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Chayna Brunner, Aurora Peterson, Kristie Peterson-Knighten, Cherisse Brunner, Kai Smith, front kneeling, Kynnedi Knighten

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A Golden Opportunity Knocks

By Rev. Donald L. Perryman, Ph.D.

The Truth Contributor



If a window of opportunity appears, don't pull down the shade.

- Tom Peters

Political dynamics are as unpredictable as the weather. The recent withdrawal of the front-runner, Mike Hart, from consideration to succeed the retiring Lucas County Commissioner Tina Skeldon-Wozniak is a stunning example of how swiftly political winds can shift in the local Democratic Party.

I understand the unions have told Mike Hart to “stand down” because they will back someone else after they had previously lined up the support to ensure that he got the nomination. Nevertheless, whether Hart backed out or got pushed out, he took some time, thought about it, and decided to continue doing the excellent work at the Toledo Lucas County Homelessness Board, which still has shortcomings but is in a better position than it has been for many years.

Stepping into the void left by Hart is Toledo City Councilman Nick Komives, a vocal advocate for the LGBTQ+ community. Since assuming office on January 1, 2018, and securing re-election in November 2021, Councilman Komives has been prolific in legislative output, significantly contributing to transformative change in Toledo.

What Komives Brings to the Table:

Komives excels in campaign organization and in energizing younger voters, already enjoying substantial support within the Party’s central committee. However, it remains to be seen whether he possesses the name recognition necessary to influence voters in Lucas County regions beyond Toledo, including areas like Maumee, Oregon, and Sylvania.

Although known for his impactful contributions on City Council and his evident enthusiasm for public service, Komives has indicated inter-

ests in multiple avenues, including a mayoral run in Toledo and a previous bid for a State House role. His colleagues suggest that for meaningful impact, he should streamline his ambitions and concentrate on actively campaigning for a particular office. The role of commissioner, for instance, is notably demanding and calls for an unwavering commitment to public service. As a source familiar with the matter stated, “Now is the optimal moment for Nick to refine his objectives to serve the community effectively.”

Komives responds, “I am exceedingly flattered that my name keeps coming up in the conversation for commissioner considering I didn’t ask to be considered. It invigorates me to think that people think that I would make a good commissioner, so while I’m flattered, I recognize there are numerous qualified individuals for the role.

‘A future mayoral candidacy is certainly an avenue I might explore,’ he adds. However, my current focus remains steadfast on the City Council, working diligently for the people of Toledo. Should the opportunity to run for mayor present itself, I will give it serious consideration. My objective is to ensure that we are making collective decisions that primarily benefit the community and secondarily strengthen the Party, aligning with my core values.”

Another candidate exceptionally poised to seize the opportunity is Paula Hicks-Hudson. Currently representing District 11 in the Ohio State Senate, she also served previously as a member of the Ohio House of Representatives for District 44.

Hicks-Hudson has the distinction of being Toledo’s first African-American female mayor, appointed in 2015 by the Toledo City Council. She initially entered the council as a District 4 representative in January 2011, filling a partial term vacated by Michael Ashford. Subsequently, she secured a full term in the November 2011 elections and served until her mayoral appointment. Additionally, she holds the current role of interim Lucas County Democratic Party Chair.

What Hicks-Hudson Brings to the Table:

Paula Hicks-Hudson brings a unique blend of experience and skills that could significantly benefit our community. With an extensive political background, including serving as a mayor, state representative, senator, city council member, and council president, Paula Hicks-Hudson deeply understands city and county governance. Her varied roles have equipped her with the skills to foster compromise and build consensus, a crucial asset in today’s divisive political climate. In addition to her wealth of experience, Hicks-Hudson is also a practicing attorney. This qualification adds a unique legal perspective to her skill set. As Tina Skeldon Wozniak departs, leaving a focus on social services – a vital component of county governance – Hicks-Hudson is poised to fill that gap. Her legal background, notably advocating for children, aligns seamlessly with this focus, making her a potentially invaluable asset to the community.

She also understands the importance of re-establishing a strong connection between Toledo and Columbus, which has been lacking recently. Given the considerable taxpayer dollars we contribute to the state, Hicks-Hudson aims to ensure we have a vocal presence in Columbus and reap a fair return on our investment.

