

# The Sojourner's Truth

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Blessed Are The Peacemakers!

Warren AME 's Rev. Otis Gordon Soon to Retire - Page 2

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# Blessed Are the Peacemakers

By Rev. Donald L. Perryman, Ph.D.  
The Truth Contributor

*For the advancement of peace and unity, I shall pity the faults of my fellow man and praise his virtues, forgive his injuries and proclaim his favors, hide his stains and display his perfections, hoping that he will be likewise charitable toward my own shortcomings*

- Carter G. Woodson



Toledo has a long and storied history of individual ministers belonging to Black mainstream denominations involved in social activism.

Some religious leaders have engaged in community work with a "Burn baby, burn" activist approach emphasizing a strategy of bold criticism and protest against the system. Others, however, are "actionists" who navigate the system to empower their community itself rather than attack the system.

While both approaches have an important role in societal change, Rev. Dr. Otis Gordon has emphasized a pragmatic approach focusing on self-empowerment, self-sufficiency and maneuvering through the existing system to achieve community goals.

Known as a peacemaker rather than a hell-raiser, Gordon will deliver his final sermon on October 1 before retiring after a 20-year stint as the Warren A.M.E. church pastor. He will also be honored at a banquet on September 15.

During his 53-year pastoral career, Gordon has pastored churches in Massillon, Kent, Cleveland, and Warren, Ohio, before coming to Toledo. In his time in Toledo, Gordon forged peace, not by denying the presence of racism and injustice or by avoiding its systemic power, but by proactively and not reactively facing these structures head-on.

I spoke with Pastor Gordon to discuss his reflections on his effectual career in Toledo. Here is our conversation.

**Perryman:** Congratulations on your retirement. Let's talk about Warren AME's legacy and history.

**Gordon:** Warren was founded in 1847 due to the Underground Railroad, where Blacks who came here were en route to Canada. We began as a school to attract people who needed to further their education or learn the basics, and from there, they became a church. Warren was originally located on Summit Street. A marker right across from the Imagination Station today marks the place of the first church.

**Perryman:** What comes to mind when most people think about Warren?

**Gordon:** Historically, Warren was a place where many of the major meet-

ings were held. For example, Sojourner Truth, the NAACP, met here. They had community meetings here at the turn of the century. Frederick Douglass also had some meetings here. Warren is known as a church like Third Baptist, one of the first churches here that Blacks populated in the city.

**Perryman:** Warren also carries a legacy of involvement in The Civil Rights Movement.

**Gordon:** Yes, and that's one of the points of AME Methodism. We've argued that our founding was a result of injustice because it was a result of racism within St. George's Church when Richard Allen, who was a free enslaved person, began to teach Sunday school, and his class grew larger than the white classes. They relegated the Blacks to stand on the outer side of the sanctuary during worship, and then put them in the balcony. The final point happened when the pastor called for an altar call, and African Americans who were in the church at the time had to come down from the balcony, and so they were the last ones at the altar. When the Blacks knelt at the altar, the usher, or the sexton, as they were called, began to pull them from the altar. Richard Allen, along with Absalom Jones, objected and said, "Please wait till prayer is over, and we will trouble you no more." So, they got up and walked out, vowing never to return. That was the first Civil Rights protest, we believe, that occurred in the United States.

**Perryman:** The AME denomination has also been a big proponent of education and literacy, establishing numerous schools and colleges.

**Gordon:** Absolutely. Daniel Payne was a strong advocate for education and literacy because he believed that for African Americans to move forward, we needed to have an educational basis, and he felt it was essential to help educate Blacks. For that reason, we have several universities. Wilberforce, the oldest predominantly black school in the country, was founded by Bishop Daniel Payne and named after William Wilberforce, the great statesman and liberator from England.

**Perryman:** Talk about your calling and where it began.

**Gordon:** I am a product of St. Andrews AME Church in Youngstown, Ohio, which at the time was the largest African American church in the city. Interestingly enough, I was ordained an elder in the AME Church at the North Ohio Conference, convened at Warren AME in Toledo in October 1970. So, my ministry really began here in Toledo. At that time, I had no idea that I would ultimately become the pastor of Warren at the close of my career.

**Perryman:** How did you become active in social justice issues?

**Gordon:** Before coming to Toledo, my Bishop appointed me to pastor Grace AME Church in Warren, Ohio. I remained their pastor for 13 years, dealing with a congregation's problems in the midst of decline, and the city was amid decline educationally, economically and racially. That's where I learned to be involved in various justice issues.

I had been the presiding elder of a friend from Cleveland. He told me that when the Rodney King situation occurred, his mayor called and asked him for help because the mayor feared that they would have a race riot and asked if the African American church would help. My friend then reached out to a white Lutheran pastor, and both of them connected with a group of scholars from New England. They wrote this curriculum called Study Circles for Blacks and whites to sit down and discuss their differences and racial issues

... continued on page 11



Pastor Gordon

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# GENERAC

## Community Calendar

August 20

Toledo NAACP Youth Council meeting; Sanger Branch Library 3030 Central Ave; 3:00 pm Youth Works meeting 4:00 pm

# A Letter from P.T. Barnum to Donald Trump

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq

Guest Column

If the legendary carnival barker and impresario P.T. Barnum were alive today and were witnessing the knee slapping antics of political showman Donald Trump, he would be green with envy.

You know, it was erroneously attributed to P.T. Barnum, the now famous phrase, "A sucker is born every minute!"

P.T. Barnum was the proverbial seller of snake oil. He could sell ice to the Eskimos and sand to the Arabs. Nothing was out of reach for his skills in reading human nature and fashioning a pitch for the average John Doe to give up a few dollars on a pitch that amounted to smoke and mirrors.

Why, P.T. Barnum could travel with a circus, and he would be in the side show lane whooping it up about the two-headed boy or the half-man and half-woman person and with the bearded woman with legs so hairy, small birds would nest in them.

P.T. Barnum loved a show and he loved showing off. Razzle-dazzle was his trademark along with a silver tongue that could charm a snake out of its skin or sell hard liquor to a Pentecostal fire breathing Baptist preacher.

P.T. Barnum had the art of the deal down to a science long before Donald Trump ever came up that title for one of his best-selling books.

P.T. Barnum would arrive with a circus in small town America and he would set up his show with a lot of hoopla and hype. He was the master of promotion and would have the assembled crowd believe that what he had to show them could be seen nowhere else and you were about to see a wonder of the world!

He would rant and rave about how depraved or wild or fearful or shocking each item was behind the closed tent door, and he would dare the crowd to pay him just a modest sum to go in and see, "A wonder of the world!"

Of course, P.T. Barnum made sure that you paid before you went in and after you went in, you went out a back door that led to an exit so that you could not tell the still awaiting crowd what you saw...much less try to get your money back for believing in such overextended hype!

Now, fast forward that carnival approach to today's politics and the merging of the celebrity and the political and you get America's newest P.T. Barnum a.k.a...Donald Trump!

