’m looking forward to hearing the important discussions this book will generate.”

Tim Junkin says: “I was honored to learn that Bloodsworth was chosen as the 2018 One Maryland One Book selection, a program I applaud for encouraging reading and dialogue throughout our state. I was delighted, as well, to be a finalist in the company of such remarkable books as Bryan Stevenson’s *Just Mercy* and Jesmyn Ward’s *Sing, Unburied Sing*, both of which are

marvels,” the author continued. “The marvel of Kirk Bloodsworth is that he not only survived, but what he became. His ordeal is still, to me, a frightening reminder of hard truths leavened with astonishing miracles.”

Charged with the rape and murder of a nine-year-old girl in 1984, Kirk Bloodsworth was tried, convicted and sentenced to die in Maryland’s gas chamber. Maintaining his innocence, he read everything on criminal law available in the prison library and persuaded a new lawyer to petition for the then-innovative DNA testing. After nine years in one of the harshest prisons in America, Kirk Bloodsworth became the first death row inmate exonerated by DNA evidence. He was pardoned by the governor of Maryland and has gone on to become a tireless spokesman against capital punishment. Bloodsworth’s story speaks for hundreds of others who were wrongly convicted and have since been released, and for the thousands still in prison waiting for DNA testing.

Junkin is an attorney with thirty years experience as a trial lawyer and advocate of civil rights, an award-winning writer, and a teacher. He spent much of his boyhood in Talbot County, graduat-



ing from Easton High School. Today, he lives on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Junkin is the author of *The Waterman*, *Good Counsel*, and *Bloodsworth*. He also founded Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy, which became *ShoreRivers*, a Maryland river protection nonprofit, and has received

several environmental awards. He graduated from the University of Maryland in 1973 and completed his law studies at Georgetown University Law Center in 1977. He has taught at American University, Georgetown University Law Center, Harvard University Law School, and the Bethesda Writer’s Center.

When we read a great book, we can’t wait to share the experience and talk about it with others. That’s one of the joys of reading.

In that spirit, through its Maryland Center for the Book program, Maryland Humanities created One Maryland One Book (OMOB) to bring together diverse people in communities across the state through the shared experience of reading the same book. We invite readers to participate in book-centered discussions and related programs at public libraries, high schools, colleges, museums, bookstores, and community and senior centers around the state.

One Maryland One Book is presented in partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library and is sponsored by The Institute of Museum and Library Services via the Maryland State Library as well as BGE, with additional support from PNC Foundation, Baltimore City Foundation, Wells Fargo, and M&T Bank.

Veteran Town Hall

Hosted By Acting Medical Center Director Lawrence B. Connell

Veterans are invited to learn about VA initiatives and programs, share concerns and kudos and engage with medical center leadership.

April 19, 2018, 5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Freedom Auditorium, Fourth Floor
50 Irving Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20422



For more information, contact the Office of Public Affairs: 202-745-4037.



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Flagger Force urges motorists 'Stay Alert. Stay Alive.'

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania— Flagger Force Traffic Control Services joins the nationwide movement to bring awareness to work zone safety during National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW), April 9-13, 2018.

NWZAW is an annual spring campaign organized by American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) to encourage safe driving through work zones.

"We share our Safety-Driven passion every day of the year, especially during NWZAW, by encouraging motorists of the importance to "Stay Alert. Stay Alive.," said Mike Doner, executive vice president, COO, and co-founder of Flagger Force. "Motorists need to put their phones down and pay attention to what is going on around them. They are not only putting themselves at risk, but also other drivers and the workers who are working diligently to improve the infrastructure in our communities."

According to the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse, 683

fatal crashes occurred in work zones, nationally, in 2016. The Federal Highway Administration reports in 2016 that roughly 85 percent of work-zone fatalities are travelers, not workers. Distracted driving and speeding primarily cause these fatalities.

To prevent these statistics from rising, Flagger Force is committed to educating drivers and workers about the hazardous conditions in work zones with safety messages urging drivers to: slow down; avoid distractions such as texting and driving; and obey all posted signage.

Additionally, the company will partner with several departments of transportation at press events throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. To learn more about Flagger Force and their support of NWZAW, visit: FlaggerForce.com.



Please send all area community calendar events to: kreevie@btimes.com

Reginald Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture Needs Volunteers

The Reginald Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture is dedicated to serving the community by providing multifaceted support through meaningful interactions with history and material culture of Maryland African Americans. Volunteers are needed to assist at the Information Desk, as Docents, for Special Events, and more. There are ongoing opportunities on Saturdays and Sundays for assistance with greeting guests and patrons at the main entrance and to work with kid's activities during public hours. The minimum age for volunteers is 14. Volunteering is open to adults, seniors, college, and high school students. Service learning credit hours can be earned by high school students. We are accepting applications for the following volunteer positions: Special Event Volunteer, Administrative Assistant, Curatorial Assistant, and Visitor Services. Contact Joy Hall at 443-263-1800 or hall@lewismuseum.org or visit the website: www.lewismuseum.org.

BGE recognizes April as National Safe Digging Month

Company reminds customers to call 811 before you dig

Baltimore— This April marks the 11th annual National Safe Digging Month, and BGE reminds all customers and contractors to call 811 to have underground lines marked before digging. Maryland Governor Larry Hogan recently proclaimed April 2018 as National Safe Digging Month in Maryland. Nationwide, every nine minutes there is damage to an underground electric, natural gas, cable, water, sewer or other lines because of digging without first calling 811, according to the Common Ground Alliance, the national association that promotes the 811 phone number and safe digging practices.

Striking an underground electric line, natural gas pipe or other service line can cause serious injury, damages and service interruptions. Every digging project, no matter how large or small, warrants a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, building a deck, planting a tree and laying a patio are all examples of digging projects where a call to 811 should be one of the first steps.

More than 60 percent of BGE's electric lines, approximately 17,000 circuit miles, are located underground and BGE manages more than 7,000 miles of buried natural gas lines in its region, many of which may cross through residential properties. Properly locating these lines is essential to safely completing a digging job.

When calling 811 at least two business days prior to digging, customers and contractors are connected to Miss Utility to provide information about their project. Miss Utility will notify BGE



and all member utilities of your plan to dig. The utilities will then mark their underground facilities.

Once lines are located, excavators also must understand the markings and look for evidence of unmarked lines, such as water and sewer lines on private property. Sewer clean-outs and water valve covers are examples of equipment that can indicate the presence of underground lines.

BGE joins the Exelon family of utilities in marking National Safe Digging Month, and is a member of the Common Ground Alliance to share best practices to promote safe excavation and lower instances of damage to underground lines.

For information on digging safely, including how to get lines marked and what to do after lines are marked, watch BGE's Dig Smart video. Excavators can also contact the BGE Damage Prevention team at 410.470.6698 to arrange for free damage prevention training.

To learn more visit: www.bge.com/811.

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