Her approach will align well with proactive efforts already in place, such as lobbying, attending sessions in Columbus, and actively com-

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Community Calendar

Sept 1
 Braden United: Women in Faith will host First Friday Game Night in the church gym on Friday, 6-8PM. Free admission

Sept 17
 Indiana Avenue MBC 75th Annual Women's Day: 9 am Sunday School; 10:30 am Morning Service; "Christian Women's Impact on the Church and Community"

Marching on Washington and Continuing to Break the Silence of Women

By Ebenezer Nkunda and Madison Pina

Howard University News Service

Sixty years and generations later, women have taken center stage in the Civil Rights Movement, standing prominently at the microphone on Saturday to commemorate the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. But they were largely invisible in the same place at the Lincoln Memorial for the original march on August 28, 1963.

On that day, female leaders walked down Independence Avenue alongside the wives of the male leaders — not to separate themselves from the men walking down Pennsylvania Avenue, but showcase themselves as architects and organizers of the movement.

The March on Washington would not have happened if the women behind the scenes did not put in all the work they did. Ann Arnold Hedgeman was one of the lead organizers of the 1963 march along with women like Dorothy L. Heights, then president of the National Council of Negro Woman.

Hedgeman was responsible for recruiting 40,000 members to come to Washington as coordinator of special events for the Commission of Religion and Race of the National Council of Churches. After learning that no woman was present on the program as a keynote speaker, Hedgeman, the only woman in the planning committee, wrote a letter to the all-male “Big Six” saying that a woman should address the crowd. Hedgeman, Height nor other female leaders were given the opportunity to speak.

In addition to being a chief organizer of the March on Washington and a vital member of the Civil Rights Movement, Height was considered a member of the “Big Six.” Yet, the press ignored her in references to the “Big Six.” One member, James Farmer, mentions Height in his 1985 autobiography while identifying the origin of the name “Big Six.”

“Dr. Height, who didn’t get the chance to speak but will be named today as an intricate voice, was silenced, but her hand was all in it,” said the Rev. Shavon Arline-Bradley, who spoke at this year’s march as the current president of the NCNW, a co-sponsor of the anniversary.

After numerous ignored efforts and with the support of other female leaders, Hedgeman read a letter airing their grievances on the omission of women at the final meeting before the march. Hedgeman’s and Height’s efforts resulted in Myrlie Evers, widow of Medgar Evers, being selected to speak in 1963; however, she was ultimately unable to participate at the last minute.

Daisy Bates, who led the Little Rock Nine, gave a short speech of 142 words in her place, with a tribute to the women fighting for freedom and honoring those who rallied among the 250,000 attendees. Josephine Baker is often credited as speaking at the march, and she did, but she spoke before the formal events began.

For the most part, women were present on stage as entertainment. Camilla Williams sang the national anthem after Marian Anderson arrived too late. Anderson later got her chance to sing. So did Mahalia Jackson, who sang before the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. took the stage.

Women’s Resilience: A Continuum of Commitment

Today, women and girls are honoring the legacy of those who came before them and carrying the torch of progress forward in a wide range of roles.

“Black women are here to stay,” Bradley said. “Black women have done it again. We’re united again, and the generations are united again. As NCNW sections on all collegiate campuses, we have huge opportunities to talk about our ancestors.”

“We’re here to fight for these issues on poverty, justice, education, and health care,” she added.

Throughout the afternoon, more and more speakers came out, shining a light on how Black women have been at the forefront since the beginning.

“We continue to march as the first group to establish an African-American lobby group in 1938, the National Nonpartisan Council on Public Affairs,” said Danette Anthony Reed, president of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., told the crowd.

“We continue to march as the first sorority to enter lifetime membership in NAACP in 1939. We continue to march as the org in 1948 to establish the American Council on Human Rights for the Greek letter organizations to lobby.”

Brigitte Jean-Louis, director of mission advancement for the Young



Marching on Washington and Continuing to Break the Silence of Women

Women’s Christian Association, continues in the same dedication to women’s advancement as Hedgeman, who held high YWCA positions in Ohio and New York. Coming in from Princeton, New Jersey, Jean-Louis said that she had to be in attendance.