So, here is an imaginary letter from P.T. to Donald:

Dear Donald:

I have been watching and hearing about your campaign run for the presidency even after you have been impeached twice; and I must admit that you almost got me believing in you!

When I see what you do and how you do it, I look into the mirror and laugh and say, "That's me!"

## Art Extravaganza: Join Us for Outdoor Creativity and Fun at Toledo Museum of Art!

Art Unleashed: Explore, Create, Enjoy Discover outdoor art at the Toledo Museum of Art (TMA). All are welcome to explore the sculpture garden, create art. Spare yourself the kitchen hassle!

Swing by the restaurant at TMA for kid-friendly options before the event. Friday, August 25 Friday, August 25 6:00-8:00pm Toledo Museum of Art 2445 Monroe St Toledo, OH 43620 RSVP HERE Ages 0-12 Looking for more free or low cost events for kids?

Oh, what a time we would have had together if we were living at the same time. We could be multi-millionaires (I hear you already are one!) and be on the top of our game.

Your line of, "Trust me, I alone can get it done!" is pure gold. It reminds me of the times I took the rubes for their money when they came to my side shows and wanted to peek inside my tent to see what was so spectacular.

Of course, I, like you, gave them little details since I wanted them to commit to paying me first before they go inside. And inside did they go! By the hundreds. Each time I set up the side shows, the crowds were there.

Oh, sure, I changed my pitch to suit the crowd, just as you do when you travel either to the South or to the Northeast.

That we have in common. We both know human nature and when people get tired of their day-to-day existence, I am there to tell them that I have got some excitement for them, but it will cost them something.

You do the same. You tell them what they want to hear, be it building a wall along the Mexican border and having the Mexican government pay for it or you promising to smash ISIS or your current grift of making America great again.

No clear details. Great plan! Do not give them too much because then they start thinking about it and before you know it, your crowd drifts away and there goes your admission fees.

Keep attacking the other politicians because Americans love political combat and a little mudslinging. I did it now and then and it works...big time!

If you ever get caught in a jam, simply tell them that you will get back to them and they will forget about it before long and move on to something else. Better yet, blame everything on the Deep State or it is a witch hunt against you.

But, whatever you do, never let on that you are hyping them. Always act sincere and contrite if you are caught because Americans love to forgive someone just like them. It makes them feel good about themselves.

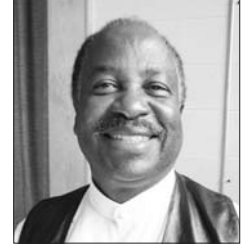
I really envy you. That TRUMP plane is a winner! Use it all the time. Americans love to be overwhelmed with grandiosity and pomp. It is what a lot of these rubes lack and they desire it, even if it is showered on someone else.

At least they can dream and you are talking up those dreams!

So, in closing, keep 'em coming back for more and never let them see you sweat and remember, you control the tent and no one gets a free peek!

Your adoring friend, P.T. Barnum.

Contact Lafe Tolliver at [Tolliver@Juno.com](mailto:Tolliver@Juno.com)



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# Ranked-Choice Voting Can Assist to Protect Democracy's Future

*So, why is Ohio Senate Bill 137 set to ban RCV?*

*By DemocracyIssues.com, an Ohio-based Voter Rights initiative*

A small group of Ohio politicians are leading an anti-democratic effort that continues to take away voting rights of targeted segments of citizens in order to increase their own power and control of State government.

This is another effort from these anti-democratic politicians that follows their failed attempt to grab more power by deceiving voters about the real purpose of Issue 1 that was on the August 2023 ballot.

These politicians have now introduced Senate Bill 137 that is aimed at banning Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) in the State.

With all of the issues facing Ohio citizens, how can banning a pro-democracy voting reform be a priority for the State's Legislature?

## Ranked-Choice Voting is Pro-Democracy, Majority Rule

To win an election, Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) requires a candidate to have broader voter appeal in order to obtain a majority of the total votes cast.

With the current plurality system and multiple candidates in a contest, an election can be won with far less than the majority of the votes, since in a plurality contest it only takes the most votes to win.

In an RCV contest, instead of voting for one candidate, voters have more choices, and simply rank their top selections. For example, even if a voter's favorite candidate does not win, their 2nd choice may be victorious.

## How RCV Works

If no candidate receives a majority of votes in the first tabulation round, the candidate in last place is eliminated. Then, in any tabulation round that follows, the second choice votes that were cast by an eliminated candidate's supporters are distributed to the remaining contenders until one candidate ob-

tains a majority.

With Ranked-Choice voting, candidates are more civil and respectful of each other as they need their opponents' supporters to rank them high in their selections.

## Vote Splitting Results in Minority Rule

Primary contests for each political party can have a large number of candidates running. With a large number of candidates splitting the votes, it takes less votes and a lower percentage of the total to win. A candidate can win a crowded primary field with less than 40 percent, or even far less than 30 percent of the total votes cast.

## Vote Splitting can Favor Extremist Politicians

According to The Center for Election Sciences, for elections involving seats to the U.S. House of Representatives from 2010 thru 2020, "Out of the 427 new members who won primary challenges . . . 38% . . . earned less than 40% of ballots cast."

Data provided by Rank the Vote provides important insight into this issue. On January 6, 2021 in the U.S. Congress, the infamous vote was conducted to overturn the results of a fair presidential election. Eighty-one (81) of the members of the U.S. House of Representatives who voted against certifying a fair election had each entered Congress by winning their primary election with less than a majority of the votes cast. And 62 of these House of Representative members won their primary election with less than 40 percent of the votes cast.

Thus, well over 60 percent of the voters in the election districts of these members of the U.S. House of Representatives voted against each of these 62 individuals.

## Extremist Politicians use Vote Splitting in Gerrymandered Districts

In gerrymandered districts, when there is a large field of primary candidates with similar views, an aggressive and extremist politician is able to stand out. And with a crowded field of candidates splitting the votes, a primary election can be won by an extremist politician favoring autocratic laws and policies that stands out from the field and who only needs to obtain a relatively low percentage of voter support.

As a result of the increase in gerrymandering, the number of districts where the majority political party has dominant control have significantly expanded during the past decade. Candidates in the minority party have little chance of winning the general election in a gerrymandered district that has been intentionally structured through wrongful map drawing to insure the majority party's victory.

As the example above involving the 62 U.S. House of Representative members confirms, there have been many anti-democratic, extremist politicians who have used the deliberate strategy to run in a crowded primary election field in a district that has been gerrymandered by the majority party. They know that winning the majority party's primary election, even with a low percentage of the total votes cast, almost always guarantees winning the general election.

## Voting Reforms will Thwart Anti-Democratic, Extremist Politicians

...continued on page 12

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# Assets Toledo 69th Business Cohort

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

As a writer and black woman working in the fine jewelry industry, I'm slowly carving my path like the brilliance of a diamond. In doing so, I could never express enough gratitude for the full support I've received locally by my professional peers and the lessons we learned as participants of Assets Toledo's 69th business cohort.

