DEI: Unwitting Conspirators Against the Effort to Promote Social Justice
By Eric Johnson, PhD

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By Joanne Lunceford, DSW

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In our July 2022 edition of The Columbus & Dayton African American, I promised to share with our readers the significant lessons that I learned from those leaders I had the privilege of working with over my 38 years as a student of politics at The Ohio State University, Legislative Assistant in the Ohio General Assembly, Member of the Ohio House of Representatives, the Ohio Senate, and The White House Staff as a Deputy Special Assistant to the President of the United States—Jimmy Carter. In addition, there are many teachable moments that I could share in reviewing my work as a Vice President at Columbus State Community College, the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees—AFSCME Ohio Council 8. At some other time, it would be instructive to visit my work with various business enterprises and lessons learned in those ventures (including the development of this news journal). Here are some of the key principles learned from working with Dr. William E. Nelson, Jr., Dr. James Kveder, Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, Vernal G. Riffl, Jr., Governor Richard F. Celeste, Representative C. J. McLin, Jr., The Honorable Louis E. Martin, Jr., and Donald K. Day:

- Know your stuff. Whatever your stuff is—know it completely;
- Dance and leave with the one who brung yuh! Don't forget how you got there (Loyalty);
- Have a definite strategic plan and know why you are pursuing the course you are on;
- Establish major goals and work without ceasing to accomplish them;
- Make sure you are helping others and not just yourself;
- Say what you mean, and mean what you say;
- Establish your goals based on addition and multiplication—and not, subtraction and division!
- Know who and how much to ask for what you want or need.

Now, I wish to turn my attention to an issue that truly troubles me, and that is parental disrespect of their children, and oftentimes their grandchildren. Too many people today are quick to blame the system for their actions and their failings. I have witnessed parents cutting out their children and grandchildren—using every profanity word that they can recall. More often than not, the child is called, dumb, stupid, an ignorant bastard, M-F, and worse. The disgusting thing is when we see this kind of parent whining and crying about their child having been shot, beaten, stabbed, or murdered. The child's behavior is predictable after spending most of their lives being verbally and physically abused. I, for one, am tired of seeing the irresponsible parent wailing and crying about "My Baby. They shot My Baby." Laws relative to parental and caregiver neglect need to be reviewed and strengthened. Training programs are also needed to address these issues when it can be determined that such action can yield results. And yes, training and proper protocols for the police should be strengthened and enforced.

Here's what's really happening. Too many fathers are just sperm givers! Further, too many fathers are incarcerated in our prison system and many of them have dropped out even before they have reached high school. Guns and drugs are readily available to them. More government funds are available to address this crisis. But I am ever mindful of the admonishment—"You can't teach what you don't know and you can't lead where you won't go." We have too many people in key positions who have neither the aptitude nor the attitude to bring about needed change.

Please allow me to share my remaining remarks within the context of a relevant research study that I read some 15 years ago. "The accompanying article on the study was titled, "In the Absence of Fathers: A Story of Elephants and Men." I will present sufficient excerpts from the study necessary to understand this well-written presentation on the issues I've been advancing in my remarks.

Some years ago, officials at the Kruger National Park and game reserve in South Africa were faced with a growing elephant problem. The population of African elephants, once endangered, had grown larger than the park could sustain. A plan was devised to relocate some of the elephants to other African game reserves. The herds weren't strong enough. It could handle the juvenile and adult female elephants, but not the huge African bull elephants. A decision was made to leave the much larger bulls at Kruger and relocate only some of the female elephants and juvenile males. Sometime later, however, a problem surfaced at South Africa’s other game reserve, Pilanesburg National Park, the younger elephant's new home. Rangers at Pilanesburg began finding the dead bodies of endangered white rhinoceros. The rhinos were killed violently, with deep puncture wounds. The result was shocking. The culprits turned out to be marauding bands of aggressive juvenile male elephants taken from Kruger National Park a few years earlier. The young males were caught on camera chasing down the rhinos, knocking them over, and stomping and gore them to death with their tusks. What had been missing from the relocated herd was the presence of the large dominant bulls that provide modeling behaviors for younger elephants' keeping them in line.

In his terrific article, "Of Elephants and Men," Dr. Wade Horn went on to write a story very similar to that of the elephants thought to have happened not in Africa but in New York's Central Park. Groups of young men were caught on camera sexually harassing and robbing women and victimizing others in the park. Their herd mentality created a sort of frenzy that was both brazen and contagious. In broad daylight, they seemed to compete with each other, even laughing and mugging for the cameras as they assaulted and robbed passersby. This is a social problem that has a direct correlation with their criminal behavior. They were not acting like men because their only experience of modeling the behaviors of men had been taught by their peers and not by their fathers.

For a nation struggling with its racial inequities, the prison system is a racial disaster. Currently, young men of African American and Latino descent comprise 30 percent of our population, but 60% of our prison population.

Eighty percent of the young men I have met in prison grew up in homes without fathers. When prisons and police replace fathers, chaos reigns, and promising young lives are sacrificed. Now is the time for every appropriate governmental, non-profit, fraternal, religious, media, and business organization to join hands, come together, and design realistic strategies for ameliorating this chronic problem that is destroying our families and our civility as a people in this nation. If you have thoughts on this topic please share them with me at your earliest.

With Appreciation and Respect,

Ray Miller
Founder & Publisher
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DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND EQUITY: UNWITTING CONSPIRATORS AGAINST THE EFFORT TO PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE

By Eric Johnson, PhD

Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity principles have been a driving force in much of the effort to promote Social Justice, over the last several decades. Social Justice in its best version is a reimagining of societal inequality and acute disparities that are not based on what people look like, where they are from, or their connections to relevant resources. Moreover, Social Justice represents opportunities to “right” historical wrongs and acknowledge the damage caused by mostly the deliberate decisions of individuals and the consistent uneven outcomes of institutional operations. In essence, Social Justice has come to represent our nation’s opportunity and responsibility to live up to its highest ideals. However, while there can be no doubt that there has been progress; it has been too slow, easily reversible, and often not what was needed to move the country forward in a way that is healthy and accountable. The simple fact is that there are those among us who understand diversity, equity, and inclusion as impediments and barriers to their interests. Diversity, equity, and inclusion principles have been unwitting conspirators in the effort against social justice because they have ultimately fallen short in helping each of us reimagine a reality that is not predicated on exploitation, prejudice, and bias. Too often DEI principles seek to explain disparities and recommend remedies that help to ameliorate the impact but rarely are they designed to develop new insights and processes that encourage the possibility of constructing new realities divorced from the previous perspectives that produced the current inequality. Moreover, an argument can be made that DEI principles have served the interest of the exploiters much more than the exploited. DEI efforts have certainly helped to move more “have nots” into the “have” category through more employment opportunities and contract and procurement access for previously marginalized and disadvantaged groups. The consequence of which has been less questioning of inherently flawed processes, systems, and outcomes. The ultimate result has been more confidence in a social structure founded and codified on widespread exploitation.

After more than 20 years of DEI training in the field of health, the infant mortality rate for Black women with a Master’s Degree is higher than for White women with only a high school diploma. After more than 30 years of diversity and equity training in our public schools, the achievement gap for racial and ethnic minorities remains ever-present and some places getting worse. The impact of police violence on marginalized communities seems to get worse with the release of each new video that reveals it. The disparities in wealth between black and white communities have worsened over the last 30 years. Moreover, the concentration of wealth at the top should be of concern to the 10’s of millions of white people who live in poverty and have done so for many generations. There is no question that DEI efforts are relevant and can play an important role in the effort to get better. It is also important that we account for the persistent and stubborn tendency for the top and the bottom of the social structure to largely remain unchanged for the last 40 years. Good liars and manipulators can get anyone to believe a few lies at any given moment; however advanced liars and manipulators can be effective in getting people to accept whole realities. When a manipulator is successful in getting anyone to see a reality; arguments about truth and lies are mostly irrelevant. When anyone accepts the reality of an advanced manipulator, often they are unaware that even the search for “truth” operates in the interests of the manipulator. In fact, in such circumstances, advanced manipulators can utilize the lies, the truth, and even the struggle to discern them as tools to maneuver an outcome in their interest. In that aspect, DEI efforts have fallen woefully short; too often DEI efforts legitimize processes that are inherently unsound, defective, and invalid by the seemingly progressive step of recommending actions that make a faulty process better. If DEI efforts are going to deliver on the promise of a better day, they must not simply be occupied by trying to simply make flawed processes better. The effort has to also encourage, invite and develop the will, desire, and skills to reimagine a world that is fueled by ideas such as grace, cooperative learning, and notions of a common good rather than manipulation and corruption. Certainly, that requires a shift in individual and collective perspectives, notions of success and joint achievement; informed by spiritual inklings that are rooted in the connection of everything. If DEI efforts are to be successful they are required to invite each of us to become critical consumers of information, while simultaneously realizing our connection to our beliefs, our actions, our ideals, and our impact on the things that matter.

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WE SAW YOU, WHEN YOU SEEN IT

By William McCoy, MPA

Repeat after me: “I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands...” Did you know, “I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands...” are the original words of The Pledge of Allegiance, first recited on Columbus Day 1892 by schoolchildren around the country! The words “my flag” were replaced with “the flag” in 1923 to avoid the sort of confusion embodied in Kevin Seefried’s Confederate Flag-carrying stroll through the second floor of the U.S. Capitol during the January 6, 2021 Insurrection. Seefried’s treasonous walk speaks volumes about the “Republic” and “flag” he and those who sought to interfere with the peaceful transfer of presidential power that infamous day actually represent and want.

July 4th, Independence Day, is in the rearview mirror. Flags, food, festivals, and fireworks took center stage, along with the Congressional Hearings on the pro-Trump Insurrection. These Congressional Hearings provide an in-depth look at the events, people, and plans at work during the worst attack on America’s Capitol since the War of 1812. These Congressional Hearings have exposed people, who are potentially at-risk of disqualification from public service, as mandated by Section 3 of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which says: “No Person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof.”

Oh, boy.

Literally hundreds of (some former) military, law enforcement, and elected and appointed officials have been identified and/or contacted about their activities and actions, on and around the January 6th Insurrection. Those who could be called into account range from precinct-level civil servants and electors to high-ranking government officials, including Donald Trump. A lot of people are now at-risk of prosecution, exclusion, and/or disqualification from public service jobs, careers, and offices, because of what they did, saw, said, and/or heard that fateful day.

Nevertheless, some try to characterize the insurrectionists as “patriots” not “traitors.” Patriots, by definition, love their country and are prepared to sacrifice for it; traitors, on the other hand, do not and are not. What do you call someone who “loves America,” but “hates democracy?” Some might call him Kevin Seefried, whose confederate flag-carrying march caused one observer to say, “There may be no greater disrespect that can be shown to the American flag, Constitution, Bill of Rights than to embrace, display, and use the confederate flag and related symbols.” The confederacy seceded from the Union and started a Civil War that claimed over 620,000 American lives- or almost half of those killed in all USA-involved wars and conflicts combined! Now, more than 150 years later, the confederate flag was paraded through the U.S. Capitol during the January 6th Insurrection with the whole world watching. It was somewhat puzzling to see a Trump supporter carrying a flag during the January 6th Insurrection, given the ex-president’s sensitivity about flags. Former-president Donald Trump said, “When someone disrespects our flag to say, ‘get that son of a bitch off the field right now. Out...’ That guy disrespects our flag, he’s fired.’ That owner will be the most popular person in the country.”

The framers of the Constitution and those who followed made it clear that they wanted to prosecute, exclude, and/or disqualify people involved with an insurrection or rebellion from public service- as well as those who gave them aid and comfort. One of the Founding Fathers, Samuel Adams, said, “If ever the time should come, when vain and aspiring men shall possess the highest seats in government, our country will stand in need of its experienced patriots to prevent its ruin.” Now is that time and people are asking, “Who and where are the patriots?”

Senator Rand Paul once said, “We should stand up for the entire Bill of Rights whether it’s the 1st Amendment, 4th or 2nd... The Constitution is non-negotiable.” Great! At this point in time, we are specifically interested in Section 3 of the 14th Amendment (as well as your whereabouts and activities on and about January 6, 2021). Understandably, Josh Hawley is not the only official running from an angry mob. In conclusion, the world is watching how the nation handles the aftermath of the January 6th Insurrection aftermath. systems. The Founding Fathers were aware of the dangers posed by “pretended patriots,” as well as the need to exclude or expel rebellious, insurrectionists and their enablers from public service. Those who profess love for the U.S. Constitution must hold fast to Section 3 of the 14th Amendment. The price of not doing so is too steep. Founding Father John Adams told us, “Liberty, once lost, is lost forever.”

William McCoy is founder and principal consultant of The McCoy Company- a world-class, personal services consulting firm specializing in strategic planning, economic development, and training that helps clients articulate and achieve their visions, solve problems, and capitalize on their opportunities. Mr. McCoy has worked with national think tanks, every level of government, the private sector (including the National Football League), and held two White House appointments. He holds BA and MPA degrees and is profiled in Who’s Who in the World and elsewhere. McCoy is author of the up-coming book, On the Edge: A Practical Approach to Bridging the Gap Between Police and the Black Community. His Violence Interruption Experience is a high-impact, experiential intervention that confronts the explosive issues of power, violence, racism, and other “isms.” Call William McCoy at (614) 785-8497 or e-mail him at wmccoy2@themccoycompany.com.
Nearly 3 in 4 smokers are from lower-income communities. Far from a coincidence, this statistic reveals a tobacco industry strategy to appeal to lower-income, less-educated consumers.

Tobacco companies have targeted low-income populations in many ways over many years, creating smoking rate disparities that did not previously exist. In fact, the smoking rate was higher among those with more years of education in 1940, before the health effects of smoking became widely known and before the industry started targeting low-income individuals.

At different points in the past 60 years, tobacco companies have handed out free cigarettes to children in housing projects, issued tobacco coupons with food stamps and explored giving away financial products like prepaid debit cards. Today, several major tobacco industry practices contribute to higher smoking rates in low-income communities.

More retailers and more advertising.

There are an estimated 375,000 tobacco retailers in the U.S. — about 27 times more than McDonald’s and 28 times more than Starbucks — and they are disproportionately located in low-income communities. Low-income neighborhoods are also more likely to have tobacco retailers near schools than other neighborhoods.

A greater number of tobacco retailers means community members face more exposure to tobacco marketing. Marketing in retail environments, including in-store advertising, discounts and product displays behind checkout counters, is the tobacco industry’s main marketing channel, accounting for the overwhelming majority of Big Tobacco’s marketing budget. Retail marketing made up 93 percent of the tobacco industry’s more than $8 billion marketing expenditure in 2015.

Retail marketing is linked to an increased likelihood of young people starting to smoke and decreased success for people attempting to quit. About one-third of teenage experimentation with smoking can be directly attributed to tobacco advertising and promotional activities in retail environments.

Discounting and keeping prices low.

Raising the cost of cigarettes is one of the most effective ways to stop people from smoking. That’s why the industry puts a massive amount of resources behind keeping cigarette prices low and ensuring that its target low-income demographic will continue to be able to afford tobacco products.

In 2015, the tobacco industry spent more than 80 percent of its marketing budget, or $7 billion, on discounting practices or lowering the cost of cigarettes. It also spends millions to fight against cigarette tax increases. For example, Big Tobacco raised more than $71 million in 2016 to fund a campaign that defeated California’s ballot initiative to raise the cost of cigarette packs by $2 to an average pack price of $5.53.

It’s no coincidence that states with the lowest cigarette prices also have some of the highest smoking rates. A 2017 Truth Initiative® report on a group of 12 contiguous states with smoking rates on par with a number of developing countries, “Tobacco Nation,” illustrates how low prices and high smoking rates are linked. Cigarette packs, on average, are 19 percent cheaper in Tobacco Nation ($5.48) than in the rest of the U.S. ($6.72). What’s the result? Just compare West Virginia, the state with the highest adult smoking rate, with New York, the state with the highest average price per cigarette pack. Cigarettes cost $10.48 in New York, where 14.2 percent of adults smoke. In West Virginia, where nearly a quarter of adults smoke — a 54 percent higher rate than in New York — a pack of cigarettes costs 45 percent less at $5.77.