“Being here in a community with everyone fighting for democracy is huge to me,” said Jean-Louis while surrounded by fellow YWCA members. “As the daughter of Haitian immigrants, the first nation to fight back and win against their oppressors, this is in my blood.”

With the Dobbs v. Jackson decision leading to the overturning of Roe v. Wade and Parenthood v. Casey, which protected abortion rights, women who were born with the right to choose have found that right taken from them. They are now fighting to get them back with the generations that got them in the first place. The ongoing struggle for their rights reminds women that the fight is not linear. Still, it is through these hardships that the impact of unity is as prevalent as ever, as women came together to

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ensure their hard-earned triumphs would not be diminished.

Voices of the Youth: A New Chapter in Activism

Young people have always been part of the Civil Rights Movement, and they are continuing this legacy.

"We are still fighting for the same things 60 years later," said Carys Carr, a member of the Howard University section of the National Council of Negro Women. "We have a lot further to go, but we still came a long way. Being here with people who were here 60 years ago, it's a good feeling, not in the best way because we are still fighting for the same stuff."

Jan Howard, who came with the National Council of Jewish Women, recounts sitting on the steps and listening to King's speech.

"I was here in 1963, and I was sitting on those steps. They asked me to join them, and I said, 'Sure, why not?' I think it's important to continue to fight for other freedoms."

When asked if she has seen change, Howard says "Some, but more can change."

"It's a very sad thing to be here 60 years later and not see progress," she added. "We hope the young people take over, because we've done our part."

Later in the afternoon, the only grandchild of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. took the stage. Yolanda Renee King, a 15-year-old published author and public speaker, looks out among a crowd similar to the one her grandfather gazed upon in 1963.

Surrounded by her mother, Arndrea Waters King, and father, Martin Luther King III, she reiterated her grandfather's teachings on taking on the triple evil of racism, poverty and bigotry. She stated that her generation is experiencing things that earlier generations didn't expect but now cannot escape. Therefore, she said, her generation will be "defined by action, not apathy."

The youngest King leader ended the speech in a way that encapsulates the presence of her grandfather as the crowd repeated after her: Spread the word."

"Have you heard?"

"All across the nation,"

"We are going to be a great generation."

By joining arms across time and circumstance, the gathering served as a bridge between the conflicts won and those that continue. As the march came to a close, the setting sun shed a symbolic light on women's tenacity and unity of purpose as they continued in their lives.

Ebenezer Nkunda and Madison Pina are reporters for HUNewsService.com.

Perryman...continued from page 2

communicating with state officials. Her previous experience working in the Office of Management and Budget under Governor Strickland adds another layer of expertise, particularly in budgeting and fiscal management.

Furthermore, Hicks-Hudson can help community members navigate the complexities of state funding requests to help secure the resources we need locally. Her diverse areas of expertise would complement existing Lucas County Board of Commissioners skills while filling crucial gaps in our community's relationship with state governance.

What's more, Hicks-Hudson demonstrates a solid commitment to revitalizing Party engagement with youth and building a sustainable political pipeline for the future. As Party chair, she has taken concrete steps toward inclusion by appointing young talents like Daniel Ortiz and Chris Gore to key committees and roles within the Party. Unlike previous leadership, she is actively mentoring the next generation, thereby revitalizing areas of the Party that had diminished over time. She recognizes the importance of constantly recruiting and rebuilding, especially among young Democrats at the university level, where there was once a strong presence.

In short, Hicks-Hudson also brings a focused and inclusive approach to leadership, nurturing young talent and setting the stage for long-term Party sustainability at a time when there hasn't been a minority on the Board of Lucas County Commissioners since Bill Copeland, the first African American to hold a countywide post, retired in 2002.

Hicks-Hudson conveyed to me, "I'm praying and giving the matter thoughtful and careful consideration. I've been approached by numerous individuals encouraging me to weigh this option. Am I considering it? Yes. Am I looking toward it? Possibly yes, but I've not done anything quite official. Right now, though, I can confirm that it is under serious review."

Yes, I hear you, Paula and Nick. But in politics, as in life, golden opportunities don't come often; when they do, they require swift and decisive action!