"Assets Toledo isn't just a business initiative; we are a beacon of unity and empowerment," said Executive Director Oliva Holden to all of our class as she welcomed us to the Assets family. "I look good for a mother of over 5,000 students and counting, huh?" she shared as we all laughed.

At Assets Toledo, you learn the gems of wisdom that will be your business cornerstones. From writing a business plan to budgeting and marketing, they equip business owners to break barriers while embracing opportunities.

What truly sets Assets apart is the staff's dedication to supporting driven individuals in northwest Ohio who possess a personal aspiration for self-employment, despite facing limited resources.

This commitment is realized through their 13-week entrepreneurial training program, which fosters peer connections, while offering both a support network and essential capital.

In class, I found myself among a diverse tapestry of entrepreneurs from all walks of life. The sense of community, the shared dreams, and the collective determination were my companions on our roads to success. Over the next 13 weeks we learned, when entrepreneurs work together, we can rewrite the rules of what's possible in business.

It was in the infamous Assets classroom that my personal ambition found its wings. As a mom of two young children, I was fueled by the program's practical, experience-based training.

Before Assets, writing a business plan, for most of us, was a beyond overwhelming task. We learned having a business plan is the compass that navigates entrepreneurs through the labyrinth of business endeavors. It's not just a document; it's a strategic roadmap that outlines a clear vision, goals, and the detailed steps required to achieve them.

We all crafted our business plans as a means of providing a solid foundation for our future decision-making, anticipating challenges, identifying opportunities, and allocating resources effectively.

A business plan is an essential tool that instills discipline, offering a structured framework to measure progress, evaluate performance, and make adjustments when necessary. Ultimately, we learned having a business plan is the difference between wandering aimlessly and confidently steering ourselves toward success. It's a guiding light through uncertainty with a coherent and actionable strategy.

Assets training helped us focus on each individual part of our business so that our business plans could help us transform our ideas into concrete actions. This communication tool will help each of us convey our visions to potential investors, partners, and stakeholders. By defining the target market, competitive landscape, and marketing strategies, we learned our business plans will ensure that we are equipped with a clear understanding of the market dynamics we're entering.

Assets Toledo's proprietary programming infuses business owners with a



The 69th Assets Toledo Business Cohort



Assets Toledo Executive Director Oliva Holden



The Author and Oliva Holden at graduation

surge of confidence by immersing them in practical scenarios that mirror real-world challenges. As we navigated these simulated situations together, we all gained firsthand insights into decision-making, problem-solving and strategic planning.

This hands-on exposure fosters a deep understanding of operating a profitable business and hones your skills, transforming theory into tangible competence.

Many different business owners within the Assets network came and gave presentations to the class. With each successfully tackled scenario, we watched each business owner witness his or her own growth in real time. It was cool, like watching a lightbulb turn on in someone's head!

It is dynamic entrepreneurial training that will solidify your own beliefs in your individual ability to navigate complexities, make informed choices, and to ultimately lead your business with unwavering assurance.

In a world that's beginning to truly value equity, diversity and inclusion, I'm

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# Lawsuit Accuses Local Housing Provider of Discrimination on the Basis of Race and Color

***The Fair Housing Center Has Filed a Lawsuit Alleging That Secor, LLC, Kwapich Real Estate Companies, and River Asset Management, LLC, Violated the Federal Fair Housing Act "FHA," and the Fair Housing Laws of the State of Ohio***

The Fair Housing Center has filed a housing discrimination lawsuit against Secor, LLC, Kwapich Real Estate Companies, and River Asset Management, LLC, "Defendants," in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio Western Division. The lawsuit alleges the Defendants engaged in race-based discrimination violating the Fair Housing Act.

Plaintiff lived incident-free at Secor Flats for more than one year when ownership was transferred to Defendant 5109 Secor, LLC in December 2020. They subsequently engaged Kwapich Real Estate Companies (River Asset Management) to manage the property. Despite a clean rental history, the Plaintiffs' lease was terminated in November 2021 due to a criminal record from 2015 found in a background check conducted by the Defendants.

The Fair Housing Center joined the Plaintiff, claiming that the Defendants' criminal convictions ban disproportionately affected him based on race. After an investigation, the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) found it probable that Defendants engaged in discriminatory conduct. Despite the Plaintiffs' clean record since 2015, the Defendants' criminal convictions policy failed to consider individual circumstances, violating Fair Housing Laws.

The lawsuit asserts that the Defendants violated the federal Fair Housing

Act of 1968, 42 U.S.C. § 3601, et seq., the federal Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, and the Ohio Fair Housing Act. Additionally, the Ohio Civil Rights Commission determined that it was probable that Defendants engaged in unlawful discriminatory practices based on race and color in violation of the fair housing laws of Ohio, Ohio Rev. Code § 4112.01, et seq.

After a thorough investigation by The Fair Housing Center, the Ohio Civil Rights Commission also found that the Defendants' policies and practices of relying solely on criminal convictions as a basis for denying housing opportunities have a disparate impact on black African American males.

"Housing providers should be aware of the strong connection between racial discrimination and denying housing opportunities based on criminal history. Generally, housing providers should only consider recent criminal conduct that indicates a demonstrable risk to safety or property. Other criminal conduct not relevant to legitimate business concerns should not be considered," said George Thomas, CEO and General Counsel for The Fair Housing Center.

The Plaintiff will be represented by George Thomas, Esq., Fair Housing Opportunities of Northwest Ohio, and Jacob Davis, Esq., Nalls Davis | Attorneys at Law.

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# Finkbeiner and Others Object to Possibility of Downtown Amphitheater

The Truth Staff

Over the past several weeks, there has been rampant speculation that the City of Toledo is considering approving the construction of an amphitheater in downtown Toledo on the site currently occupied by a parking lot across from the Valentine Theatre and Georgio's Restaurant.

An Saturday, August 19, former mayor Carty Finkbeiner and several others held a press conference in front of the Valentine to express their collective dismay at such a prospect. That prospect, they noted, goes against the concept of a carefully considered master plan for the city and would wreak havoc on businesses such as Georgio's and the historic entertainment center, the Valentine's Theatre.

"This is a risk we shouldn't take," said Michael Young, former city planner who flew in from San Diego to add his voice to the protest. "There's been no call for an amphitheater downtown, no clamoring masses – we also have other amphitheaters near downtown. This is the reason we go through a master planning process."

The parking lot in question is bordered by Admas, Superior, Jackson and Huron Streets. It serves the patrons of the Valentine and Georgio's on a regular basis, along with city employees in One Government Center.

Pete Culp, a former member of the City Plan Commission, also spoke out about the idea of spending money on such a facility.

"There are other types of needs more important than another amphitheater, such as housing, assisting minority businesses," said Culp.