A 2017 analysis found that tax hikes of $.71 to $4.63 per cigarette pack could yield an 8 to 46 percent reduction in cigarette use.

Increasing addiction over the past 50-plus years.

The surgeon general’s 2014 report found that the cigarettes today pose an even greater risk of death and disease — specifically lung cancer — than the cigarettes sold when the first surgeon general’s report on smoking was issued in 1964. Why? During the last 50-plus years, the tobacco industry has genetically engineered cigarettes to have twice the amount of nicotine and be even more addictive.

Targeting people in low-income communities with an even more addictive product ensures that they will continue to buy it. The impact of the smoking rate disparity has far-reaching consequences. A 2016 report on the economics of tobacco from the National Cancer Institute and World Health Organization states that “tobacco use accounts for a significant share of the health disparities between the rich and poor” worldwide.

Article from truthinitiative.org
By Nikole Killion

Washington — More than 50 organizations are joining forces to mobilize African American voters for November’s midterm elections, with the coalition announcing the launch of a multi-state voter engagement and organizing effort on Monday.

The National Unity 2022 Black Voting and Power Building Campaign, or Unity 22, will focus on building a broad intergenerational coalition to maximize resources, providing tools to Black voters and fighting back against historic attacks on various rights, according to press releases from the groups.

“It’s not just talking about, this is what’s on the ballot and this is why you should vote, but really literally organizing as we have been doing for the past year,” said Melanie Campbell, president and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation. The organization is leading the campaign along with national and state-based partners like the NAACP, National Urban League, National Action Network, Black Voters Matter, NARAL, Emily’s List and Building Back Together.

Campbell said the groups aim to match or exceed Black voter turnout levels from the 2018 midterms. More than 122 million people cast ballots in 2018’s races, with a 51.4% turnout rate among African Americans, according to the Pew Research Center.

The coalition will kick off a summer of activism in 11 states beginning this week with community events and a call to action on issues ranging from gun safety to voting rights and reproductive rights. It will also include a social media campaign called #RUVoteReady to register and educate voters and a recruitment drive for poll workers and monitors.

“We’re combining our advocacy, if you will, in a real tangible way, because you’re having these attacks that are falling to the states,” Campbell said, citing the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. “The impact is real because on the ground where people are having to deal with this. It plays out when you can’t go to that Planned Parenthood clinic because you go in there for more than an abortion. There are other medical needs.”

She said the campaign is starting with upcoming primaries in Michigan and Ohio. It will also target other key battlegrounds, including Georgia, Florida, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Aides say the group hopes to make more than 1 million Black voter contacts and train more than 500 youth organizers.

“We have to work together to educate our community on how to protect their vote because you have all these voter suppression laws on the books,” Campbell explained, referring to the 19 states that passed restrictions last year. “So this will be the first really national election where we’re going to see the results.”

As President Biden’s approval rating has dropped in recent months, support has also softened among Black voters. A recent Washington Post-Ipsos poll found 7 in 10 approve of the president’s job performance, down 8 percentage points from the previous year. Sixty percent of those surveyed said the Mr. Biden is keeping most of his campaign promises, while 37% said he has not.

“Biden and Harris are not on the ballot,” Campbell countered. “Who’s on the ballot are Congress people ... the governors and state legislatures.”

She said the coalition would target key demographics, especially young people, where support for Mr. Biden has also eroded.

“So really trying to educate and motivate and do a peer-to-peer model of young people really encouraging their peers,” Campbell said. “And yes, there's disappointment, and yes, we have to keep pushing this administration to do, you know, what they promised, and things like that, and that won’t stop.”

Nikole Killion is a congressional correspondent for CBS News based in Washington D.C.
The Politics of Hate: What Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Will Not Address

By Tim Anderson

Initially, this article was intended to be my Dear White People article (not the titled but as the intended audience). But as I began to outline my thoughts it was evident that I was also addressing my base, the African American community. As the victims of four-hundred years of hate we are often called upon to address hate, racism, and racial bias. Never should the burden of ending racism be the burden of those being oppressed. The oppressors did not create hate, they have amplified hate to an egregious level. America is known throughout the world today, before its founding as a country, anchored in the mire of racism and white supremacy.

Words have power. Very few adults are unfamiliar with these derogatory labels; niggas, faggots, spics, chins, and other words that pollute our minds and victimize the community of its target. To reduce the power of hate words the community is referred to themselves by these provocative and insulting labels. Believing that using hate labels in reference to their community reduces or removes the damaging sting of the racist label. I see it very differently, hate labels are poisonous. Originating from a white supremacist culture and being mainstreamed into modern-day vernacular. These labels of hate remain poisonous even when use by victims to self-identified.

By and large, when white people hear these offensive labels spoken by members of their community, there is no rebuke over their use of hate label. Some may consider it a freedom of speech and constitute their right to say anything to anyone no matter how offensive the language. Others may pretend that they did not hear the offensive language. But what is clear, that white people are using hate labels and hate speech more with impunity.

The Trump presidency gave the far-right haters political credibility from the leader of the Republican Party. According to Trump, these haters are “very fine people”. Their demonstration and use of derogatory and racist language has now made its way into the fringes of mainstream. During the Obama presidency, I thought white people (some who would say) haters were not recognized as belonging to any of the major political parties. And of course, Obama receive a record number of death threats during his two-terms, yet he survived two-terms without any publicly visible threat to him and his family. Six years after the end of the Obama presidency and year and a half after the assault on the Capitol, it is certain that one public attempt would have been made by haters.

White supremacy is thriving in America as recently witnessed. A few weeks ago, I received a text from a friend. The tone of the text was alarming and concerning. My friend is a well-balanced, politically progressive black woman (my characterization not hers) and remains actively involved in the treatment of mental health for many years. She shared with me a recent encounter that she witnessed at the Beechwold Post Office on a rainy Saturday morning.

She had just concluded her transaction at the mail clerk’s counter. Behind her was an Arab family presumably the husband, wife and their small child. At the counter were two white female postal clerks who were talking openly, loudly, and derogatorily about the family. Then the employees in the conversation that others in line, left the building before being waited on. My friend stood there not believing what these federal employees while on a federal premise were openly saying about the family.

Once waited on the husband apologized for running late for his appointment regarding his passport issuance. The white postal clerk told the man, he would have to reschedule for another day after being five minutes late for his appointment. He explained that the bad weather and traffic delayed him from arriving on time. This then developed into a direct comment from the federal worker. She began with a senseless verbal assault, a monologue underlined with a white supremacist’s attitude. Telling the customer that he had to take the bad weather and traffic conditions into account and arrived running late and be given the opportunity to process his passport while there and acknowledge that he was five minutes late for his appointment.

Shortly after, he left with his family and returned to tell the clerk that he is being mistreated and discriminated against. He asked the clerk for her manager. She informed him that the manager was not available and on the phone. The man said, “I don’t believe you and her reply are ‘call me a liar’?” His response, “You did not check so how do you know the manager is unavailable?” He asked the clerk for her name and her response was, “What will I call myself today? Call me ‘Amy’ today.”

My friend who witnessed the entire incident became so upset that she filed a complaint against both clerks. As we talked through what she had seen, it was clear that she also felt victimized by the anti-social racist’s behavior. Although what she witnessed was not directed towards her, she felt victimized as well. The other whites in line left the building rather than support the Arab family. In essence sanctioning the clerk’s racist behavior.

The carryover of our conversation was that she has a diverse group of friends; whites, blacks, immigrants, members of the LGBTQ and others. She found that her white friends who were empathetic when she discussed such incidents were not activated to address these all too frequent racist occurrences. If the victim was white and the employee a person of color, would the whites who had left the line, acted in defense of the white customer? Would my friend’s good meaning white friends become more active had the victim been white?

Hate has unintended allies and unintended victims witness these racially charged occurrences. The majority of whites in America sit on the fence when it comes to addressing racism and racial inequity. A small percentage are racists, white supremacists or non-demonstrative supporters of those who hold such contempt. On the other end, a very small percentage of whites actively address the dismantling of white supremacy culture and white privileged status. They are often ostracized for being too radical in their words, thoughts and nonviolent actions. The vast majority of whites the sitting-on-the-fencers, by playing it safe, they will not advocate stronger condemnation to stand on the issue of racism, as a member of the community. The danger that sitting-on-the-fencers present, they are influenced more by the haters and their supporters, leading them to not taking a stance against hate. They become allies to hate, by forfeiting to the sit-on-the-fencers, by playing it safe, they will avoid being socially shunned within their communities. They are often ostracized for being too radical in their words, thoughts and nonviolent actions. The vast majority of whites the sitting-on-the-fencers, by playing it safe, they will not advocate stronger condemnation to stand on the issue of racism, as a member of the community. The danger that sitting-on-the-fencers present, they are influenced more by the haters and their supporters, leading them to not taking a stance against hate. They become allies to hate, by forfeiting to the sit-on-the-fencers, by playing it safe, they will avoid being socially shunned within their communities. They are often ostracized for being too radical in their words, thoughts and nonviolent actions.

Until white people come to a full understanding and complete acceptance of their obligation to end racism in the form of the white supremacy culture and white privilege, this nation will remain affixed to a legacy and a sustaining practice of hate and racial bigotry. Ending racism is an obligation which white America has as the sole beneficiary of this nation’s longstanding plight of racism towards blacks and other people of color. It will remain a moral debt unpaid and collectible until white America fulfills its moral obligations of ending racism.

Here is a simple test to determine where you stand on the issue of racism. “Why can’t we all just get along”. Well, that has been hijacked into a workplace training module addressing racial and social bias training. It is training for the haters, their supporters, and the sitting-on-the-fencers to become less hateful and racially biased. To present the appearance to the people of color and the socially disenfranchised workforce, that its’ organization is striving to eliminate existing and systemic barriers to achieve equity in the workplace.

DEI is a safe place for the sitting-on-the-fencers to examine their biases and not to declare themselves racist or supporter of hate. To mask their complicity these initiatives are often led by people of color who have been socially, economically disenfranchised because of their skin color. But upon closer examination of this initiative, it offers little in improving racial outcomes.

Corporate America has determined that we all need diversity, equity, and inclusion training (DEI). Remember Rodney King, “why can’t we all just get along”. Well, that has been hijacked into a workplace training module addressing racial and social bias training. It is training for the haters, their supporters, and the sitting-on-the-fencers to become less hateful and racially biased. To present the appearance to the people of color and the socially disenfranchised workforce, that its’ organization is striving to eliminate existing and systemic barriers to achieve equity in the workplace.

DEIs often lack quantifiable data,
comparative data, or a road map to addressing the equity gap. Further benchmarks are set very low or are nonexistent holding no one accountable for key deliverables with timetables. Additionally, those directing such initiatives often had little to no prior experience in addressing equity gaps either in the community or in the workplace.

DEIs are corporate entities that grew out of the outreach for the MLK Jr.’s federal holiday and recognizing Black History Month, along with complaints from its workforce of color for internal policies of discrimination and practice. Originally design to address discrimination in the workplace, DEI has merged more into a culturally diverse entities addressing ethnic and social celebrations like MLK Jr. holiday, Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo, and Gay Pride Month to name a few.

DEI is used as a marketing ploy into the black community and other communities of color. Corporations use imagery and text to market itself as a leader in promoting equity in the workplace. To solidify its position, it presents a financial contribution to the hosting community organization of its choosing, or a gift to the community. In return organizations’ DEIs receives gratitude and praise for their efforts in promoting equity in the workplace and in the community.

If hate has become politicized and I believe it has, then DEI initiatives have minimum to no relevancy in eliminating hate, a white supremacy culture or ending white privilege within their respective workplace. The number one objective of all DEI programs should be implementing a dismantling of white supremacy culture in the workplace. Efforts not addressing that foundation becomes irrelevant. From the post office to other public institutions like libraries, colleges and universities, government agencies and the business community, our society has failed to promote meaningful equity solutions. Instead, the status quo is preserved despite the social and political advances achieved more than half a century ago during the civil rights era.

A sizeable number of black people are unaware of DEI and what it means. Those who are aware see DEI initiative as a lackluster effort in addressing racial and social gaps in the workplace. There are some approaches that may have promise, time and outcomes will tell. But by and large, DEI is simply window dressing. And not unlike previous “window dressing initiatives”; as time goes by, DEI becomes unsustainable, because its focus lacks focus. Here is what the USPS says about its DEI initiative posted on their webpage:

The United States Postal Service is committed to a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace where everyone has an opportunity to thrive. As stated in the Postmaster General’s 10-year plan – “Diversity and inclusion is key to our corporate success because it affects every aspect of the organization—employees, customers, and the business.”

Diversity has been a longstanding value and tradition of the Postal Service; we have grown alongside this country and within our communities, and we aspire for our workforce to represent the diverse communities we serve.

Is it possible that the two white clerks at the Beechwold Post Office, “Amy” and “Karen” (my reference to the other unidentified hater) never received this memo? Or maybe they are racial haters and white supremacists whose beliefs and attitudes go well beyond the parameters of an effective DEI training. Certainly, they feel empowered (politically and socially) to publicly expressed their racist attitudes at will. I hope that the Arab family who were victimized by these racists postal employees will receive some redemption from this humiliating experience. It is never too late to make it right. As Dr. King declared more than fifty-five years ago, “The arc of the moral universe is long, and it bends towards justice.”

Well perhaps, this has become my Dear White People article. Plainly speaking, “Step it up white folks, step it up!”

Tim Anderson is a contributing columnist to the Columbus & Dayton African American News Journal. His editorial focus is on social justice reform and health equity. He is the recipient of numerous awards and honors addressing health equity. To reach Tim by email send inquiries to: tim.anderson614@gmail.com.
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This project is supported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling $2.18 million with 100% percent funded by CMS/HHS. The contents are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of nor an endorsement by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

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POLITICS

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
2022 PRIMARY ELECTION...AGAIN

By Senator Charleta B. Tavares (Ret.)

By the time this article is printed and read, the 2022 Primary Election will have been decided once again. This time however, it will only be for Congressional and state Legislative races due to the fiasco created by the Ohio Redistricting Commission with its failure on five separate occasions to meet the dictates of the Ohio Constitution and the Ohio Supreme Court.

In addition, due to the changes in the Congressional and state Legislative district boundaries, Republican and Democratic central committee elections are also on the ballot since these seats follow the state Senate districts. Each state Senate District elects one woman and one man to sit on the state Central Committee. The Ohio Revised Code requires elections for the central committee, which makes up the governing body of the state political parties, to be on the primary ballot. Since there are thirty-three Ohio Senate seats there will be sixty-six members for the Central Committee for both the Democratic and Republican Parties. The length of their terms varies, with Republicans having two-year terms and Democrats having four-year terms. The central committee can choose which candidates to endorse and they are also responsible for selecting party chairs and other officers.

The Ohio Supreme Court on Tuesday, July 19, threw out the district map for the state’s 15 congressional seats and 66 state Senate seats due to the fiasco created by the Ohio Redistricting Commission with its failure on five separate occasions to meet the dictates of the Ohio Constitution and the Ohio Supreme Court.

What happens with the maps long-term?

• The Ohio Supreme Court has ordered the commission to make a sixth try, though that is not expected until at least after the November election and probably next year.

• New maps will not be put in place until 2024.

• A map passed with single-party support, even if upheld by the court, must be redrawn in four years. A map supported by both parties would be valid until the election after the next U.S. census in 2030.

How do I know what district I’m voting in?

• The Secretary of State’s Office released an online tool at findmydistrict.ohiosos.gov allowing people to type in their address and find out which districts they will be voting in this year.

The second Primary Election is expected to cost Ohioans a minimum of $20 million. This election is projected to have an even lower turnout than the abysmal sixteen percent (16%) that voted in the May 2022 Primary Election. Many experts expect a single digit turnout.