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, PhD, at drdlperryman@enterofhopebaptist.org

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Queens Village: Creating Safe Spaces and Amplifying Black Women's Voices

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

In the heart of many cities, beneath the bustling surface, lies a hidden treasure waiting to be unearthed. In Queens Village, a thriving community is blossoming, a sanctuary where Black women gather to rest, relax, and empower. It's a place where resilience meets rejuvenation, where unity is the driving force, and where change is the ultimate goal.

"Dr. Meredith Shockley-Smith, is the visionary founder of Queens Village," shares Toledo Area Coordinator Crystal Martin.

"She knew that change had to start from within the community."

With a mission as powerful as the women it serves, Queens Village is more than just a place; it's a movement, a catalyst for transformation.

Here, they change the narrative, invest in leadership, create opportunities, and engage with the community to address the inequities that affect Black women, particularly when it comes to maternal and infant health.

WHAT

Queens Village, originally founded in Cincinnati, Ohio, is a community-based initiative bringing together powerful Black women from like-minded organizations. These thought leaders come together in growing chapters across the country to improve Black infant mortality from the ground up.

WHY

Addressing the inequities that affect Black women is a critical imperative to achieving health equity. "These disparities are multifaceted and deeply rooted in systemic, historical, and socio-economic factors," explains Martin.

"The stark reality is that Black women in the U.S. are up to three times more likely to experience infant loss, regardless of socioeconomic status."

Queens Village stands as a powerful response to this harrowing statistic. Their initiatives are rallying cries for change, coupled with calls to action to address these disparities head-on.

Changing the Narrative

Queens Village is rewriting the story for Black women. In a world that often overlooks our voices, this community has become a platform for Black women to share their experiences, challenges, and triumphs. Just as a pen can reshape a story, Queens Village is reshaping the narrative.

"As black women we are disproportionately affected by chronic conditions and complications during pregnancy," says Martin. Comprehensive maternal health programs and support for managing chronic conditions can help mitigate these risks.

Accurate data collection is also essential to understanding the extent of these disparities. Funding research focused on maternal and infant health among Black women can provide insights into effective interventions as providers track progress.

Stress and trauma play significant roles in impacting the Black community as well. The chronic stress of racism and discrimination on both macro and micro levels can have a profound impact on Black women's health.



Healthcare providers must be culturally competent, understanding the unique experiences and needs of Black women. This includes respecting cultural traditions and preferences in healthcare decisions.

"Our Queens Village Communities partner with organizations that provide mental health support, trauma-informed care, and culturally proficient counseling services," Martin adds.

Investing in Leadership

Empowerment is a cornerstone of Queens Village. By investing in Black female leadership, social capital, and power, they are building a generation of strong women who can uplift their communities. Like seeds planted in fertile soil, these leaders are poised to grow and flourish, leaving a lasting legacy of change.

Creating Opportunities

Creating safe spaces for black women to both personally and professionally thrive actively addresses systemic racism.

Queens Village understands this and prides itself on bridging the gaps to opportunities. They actively promote economic and professional opportunities for Black women, ensuring we have the tools and resources to not only succeed but thrive. This is a place where doors open wide, and paths to success are illuminated.

Engaging Community

In the quest for equity, Queens Village engages with social, political, and medical communities. "We are driving change by supporting equity initiatives and reducing implicit bias that disproportionately affects Black women," says Martin.

Important issues such as delayed diagnoses, inadequate treatment, and dismissive attitudes are all addressed in their anti-bias training. "You can't address a bias if you do not recognize that one exists. When you understand the challenge you can then address it properly. That's why our workshops

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Black Youths Suffer the Most from Gun Violence in America

By Hazel Trice Edney

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Sierra Jenkins, a former news assistant for CNN and reporter with the Virginian Pilot newspaper, was headed for the peak of her career. Her colleagues praised her for her journalistic acumen and her respect for reporting excellence.

But when her editor tried to call her to assign her to cover a shooting in Downtown Norfolk, Va. on March 19 last year, he could get no answer. Way out of character for this young journalist, known for her professionalism and accountability, there would be a reason for her non-response that would shock the world. Sierra Jenkins, 25, was one of the victims of the very shooting that her editor sought her to cover.

As her phone rang, she lay dead outside a popular pizza restaurant, felled by a bullet shot during an argument over a spilled drink. She was not involved in the dispute and the bullet was never intended for her. Nor was it intended for 25-year-old former high school honor student and football linebacker Devon Harris, also killed in the gunfire that night. The news devastated the community; their co-workers, family and friends.