The issue of a downtown amphitheater is the brainchild of Hunter Brucks, a concert promoter, who had advanced the idea of an amphitheater in Waterville. When that proposal fell apart, Brucks turned his attention to downtown Toledo.

Last week, the Lucas County board of commissioners agreed to spend \$35,000 with ConnecToledo to perform a feasibility study on locating an amphitheater in downtown Toledo. The City of Toledo is expected to contribute \$9,500. The study is expected to be completed in 10-12 weeks, according to Commissioner Pete Gerken.

Those at the press conference on Saturday took issue with the idea that money had been spent on such a study without being part of a master plan. "The Plan Commission would never have approved this when I was on the board," said Culp.

Along with the concern for the commercial enterprises that would be



Pete Culp addresses his downtown amphitheater concerns

negatively impacted by such a structure, Saturday's group also expressed concern for downtown residents would be inconvenienced by the noise created.

"An amphitheater with sound bouncing off concrete is disruptive to residents," said Theresa M. Gabriel, a former city official who held a number of positions during her tenure. "We have a lot of space already underutilized that we could spend our money on – be it federal, city or grants – in helping our community."

As the press conference was being held, the group was informed that Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz had supposedly downplayed the idea of such a structure at the suggested location across from the Valentine.

"The mayor has not said that publicly, on the record," said Finkbeiner. "I won't rest, nor will these folks, and the Valentine Theatre's board of directors should not rest until he does."

Finkbeiner went on to offer his opinion, shared by the rest of the group, that the best place to build an amphitheater is "on the water."

Citing the advantages of the scenic views and the access to watercraft, Finkbeiner said that "the best amphitheaters in the world are on the water."

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Katrina Barnhill  
Glass City Disciples  
Chris Byrd & TV  
Twilight Gospel Singers  
Nelly Arnett & Company  
The Newson Family Singers & Many More

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# Superior Made Spaces Opens in Downtown Toledo

Sisters Arlinda Self and Shirley Lawson, the entrepreneurs behind Superior Made Spaces, held a grand opening ceremony on Saturday, August 19, to unveil their newly renovated office building at 421 N. Michigan.

"Superior Made Spaces is our dream come true enabling us to give back to our community and help other local businesses flourish," said Self during an interview with The Truth in preparation for the opening.

The sisters' building has office space for 22 businesses, the majority of which are already occupied. The company also purchased a parking lot behind the building for the convenience of the small businesses that will occupy the premises.

Currently in the offices are businesses such as Nonnies Jewelry by Nicole; Farmasi by Deb Cash; Petals by JVP Jackie; New York Life Insurance with Tequia Leller; Little Tots Transportation with Deb Wilkens.

Call 567-408-0452 or email [Superiormadespaces@gmail.com](mailto:Superiormadespaces@gmail.com) for more information.



*(l. to r.) - Arlinda Self and husband Lance Self, parents Alicia and Nate Lawson, Shirley Lawson and husband Amari Roland*



*The ribbon cutting*



*Shawanda Clarke and Arlinda Self*



*Petals owner Jackie Pettaway and her daughter Kay*



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# First Day of School – Meet and Greet

Community members gathered at several local elementary schools on Monday to meet and greet students on their first day of class.

About 30 notable men - business and agency leaders, elected officials, pastors, union heads, Buffalo Soldiers – arrived early at Martin Luther King, Jr. Academy for Boys to shake hands of the arriving boys and wish them success during the new academic year. A ceremony celebrated with a quiet dignity and joyful smiles.

At Ella P. Stewart Academy for Girls, a half mile away, a similar group of notable women also gathered to greet that school's incoming students. However, that ceremony was anything but quiet. Smiles gave way to cheers and ovations. The women waved pom poms and high fived the students creating an atmosphere that had everyone – students and greeters – excited.

The greeting won't end there for many of these students. A number of the community leaders will be involved with the schools during the year serving as mentors and hosting special events.



Buffalo Soldiers at MLK

# Health Department Hosts Additional Farmers Market

The Creating Healthy Communities program at the Health Department is hosting a Farmers' Market, in addition to the WIC-hosted markets this summer: Thursday, August 24, 2023 Friendship Park Community Center 2930 131st St, Toledo, OH 43611 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Please note: due to forecasted high temperatures near 100°, the event will be held inside the Community Center at the park.

The Toledo Farmers Market staff will be on-site to assist individuals using SNAP benefits. Produce Perks, WIC farmer's market coupons and Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program coupons will all be accepted, in addition to those paying with cash.

For additional information, please contact Amy Abodeedy at 419.213.4116 or abodeela@co.lucas.oh.us.

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**SATURDAY AUGUST 26, 2023** 10AM-3PM

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--	---	--

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This program is made possible by Grant Number 5HT91082294-02 from SAMHSA. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the official views of SAMHSA.

# National Black Business Month Highlights Resources Available for Ohio Minority Entrepreneurs

To commemorate National Black Business Month, the Ohio Department of Development is highlighting the many state resources available to support Ohio's small, minority, and disadvantaged entrepreneurs.

Recognized every August since 2004, Black Business Month celebrates the success and innovation of America's African American entrepreneurs.

"The DeWine-Husted Administration is committed to removing any barriers preventing Ohio's entrepreneurs and emerging business enterprises from accessing the vital resources needed for long-term success," said Development Director Lydia Mihalik. "The Minority Business Development Division has simplified the certification and loan processes, expanded outreach efforts, and increased engagement with local partners who support small business growth and sustainability."

Ohio's network of Minority Business Assistance Centers (MBAC) offers technical and professional assistance, access to capital and bonding, and connection to business opportunities to empower entrepreneurs to succeed.

\*Jeanna Hondel,\* owner of the Ascension Construction Solutions LLC (Franklin County), was approved for \$1,063,193 from the Minority Business Direct Loan Program. This is the largest single transaction approved under this administration. The construction planning, management, and inspection firm provides management, administration, and inspections, and offers design review, project scheduling, cost estimating, document controls, and quality assurance. The funds will allow for the purchase of an office building and create 30 new jobs and retain 18 full-time employees. The U.S. Small Business Administration named Hondel Ohio's 2023 Small Businessperson of the Year.

During the last biennium, regional MBAC partners added more than 4,000 new clients and more than 11,000 of Ohio's minority-, women-owned, and under resourced businesses received counseling. Additionally, more than 150 minority- and women-owned businesses received more than \$16 million in loans through their loan programs, and more funding remains.

Development's Women's Business Enterprise (WBE), Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity (EDGE), Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), and Veteran-Friendly Business Enterprise (VFBE) certification programs have

over 4,000 businesses certified across all four programs

\*Crystal Kendrick\*, owner of The Voice of Your Customer (Hamilton County), is MBE/EDGE/WBE certified in addition to being certified as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Small Business Enterprise (SBE) through the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and HUB-Zone from the Small Business Administration (SBA). Kendrick also received a \$45,000 Microloan, and a \$81,317 WBE loan. These certifications and funding allow her minority- and woman-owned marketing firm to assist clients in engaging audiences using survey research, focus groups, secret shopping, business training, and media campaigns.