The main event this year is the November 8, 2022 General Election where we will see the Gubernatorial race pitting Gov. Mike DeWine against Democrat, Nan Whaley, former Mayor of Dayton, Ohio, the U.S. Senate open seat being vacated by Senator Rob Portman and the statewide offices, Attorney General, Auditor, Secretary of State, and Treasurer. In addition, all now fifteen (15) seats of Congress (Ohio lost one seat due to the loss of residents according to the U.S. Census) with a primary opponent are up for election in the Aug. 2nd Primary Election to be their Party’s standard-bearer to run in the November General Election.

• Although legislative district maps are now in place for a state House and Senate primary election Aug. 2, those district lines (using the third proposed map) are likely to change again before the next primary season.

The last day to register for the November election is October 11, 2022. Early voting for the November 8th General Election starts on October 12th.

Former Sen. Charleta B. Tavares, D-Columbus, is the 1st Democrat and African American woman to serve in the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate from Franklin County. She is also the first African American woman to serve in leadership in the history of Ohio and the 1st Democrat woman to serve in leadership in both the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate (House Minority Whip and Senate Assistant Minority Leader).

The Legislative Update is focused on educating and empowering our African American people specifically and communities of color generally with information in order to advocate for the policies, funding and programs that will improve economic/employment, business, health, education, housing, justice and environment for our residents.

If you are interested in testifying on any of the bills introduced in either the House or Senate, please contact the Chair or Ranking member of the committee who can be found at www.ohiosenate.gov or www.ohr.gov.

Additional Contacts

UPDATE: The Ohio General Assembly sessions and the House and Senate Committees are televised live on WOSU/ WPBO and replays can be viewed at www. ohiochannel.org (specific House and Senate sessions and committee hearings can be searched in the video archives).

If you would like to receive updated information on the Ohio General Assembly and policy initiatives introduced, call or email your state Representative or Senator. The committee schedules, full membership rosters and contact information for the Ohio House and Senate can be found at www. ohiohouse.gov and www.ohiosenate.gov respectively.
WANT CHANGE? VOTE!

By Joanne Lunceford, DSW

The National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc. (NABSW), comprised of people of African ancestry, is committed to enhancing the quality of life and empowering people of African ancestry through advocacy, human services delivery, and research.

NABSW works to create a world in which people of African Ancestry will live free from racial domination, economic exploitation, and cultural oppression. In collaboration with international, national, state, and local entities, NABSW, through its executive, standing, task force, ad-hoc committees, and local chapters, continually leverages its collective expertise to strategically develop the capacity of people of African ancestry to sustain and flourish.

The local chapter, Columbus Association of Black Social Workers (CABSW), is committed to the vision, mission, and work of NABSW. One of the most impactful ways CABSW can live this is by encouraging everyone to get out and vote in the 2022 special and general elections and all subsequent elections. CABSW applauds our community members who educate themselves and others about the importance of voting and become informed on the issues and candidates on the ballot; as well as those who vote regularly and volunteer to help with the elections in any capacity. But CABSW is very aware that many community members have perceived and real barriers to voting. Access is not always easy. It is also a long-acknowledged truth that many, especially those of African ancestry, may not believe in the power of their vote and have lost hope for change, but CABSW wants to change that feeling of disbelief.

Our communities are disproportionately impacted by crime, drug abuse and misuse, social service involvement, poverty, and so many societal ills that it can make anyone believe that our lives do not matter to the mainstream. But we do matter, our communities matter, and our votes matter. Our votes elect officials who create and pass laws for our benefit and to our detriment, determine public safety, how our educational systems work, how the judicial system runs and rules, transportation needs, what gets funded and what does not get funded, and so many other matters that impact our daily lives.

Democracy is not free. The United States of America requires advanced citizenship that goes beyond sitting around and talking about what is wrong with our communities, our townships, our cities, our states, and our nation. It demands that all those who can become registered voters, educated on ballot items, get out and vote, and encourage others to do so as well. Whether by absentee ballot or in the polling stations on Election Day, EVERYONE MUST VOTE! With all that is going on with racial, social, and economic inequalities, environmental injustice, etc. we cannot afford anyone sitting on the sidelines explaining why they will not be voting in ANY upcoming election. Are we going to talk about change or be about change? There is blood on the stickers given out after voting because so many have died for the right to do so.

Social workers aspire to help people to make things better and we choose to believe that we do. CABSW is not endorsing any issues or candidates in the 2022 special or general elections. We are, however, encouraging everyone to vote. We are urging everyone to attend candidate information sessions and do much needed research on issues/candidates and their possible impact. If you are unsure of how to get election information, https://www.vote411.org is an easy to navigate resource. The website shares how to register to vote, information about current voter registration, how to find the accurate polling place, issues and candidates on the ballot, upcoming debates in the area, and much more valuable voting and election information. Make your voice heard so that we ALL can do our part to make things better. We all are responsible for doing our part in building a stronger democracy, and we can with our vote. It is one way, an important way, that we defend our rights and communities.

America will continue to go on whether our community participates and practices civic responsibility or not. It will continue to function whether we make our opinions known through our votes or keep them in our neighborhood venting sessions. Presidents, governors, commissioners, mayors, city council members, and legislators will continue to lead and pass laws on everything from education to child rearing to criminal justice matters to new and raised taxes to social security and welfare benefits to health-related matters to job creation. It’s up to us if our voices are to be heard. CABSW wants you to know your power, exercise your power responsibly, and be the change you desire for our communities. Know there is power in your voice and power in your vote… Know you matter… Know your life matters… Know we matter… Know our communities matter… And know that all our votes are needed and that they all count!

For further information on the Columbus Association of Black Social Workers chapter, email columbusabsw@nabsw.org

Dr. Joanne Lunceford is the Founding Executive Director of The Peace Project. She has also worked as a macro/mezzo social work and criminal justice professional for over 25 years. She has served as an Adjunct Professor of Social Work, an Adjunct Instructor of Criminal Justice, Sociology, and General Studies; as well as Faculty through the Supreme Court of Ohio for the statewide Probation Officer Training Program. She earned her DSW from the University of Southern California, was awarded her MSW from Case Western Reserve University, and obtained her BA from Miami University.
Vice President Kamala Harris appeared at the NAACP convention in Atlantic City on Monday, July 18, declaring that freedom, liberty, and democracy are on the ballot in the upcoming midterm elections.

She implored the large gathering at the Atlantic City Convention Center to make sure that all voices are heard.

“We’re not going to be able to get these days back, so each one of these days we must, with a sense of urgency, ensure that the American people know their voice and their vote matters,” Harris declared.

“It is their voice. The right to vote is something that the leaders of this organization and its founders knew to be at the core of all of the other rights and freedoms to which we are entitled,” she further implored.

“So, we know what we need to do. And, in particular, to protect the freedom to vote and a women’s right to make decisions about her own body, we need people who will defend our rights up and down the ballot, from local sheriffs to governors.”

The vice president received several standing ovations as she spoke of the need to vote. The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), a trade association representing 235 African American-owned newspapers and media companies, has teamed with the Transformative Justice Coalition in an effort to register 10 million more Black voters ahead of the midterm and 2024 general elections.

As Harris arrived in Atlantic City, Mayor Marty Small greeted her as she descended from Air Force Two.

NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson spoke to the vice president and railed against politicians and the U.S. Supreme Court for “the erosion of constitutional freedom, including the right of a woman over her own body.”

Harris also decried the sharp increase in mass shootings and gun violence in the United States.

“There is no reason for weapons of war on the streets of America,” she asserted.

With West Virginia Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin repeatedly stopping the Biden-Harris administration agenda, Harris called on voters to participate in the U.S. Senate election.

“We will not, and the president has been clear, we will not let the filibuster stand in our way of our most essential rights and freedoms,” Harris declared.

“I visited Buffalo, New York, to attend the funeral of an 86-year-old grandmother who went to the grocery store after, as she often did, spending the day with her husband who was in a nursing home – Mrs. Whitfield.”

Harris continued:

“I went to Highland Park, Illinois, where there were strollers and lawn chairs scattered up and down a street where there was supposed to be a parade for July 4th. There – as in Uvalde, Texas; as in Greenwood, Indiana, just last night; and in so many communities across our nation – scenes of ordinary life have been turned into war zones by horrific acts of gun violence.

“Mass shootings have made America a nation in mourning. And it’s not only the mass shootings. We see it in our communities every day, and it is no less tragic or outrageous.”

“Think about it: Black people are 13 percent of America’s population but make up 62 percent of gun homicide victims.

“This issue of the need for reasonable gun safety laws is a real issue when we are talking about the civil right, the right that all communities should have, to live in a place that is safe without weapons of war running those streets.”

She concluded that the number of guns manufactured in the country tripled over the last 20 years. “Today we have more guns in our nation than people,” Harris said.

“Earlier this month, the president signed the first federal gun safety law in nearly 30 years. And it was an important and necessary step. But we need to do more. We must repeal the liability shield that protects gun manufacturers. And we must renew the assault weapons ban.”

Article from blackpressusa.com
**EDUCATION**

**WHY STUDENTS ARE CHOOSING HBCU'S: 4 YEARS BEING SEEN AS FAMILY**

By Erica Green

Many in a generation that grew up with a Black president and Black Lives Matter are embracing Black colleges and universities.

SeKai Parker looked on last spring as her prep school classmates tearfully embraced and bolted out in unison every word of a Kelly Clarkson song.

It was the senior farewell at Holton-Arms in Bethesda, Md., and many of the teens were making college plans that would have them trading one elite, mostly white setting for another. Ms. Parker intended to accept an offer from Yale, which she had fallen in love with on a recent visit. But as she scanned her school auditorium, a familiar sinking feeling washed over her.

“I was sitting there by myself, I didn’t know a single word and I had no one to hold onto,” she recalled.

After school that day, she rushed out to meet her mother and made a life-changing declaration: I’m going to Spelman.

Choosing the historically Black women’s college in Atlanta was surprising for a student who had been determined to reach the Ivy League. Yale was one of 16 institutions, including three Ivies, competing for her to enroll.

But her decision reflects a renaissance in recent years among the nation’s historically Black colleges and universities, where their nurturing mission, increased funding and growing visibility have been drawing a new wave of students.

Once the primary means for Black Americans to get a college education, historically Black colleges and universities, or H.B.C.U.s, now account for just 9 percent of such students. But top-tier H.B.C.U.s — long bastions of Black excellence — as well as others are increasingly becoming the first choice for some of the nation’s most-sought-after talent, according to interviews with dozens of students, guidance counselors, admissions advisers and college officials across the country.

They belong to a generation whose adolescence was shaped not only by the election of the first Black president but also by political and social strife that threatened the lives and liberties of Black Americans. For many families, the embrace of historically Black colleges has been influenced by concerns about racial hostility, students’ feelings of isolation in predominantly white schools and shifting views on what constitutes the pinnacle of higher education.

“College is the time when you’re trying to figure out who you are,” Ms. Parker said in an interview. “It’s impossible to figure that out in a space where you not only feel like you have to assimilate to fit into that space, when they didn’t invite you there or they tolerate you there, but you have to prove that your existence has value.”

In the past few years, the nation’s H.B.C.U.s have experienced a boom. From 2018 to 2021, for example, applications for a cross section of Black schools increased nearly 30 percent, according to the Common App, a platform for students to submit one application to multiple colleges, outpacing the increases of many other schools. Submissions using the Common Black College Application, solely for H.B.C.U.s, are projected to reach 40,000 this year, quadruple the total in 2016. And enrollment has soared at some of the schools, even as it declined nationally.

There is also a growing recognition among policymakers and predominantly white schools of the value of H.B.C.U.s, and the fact that they have long operated at a disadvantage. Federal lawmakers have increased funding for the 101 schools, providing nearly $2 billion since 2017, as well as $2.7 billion this year in pandemic emergency relief. Alumni and philanthropists have donated over a billion dollars in recent years, funding scholarships and programs in science, technology and other fields. In April, Harvard, acknowledging that it had directly benefited from slavery in its early years, announced a faculty and student exchange program with H.B.C.U.s; Princeton soon after unveiled plans for research partnerships with some of the schools.

The groundswell of support has been unparalleled, said Lodriguez Murray, a senior advisor for minority students and the leading advocacy organization for H.B.C.U.s.

“We say this is a renaissance for H.B.C.U.s, but the level of clout and capital the institutions have now is unprecedented,” Mr. Murray said, adding, “Frankly, it is about time.”

Lisa Fuller, the owner of College Primed, a college advising firm, noticed the new surge of interest in the schools around 2015, as protests erupted in the streets and on college campuses, when many more parents requested that she add H.B.C.U.s to their children’s lists of college applications.

“Families started to look and become introspective about ‘Where are we sending our kids?’ and started to search for safe heavens,” she said.

“Students asked, ‘Do I go somewhere where it’s sink or swim, or do I go somewhere where everybody’s swimming with me?’”

When it came time for her son to apply to colleges, Dr. Makunda Abdul-Mbacke thought it was settled: She had gone to Yale as an undergraduate and medical student, and earned a master’s in public health from Harvard. Her son, Khadin Mbacke, was on the radar of Ivy League and other highly selective schools.

“When we talked about what schools we were interested in, he said he wanted to look at Morehouse and Howard, and I was like, ‘What?’” she recalled.

She had imagined him in New Haven, eating in the same dining halls and studying in the same classrooms she had. But she realized how different his experience as a Black male would be from hers as a young woman in the 1970s, when hard-won gains of the Civil Rights movement were taking hold.

Mr. Mbacke was 16 when neo-Nazis rallied in Charlottesville in August 2017, marching with torches on the University of Virginia, a school he was considering. Violence broke out the next day, leaving one woman dead. At his rural Virginia high school, he noticed overwhelmingly white enrollment in advanced placement courses. “One of the main things was that to be Black and smart, for some reason they tried to make it like those two things couldn’t coexist,” he said.

Then in 2019, a tour guide at the University of Pittsburgh pointed out a blue light emergency alarm system for students to summon security. The beacon was supposed to symbolize safety. For Mr. Mbacke, though, it conjured thoughts of a different outcome should his towering presence on campus ever be seen as a threat.

“He’s 6-foot-3,” his mother said. “That’s the description of every Black man they put on the news.”

But after seeing Morehouse College in Atlanta, he was beaming, she recalled.

“His coming-of-age has been Mike Brown and Trayvon Martin and all the litany of young Black men that looked like him that have been killed too soon and taken away from their mothers and their families,” Dr. Abdul-Mbacke said. “There’s no golden key, no golden ticket when you’re Black in America,” she added. “You’re going to have to work hard, and if you can have a fair chance then you go for it. And he found that space.”

The Missouri Effect

America’s first Black college, called the African Institute, was opened in Philadelphia in 1837 by a Quaker philanthropist. Later renamed Cheyney University, it had a mission to train teachers and prepare workers for trades. After the Civil War, it was settled: She had gone to Yale as an undergraduate and medical student, and earned a master’s in public health from Harvard. Her son, Khadin Mbacke, was on the radar of Ivy League and other highly selective schools.

Continued from Page 18
College leaders were falling short in supporting Black students, he said. “That allowed H.B.C.U.s to revolutionize the way they could tell their story.”

Dr. Kimbrough said the schools reassigned themselves as the “original safe spaces” for Black students, cultivating both their intellects and their spirits. In 2016, the year after the Missouri protests, and with Donald J. Trump campaigning for the White House, some schools saw record increases in freshman enrollment, from 22 percent at Dillard to 49 percent at Shaw University in North Carolina.

“In the Black community, we’re really seeing a change in addressing mental health. I think parents are more sensitive now to what it means for their kids to traverse these worlds, of what it means to be Black in all these different spaces,” said Michelle A. Purdy, an associate professor of education at Washington University in St. Louis and author of “Transforming the Elite: Black Students and the Desegregation of Private School.”

Spencer Jones, 21, a rising Dillard senior with his sights set on law school, recalled the support he had received. During the protests after George Floyd’s murder in 2020, he said, a professor emailed students over the summer to check on their well-being, and last year class discussions centered on the pandemic’s disproportionate toll on African Americans. “It gave us a deeper sense of what it means to be Black, going to an H.B.C.U. at this time, that we really couldn’t have gotten anywhere else,” he said.

Mr. Mbacke, the Morehouse student, often passes two campus landmarks: a statue of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the tomb of that civil rights leader’s mentor, Dr. Benjamin Mays, Morehouse’s sixth president.

“Every day we actually walk the same steps as them,” said Mr. Mbacke, a physics major who just finished his third year at the school, which had record enrollment last year and like its neighbor, Spelman, is a top-ranked H.B.C.U.

“You’re directly investing in a Black-centric atmosphere. You’re doing your part, no matter how small it may seem. You’re changing the world, no matter whether you can see it or not.”

The renewed appeal of H.B.C.U.s is particularly notable among middle- and upper-class Black parents who attended elite, predominantly white schools, said Sammy Redd, a college counselor and Yale graduate. He spent years steering students to those schools with the same message he heard growing up, he said: “The Ivies were the mountaintop.”

But then some Generation X parents, who had pushed through doors that were shut to their own parents, began redefining what “the best” meant — and reckoning with the implications of their past choices.

Referring to the historically Black colleges, Dr. Redd said, “There was this sense that these institutions who nurtured our people didn’t get anything back.” He added, “Those parents were asking themselves, ‘Do we have an obligation and responsibility to support them?’”

For Gabrielle Armstrong, a competitive student in Durham, N.C., the answer was yes. Ms. Armstrong, 18, whose grandparents were H.B.C.U. graduates and whose parents went to Yale, had long dreamed of attending Duke University in her hometown. But ultimately she opted not to apply, and decided on Elizabeth City State University, a small North Carolina H.B.C.U. She’ll start in the fall.

“Fear of mine was going to an H.B.C.U. and not having a lot of resources,” she said. “But I realized that if I want other Blacks to have a first-class education at an H.B.C.U., part of that is me going to one, graduating and giving back.”

“I figured I have the rest of my life to be treated like a minority, to fight to be seen as human,” she added. “I might as well spend four years being seen as family.”

$2 Billion vs. $200 Billion

Unlike their mostly white counterparts, H.B.C.U.s still carry the burdens of the country’s original sin. They overwhelmingly serve students from low-income households and those who have borne the brunt of an inequitable K-12 system. The schools have long been underfunded — and typically charge lower tuition — compared with predominantly white colleges, and most don’t have a pipeline of rich donors.

In fiscal year 2020, the 10 largest H.B.C.U. endowments totaled $2 billion, compared with $200 billion for the top 10 predominantly white institutions, as reported by the schools.

Many smaller H.B.C.U.s have struggled or buckled in recent years under financial strains, enrollment pressures or, in extreme cases, losing accreditation that ensured federal funding and credibility.

Even Howard, the prestigious Washington school long known as “the Black Harvard” — offering disciplines from literature to medicine, consistently ranking among the best H.B.C.U.s — has faced challenges. Last fall, Howard students held sit-ins and slept in tents to protest housing shortages and poor living conditions in the dorms, a concern shared at many H.B.C.U.s with aging buildings. After a standoff of over a month, students reached an agreement with the school and ended the protest.

At the same time, Howard has seen the renewed favor for H.B.C.U.s. Undergraduate enrollment climbed 26 percent between 2019 and 2021, students following in the path of alumni who include the Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, Vice President Harris and the award-winning actor Chadwick Boseman.

Professors, alumni and admirers of the school call it “The Mecca,” harnessing the power of its history, its community and the talent within it.

The writer Ta-Nehisi Coates, an alum who extolled The Mecca in his book “Between the World and Me,” and Nikole Hannah-Jones, the Pulitzer-winning Times journalist who conceived of “The 1619 Project,” inspired pride on campus when they chose to join the faculty last year over other teaching opportunities: He
left N.Y.U.; she turned down the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, where an internal battle broke out over a refusal to offer her tenure. “For too long, Black Americans have been taught that success is defined by gaining entry to and succeeding in historically white institutions,” she wrote in a statement. “I have done that, and now I am honored and grateful to join the long legacy of Black Americans who have defined success by working to build up their own.”

Their appointments also brought nearly $20 million from the Knight, MacArthur and Ford Foundations and an anonymous donor. It was one of several high-profile gifts to H.B.C.U.s in recent years from philanthropists and organizations seeking to remedy educational and racial inequities. The donations included more than $100 million from the Netflix founder Reed Hastings; more than $500 million from MacKenzie Scott, including $40 million to Howard; and $10 million from the Karsh Family Foundation to endow a Howard program in STEM — science, technology, engineering and math — fields where Black students have been historically underrepresented.

Five years ago, the school’s provost, Anthony Wutoh, invited 100 top-performing high school students to campus to pitch them the program. Like others, it offered full scholarships, a network and resources that could catapult them to the country’s top graduate and professional programs. (Over much of the past two decades, Howard has sent at least as many Black students to science and engineering Ph.D. programs as Stanford, M.I.T., Harvard and Yale combined, according to the National Science Foundation.)

But it offered something more: It was created specifically for bright Black students like them who had felt isolated in mostly white science settings.

“You could just see this sense of relief,” the provost recalled. “There was this sense of, ‘I could just be myself, and just focus on doing as well as I could academically,’ and not wonder, ‘Do I belong here?’ or not have to wonder, ‘Do people feel like I earned my way here?’”

The Karsh STEM Scholars program is adding new luster to Howard’s profile in the sciences; its faculty once included Charles Drew, a surgeon whose research laid the foundation for the first blood transfusions, and Ernest Just, a renowned cell biologist. And it is helping provide a competitive edge over schools including Cornell, Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, and U.N.C.-Chapel Hill, according to a Times survey and interviews.

Jazmine Grant, a Karsh scholar who graduated this spring, said choosing Howard came down to one distinguishing factor: “an environment that was targeted toward Black excellence.”

Now bound for an M.D.-Ph.D program at The University of Texas in Houston, she was president of Howard’s chapter of the National Council of Negro Women, started by Mary McLeod Bethune — a civil rights activist whose footsteps she hopes to follow.

“Howard developed my confidence,” Ms. Grant said. “I’m going to be prepared in academia, and in my Black womanhood — knowing any space that I enter into, I can make a change, I can bring forth new ideas, I can bring what I learned to where I’m about to go.”

‘A Challenge to the System’
The 911 call came in January, describing bombs placed in Spelman’s hallways — one of dozens of such threats against H.B.C.U.s over two months. “I had picked this school, this university, because of this reason,” the caller said. “There are too many Black students in it.”

Ms. Parker was halfway through her freshman year when that threat was phoned in, captured a recording later made public. “It was really hard to hear, but it’s the reality,” she said. It was also a jarring reminder of why H.B.C.U.s came to exist in the first place. “Here my everyday existence is a challenge to the system,” Ms. Parker added.

In the present-day movement toward the schools are echoes of the hardships Black people in America have faced going back centuries, said Honorée Fanonne Jeffers, an award-winning author and an alumna of Talladega College, a small H.B.C.U. in Alabama. Her novel, “The Love Songs of W.E.B. DuBois,” is a coming-of-age story that follows a young woman to a historically Black college and unparalleled generations of her family history.

Ms. Jeffers, whose mother and two sisters are Spelman graduates, and whose father taught at Howard and Morehouse, drew a connection to the forebears of today’s students: enslaved people brought to the country, clinging together in the bottom of ships. They managed to survive the unthinkable and stay connected to one another.

“The entire African American story is about seeking to maintain community,” Ms. Jeffers said. “So it should not come as a surprise that the descendants of these people from so many centuries ago are still seeking community.”

Ms. Parker, though she is still haunted by the bomb threat, sees reminders throughout campus that she belongs. In Fish Fry Fridays, where food that kids she grew up with would have scorned as “unhealthy and gross,” she said, here represents “fellowship among Black people.” In the wellness center pool, where the chemicals are adjusted to be gentle on Black hair, in classes led by Black male teachers, after not encountering a single one in all her school before. In the siblinghood of “Morehouse brothers” and “Spelman sisters.”

“Everything I thought I loved about loving Blackness has completely turned around,” she said. “Learning about my people, from my people, with my people, is such a powerful experience.”

Being at Spelman has been both empowering and humbling. The school, which last year received more applications than ever before, is a standout in the sciences. Ms. Parker, 19 and on the pre-med track, was accepted into a prestigious summer research program at the University of Pennsylvania. But she lost out on a coveted spot in a program at Vanderbilt to a classmate — a reminder that she’s no longer the only smart Black student in the room.

She recalled how her white high school classmates had reacted when she chose Spelman. Students had a “we don’t go there” attitude about H.B.C.U.s, she said. And they couldn’t fathom how she had gotten into Yale, let alone how she could turn it down.

But she could tell soon after arriving on campus that she had made the right decision. She and her new friends were driving and singing along to the R&B group Jodeci. Unlike that day back in the prep school auditorium, this time she knew every word.

Erica L. Green is a correspondent with the NYT Times in Washington covering education and education policy.
All of us confront “defining moments” or experiences that unilaterally and indelibly alter how we think and act.

For Columbus Urban League (CUL) President and CEO Stephanie Hightower, the past two years ushered in traumatic challenges and transformative opportunities that leave her, and the organization, forever changed.

It started with the health, economic, educational and social tsunami that was COVID. The 104-year-old organization she leads for more than a decade had long relied on face-to-face coaching and classroom-style training to serve clients. How and where they worked, what they did and how they delivered it, where the funding and partners and allies came in—all of it had to change. And instantly.

Then, just two months after the lockdown, she found herself staring unbelievably at her television, watching the gut-wrenching “I can’t breathe” last minutes of George Floyd’s life. The horror and trauma of the Floyd murder echoed and compounded the trauma of the murder of a Black man caused a national explosion.

TRAUMA RESURFACES
For Hightower and so many others, what happened to George Floyd was horrible, brutal and not an isolated incident.

As a mother, she had repeatedly engaged in “driving while black” conversations with her son, Cameron. As a wife, her husband was rocked by overt racism he heard while door-to-door campaigning during her first campaign for the Columbus Board of Education. As an Olympic hurdler and over her long career in leadership of U.S. Track and Field and World Athletics, she witnessed racism in all its forms across the world.

She had already planned a November 2020 Empowerment Day event designed to make racial inequities real to people who had not personally felt it. She intended to feature A Thousand Cuts, a virtual reality experience in which participants become a young Black man. They feel his pain and indignation over disparate treatment by teachers in pre-school, nearly violent police behavior in high school, and nonchalantly biased potential employers as a young adult.

Even against this backdrop, the world shifted churned up new questions. For example, Nick Bankston, then President of CUL’s Young Professionals (YP) group, asked that CUL endorse a “Black Out” day. Young men and women would deliberately not work for one day as a means of expressing their own peaceful protest and demands for reform. Hightower agreed and joined a news conference with the YPs. She also fielded several calls from unhappy employers.

“It was a tough decision, but I still believe it was the right one,” she says. “We were dealing with COVID, white supremacists were infiltrating some of the protests, policing tactics were questionable, it just wasn’t a safe choice for many people. But they still wanted to be heard.”

She paired up with the National Urban League, sister organizations like the NAACP, and members of the ENC to speak out on policing issues, civilian review boards, voters’ rights, responsive schools, eviction prevention and economic relief for frontline workers, among others.

GOOD CRISIS
As COVID-19 began raging, Hightower talked with a trusted advisor about how CUL should respond to the pandemic. The final answer echoed the words of Winston Churchill who, when launching the United Nations after the end of World War II, said “we let a good crisis go to waste.”

“No one ever seeks out traumatic events,” explained Hightower. “Especially not viruses that kill people, slam the brakes on our economy, isolate our families and send addiction, anxiety and depression soaring. We couldn’t change the situation we faced. So, we changed how we faced it.”

Hightower and her leadership team slammed CUL into high gear—and not just in terms of adding Microsoft Teams to their laptops and more forms to request services from their website. They dug in to shift an agency known as a holistic resource into a holistic resource AND an emergency front-line provider.

“We pumped out rental assistance to keep people in their homes, navigated landlord-tenant disputes, placed emergency food boxes in car trunks, hosted vaccination clinics, dreamed up virtual afterschool programming for kids, advocated for PPP and other funding supporting small businesses and made sure people just released from incarceration had masks, food and other necessities,” she says. “Our team fielded thousands of calls and worked around the clock. Sometimes they fought to stay awake long enough to coherently finish a client interview.”

COVID, like many other crises, disproportionately impacted people of color. Hightower saw an urgent need for greater collaboration among public, private and nonprofit leaders who cared about Black and underserved communities. She convened weekly calls with what became the Equity Now Coalition, (ENC) a group that now extends to as many as 250 participants. Members share information, work together on larger community issues, collect and analyze data and advocate for reform.

Then, in the midst of these hyper-speed efforts to help families stabilize and survive, the murder of a Black man caused a national explosion.

The Columbus & Dayton African American • August 2022

Cover Story

Defining Transformation: Years of Change for Stephanie Hightower and Columbus Urban League

Stephanie Hightower, President & CEO of the Columbus Urban League

Continued on Page 21
Then, both passed away within weeks of one another in late 2020.

“Nothing prepares you,” she says. “Losing them during COVID felt even more lonely. I’m so grateful for the outpouring of love and support I received. It got me through.”

She also gained new support for CUL and its work.

NEW DOORS OPEN

One long-standing barrier to CUL’s success that Hightower and others spent years trying to overcome was philanthropic redlining, the documented reality that Black-led, Black-serving organizations receive far less funding for basic operations and infrastructure. Not only does this translate into the inability to pay staff well, it means there are no dollars for functions critical to effective operations, such as technology and communications.

“As an anchor institution in the community, being marginalized for so long, we didn’t have capacity,” she explains. “Our employees were disgruntled; our funders were unhappy. Everyone thought we should do more. But, it’s like, I write a proposal for $300,000. Then, I get $50,000 accompanied by outcomes measures that may or may not be realistic for the clients we serve.”

The trauma of 2020 laid bare this disparate reality—and created new openings to address it. The leadership of the Columbus Foundation made an unprecedented, unrestricted $500,000 gift to CUL. Other funders followed, including asking about the real cost of service delivery and what they should realistically expect from their donation.

Hightower embraced the positive change and has begun making investments in people that will lead CUL to becoming “an employer of choice.” Staff salaries for full-time employees now start at $50,000 a year.

“How can I ask people to increase the earning power of our families, to propel people into the middle class, if they’re not earning middle-income salaries themselves?” she asks. “We have a new generation of people who are well-educated and have valuable lived experiences. They can achieve great things. They are not willing to compromise themselves, however. They expect and deserve to be compensated and appreciated.”

CUL also has implemented new self-care days. Any employee with a year or more of service can earn up to two self-care days per month, days to get well-needed rest or take care of their families and responsibilities.

“We ask our employees to be the best coaches, best educators, best supporters our clients will ever find,” she adds. “That means they need to be their best selves every day.”

She believes today’s CUL must be a conduit for economic mobility – ensuring everyone can maximize their earning power – and an incubator of an inclusive economy. “Everybody wins, when everybody’s in.”

This translates into a myriad of other changes as well, starting with workforce development programs aimed at preparing people for jobs with higher wages and greater opportunity for advancement.

“This is about my passion for what Black and underserved populations deserve,” she says. “Mediocrity isn’t acceptable. Our community should set high expectations and be clear about what all of us need to succeed.”

The tragedies and the blessings of the last two years may just make Hightower’s dream a reality.

In all, between March 2020 and March 2022, CUL earned more than $19 million in financial support and completed more than 150,000 community interactions. They:

• channeled $1.3 million to ensure that over 1,200 Columbus wage-earners with COVID didn’t go broke because they got sick.
• helped host 25 clinics, completing more than 1,000 vaccinations.
• tapped over $2.1 million in rental and mortgage assistance and kept more than 900 families in their homes.
• provided winter coats to 1,437 kids and emergency food to 6,000 families.
• engaged nearly 3,000 youth with academic offerings, behavioral health interventions and $510,000 in paid work experiences.
• continued providing training and support to 500-plus people looking to move into the middle class through careers in skilled trades and logistics.
• shared more than $8.5 million in recovery funds with 7,000 black-owned businesses, creating or saving 2,750 jobs.
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3. Store ammunition in a separate locked container out of the reach and sight of children.
4. Use combination locks and barrels, or safes, that use fingerprint recognition locks. Keep the combination secret.
5. If a family member or loved one is in crisis and may be a risk to themselves or others, consider temporarily removing firearms from your home.