"With the assistance of the Ohio Micro-Loan and the WBE loan I was able to improve our working space and daily operations which allowed me to hire additional staff," said Crystal Kendrick.

\*Barry Coutts\*, owner of True Inspection Services (Franklin and Champaign Counties), is MBE/EDGE certified in addition to having DBE and SBE certifications through ODOT. These certifications allow the firm to provide inspection of asphalt and concrete roadways, bridge construction and rehabilitation and coating inspection services. True Inspection Services has locations in Columbus and Urbana, as well as Baltimore, MD.

"Maintaining these certifications has helped us obtain work on various state and locally funded projects," said Barry Coutts.

More information about loans and other capital assistance programs can be found online at Minority.Ohio.Gov [https://development.ohio.gov/business/minority-business?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://development.ohio.gov/business/minority-business?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). Minority business owners can start the loan application process at [https://development.force.com/ODSA/s/minority-business-loan-form?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://development.force.com/ODSA/s/minority-business-loan-form?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

The Ohio Department of Development empowers communities to succeed by investing in Ohio's people, places, and businesses. Learn more about our work at [development.ohio.gov](http://development.ohio.gov)

## Assets Toledo... continued from page 5

discovering my personal journey isn't just about opening a local gem boutique. It's about being part of a movement that reshapes the narrative of black businesses.

Assets Toledo's faith-based training weaves character building and values into the fabric of entrepreneurship. The staff and business advisors are more than just professional peers; they are kindred spirits on a shared journey. Together, they form a diverse network of support, resilience, and hope. I enjoyed getting to know my professional peers individually. Listening to our shared experiences formed bonds that, I believe, will carry us through the toughest days.

My new written journal and vlog, iRockGems.com, isn't just a website to me; after 20 years of working as a jewelry professional, it's a testament to my resilience and growth. We all have that, when we don't quit. I'm glad I found Assets Toledo and kept going.

iRockGems offers a curated collection of high-end and artisan jewelry sourced from independent female, male and BIPOC-owned businesses (Black Indigenous People of Color). By supporting these businesses, we aim to uplift and inspire confidence in representation from diverse backgrounds. Each independent jeweler spotlighted creates gems that bare the imprints of their journeys: the hurdles overcome, the barriers shattered, and the allure of their special skill set.

My journey as a black woman jeweler turned entrepreneur isn't just about me though; it's a chapter in the larger story of a changing world.

The mission of Assets Toledo transcends small business development; it's about crafting a brighter future. As the world evolves, so does the perception of minority business. Assets Toledo stands as a testament to what can be achieved when dreams are nurtured with knowledge and when the spirit of entrepreneurship aligns with principles of equity and inclusion. In this new era, where business innovation and social justice go hand in hand, they are a beacon of light.

On behalf of myself and cohort 69, we thank the entire Assets Toledo staff and their network of professionals for their incredible support and guidance. You all stand as a shining example of what can happen when passion, knowledge, faith, and community come together in perfect harmony.

To learn more about Assets Toledo visit [www.AssetsToledo.com](http://www.AssetsToledo.com) where you'll find detailed information about their business programming.

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*Perryman... continued from page 2*

in a nonthreatening manner.

**Perryman:** What did you learn from that strategy?

**Gordon:** It just so happened that a couple of years after that, the mayor of Warren, Ohio called me and said they had a problem. Two black kids allegedly "broke into the Catholic rectory, beat up the priest, and stole money." I said, "Yes, I saw that on the front page of the newspaper" He said, "Well, it didn't happen that way. We know now that the priest lied; he faked the whole thing, and there's going to be a race riot once that comes out. What can we do?"

I remembered the program called Study Circles. I said, "Mayor, we'll bring all the African American preachers together, have a press conference and call for calm, and follow that with a unity prayer service. And, to put substance to it, we'll begin the Study Circle process for Warren, Ohio because we need it anyway. That's precisely what we did, and it turned out to be tremendous. Blacks and whites came together; they worked on racial harmony. We even had a unity prayer service, filling a music hall that held over 1,000 people. That was the high point I think of my time there and that we averted what was potentially a race riot because every summer before that I had to intervene.

There was one point where we, IMA, walked the streets to make sure there was no violence because of problems within the African American community. So that's where I learned to become involved in the community and carry out what I thought was the mandate of the AME Church going back to Richard Allen.

**Perryman:**Your leadership style seems to be that of a peacemaker rather than a disrupter or protester like the Apostle Paul, whom many people could call an accommodationist. Have you ever been criticized for being too accommodating?

**Gordon:** Absolutely.

**Perryman:** How do you respond?

**Gordon:** Well, Otis Gordon is just exactly as you said; I am the peacemaker. I want to find reconciliation. I want to see my people advance. I was working with the NAACP. Frank Hearn, the president of the NAACP, joined my church because he was so impressed with the changes I was helping to bring back through the city.

Remember the situation with the priest and the unity rally? Well, Hearn was opposed to it. Still, I convinced the majority of the Black preachers to support this, that it would be in our best interest. By the way, because of what I was able to do, we secured finances for a community center called ACOP, which still stands today serving that community, built by community funds.

But anyway, the newspaper interviewed me, and they also interviewed Frank Hearn. On one side of the middle of the article on the front page was this packed auditorium with this white lady with her hands raised praising God, and you looked into this picture, you'd see Blacks and whites worshipping. And then on one side was my picture with my viewpoints on why we needed to have recon-

ciliation.

And then on the other side was Frank Hearn's picture, why he was saying that this is no time for prayer. It seems you had two Black preachers disputing one another and this white lady praising God with other Blacks in the middle. I thought it was just the wrong picture. It's as though they were using us to highlight our differences. Now bear in mind, Frank and I were friends, we just disagreed on how to achieve racial harmony, and after that, we worked together on many other things, but that's an excellent example of where my personality, which is a person who seeks reconciliation, created some problems for me.

**Perryman:** How did that style of reconciliation develop? Where can you point to in your history?

**Gordon:** I think it goes back to my childhood. I was always a reconciler, and I always sought peace. Still, I attribute it to my background in English literature and philosophy. Those who reasoned well could always solve problems and bring about change. Shakespeare, specifically, his thing was everybody has this tragic flaw, and this is what Jesus taught as well, you cannot change circumstances until you change hearts, and that's what I was always about.

It actually goes back to the Civil Rights era. I don't want to tell you this, but I felt I was more conservative than most of my colleagues at the time. I was a youngster when Martin Luther King led the Movement. I thought he was a great orator but wondered whether we were moving too fast. Now, of course, I regret thinking that and even saying it. But in hindsight, I have to admit that I was totally wrong, and I would've handled it differently if I had known that. Now, I feel the exact opposite. In fact, I'm more militant now than I ever was. So, my style goes back to my early years in the '60s, and it's just my personality.