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Imagine the headline: The President & CEO of the Columbus Urban League (CUL) recently spent two intense days with her executive team – and she cried.

Were these solo drops of frustration or anger? Not at all. Nearly all of CUL’s leadership shed some tears during the organization’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) retreat. It seemed an appropriate response and release once participants were invited to be vulnerable and real. The experience also magnetized and energized the team. Staff left with a heightened sense of connection and trust and a greater willingness to collaborate and innovate.

In these days of the Great Resignation and a whole new crop of younger employees with differing expectations, DEI principles belong in every workplace. They open eyes and change minds. And they are critical to fostering an organization that seizes short-term opportunities while sustaining a long-term mission.

Consulting firm McKinsey & Company’s latest research emphasizes the essential value of a work environment that is “...conducive to the often vulnerable process of learning and also expertly designed.” Thanks to the thoughtful design and facilitation of DEI expert Dr. Rachel-Yvonne Talton, CUL staff could unmask all artifices, explore their biases and grow individually and as a team. Yes, you read that correctly. Staff from CUL, a 104-year-old advocacy organization dedicated to social justice and racial equity, staff who are some of the most culturally-authentic professionals skilled and schooled in economic mobility – they engaged in, and learned from, a DEI retreat.

The initial impetus for the retreat traces to a foundational commitment to transparency and accountability. How can CUL challenge others for being blind to inherent biases if we haven’t confronted our own short-sightedness?

Humans tend to judge quickly. As Dr. Rachel reminds, if you have a brain, you have a bias. Making fast assumptions about someone based upon appearance, behavior or immediate surroundings is a thoroughly human reaction, a holdover from how we survived and evolved by sensing danger thousands of years ago.

But old mindsets can be significant impediments to accurate perception and equitable action. This is true, even when you are part of a marginalized group subjected to inequities based upon race, gender or other factors. In fact, marginalized people may rightfully feel personally victimized by past practices, burdening them with a crippling load of trauma from injustice and misunderstandings from unexamined prejudices.

CUL confronted some of those prejudices several years ago when we dedicated our annual Empowerment Day to highlighting the sobering similarities between rural and urban poverty. Rural people in poverty are primarily Caucasian. Urban folks who deal with poverty are predominately Black and people of color. Sadly though, the disadvantages they encounter are strikingly similar, whether in education, health, crime, addiction or generational poverty. Their odds of attaining economic mobility are significantly more circumscribed even before pre-school.

The event was powerful and worth remembering. Especially so in this post-COVID, post-George Floyd, post-January 6th insurrection and post-André Hill era. Our shared similarities and our misplaced judgments both need a strong dose of sunlight.

So, CUL put itself under a microscope to gain at least six specific benefits:

- **Advance our mission.** We exist to advance Black and Brown and underserved communities. We must get this right.
- **Enhance our culture.** Fulfilling our mission starts by serving our employees. They deserve and perform best in a culture that values them and their contributions.
- **Honor our funding.** We are blessed with generous, committed funders and donors who fuel our work. They rightfully expect us to talk and walk consistently.
- **Respect our clients.** We succeed by providing compassionate coaching and best-in-class services respectfully and responsively – even when we touch the community 157,000 times as we did during the pandemic.
- **Encourage innovation.** Dr. Rachel points to an absolute, causal relationship between DEI and innovation. This fact has been proven repeatedly by objective research at institutions like the Design School at Stanford University.
- **Demonstrate our leadership.** The community counts on us to champion justice and equity. We must be the leaders we want to see.

Finally, one more crucial benefit accrues to entities that intentionally celebrate diversity: success. Numerous surveys document that companies and organizations led by a diverse mix of people achieve the highest returns.

We won’t stop here. DEI cannot be a one-and-done strategy. It calls for an on-going series of thoughtful actions, conscious reflection and consistent reinforcement. Just as every marathon starts with a single step, CUL can now enthusiastically share that, we, too, have stretched out our stride with immediate positive outcomes.

Join us. Start wherever you can. Initiate a DEI assessment, conduct a review of your cultural competency or take a fresh look at your employee on-boarding process. Analyze how companies and organizations led by a diverse mix of people achieve the highest returns.

A few tears may be more than worth it.
COLUMBUS, OHIO On August 6, 2022, The Partnering in Negating Statistics (P.I.N.S.) for Black Women Initiative and the African American Male Wellness Agency partnered to present ‘Uplift Her’ at St. Charles Preparatory School. ‘Uplift Her’ is a day focused on highlighting women’s health disparities, and closing the health gap, especially for women of color.

The day of holistic wellness for women of color includes free screenings for common health concerns like glucose levels and high blood pressure, as well as women’s health screenings. Attendees also have the opportunity to participate in group workouts, receive free fitness resources and free COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. U.S. Congresswoman Joyce Beatty joined attendees and honorees at the event in support of the work being done.

“It is not uncommon for women of color to be effected by diseases and health concerns at higher rates,” said Dr. Timiya Nolan, assistant professor at The Ohio State University College of Nursing and director of the Partnering in Negating Statistics (P.I.N.S.) for Black Women Initiative that co-hosts the annual ‘Uplift Her’ event. “This event is bringing in partners focused on helping communities that often face disparities to challenge the status quo that is creating such unequal outcomes for all women, and especially women of color.”

Women of color are at the most risk for death related to heart disease and breast cancer. It’s exactly these kinds of gaps that inspired the team behind the ‘Uplift Her’ signature event to offer education, resources, and access to women’s health screenings.

‘Uplift Her’ was designed to extend the life expectancy of women of color by providing health education, support and resources to women, organizations and communities of color. The event is a collaboration between sponsors in the healthcare field and community partners. The event also honors those on the front lines of healthcare inequality who are fighting for equal access for all women. By highlighting the gender inequity in healthcare and creating an open space for accessibility, ‘Uplift Her’ hopes to inspire more organizations and partners to continue to create equal opportunities in the health and wellness space for all women.

About ‘Uplift Her’
‘Uplift Her’ is a day of holistic wellness for women of color offering free services, activities and resources. Presented by the Partnering in Negating Statistics (P.I.N.S) for Black Women Initiative and the African American Male Wellness Agency, the mission of ‘Uplift Her’ is to close the gap in women’s health, especially for women of color who are at most risk for heart disease and breast cancer. As an initiative, ‘Uplift Her’ is designed to extend the life expectancy of women of color by providing health education, support and resources to women, organizations and communities of color.

For more information contact Sam Cejda – 402.560.6642 (m) 614.484.9100 (O), Lauryn Lipscomb – 614.822.5228 (m) 614.484.9100 (O) at The Saunders PR Group
By Edward D. Melillo, PhD

On a crisp autumn morning in 1908, an elegantly dressed African American man strode back and forth among the pin oaks, magnolias and silver maples of O’Fallon Park in St. Louis, Missouri. After placing a dozen dishes filled with strawberry jam atop several picnic tables, biologist Charles Henry Turner retreated to a nearby bench, notebook and pencil at the ready.

Following a midmorning break for tea and toast (topped with strawberry jam, of course), Turner returned to his outdoor experiment. At noon and again at dusk, he placed jam-filled dishes on the park tables. As he observed, honeybees (Apis mellifera) were reliable breakfast, lunch and dinner visitors to the sugary buffet. After a few days, Turner stopped offering jam at midday and sunset, and presented the treats only at dawn. Initially, the bees continued appearing at all three times. Soon, however, they changed their arrival patterns, visiting the picnic tables only in the mornings.

This simple but elegantly devised experiment led Turner to conclude that bees can perceive time and will rapidly develop new feeding habits in response to changing conditions. These results were among the first in a cascade of groundbreaking discoveries that Turner made about insect behavior.

Across his distinguished 33-year career, Turner authored 71 papers and was the first African American to have his research published in the prestigious journal Science. Although his name is barely known today, Charles Henry Turner was a pioneer in studying bees and became one of the greatest entomologists of the 20th century. (Photo courtesy of Charles Abramson)

Turner went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Cincinnati, and he became the first African American to receive a doctorate in zoology from the University of Chicago. Turner’s cutting-edge doctoral dissertation, “The Homing of Ants: An Experimental Study of Ant Behavior,” was later excerpted in the September 1907 issue of the Journal of Comparative Neurology and Psychology.

Despite his brilliance, Turner was unable to secure long-term employment in higher education. The University of Chicago refused to offer him a job, and Booker T. Washington was too cash-strapped to hire him at the all-Black Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Alabama.

Following a brief stint at the University of Cincinnati and a temporary position at Clark College (now Clark Atlanta University), Turner spent the remainder of his career teaching at Sumner High School and became one the greatest entomologists of the 20th century. At Gaines High School, he led his all-Black class, securing his place as valedictorian.

Turner’s astounding range of findings from three decades of experiments established his reputation as an authority on the behavioral patterns of bees, cockroaches, spiders and ants.

As a scientific researcher without a university position, he occupied an odd niche. In large part, his situation was the product of systemic racism. It was also a result of his commitment to training young Black students in science.

Alongside his scientific publications, Turner wrote extensively on African American education. In his 1902 essay “Will the Education of the Negro Solve the Race Problem?” Turner contended that trade schools were not the pathway to Black empowerment. Instead, he called for widespread public education of African Americans in all subjects: “if we cast aside our prejudices and try the highest education upon both white and Black, in a few decades there will be no Negro problem.”

Turner was only 56 when he died of acute myocarditis, an infectious heart inflammation. He was survived by two children and his second wife, Lillian Porter.

Turner’s scientific contributions endure. His articles continue to be widely cited, and entomologists have subsequently verified most of his conclusions.

Despite the colossal challenges he faced throughout his career, Charles Henry Turner was among the first scientists to shed light on the secret lives of bees, the winged pollinators that ensure the welfare of human food systems and the survival of Earth’s biosphere.

Edward D. Melillo is a Professor of History and Environmental Studies at Amherst College. He is a contributing writer to theconversation.com
Some community members will attribute the phenomenon of Black Boys dying from reckless and lethal behaviors to the typical ‘Boys Will Be Boys’ argument regarding innate differences between boys and girls. In other words, they will intuitively reference a body of research that has consistently demonstrated that men and boys participate in a more reckless and lethal behaviors compared to women and girls regardless of race or ethnicity. For these community members, the solution is simply for parents to exercise more control and to do a better job and be accountable for their children’s bad behavior. While other community members, particularly community activists and religious leaders, will point to the significant amount of trauma that the Black community has been exposed to during the COVID-19 pandemic and the period now referred to as the "Racial Reckoning." For these community members, the cumulative amount of trauma that African Americans in Ohio and across the country have been exposed to reflected in the escalating homicide rates due to gun violence, the police killings of unarmed black men, and the disproportionate amount of suffering experienced by African Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic, are the main reasons why black youth, and particularly black boys are engaging in such behaviors. For these community members, the solution is more community involvement, structure, resources, and accountability from the city, county, and state. While elements of both these points of view are undoubtedly true, particularly when you listen to the macho attitudes toward violence expressed by some of the Kia Boys in other cities, neither of these perspectives adequately convey the magnitude of suffering and despair hidden behind these behaviors.

Black men and Black boys are losing hope at a staggering rate in American Society. One study reported that Black men had the highest increase in suicide attempts (162.4% between 1991 and 2019) when compared to all other racial and ethnic groups. That same study showed a 62.1% increase in suicide attempts for Black women. A report by the Congressional Black Caucus noted that while the suicide rate for high-school aged Black boys and Black girls both rose 73% between 1991 -2017, the injury rate for Black boys rose by 122%. Taken as a whole, what makes the experiences of Black men and Black boys different from any other group is that Black men and Black boys are exposed to a significant amount of trauma and an unparalleled amount of unaddressed grief at the same time.

Trauma and grief are often thought of as being one and the same, but there are important differences. Trauma symptoms, for example, are more associated with fear and anxiety and lead to an experience of more stress related symptoms like hypervigilance and constantly feeling on edge. Grief symptoms, on the other hand, are more associated with loss and yearning and lead to an experience of more mood symptoms like sadness and numbness. Perhaps the biggest difference between trauma and grief is the change in meanings toward life and death after the experience of loss. If you have ever lost a loved one to cancer or some other horrible disease you come to understand quickly that not all deaths are the same and that there is a profound difference between the experience of death and the experience of dying. Thus, after the loss of a loved one, it is not unusual for people to develop an attitude and bitterness toward life and a sense of futility toward death. Maya Angelou perfectly captured how devastating this could be for Black youth when she lamented, “There is nothing so pitiful as a young cynic because he has gone from knowing nothing to believing nothing.” Given the research which now shows that Black youth under age 13 are approximately twice as likely to die by suicide compared to their White counterparts, we can ill afford to ignore what loss means to the hearts and minds of Black youth.

Too often we focus on trauma and not enough on grief. The clinical and cultural lack of attention to grief has had a devastating impact on the African American community. Unaddressed grief can cause a constellation of symptoms and lead to reckless and lethal behaviors. Who is to say that the deep yearning, numbness, need to feel a sense of belonging and attachment, anger, lack of impulse control, and lack of belief in the future are not the direct result of the severe sense of loss Black youth are exposed to?

We owe it to our youth to go beyond easy explanations for bad behaviors and offer different solutions to address their need besides the typical criminal justice system response like Operation Game Over. To address this issue there is a significant need for cultural competency training so that professionals are able to deal with the unique experiences of black youth. There is also a profound need for early mental health intervention for black youth. Research shows that 50% of all mental illness happens before age 14, which is why Male Behavioral Health Counseling & Consultation Services, LLC will be initiating a middle school male mental health initiative this Fall. As critically important as early intervention is, we cannot stop there. Research also shows that 50% of youth above age 14 with a mental illness drop out of high school. Therefore, we must also direct attention and resources to supporting the mental health needs of high-school age Black youth.

Finally, recent studies report that Black students were most likely to say their parents or guardians don’t take their mental health concerns seriously, and Black students were also the most likely to say their school mental health professional, “might not understand me or the challenges I am having” due to racial or ethnic differences. The result is that only one-third of Black youth with major depression received treatment compared to approximately 50% of white youth. Clearly, there must be a concerted effort to increase the number of minority clinicians in the behavioral health workforce to increase access and reduce disparities to mental health treatment.

The bottom line is this: If we only respond to the behaviors and not their causes, we will be adding to the traumatic loss that many Black youth already feel.

Jewel Wood is the Founder and Clinical Director of the Male Behavioral Health Counseling & Consulting Services, LLC.
By Ray Miller

A Way Out of No Way - Memoir of Truth, Transformation and the New American Story
By Raphael G. Warnock

Senator Reverend Raphael G. Warnock occupies a singular place in American life. As senior pastor of Atlanta’s Ebenezer Baptist Church, and now as a senator from Georgia, he is the rare voice who can call out the uncomfortable truths that shape contemporary American life and, at a time of division, summon us all to a higher moral ground. A powerful preacher and a leading voice for voting rights and democracy, Senator Warnock has a once-in-a-generation gift to inspire and lead us forward. A Way Out of No Way tells his remarkable story for the first time.

Economy Hall - The Hidden History of a Free Black Brotherhood
By Fatima Shaik

It is impossible to imagine New Orleans, and by extension American history, without the vibrant and singular Creole culture. In the face of an oppressive white society, members of the Société d’Economie et d’Assistance Mutuelle built a community and held it together through the era of slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow terrorism. Economy Hall: The Hidden History of a Free Black Brotherhood follows Ludger Boguille, his family, and friends through landmark events—from the Haitian Revolution to the birth of jazz—that shaped New Orleans and the United States. A descendant of the Economy’s community, author Fatima Shaik has constructed a meticulously detailed nonfiction narrative that reads like an epic novel.

Un-Silencing Youth Trauma: Transformative School-Based Strategies for Students Exposed to Violence & Adversity
By Laurie Gare, Betty Butler & Chance Lewis

Urban violence, poverty, and racial injustice are ongoing sources of traumatic stress that affect the physical, emotional, and cognitive development and well-being of millions of children each year. Growing attention is therefore directed toward the study of child trauma and incorporation of trauma-sensitive practices within schools. Currently such practices focus on social and emotional learning for all children, with some in-school therapeutic approaches, and outside referrals for serious trauma. There is inadequate attention to racial injustice as an adverse childhood experience (ACE) confronting Black males among other youth of color. Although there are guidelines for trauma-sensitive approaches, few are culturally responsive. And it is now critical that educators consider the traumatic impacts of a dual pandemic (COVID-19 and racism) on children and their education.

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Humanity Over Comfort: How You Can Confront Systemic Racism Head On
By Sharone Brinkley-Parker

The authors of Humanity Over Comfort aim to move beyond the transactional responses of using one conversation to respond to structural inequalities. Alternatively, the authors advance tools that promote transformational change that eliminates the class and opportunity gaps for Black and Brown individuals. Written to cultivate awareness that increases racial equity capacity, this book will help readers: Understand historical context and the influence of racism in shaping reality; engage in reflections that connect learning to personal experience; and, direct their increased capacity towards dismantling racially predictable policies and practices.

Our Unfinished March - The Violent and Impended Future of the Vote
By Eric Holder

Voting is our most important right as Americans—“the right that protects all the others,” as Lyndon Johnson famously said when he signed the Voting Rights Act—but it’s also the one most violently contested throughout U.S. history. Since the gutting of the act in the landmark Shelby County v. Holder case in 2013, many states have passed laws restricting the vote. After the record 2020 election, only one state has launched an all-out assault on our democracy. The vote seems to be in unprecedented peril. Full-scale analysis, and actionable plans for the future, this is a powerful primer on our most urgent political struggle from one of the country’s leading advocates.

African American Political Thought - A Collected History
By Melvin Rogers and Jack Turner

African American Political Thought offers an unprecedented philosophical history of thinkers from the African American community and African diaspora who have addressed the central issues of political life: democracy, race, violence, liberation, solidarity, and mass political action. Melvin L. Rogers and Jack Turner have brought together leading scholars to reflect on individual intellectuals from the past four centuries, developing their list with scholars such as Martin Delany, Ida B. Wells, W. E. B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, and Audre Lorde, whose works are addressed by scholars such as Farah Jasmin Griffin, Robert Gooding-Williams, Michael Dawson, Nick Bromell, Neil Roberts, and Lawrie Balfour.

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COVID-19 brought a new virus, testing, vaccines and enormous resources for non-profits and for-profits to inoculate against the supply chain, staffing shortages, increased costs for medical supplies and other issues exacerbated by the virus. However, COVID-19 has provided new revenue streams albeit one-time funding to many non-profits who may have never received funding from the federal, state and/or local government and foundations (both corporate and philanthropic) to address the aforementioned issues along with business and agency closures, cutbacks and staff lay-offs.

While non-profits are appreciative of having these new resources to address the health and social service needs of community residents, they have had to scale up with new staff, vendors, contracts and grant assurances not known and/or on how the money can and should be used. Many non-profits lack the finance and accounting expertise to handle these new funding streams. In addition, they may also lack the Board experience and skills in handling these large grants and associated requirements such as reporting and performance measures, legal and auditing criteria with receiving the funding award. For this month’s article, we are going to focus on non-profits.

We have seen over recent year’s non-profits at the local, state and national levels who have filed for bankruptcy, shuttered their doors, and/or be convicted of criminal wrongdoing all while leaving their clients, patients, staff, and community scrambling for services. Why? They have not prepared – with a strong fiscal infrastructure and checks and balances between the executive director/chief executive officer and the Board of Directors. There is more to taking the dollars than just spending it on an idea or need in the organization or community.

How can a non-profit prepare to significantly expand services or receive funding from a new source? Ensure that you have a strong Finance Director, Accountant and Chief Financial Officer or Comptroller.

• This will ensure that you have the skill sets to review the financial requirements (in-kind or matching funds, prohibited use of funds, staff capacity and/or ability to contract/hire additional staff to perform the grant); • The finance team will monitor the grant expenditures to make sure that there are appropriate checks and balances with internal controls (duties segregated), bids are conducted for expenditures over a given amount (requirement for most government grants) and an outside audit firm has been secured with Board approval;

• A finance team lead is identified to work with the program lead on the grant(s) to ensure that the grant funding is being spent according to the approved proposal, reports required for reimbursement are submitted in a timely fashion and accurate time-sheets or employee records are maintained for the work associated with the grant (to ensure that multiple funders are not paying for the same time/work conducted); and

• Other issues.

How does the Board of Directors of a Non-Profit monitor or determine whether a grant is appropriate for the organization? A non-profit Board should ensure that at least one of its members have a finance background (banking, comptroller, finance director, accountant (preferably a certified public accountant) or chief financial officer).

- The non-profit should have a Finance & Audit Committee as a standing committee of the Board.

- This committee reviews the organization’s monthly financials, reviews and recommends budgets and works with the Board to identify and contract with an independent auditor to prepare the organization’s annual 990 (required by the IRS); independent audit of the organization and other reports required by local, state and federal government agencies;

- The Board member with the finance background mentioned above should be the chair of this committee and/or the Treasurer of the organization* to ensure that someone with a financial background is familiar with the terminology, reports and audit requirements;

- The Finance & Audit Committee working with the Board, Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Financial Officer should develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an independent audit firm;

- The Finance & Audit Committee recommends an audit firm to the Board of Directors who have the fiduciary responsibility individually and collectively to approve the audit firm (being a fiduciary requires being bound both legally and ethically to act in the individual/organization’s best interests);

- The Finance & Audit Committee holds monthly, bimonthly or quarterly meetings depending on the organization’s bylaws or manual, to review the organization’s financial health, grant revenue and expenditures etc. in order to alert the Board and staff of concerns, organization sustainability and/or misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance.

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Continued from Page 28

- The non-profit should have a grants team that reviews the grant opportunity with the appropriate program lead to answer several questions to determine if the grant(s) are those that should be applied.
- Does the grant support the mission of the organization?
- Is the grant aligned with the organization’s Strategic Plan?
- Does the organization have the staff, space and support (financial, equipment etc.) capacity to fulfill the grant proposal obligations?
- Has the Senior Leadership Team recommended the grant proposal to the Board and the Board approved it for submission?
- Can the program, service or staffing be sustained after the grant dollars are expended?
- And other questions that may be determined by the grants team, senior leadership or Board.

These are just some of the questions, infrastructure and policies that can insure that the non-profit stays healthy and performs at the highest level, does not have any negative findings by the grantor/funder and does not run into illegal expenditures or use of the grant dollars. There are also sources to assist non-profit Boards and staff in maintaining a healthy and sustainable organization.

PrimaryOne Health and the fifty-seven Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Look-Alikes (LAL) in Columbus, Dayton and throughout Ohio have a state primary care association, the Ohio Association of Community Health Centers (OACHC) that provides technical, peer assistance and training on financial, program and funding resources. It is similar to a trade association for other non-profit and for-profit sectors. In addition, the more than 1400 FQHC’s and LAL’s commonly referred to as, Community Health Centers (CHCs), throughout the United States have a national association, the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) which provides training, funding assistance and promising practices to its member organizations. Both the national and state associations provide manuals for Boards and staff to stay in compliance with Federal funding entities such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the funding and designation authority for FQHCs/CHCs.

Another resource for non-profits throughout Ohio is the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations (OANO). This organization is a membership organization for any Ohio non-profit and provides sample human resource, financial and other policies, resolution and employee manual templates etc. There are also local entities in Columbus and other cities throughout Ohio that are health and human services membership organizations, like the Human Services Chamber in Columbus, that provides sample policies, supplies, some shared services, peer connections and funding opportunities.

This article is written to assist non-profits in Ohio and Dayton to stay healthy, viable and inoculated from bankruptcy, misfeasance or negative headlines however; it is not an all-inclusive list of resources, recommendations or questions that should be answered before submitting a grant application. One of the first questions that an individual or group of committed volunteers who are passionate about developing a service or program should ask themselves – Do I need to start another non-profit and do I have the skills and experience to implement the healthy suggestions listed in this article? If not, there are other ways to serve, develop the program or services without creating another non-profit and allow you to do what you do best and are dedicated to doing. We will continue this discussion next month…

Join PrimaryOne Health in thanking our patients, staff, stakeholder and others during National Health Center Week! The theme this year is Community Health Centers: The Chemistry for Strong Communities. Each day will be focused on a different group or population:

Sunday, August 7, 2022 - Public Health in Housing

Monday, August 8, 2022 - Healthcare for the Homeless (donations of new socks underwear at PrimaryOne Health locations)

Tuesday, August 9, 2022 - Agricultural Worker Day

Wednesday, August 10, 2022 - Patient Appreciation Day

Thursday, August 11, 2022 - Stakeholder Appreciation Day

Friday, August 12, 2022 - Health Center Staff Appreciation Day

Saturday, August 13, 2022 - Children’s Health Day

Footnotes:

1According to The Free Dictionary: In theory nonfeasance is distinct from misfeasance and malfeasance. Malfeasance is any act that is illegal or wrongful. Misfeasance is an act that is legal but improperly performed. Nonfeasance, by contrast, is a failure to act that results in harm.

In practice the distinctions between the three terms are nebulous and difficult to apply. Courts in various jurisdictions have crafted different rules relating to the terms. The most difficult issue that faces courts is whether to imply a duty to act and find liability for the failure to act.

2A Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)/Community Health Center (CHC) is required to seek Board approval for all grants proposals submitted. Other non-profits may have similar reviews of the Board however, may not require Board approval for submission.

PrimaryOne Health is celebrating its 25th Anniversary and Healthcare Justice Awards on November 10, 2022 at COSI. For more information contact susan. brewer@primaryonehealth.org or visit www.primaryonehealth.org

Charleta B. Tavares is the Chief Executive Officer at PrimaryOne Health, the oldest and largest Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) system in Central Ohio providing comprehensive primary care, OB-GYN, pediatric, vision, dental, behavioral health and specialty care to more than 42,000 patients at 12 sites and two Mobile Health Centers. The mission is to provide access to services that improve the health status of families including people experiencing financial, social, or cultural barriers to health care. www.primaryonehealth.org.
EVEN ON YOUR WORST DAYS, LESS STRESS CAN EQUAL BETTER HEALTH

By Lisa D. Benton, MD, MPH

Today I checked the news and found debris from space was falling to earth. But I did not have a chicken little sky is falling moment. Instead, I focused on ways to keep myself calm and not stress and worry about what could potentially happen. Raising your anxiety level, anticipating the worst when it won’t necessarily happen has a negative impact on your health and well-being, mentally and physically. Those negative effects are cumulative and can wear your body, mind, and spirit out.

Research shows us that undue stress ages you on the inside and outside. Although a few more wrinkles, skin rashes, weight gain- especially around your midsection, and a bald patch from hair loss may not be a dealbreaker for you, but they are for me.

In addition to the changes on the outside, the stress on your internal organs should give you serious pause and consideration. Stress can cause recurring headaches, bad dreams, make you think you’re having a heart attack, give you heartburn and an ulcer, irregular or absent periods, cramping and involuntary muscle twitching, make you more prone to viral illness including regular colds, the flu and of course, Covid.

Those unexplainable aches and pains that don’t just go away and seem to come out of nowhere, not relieved by Tylenol or Motrin may be due to stress. That’s where relaxation techniques, meditation, deep breathing, stretching and anything with mindfulness come in.

Studies have shown that chronic and recurring stress makes areas of your brain smaller. The areas of your brain associated with memory, especially around recalling specific events, emotions and expression, and metabolism shrink. Stress kills brain cells. Ongoing stress may predispose you to mental instability and illness because of the imbalance of your body’s hormones like cortisol.

Stress, anxiety, and unnecessary worry send your immune system into overdrive and cause it to wear out. Since your cells in times of stress need more fuel, they hold onto more fat than usual, so it is always around to be converted to energy. Not wanting to run out or become depleted of fat available to use, your body always holds onto the extra fat to be ready for the real times of threats and emergencies.

For years I have been beating the drum about doing what it takes to take care of yourself-getting enough sleep, making healthy choices with the foods you eat, making exercise a part of your regular schedule, and making time for the moments of life that bring you joy.

As my mom would say, put on your mask first when the plane hits turbulence and starts shaking in the sky. Then you can help someone else.

Keeping your level of stress and worry under control and manageable may be as simple as limiting the amount of news and social media you watch. For example, turning off your devices at least two hours before you head to bed helps your brain relax. Also not eating two hours before bed is a good weight loss tip too.

Fifteen simple practices that can be tried as one idea a day to relieve stress can be found in this Healthline article: https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/16-ways-relieve-stress-anxiety

Regular exercise and eating healthy don’t just do wonders for your physical self. Studies show that a healthy body equals a healthy mind. That means it comes back to increasing the fruits and vegetables, not smoking, and limiting alcohol intake.

Although wine is made from grapes which have vitamin C and antioxidants, wine is also loaded with sugar which will get stored in your body as fat if you are drinking under stress. Not a winning option.

Adding a B vitamin is good but eating foods rich in B vitamins is a better choice. Bananas, avocados, spinach, milk, yes lactose free milk, beans, fish, red meats, and eggs are a few examples. I think you could find a food in each of the four food groups that is rich in B vitamins. These foods are also good sources for vitamin D, which we as African Americans need to make sure we get plenty.

Besides focusing on caring for yourself and what you can control, you need to take reasonable precautions and do what is in your power to prepare for an emergency or disaster.

Making sure you have batteries in a flashlight, an emergency roadside kit, portable radio, snacks, a can opener, water, toilet paper, a five-day supply of your medications, a first aid kit and other items on an emergency preparedness list, you are being proactive and using constructive rather than nervous energy.

The American Red Cross has a helpful list to get you started: https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/survival-kit-supplies.html

Whether it is the next round of Covid, Monkeypox, wars, fires, famines, and floods, that are coming our way, there are ways to stay vigilant and be prepared. In addition to taking steps to prepare, don’t be afraid to ask for or seek professional help and support to keep your peace of mind.

For living in these interesting, trying and even dangerous times unlike any other in history, building our own physical, mental, and spiritual muscles daily positions us to be ready to respond and improve our odds of surviving whatever is coming next. Take time to find the good news because your health may depend on it.

Lisa D. Benton, MD, MPH (The Doctor is In) breastsurgeonlb@gmail.com, Twitter:@DctrLisa (415) 746-0627
By Cornelius Frolik

Local partners hope to begin construction on a new healthy family market in West Dayton about a year from now that leaders hope will help further shrink a local food desert, which until recently was among the worst in the nation.

The $1.2 million project will result in the construction of a roughly 5,000-square-foot “pharmacy-style” market and adjoining smoothie and coffee shop.

The market will offer affordable produce and healthy food options that people will order online or at kiosks. That food will be prepared in the back of the store by workers, many of whom will be youth, said Robbie Brandon, the director of the Healthy Family Market.

“We want people to come in and conveniently get what they need on a daily basis,” she said. “We’re going to teach economic development and workforce development at the same time.”

The market is a new social enterprise that was founded by Sunlight Village, a nonprofit focused on improving the mental health and wellbeing of young people and their families.

The family- and kid-friendly market will have produce and educational information in the front of the store, while the back will have goods and supplies, and the space next door will have wifi and places for people to meet and talk, Brandon said.

The new space will host educational sessions some evenings focused on topics like mental health and parenting, she said.

The new market and smoothie and coffee shop, located on the 2100 block of Germantown Street, will be constructed on the site of a former laundry business that was recently torn down.