**Perryman:** Provide some examples of how you're more militant now.

**Gordon:** Now, I don't see any solution other than for us, Blacks, to come together and to work towards building ourselves up. Even though we're moving two steps forward, we're constantly taking one step backward, and it's just a challenging situation. My philosophy is that unless we speak up for ourselves, no one else will. We need to be more determined to bring about change than ever before.

It just seems that racism has always been with us from the beginning of time, and it'll always be there. I used to think that reasonable minds could always agree, but I'm not so sure now.

**Perryman:**Can you share any memorable moments from serving Warren here in Toledo that you will cherish as you retire?

**Gordon:** There were a lot of memorable moments. The first one was my first Sunday here. I always thought the church was such a beautiful sanctuary and a beautiful setting. There were also memorable moments of losing. I've funeralized hundreds of people since I've been here and gotten to know them. They impacted my life, and I remember each of them and so many of those funerals I will never forget.



Rev. Otis Gordon

I'll never forget we've successfully hosted several annual conferences here; that was a memorable moment. Another special moment was when we built the senior center at the other end of the parking lot. This turned out to be a loving congregation. Still, I have experienced great loss, pain, and triumph in this season of my ministry right here at Warren. Of course, this is where I lost my wife of 42 years and was able to remarry, so yes, very significant loss and great meaningful joy.

**Perryman:**In what ways do you plan to continue serving the community, even in retirement?

**Gordon:** I hope my colleagues invite me to serve as a guest preacher in their congregations. I do want to preach as often as I am asked. Obviously, I will not preach at Warren, but I want to serve the community on various boards. I will continue serving wherever I am asked for the betterment of the community. I still believe in reconciliation and bringing blacks and whites together because we must work together. I firmly believe that Blacks can't change this condition by themselves. We need everybody, including the government, to participate in this process of improving our community. We are at fault to some degree, but so is the system, and unless we address systemic racism, nothing will change.

**Perryman:**What message would you like to leave with your congregation and the broader community as you retire?

**Gordon:** You've asked me a question I don't have an answer for right now. I've been searching for an answer to that question because I asked myself what I will say to the congregation on my last sermon, the first Sunday in October.

I concluded that there's nothing I can say that I haven't already said, but since you put the question to me, the legacy I would like to leave with Warren AME Church is to continue a Christ-centered ministry that reflects Christ to families, to young people, and to help young people believe in themselves that they can experience upward mobility.

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, PhD, at [drdperryman@enterofhopebaptist.org](mailto:drdperryman@enterofhopebaptist.org)



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# Three Ways People of All Ages Can Give Back

*Special to The Truth*

No matter your age, it's likely you've questioned your ability to make a difference. Research from the global nonprofit Points of Light shows that 73 percent of people believe that volunteering is more important than ever, yet 66 percent think they can't make a big impact in their communities. Activists on the ground prove otherwise. That's why Points of Light, which is dedicated to inspiring and equipping people to take action, has recognized thousands of volunteers for their contributions to their communities through The Daily Point of Light Award.

"Points of Light's research found that Gen Z is the most civically engaged generation to date. Our youth honorees demonstrate that people of all ages can strengthen communities and solve persistent problems," says Diane Quest, interim CEO, Points of Light.

To inspire you to action, the organization is sharing the stories of youth honorees, along with three elements from The Points of Light Civic Circle®, a framework for helping individuals get civically engaged:

## Volunteer

Nonprofit organizations and NGOs need volunteer power to deliver support to the communities they collaborate with. If you're an adult wanting to facilitate youth volunteerism, consider organizing a youth-specific event or helping transport the young people in your life to an event. To find a volunteer opportunity that aligns with your interests and availability, check out Points of Light Engage, a database with hundreds of thousands of in-person and virtual volunteer opportunities.

The power of volunteering is apparent when considering Daily Point of Light Award honoree Nate Buescher, a high schooler who prepares food for a local food pantry and distributes home-cooked meals to tent cities around Chicago. Buescher began fighting food insecurity at age 7 with the Honeycomb Project. Today, he mentors younger volunteers while maintaining his own service projects.

## Voice

The youth voice is vital, pointing us to which concerns are most important to future world leaders and helping broaden perspectives. Use your voice to advocate for causes you care about by posting on social media, attending a rally or contacting a government leader. Adults can amplify youth voices by sharing with their networks, or organizing forums for youth to be seen and heard.

Seventeen-year-old Daily Point of Light Award honoree Maanit Goel used his voice when organizing a rally of fellow activists on the Washington State Capitol steps to support legislation protecting the Chinook salmon and orca populations. He also regularly addresses state legislators, and travels statewide to speak to K-12 students about environmental issues.

## Listen and Learn

Social justice and environmental issues are nuanced, involving many people with different perspectives shaped by their own experiences. Listening and learning is one way to honor others' lived experiences and get a fuller scope of an issue.

Young people can commit to thoroughly researching causes they care about, talking to those working toward solutions and holding space for those impacted. Adults can connect with the young people in their lives, inviting dialogue that allows for sharing different perspectives and finding common ground.

These are the driving ideas behind the work of high schooler Kristie To, who became a leading force in Asian American racial justice when she founded Hearts Against Hate. Among the initiatives of her nonprofit is distributing Asian history and Asian American Pacific Islander civil rights curriculum to children.

"Cultural sensitivity starts with exposure, and that's what we're trying to do with these elementary schoolers," says To.

To learn about other avenues for social engagement, check out the Points of Light Civic Circle by visiting [pointsoflight.org/civic-circle](https://pointsoflight.org/civic-circle).

"There are many formal channels for civic engagement, but simple actions make a difference too," says Quest. "Whether it's carrying groceries in for a neighbor or donating books to the library, the important thing is to get started when you see a need in your community."

*Courtesy StatePoint*

## Male Wellness Walk... continued from page 16

to Columbus, Ohio as deputy chief of the Toledo Fire and Rescue Department. Observing the impact in the other city motivated Byrd to strengthen his own community by establishing and continuing the powerful impact of the African American Wellness Initiative.

Many vendors set up and offered resources and information to attendees to support and encourage the community. The event included entertainment, resources and a great day to focus on living a successful life in the Toledo area for African American men and to support the entire families also. Attendees learned that men living healthy and successful lives provides peace and happiness for all family members.

The African American Initiative is a great supportive resource for the Toledo community. A day to create positive results for participants and those connected to the participants.

## Democracy's Future... continued from page 4

Current efforts with Senate Bill 137 by anti-democratic, extremist politicians in the Ohio Legislature aimed at banning Ranked-Choice Voting are designed to limit the power and choices of Ohio voters and to retain gerrymandered election districts.

Voting reforms that end gerrymandering, such as an Ohio Independent Redistricting Commission (that is planned on the ballot in November, 2024), will force anti-democratic, extremist politicians to run in districts where the outcome of the general election is not predetermined. They will no longer benefit from rigged election district maps that insure victory by the political party that drew the map.