Local partners have raised about half of the funding needed for the project and they hope to raise the rest within the next eight to 12 months.

The size of the project could increase since the partners were able to acquire an adjacent piece of land from the Montgomery County Land Bank.

The market site is just blocks from DeSoto Bass, one of the oldest and largest public housing developments in Dayton.

The Healthy Family Market project was developed after two years of community planning efforts that were resident-driven, said Jennifer Heapy, CEO of Greater Dayton Premier Management, the local public housing authority.

“It’s so exciting to see ... this community’s vision come to fruition,” said Heapy, noting that federal funding helped pay for the planning work. “For communities and our families to be successful, they need neighborhoods with good amenities and access to services.”

Dayton used to have the largest food desert in the nation, east of the Mississippi River, said Ambassador Tony Hall, with the Hall Hunger Initiative.

But the opening of the Gem City Market last year means the community no longer holds that unwanted distinction, he said.

The Gem City Market food cooperative was just the beginning, Hall said, adding that this new market is another step toward ensuring that people have the food they need, which he says should be a basic “human right.”

“We’re going to do everything we can to make this a success,” he said.

A couple of speakers on Friday said they or their relatives remember a time when that area was thriving and full of shops and businesses.

Brandon said she grew up in DeSoto Bass and the area used to be home to grocery stores, barber shops, record stores, pharmacies, recreation centers and many other destinations.

“There was something everywhere — we need to bring that back,” she said. “I am counting on this market to be a launching point ... the market is just a piece of that vision.”

Project partners include GDPM, the city of Dayton, Montgomery County, CityWide, Sunlight Village, Fifth Third Bank, the Hall Hunger Initiative and Co-op Dayton.

Cornelius Frolik is a staff writer with the Dayton Daily News.

Article from www.daytondailynews.com
Women from all backgrounds are at risk in our current maternal mortality crisis. However, women of color, and particularly Black women, face an exceptionally high risk for a traumatic and even deadly birth according to reports by the Centers for Disease Control. There are countless personal accounts — including my own — of how women’s neglected childbirth needs lead to long-term health consequences and trauma.

In many areas of the U.S., Black women are dying from childbirth at rates comparable to developing nations, the World Health Organization reports. New York City, for example, reports Black women are as much as 12 times more likely to die from childbirth-related causes according to a report put out by the city.

Latino and Asian people also face high childbirth risks. But for Black women, there seems to be a relationship uniquely influenced by toxic stress regardless of income and education — with a 2020 report from the CDC noting 37.1 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births (compared to 14.7 for non-hispanic white patients).

In the last few years, there has finally been increasing focus on the long-term effects of prolonged exposure to racism, including the way it affects one’s birth experience.

What is behind the disparity in care?

In January, when Serena Williams made headlines discussing her post-birth encounter with pulmonary embolism, we were given a public face to Black women’s risk. She informed the staff of complications and she was assumed to be delusional — had she not persisted, she might be dead.

Current social scripts portraying Black women as invincible paired with historical misconceptions about Black people’s pain tolerance lead to our concerns not being taken seriously. Instead of addressing patients’ specific needs, they receive cookie-cutter assumption-filled care. Like many Black women, Williams was not perceived as a serious advocate for her own health.

This is nothing new

Historically, it was believed that poverty and a lack of access to resources was the cause of racial health disparities. This narrative is challenged by data suggesting college-educated Black women are equally likely to die from birth-related issues as white women without high school diplomas. For other groups, education improves this outcome (Native Americans have a long-term history of disenfranchisement similar to Black Americans and are unfortunately continually left out by much of the research).

According to Makeda Dawson-Davis, a doula located in Brooklyn, New York, these biases and assumptions of ignorance aren’t new to Black women’s medical experiences.

“We already know that modern gynecology, while developed from experiments on the bodies of Black women, was formed with extreme biases,” she tells SheKnows.

Like Williams, many Black women have their experiences denied, Dawson-Davis notes. In one video uploaded to Facebook where a nurse tells a laboring Black woman she isn’t in that much pain is a key example:

“I still see where it appears anesthesiologist believe that Black women don’t feel pain the same way or can tolerate more pain than their counterparts of other races,” Dawson-Davis explains. “I still see where doctors will straight-out tell a Black woman that she doesn’t understand what’s going on in her body and therefore should not try to make any decisions for her care. Instead, she should implicitly trust the judgment of her doctor.”

Beyond the delivery room

When taking past health issues into account, hospitals where more Black women give birth have higher rates of complications according to a 2016 article published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Although income isn’t enough to protect Black women from experiencing racism in medical care, it is a factor. Black women are substantially more likely to be employed at jobs that provide inadequate health coverage, wages and maternal leave according to a report by the Kaiser Family Foundation. All of these factors can lead to an increased pressure to return to work immediately after birth, which had negative outcomes for both mom and baby.

Dawson-Davis suggests a lack of cultural competency paired with minimal patient-based care is harming communities of color. She also highlights the long-term effects of unnecessary trauma-based care in low-income areas.

“When the provider does not take cultural differences into account, does not listen or does not hear the things their patient needs to be comfortable with their care patients may stop trusting the doctor and not report problems that could be cared for early on,” she explains.

It’s also possible traumatic births have the potential to impact women’s ability to bond with their children. “I believe any trauma can have a long-term effect, but specifically childbirth trauma can because every time a woman looks at or interacts with her child she may be reliving some portion of that trauma,” Dawson-Davis says.

What we need to do now

Given the current dire state of care for women of color, what can we do? Dawson-Davis indicates that an increase in competency, reduction in bias and an increase in access are changes she would like to see that would improve outcomes for all women, especially Black women. But above all, she wants Black women to gain autonomy for their own bodies.

“I would especially love to see Black women be made to feel comfortable enough in their birthing scenarios to be able to say no to a provider who is not listening to her needs or wants and have enough options to find and be able to say yes to one who will,” she adds.

Rochaun Meadows-Fernandez is a diversity content specialist whose work can be seen in The Washington Post, InStyle and more.
SOCIAL WORK IS ESSENTIAL IN CURBING CRIME AND VIOLENCE

By Joanne Lunceford, DSW

It is an indubitable fact that crime and violence is heavily impacting communities all around our nation. Citizens are living in fear, police are learning that new ways are needed to tackle old problems, schools are becoming battlegrounds, and many are left feeling helpless and hopeless. Questions loom and mankind wonders if there is anything anyone can do to make substantial, sustainable change.

Many of the public health, medical, and social justice change models that have been explored encourage intersectionality in designing plans to address crime and violence. This is wonderful, but all too often social work is a missing element from the equation. Oftentimes approaches lack the much needed and undervalued social work perspective. Social workers add a dynamic to teams that cannot be brought, duplicated, or replaced by anyone or anything else. Social workers have submitted to a rigorous pedagogy that includes endless hours of training, studying, internships, and field education that cannot be substituted by any other discipline. Many disciplines may train employees on social work techniques and theories, but without the immersion of the entire learning experience, it’s simply not the same.

When brainstorming sessions are occurring that discuss how to end the “crime and violence” problem or how to properly address cognition, trauma, substance misuse, etc. and decisions are being made that impact communities, especially those heavily concentrated with Black, Brown, and Indigenous folk, I implore leaders to ensure that social workers are present. And I do not use the term loosely. That means someone who has a Social Work degree, especially with licensure. There are many who have worked in the social service field who are not social workers. They have valuable insight, but it can prove limiting. There is value in the Social Work degree.

Social workers bring another perspective that forces a group to understand that systemic issues and trauma are very real and relevant. Oftentimes the crime and violence happening is the manifestation of the pain and trauma many have gone through due to race-related issues, poverty, sexism, GLBTQIA+-related issues, etc. and these root issues must be acknowledged and understood to adequately address them and that which manifests from them. Social workers at the table demand that initiatives consider allostatic load, racism, generalizations, ecological fallacies, disproportionality, historical inhumanity and oppression and the role all of it plays in crime and violence. Social workers refer to research and evidence-based practices that connect and integrate theory and practice.

Social workers emphasize wholistic approaches that consider missing pieces and promote that if you want something different, you have to do something different. Social workers believe in assessing instead of assuming and meeting people where they are. They are guided by an established Code of Ethics based on the profession’s core values of social justice, service, dignity and worth of each person, integrity, the importance of human relationships, and competence. Licensed social workers are also governed by a board with the primary responsibility of protecting the citizens of the State of Ohio through licensure and they do this through the establishment of licensure and practice standards for the professional practice of social work. This translates into social workers being accountable for their words and actions in a way other service providers are not. Many social workers are also members of organizations and affiliated with associations like the National Association of Black Social Workers, the National Association of Social Workers, and the Council on Social Work Education that come with proven professional guidance, structure, strategies, support, and resources that add to their development and capabilities to ensure the betterment of individuals, families, and communities.

So why is this important? Well, I am glad you asked. Individuals of African ancestry have been subjected to inhumane, oppressive treatment since their arrival in 1619. The legacy of slavery, Willie Lynch, Jim Crow, Black Codes, segregation, redlining, and all the heinous injustices that have occurred still lives. It is embedded into the fabric of our society and has caused indescribable pain and trauma. These intentional atrocities have created systems that influence communities that produce nonproductive value systems and social norms that encourage problematic thinking that drive destructive behavior. All efforts going forth must be cognizant of this and disrupt the impact of this legacy while dismantling systems cloaked in White Supremacy. Our community should want social workers at the table who are knowledgeable, trained, anti-racist, anti-oppression informed practitioners ensuring that the justified outrage at the unacceptable crime and violence transpiring is fueled into policies that help to heal and not further divide our communities.

Our community should want responsible, smart accountability that does not involve more laws and policies that further disenfranchise or disproportionately impact those of African ancestry and create additional destruction. Our community should want laws and policies that encourage hope and healing and new structures and systems that create equal communities, opportunities, and educational systems that allow everyone to succeed and believe in the possibility of responsible choices and futures. This is in no way saying that our history is an excuse for behavior and that those who commit crimes should not answer for them, but it does argue that understanding and considering this history and its impact allows for more considerate and just approaches to crime and violence. Our community is owed respect, healing, an apology, and equal opportunity and justice and social workers who can articulate this and inspire others to adopt humanity and equality need to be at the table to influence change in regulations, people, communities, and society for the betterment of us all.

Dr. Joanne Lunceford is the Founding Executive Director of The Peace Project. She has also worked as a macro/mezzo social work and criminal justice professional for over 25 years. She has served as an Adjunct Professor of Social Work, an Adjunct Instructor of Criminal Justice, Sociology, and General Studies; as well as Faculty through the Supreme Court of Ohio for the statewide Probation Officer Training Program. She earned her DSW from the University of Southern California, was awarded her MSW from Case Western Reserve University, and obtained her BA from Miami University.
MONKEYPOX STRAINING ALREADY OVERSTRETCHED HEALTH SYSTEM

By Michael Ollove

Deep into their third year of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, local and state public health workers are battered, depleted and, in many places, demoralized.

And now, they face a rapidly spreading new virus: monkeypox. The response requires delicate political maneuvering and already has run into shortcomings in testing, vaccines and anti-viral treatments — similar to the experience with COVID-19.

Some public health authorities worry about the continued ability of an exhausted and perennially underfunded public health system to meet multiple threats at once.

“Our staff is very professional and dedicated, and they are going to do what needs to be done,” said Patrick McGough, CEO of the health department in Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County. “Right now, our capacity is good, but like anything, if it gets overwhelming, if we have two or three things going on at the same time, it could get dicey.”

Echoing the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, demand for monkeypox vaccine doses far outstrips supply, appointments have been difficult to get, and money and personnel have had to shift from other priorities. Public health workers face the additional challenge of warning the people most at risk for monkeypox without neglecting a wider public that is far from immune to the danger.

As of Wednesday, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported just under 3,600 cases in the United States, almost all of them among gay and bisexual men, with outbreaks in all but a handful of states. Alarmed by the quick spread of the virus to dozens of countries in just a matter of weeks, the World Health Organization last week took the unusual step of declaring the virus a “public health emergency of international concern,” a designation it rarely confers but now has done three times in two years: for polio, COVID-19 and now monkeypox.

Monkeypox is generally not lethal but causes lesions — often quite painful — along with fever, chills, headaches and exhaustion.

While anyone can be infected by monkeypox, 97% of reported cases are among gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men, said Dr. Ashish Jha, the White House COVID-19 response coordinator, at a news conference Friday alongside officials from the Department of Health and Human Services and the CDC.

As of that date, Jha said, eight cisgender women and five transgender men had contracted the virus as well as two young children who were exposed through others in their households.

Jha said the Biden administration was considering following the World Health Organization’s lead and declaring monkeypox a public health emergency. The Washington Post reported this month that the White House privately informed Congress that it may need nearly $7 billion to address “the scope and urgency of the current situation.”

The original documentation was over 90 pages long,” said Mayer. Jha said at the news conference that the federal government was aware of that problem and was working to reduce the paperwork.

Boom-or-Bust Funding

Jha expressed confidence that monkeypox could be contained. But local and state public health officials still worry about their capacity to respond to another public health emergency with COVID-19 on the rise yet again and public health still lacking resources despite big federal outlays during the pandemic.

“As for the workforce, people are getting tired, they are exhausted,” said Amil Mangla, epidemiologist for the health department in Washington, D.C.

When a new outbreak occurs, because of limited resources, public health agencies often must shift personnel from one need to another. David Harvey, executive director of the National Coalition of STD Directors, said he is witnessing that now, as health departments are moving staff from diseases such as syphilis and chlamydia to monkeypox to do the outreach, contact tracing and vaccine campaigns that are mounted in the face of new infections.

“Right now, monkeypox is taking priority and other [sexually transmitted infections] are getting limited attention,” Harvey said. “It’s tough going out there.”

While Congress has invested heavily in public health during COVID-19, federal funding has fallen into a familiar boom-or-bust cycle over the past few decades. In a crisis, the federal government sends money to address a specific crisis, but once the emergency ends, the money runs out and local and state agencies limp along with shoestring budgets until the next crisis.

“We have built our COVID response on the basis of emergency funds from the federal government,” New York City’s Vasan said this month during the panel discussion. “What we really need is a sustainable, well-funded, permanent public health infrastructure.”

Federal public health funding is often directed toward specific diseases, which prevents state and local health officials from using it to meet the need of the moment as it arises, said Meredith Allen, vice president for health security at the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

“If the funding is disease specific, it makes it difficult to deal with the next thing,” said Allen. “And the next thing will always come.”

Messaging: ‘It’s Tricky’

While much of the monkeypox response echoes the early COVID-19 days, public health officials face a different messaging challenge with the new virus.

Epidemiologists say the monkeypox virus is generally spread through skin-to-skin contact or through material, such as blankets and towels, that have touched lesions. It also may spread through particles expelled in respiration. Although monkeypox DNA has been detected in semen, it is not clear that it can be transmitted.

Continued on Page 35
The city this week recorded 139 monkeypox cases, more than all but a handful of states.

At the panel discussion earlier this month in New York City, Vasan said his agency was targeting its monkeypox education to bars, clubs and massage parlors patronized by gay men, holding roundtables with community organizations and activists and handing out cards with information about the virus. He said the department had sent bulletins about monkeypox to more than 100,000 medical providers.

The need for that targeted outreach is clear, said Dr. Philip Huang, director of Dallas County Health and Human Services. He said many of the 52 cases in Dallas have been traced back to this year’s Fourth of July Daddylond Festival, “where thousands of men come for parties, dance events and pool parties where there is a lot of skin to skin and sexual contact,” he said.

He emphasized, though, that it’s not because of their sexual orientation that gay men are getting monkeypox in higher concentrations; it’s because many engage in behaviors that put them at higher risk of contracting the virus.

“There’s no predisposition for that population to get this,” he said, “but because of events like these, this is where we are seeing the cases.”

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**SENATE CONFIRMS 1ST BLACK 4-STAR MARINE CORPS GENERAL**

By Luis Martinez

Lt. Gen. Michael E. Langley was confirmed by the Senate on August 1, 2022 as a four-star general, making history as the first Black Marine to attain that rank.