And voting reforms such as Ranked-Choice Voting (that favor candidates with broader voter appeal) will combine with reforms to end gerrymandered election districts that will both assist to Protect Democracy's Future.

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# Sipping Dom Perignon Through a Straw: Reimagining Success as a Disabled Achiever by Eddie Ndopu

By Terri Schlichenmeyer  
The Truth Contributor

You really get around.

You're here, you're there, at all the best parties and all the biggest events. It seems like everyone knows you, too, and you call them all "friend." You're a mover and a shaker and you sure do get around – even if, as in the new book *Sipping Dom Perignon Through a Straw* by Eddie Ndopu, it's on four wheels.

c.2023  
Legacy Lit  
\$29.00  
240 pages

He almost let it go.

In the days after receiving an acceptance letter from "the oldest university in the English-speaking world," Eddie Ndopu was stunned. The scholarship he'd landed from Oxford paid for his classes and room and board. He'd also get a stipend but the scholarship didn't include one essential thing: funds for his "disability-related needs."

Diagnosed at age two with spinal muscular atrophy, Ndopu was not expected to live beyond age five, but he defied the odds. Now his body required a wheelchair to get around, and help with his personal hygiene, bedtime, dressing, eating and drinking and other day-to-day things he couldn't do himself. Not only was Oxford disclusing money for that, but his regular caregiver, Lucky, was denied a visa provision.

That ultimately turned out for the better. Ndopu was in love with Lucky, who said he'd never be with another man but he suddenly was. Lucky's insincere vows broke Ndopu's heart and gave him impetus to seize the Oxford offer. Things could change. He'd figure it out.

He said yes and began searching for a new caregiver who'd bring him from Johannesburg to London and stay to help – but before he even got to Oxford, he was passed between two people, one of whom told him that England had laws by which caretakers had to abide. Caretaker "Four" decided the job wasn't for him. "Five" was homophobic. "Six" embarrassed Ndopu. "Seven" had family issues to tend to. And then the final blow arrived: a £66,000 bill (around \$84,000 U.S.) that Oxford University wanted for their help...

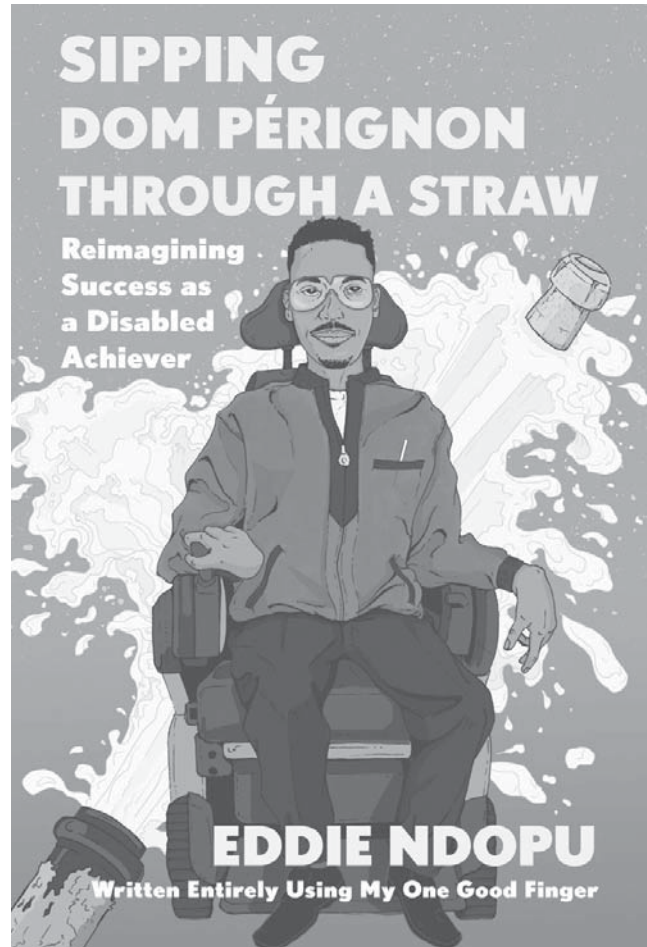
*Sipping Dom Perignon Through a Straw* is really quite the complexity.

Author Eddie Ndopu has a lot to be proud of – his humanitarian work and activism on behalf of the disabled, his education, and his dogged wall-busting, to start – but only a fraction of this book is about those things. The rest is largely a good long rant about how a major institution colossally dropped the metaphoric ball, and about the individuals who disappointed Ndopu in ways large and small while time he was studying there.

In that, Ndopu expresses outrage – righteous and right, when he's dismissed, denigrated, or lessened – but others are not always given that grace, and seem to be dismissed and judged. Complex, see? – and conflicting.

Though readers will absolutely note the indignation and unfairness of what

Ndopu endured, and may be compelled to act, don't look for a lot of joy in accomplishment inside this tale. Instead, it's an assertive, loud call for change at every level, and you should consider it as such. You'll like *Sipping Dom Perignon Through a Straw* if you can get around that.





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Home Energy  
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## Stay Cool During The Hot Summer Months!

The Ohio Department of Development and the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio are helping income-eligible Ohioans stay cool during the hot summer months. The Home Energy Assistance Summer Crisis Program (HEAP) provides eligible Ohioans assistance paying an electric bill or paying for central air conditioning repairs. The program runs from July 1, 2023, until September 30, 2023.

Applicants must bring the following documents to their appointment:

- Copies of their most recent energy bills;
- A list of all household members and proof of income for the last 30 days or 12 months for each member;
- Proof of U.S. citizenship or legal residency for all household members;
- Proof of disability (if applicable);
- Physician documentation that cooling assistance is needed for a household member's health (if there isn't a household member over the age of 60).

HEAP assists low-income households with an older household member (60 years or older), that can provide physician documentation that cooling assistance is needed for a household member's health, have a disconnect notice, have been shut off, are trying to establish new service on their electric bill, or require air conditioning. Conditions can include such things as lung disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or asthma.

Also, Ohioans enrolled in the Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus Program (PIPP) who meet the above criteria may be eligible for assistance towards their default PIPP payment, first PIPP payment, central air conditioning repairs, or may receive an air conditioning unit and/or fan.

To be connected to your local Energy Assistance provider visit [www.energyhelp.ohio.gov](http://www.energyhelp.ohio.gov) or call (800) 282-0880.

AREA OFFICE ON AGING OF NORTHWESTERN OHIO

For more information or to apply for the Summer Crisis Program please contact your local Community Action Agency in the County you reside to schedule an appointment.

[www.AreaOfficeOnAging.com](http://www.AreaOfficeOnAging.com)



**LIVING  
BETTER &  
LONGER**

## TOWN HALL MEETING ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

In conjunction with the 5th Annual NW Ohio Women's Equality Day Friday, August 25, 2 pm, The Glass City Center.