The Senate’s confirmation came after President Joe Biden nominated Langley in June to lead the U.S. Africa Command, responsible for military operations in Africa.

Born in Shreveport, Louisiana, Langley said at his July 21 confirmation hearing that his father, retired U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Willie C. Langley, served in the military for 25 years, while his stepmother, Ola Langley, served the U.S. Post Office.

MORE: 4 Vietnam War veterans awarded Medal of Honor

Langley has served for 37 years, including as the deputy commanding general of the II Marine Expeditionary Force, deputy commanding general of the Fleet Marine Force, and as the commanding general of the Marine Forces Europe and Africa. In November 2021, he assumed the duties of commanding general, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, and commander, Marine Forces Command and Marine Forces Northern Command.

"It is a great honor to be the president’s nominee to lead USAFRICOM. I am grateful to the trust and confidence extended by him, the secretary of defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the commandant of the Marine Corps,” Langley said in the July Senate Armed Services Committee hearing.

Following its founding on Nov. 10, 1775, the U.S. Marine Corps barred Black Americans from enlisting until President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 on June 25, 1941. While the order prohibited discriminatory recruitment practices in national defense departments, agencies and industries, civil rights concerns remained, according to the National Archives.

In 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued another executive order that banned segregation in the armed forces. Executive Order 9981 was initially met with resistance from military personnel, according to the National Archives, but all units were eventually desegregated by the end of the Korean War.

Despite significant progress since the Marine Corps’ establishment, Black men and women are still underrepresented in the Marines Corps senior leadership, according to a 2020 Council on Foreign Relations report. In 2016, the Department of Defense reported there were six Black general-ranking officers serving in the Marine Corps out of a total 87 across all racial demographics.

"Now, the global security environment we are witnessing today is the most challenging I have seen throughout my 37 years," Langley said during the July hearing, referencing "global tensions" and other threats.

Nevertheless, he said, he is "enthusiastic to engage across the whole government to faithfully execute the policies and orders of the president and the secretary of defense."

Luis Martinez contributor with ABC News.

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*Michael Olve is a health writer with Stateline. Article from pewresearch.org*
ALEXIS JACOBS’ LEGACY OF LOVE

Jacobs’ generous spirit uplifts Columbus Urban League & Franklin Park Conservatory with record-breaking $4 million gifts.

Alexis Jacobs made her name in the auto world and made her legacy by giving back to the Columbus community. When Jacobs, a long-time Columbus Urban League (CUL) supporter, passed away on June 3, the former Columbus Fair Auto Auction CEO left $4 million each in unrestricted gifts to two area non-profits.

“This is the largest gift ever in the history of the Columbus Urban League, corporate or individual,” said CUL President & CEO Stephanie Hightower. “This is one of those, go home and get on your knees and say ‘thank you’ kind of gifts.”

Hightower noted that Jacobs understood that philanthropic redlining, the phenomenon of Black-led nonprofits getting proportionally fewer charitable dollars but more restrictions on their use, prevents the kind of capacity building required to deliver highest quality services.

Jacobs’ gift will allow the Urban League “to think bigger,” according to Hightower. “We want to be strategic and intentional in our efforts to make sustainable progress for African Americans and other marginalized communities.”

Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens also received an unrestricted $4 million bequest, which President & CEO Bruce Harkey confirmed was the largest onetime individual gift in the history of the organization. “It’s the spirit of Alexis going forward,” Harkey said. “She was just a beacon of light in this community and her generous support has had a significant impact on so many organizations and people.”

“Unrestricted gifts like these can be transformational,” added Douglas Kridler, president and CEO of The Columbus Foundation. “It is the ultimate expression of belief in an organization’s mission and in its leadership. The community benefits of Alexis’ philanthropy will be deep and long and should be celebrated by all. Gifts of this size and type are as precious as they are uncommon.”

Hightower and Harkey each valued long friendships with Jacobs. They remember their common benefactor’s affection for certain programs, such as workforce training efforts for underserved populations.

Hightower was vice president for institutional advancement for the Columbus College of Art & Design when she met Jacobs. They bonded as sports women – Hightower as a For Immediate Release – July 26, 2022 former track Olympian and Jacobs as an avid fisherwoman – and over a shared love of fashion. Hightower created the CCAD Fashion Show and tapped Jacobs as an inaugural model. When Hightower moved to the Urban League in 2011, Jacobs followed its workforce development efforts and began hiring justice-involved people from its workforce re-entry program.

“Janet Jackson, Angela Pace and I always went to Hat Day. It was one of her favorite events,” Hightower said. “I knew of her love for the Conservatory as well, and I was thrilled to learn that the Conservatory also received a generous gift. Bruce was a perfect partner.

The Columbus Urban League is Central Ohio’s oldest and most successful social justice and racial equity advocate. The 104-year-old organization ranks among the top five percent of all National Urban League affiliates and was recently one of only ten organizations across the country to earn funding from One Million Black Women for a pilot Incubate Her program. CUL fostered more than 140,000 interactions in one year during the COVID pandemic and offers holistic initiatives to boost Black wealth, education, earning power, business growth and family stability despite long-standing implicit biases. CUL intentionally leads real change to achieve greater equity for Black families throughout Central Ohio and a more inclusive economy that benefits all.

For further information, please contact: Colin Baumgartner, The Collective Genius at 614-441-5576
Octavia E. Butler: Pioneering Science Fiction Author

By Rodney Blount, Jr., MA

In an ever changing world we are prone to be discouraged because of things we seemingly cannot control. The 6-3 conservative Supreme Court has swiftly made decisions regarding some key cases that have been in place for many years. A large multitude fear that they will continue to take America back in time by reversing or upholding several laws that discriminate against minorities, voting rights, gender equality, equitable education, etc. COVID-19 levels continue to rise and new pandemics, particularly monkey pox, have entered the scene. Many have watched as Russia continues to invade Ukraine with the support of white supremacy groups like RIM (the Russian Imperialist Movement). Their invasion has not only killed thousands and displaced millions of people, but it also affects the world due to food shortages, rising gas prices, and fear of the war led by Russia, a nuclear power, spreading beyond Ukraine. However, a lot of people have found opportunities during these times for positive uplift. Hundreds of thousands of Americans, if not more, have become more mobilized by registering to vote and spreading the word to others that they can change the world. Some individuals have formed groups or programs to assist people, especially the younger generation, with new and old skills to better help them survive and thrive in this changing world.

Another segment has used this time to hone their artistic talents as writers, artists, actors, and other creative professionals. The late Octavia E. Butler may have used this time to write stories about an alternate narrative of the world with a black protagonist in the future using elements from some issues that are going on today. Butler, one of the first African American and female science fiction/Afrofuturism writers, used even the grimmest of circumstances to find meaning, understanding, and alternate outlooks for peace and continuity. She wrote novels that involved themes of discrimination towards African Americans, global climate change, women’s rights, and political discrepancy.

Octavia Estelle Butler was born in Pasadena, California in 1947, the only child of Octavia Margaret Guy, a housemaid, and Laurence James Butler, a shoe shiner. She grew up poor in a city that was segregated. Her hardworking father died when she was seven and Butler was raised by her industrious mother and grandmother. Butler sometimes went along with her mother to work at affluent homes in Pasadena and reminisced on having to enter through the back door. Butler’s mother, Margaret, only received three years of formal schooling and worked untiringly to ensure that her daughter would have access to a good education.

Octavia Butler was a shy and often lonely student who struggled with dyslexia. Her teachers misinterpreted her hardships due to dyslexia, like slower reading, as a refusal to do the work. She believed that the books at her school were boring and unrelatable, and she pleaded with her mother for a library card. She remembered her mother, "looked surprised and happy. She immediately took me to the library and got me a card. From then on the library was my second home. Her love for stories was endless and she commonly conjured up her own while relaxing on her grandmother’s porch. Octavia Butler regularly stated that she remembers exactly when she chose to become a science fiction writer. She was 9 years old and saw a 1954 B-movie called Devil Girl from Mars, and two things stood out to her. First: “Geez, I can write a better story than that!” And second: “Somebody got paid for writing that story!” She was motivated after reflecting that if they could do it, she could also do it! A teacher encouraged Butler, at the age of 13, to submit one of her stories to a science fiction magazine for publication. “That submission was the first of many and solidified her desire to—and her belief that she could—become a professional writer.”

After graduating from John Muir High School in 1965, Butler attended and graduated from Pasadena City College (A.A., 1968). She also attended California State University and the University of California at Los Angeles. Throughout the 1970s, she refined her craft as a writer, discovering, through a class with the Screen Writers’ Guild Open Door Program, a mentor in sci-fi veteran Harlan Ellison, and then selling her first story while attending the Clarion Science Fiction Writer’s Workshop. During this time, she financially sustained herself working at different times as a dishwasher, telemarketer and inspector at a crisp factory, waking at 2am to write. The first of her novels, Patternmaster (1976), was the start of her five-volume Patternist series about an elite group of mentally linked telepaths ruled by Doro, a 4,000-year-old immortal African. Other novels in the series are Mind of My Mind (1977), Survivor (1978), Wild Seed (1980), and Clay’s Ark (1984).

“Kindred, one of the books most famously associated with Butler, was published in 1979. It’s the story of Dana, a contemporary black writer hurled backward in time to antebellum Maryland. A spirited feminist, Dana must learn to conform herself to the times so she can survive; she needs to find her slave-holding ancestor to ensure her own existence more than 150 years in the future. Her later novels include the Xenogenesis trilogy—Dawn: Xenogenesis (1987), Adulthood Rites (1988), and Imago (1989)—and The Parable of the Sower (1993), The Parable of the Talents (1998), and Fledgling (2005). Butler’s short story Speech Sounds won a Hugo Award in 1984, and her story “Bloodchild” about human male slaves who incubate their alien masters’ eggs, won both Hugo and Nebula awards. Her collection Bloodchild and Other Stories was published in 1995. That same year Butler became the first science fiction writer to be awarded a MacArthur Foundation fellowship, and in 2000 she received a PEN Award for lifetime achievement.”

Butler’s work is now in the curriculum in over 200 colleges and universities nationwide. The #1 New York Times best-selling graphic novel adaptation of her book Kindred, created by Damian Duffy and John Jennings, received critical praise for its vivid depiction. In media, her novel Dawn is being developed for television by Ava DuVernay. An opera by Toshi Reagon based on Butler’s novel The Parable of the Sower was part of The Public Theatre “Under the Radar” festival and toured worldwide in 2018. Amazon and JuVece Productions (Viola Davis and Julius Tennon’s production company) are developing a drama series from Butler’s Patternist series, beginning with Wild Sees, and the series is being co-written by Nnedi Okorafor and Wanuri Kahu, who will also direct.

Octavia Butler passed away on February 24, 2006. Sixteen years after her untimely death, Butler’s reputation has risen exponentially. She predicted an uncanny amount of information about politics in the United States. She also envisioned issues with and challenged traditional gender identity, racial connotations, climate change, and the pharmaceutical industry. She was truly ahead of her time! She warned her readers about the challenges ahead, but she also provided hope and distinct measures to make this world a better place. Butler’s life and thoughts will live on through her works and may even help the future of humanity with her predictions and advice.

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Rodney Blount is an Educator and Historian. He received two Bachelor of Arts degrees from Ball State University and a Masters of Arts degree from The Ohio State University. His work has been featured in several publications. Rodney is a native of Columbus, Ohio and is a member of several organizations.
COMMUNITY EVENTS

Columbus, Ohio

August 13, 2022
Poindexter Village Drum Circle. Join us in a vibrant community experience where you enjoy what it means to beat as one. Led by elder drummers, we encourage you to bring your drums, lawn chairs and coolers. Check out the drum activity tables, local community vendors and food trucks!

Location: Legacy Tree at Poindexter Village Museum
Address: 290 N Champion Ave, 43203
Time: 10AM - 5pm (Drum Circle Noon - 4pm)
Admission: Free
Contact: poindextervillagemuseum.org

August 13-14, 2022
Festival Latina. A free, family-friendly event celebrating family and community with two days of children's activities, music, food, fashion, art and dance from the heart of Latin America. For more information visit the website below.

Location: Genoa Park (Downtown Columbus)
Address: 303 W Broad Street, 43215
Time: 11:00AM - 8:00 PM
Admission: Free
Contact: festivallatino.net

August 20, 2022
CBUS Soul Fest. A collaboration between Experience Columbus and the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, the CBUS Soul fest features vibrant Black culture, music, history and soul! For more information visit the website below.

Location: Bicentennial Park (Downtown Columbus)
Address: 233 Civic Center Dr, 43215
Time: 11:00AM - 11:00 PM
Admission: Free
Contact: experiencecolumbus.com

September 17, 2022
UNCF Walk for Education. Make a difference while practicing social distancing - walk, run, cycle, dance - all in honor of UNCF, our students and schools. Join us in person for the Columbus Walk and help UNCF raise funds to support our HBCUs and students. Celebrate with your family, friends and coworkers. Let's build better futures one step at a time.

Location: McFerson Commons #1
Address: 218 W West Street, 43215
Time: 9:00AM - Noon
Admission: Registration Required
Contact: uncf.org/events/2022-uncf-national-walk-for-education-columbus

Dayton, Ohio

August 18, 2022
TLC and Shaggy In Concert. The 4-time Grammy Award winning R&B supergroup is coming to Dayton with special guest Shaggy! This is your chance to hear your favorite songs of the 90's and early 2000's. They will in town for one night only. For tickets, visit the link below.

Location: Fraze Pavilion
Address: 695 Lincoln Park Blvd, 45429
Time: 7:00 PM
Admission: Ticket prices vary.
Contact: fraze.pavilionkettering.org

August 20, 2022
Dayton African American Cultural Festival. This family event brings the richness of the African American experience to Dayton and its surrounding communities through culture, education and music. Come see an African village, a pavilion of paintings and enjoy live R&B, Gospel and Jazz performances. Merchandise and food vendors will be on site. For more information visit the site below.

Location: Island Metropark
Address: 101 E. Helena Street, 45404
Time: Noon - 8:00 PM
Admission: Free
Contact: DAACF.com

August 27, 2022
Black Breastfeeding Luncheon. Join us for this special Free event as we celebrate the benefits, and address the challenges of breastfeeding with others from the Black community. Enjoy free lunch and parking with door prizes and valuable resources. To register, visit the link below.

Location: Sinclair Community College, Building 12
Address: South Perry Street, 45402
Time: Noon - 3:00 PM
Admission: Free
Contact: eventbrite.com/black-breastfeeding-luncheon-tickets

September 4, 2022
Central State University vs Winston-Salem State University. Kick-off the football season with a classic game between the CSU Marauders and the WSSU Rams at the Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton, OH. Enjoy the battle of the bands, great food and fun. For tickets or more information, visit the site below.

Location: Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium
Address: 2121 George Halas Dr NW, 44708
Time: 4:00PM
Admission: Prices Vary
Contact: maraudersports.com

Please note: Information for this section is gathered from multiple community sources. The Columbus & Dayton African American is not responsible for the accuracy and content of information. Times, dates and locations are subject to change. If you have an event that you would like to feature in this section, please call 614-826-2254 or email us at editor@columbusafricanamerican.com. Submissions are due the last Friday of each month.
New Opportunities to Save on Health Care Coverage

Learn about new financial help to keep you and your family healthy

If you lost your health insurance during the pandemic or have been unable to pay for coverage in the past, you may now be eligible to save money on your health care.

Because of changes in the law, you could now pay as little as $0 for your premiums, or you could save up to thousands of dollars a year.

You can enroll or change your coverage through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace, an online platform that offers insurance plans to individuals, families, and small businesses.

To learn more, call 1-888-OUR-AARP or visit aarp.org/ACA.
BUILD YOUR FUTURE

- $2.4 BILLION -
The amount of construction projects in Columbus over the next 10 years.

The Construction Trade sector is constantly hiring with most jobs paying between $70k to $100k a year.

Contact the National Skilled Trade Network and enroll in our program. All courses are accredited by the National Center for Construction Education & Research.

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