Hear from the local women's community and leaders on the status of women and girls in our region, with a focus on human rights as women's rights, a discussion on inclusion and access, justice, & security. 2:00 pm Community Conversation (Listening Sessions) 3:30 pm Open Networking & Appetizers 4:30 pm Women's Town Hall Meeting with Stakeholders & Elected Officials 6:30 pm After-Hour Cocktails & Dance Party!

## ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICE BOARD OF LUCAS COUNTY

The Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of Lucas County is accepting applications for the Accounting Specialist position. The position requires a highly responsible professional that will maintain accurate and complete records, including ledgers, invoices and receipts in accounting. Reconciles Oracle expense reports as well as monitoring cash availability on a weekly basis. The salary range is \$39,800 - \$44,400 annually, plus a full range of benefits. Additional information regarding the duties is available on the Lucas County website ([www.co.lucas.oh.us](http://www.co.lucas.oh.us)). Click on "Apply for a Job" and then select "Accounting Specialist" from the list to read more and apply. Resumes are also accepted by email to [ssylak@cmhrsb.oh.gov](mailto:ssylak@cmhrsb.oh.gov)

*An Equal Opportunity Employer*

## FRIENDS OF THE TOLEDO LIBRARY BOOK SALE!

Stock up on books to read this summer at August's Friends of the Library book sale! Happening Thursday, August 24 through Saturday, August 26, find great books at great prices! Titles range from children's, to fiction, cookbooks, and even movies; perfect to add to any book lover's collection.

Join the Friends of the Library (FOL) Book Sale (<https://www.toledolibrary.org/fol>)! (<https://www.toledolibrary.org/fol>) FOL is a nonprofit organization that encourages, promotes, and supports the ongoing development and use of the Toledo Lucas County Public Library. This membership organization offers support for our Summer Music Series, Authors! events, Children's Summer Read, local branch activities, and levy campaigns.

The gently-used, well-loved books are \$1 or less! It's a great way to add to a home or classroom library.

## Position Available Senior Attorney



**Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (ABLE), a non-profit regional law firm that provides high-quality legal assistance to low-income people and groups in western Ohio, seeks a resourceful, culturally competent, hardworking Senior Attorney for its Toledo office.**

The Senior Attorney will work with ABLE's Housing and Community Economic Development and Meaningful and Appropriate Education Practice Groups. The Senior Attorney will expand ABLE's community economic development capacity in the Toledo area and provide legal representation to children and parents in education cases.

Please visit ABLE's website at [www.ablelaw.org](http://www.ablelaw.org) to review the full details and apply for the position.

*ABLE is an Equal Opportunity Employer and places a high value on diversity in our workplace, including diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and physical ability. We strive to create an environment welcoming to all individuals and we encourage applications from individuals traditionally underrepresented in the legal profession. Applicants requiring accommodation for the interview/application process should contact the recruitment coordinator at [ablejobs@freelawyers.org](mailto:ablejobs@freelawyers.org).*

## TARTA SEEKS FEEDBACK ON UPCOMING SERVICE CHANGES

The Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) has scheduled a series of public events to collect community feedback on upcoming proposed major service changes. Proposed changes, which would go into effect in January of 2024 if approved by TARTA's Board of Trustees, include:

- The extension of Route 2 to Walmart in Oregon via Downtown Toledo
- Increased weekend frequency of Route 52
- Removal of Route 51

These events will include two in-person forums and one virtual feedback session. These forums will focus on the Title VI equity analyses surrounding the service changes. Public meetings are scheduled for:

- In-person meeting, **Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2023**, 12-1 p.m., Lucas County Shared Services building, 3737 W. Sylvania Avenue, Toledo (accessible by TARTA routes 3 and 19)
- In-person meeting, **Thursday, Sept. 7, 2023**, 6-7 p.m., Toledo Lucas County Public Library, Main Branch, 325 N. Michigan Avenue, Toledo (accessible by TARTA routes 20, 22, 27 and 33)
- Virtual meeting, **Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2023**, 10-11 a.m. Register at [tarta.com/publicmeetings](http://tarta.com/publicmeetings).

TARTA will also host public informational meetings in the Oregon area specific to extending service to Oregon, with dates and locations to be announced soon.

All language assistance services for TARTA programs are provided to the public at no charge. In-person translation services for events can be provided and should be requested at least 5 business days prior to the event.

Registration and additional details will be available in the coming weeks at [tarta.com](http://tarta.com) or by calling 419-243-7433. Customers and others from the public interested in submitting questions may do so by sending them to [customer-relations@tarta.com](mailto:customer-relations@tarta.com).

## LIBBEY 50TH REUNION

Libbey High School Class of 1973 are celebrating our 50th Class Reunion on Labor Day Weekend. The event will be held Friday, September 1st and Saturday, September 2nd.

Please contact Cassandra Day-Moore for tickets at 419.450.7227. Tickets are \$50 single and \$75 couple.

# The 10th Annual African American Male Wellness Walk

By Angie Hayes  
The Truth Reporter

On August 19, 2023, the 10th anniversary African American Male Wellness Initiative began and supported the wellness for the African American men in the community. Toledo continues to support preventive health care with the African American Initiative and acknowledging the impact provided by the African American Male Wellness Walk. Warren AME Church always volunteers to support the environment, so the African American Male Wellness

Initiative was held at 915 Collingwood Blvd.

The free event began in the morning and continued until 1 p.m. Free health screenings began at 8 a.m. and provided knowledge, support and medical resolutions for all participants. Free screening for blood pressure, sugar, vision, sickle cell, cholesterol, prostate, along with HIV testing was available to participants. Mercy Health and Equitas Health Toledo provided the service free

to support healthy lives. Several announcements were made to women in the atmosphere; requesting for their support to invite or encourage their "Black men, the loves of their lives" to complete the medical screenings and prepare for successful medical issues prevention and healthy living.

The morning also featured music from DJ impress, a fun zone for kids, Mystery Music youth drumline, more than 70 service provider vendors, and a workout session to loosen up the walkers organized by Erika White and Fit Zone.

This year's honorary chairman was Dennis Hopson, head coach for the Lourdes University men's basketball team. TaShara Brown, who splits her time between her hometown of Toledo and adopted town, Atlanta, lent her expertise to help with the organization of this year's event.

The 5K Walk began at 9 a.m. and dozens of participants completed the 5K walk/run. Many participants ran the entire length of the course, as they are active runners in their lives to support healthy living. Other participants successfully walked in a quick and efficient manner to complete the walk. Excellent benefits of activity were present, and many participants felt the positivity of the 5K walk.

Toledo's Public Safety Director Brian Byrd has served for 10 years as the event main organizer after he initially observed the benefits of the event during a visit

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City Safety Director Brian Byrd and TaShara Brown



DJ Impress



Erika White, Center, leads the fitness warmup



Greg Braylock and family members



The walkers start as the Mystery Music Youth Drumline salutes them



The AKA Booth



**THINK, ACT AND LIVE!**

SCAN FOR MORE INFO



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