Fifteen months later, on June 6 this year, only about 90 miles away, 18-year-old Shawn Jackson was also a promising young African-American. Having just graduated from Huguenot High School 30 minutes earlier, he lay dead

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are so powerful," she explains.

"We recently had a workshop on the importance of rest. It was mind boggling to see how overwhelmed many Black women are day to day."

Queens Village also asks their allies to use their voices in rooms and conversations in which Black women are not present to reduce and eliminate the adversity we experience.

"Each of our organization's Chapters champion education," says Martin. "We provide valuable support networks throughout Ohio that advocate for policies that prioritize maternal and infant health for Black women specifically. This is the best way we've found to track progress."

Join the Movement

Queens Village invites all who are willing to join their movement. Wheth-



Meredith Shockley-Smith

er through donations, sponsorship, or active participation, this is a community that values every contribution.

"Together, we are working towards a future where maternal equity is not a distant dream but a lived reality for all Black moms and babies," says Martin.

Addressing the inequities that affect Black women in maternal and infant health requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach. It involves changes at individual, community, and systemic levels, along with a commitment to dismantling the structural barriers that have perpetuated these disparities for generations.

Efforts like Queens Village serve as a shining example of how communities can come together to make a difference. In Queens Village, every woman is a queen, and together, they are building a kingdom of empowerment, resilience, and change. As they continue to amplify Black women's voices, they are sowing the seeds of a better world, where safe spaces thrive, and Black women are at the forefront of a brighter future.

For more information and to support Queens Village go to blackwomen-forthewin.com

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Gun Violence... continued from page 6

outside Richmond's Altria Theatre alongside his stepfather, Renzo Smith, a U. S. Army veteran. Both were killed by bullets from a gun wielded by a 19-year-old man who targeted the two men, according to police.

Whether the shootings were unintended or criminally intended for their victims, across the nation - coast to coast - Black people are disproportionately dying, being wounded by or mentally suffering from gun violence. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the leading cause of death [cdc.gov] among America's Black children and young adults ages 1-44 is homicide by firearms.

Amidst this crisis, sociologists, Black mental health experts and medical workers say one thing is certain: The travesty has taken its toll on Black mental health - largely through fear, stress and grief - while the gun industry is reaping billions of dollars.

"The volumes of guns are now so high that many people just use a gun to solve conflict when even that person might have tried something different in the past," says psychiatrist Rahn Kennedy Bailey - chairman of the department of psychiatry at Louisiana State University in New Orleans. "Our streets have been flooded with guns, a lot of guns. Where people have always had conflicts and had to resolve it in different ways, now they might grab you and shoot you... The sheer volume of guns are so high, a lot more violence happens."

According to a report by the Center for American Progress, between 1986 and 2008, an average of 3.8 million firearms were manufactured in the United States. The report titled, "The Gun Industry in America: The Overlooked Player in a National Crisis [static1.squarespace.com]," then illustrates the rapid annual growth of the gun proliferation. The 3.8 million between 1986 and 2008 "doubled to an annual average of 8.4 million firearms per year from 2009 to 2018," the most accurate recent count by the ATF.

In the year 2022 alone 4.2 million people in America became new gun owners, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation [nssf.org] (NSSF), the firearm industry's trade association. In a report [nssf.org], the NSSF estimates "in 2022 the firearm and ammunition industry was responsible for as much as \$80.73 billion in total economic activity" in America. This does not count the thousands of so-called "ghost guns", weapons not traceable because they are purchased secretly online or even made at home.

The compilations of resulting deaths have come from multiple directions. An NBC News analysis of data [cdc.gov] from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [cdc.gov] says, "More Americans have died from gunshots in the last 50 years" than in all of the wars in American history. "Since 1968, more than 1.5 million Americans have died in gun-related incidents. By comparison, approximately 1.2 million service members have been killed in every war in U.S. history, according to estimates from the Department of Veterans Affairs [va.gov] and iCasualties.org [icasualties.org]."

Everytown.org, a gun violence prevention organization, reports that Black people "experience 12 times the gun homicides, 18 times the gun assault injuries, and nearly 3 times the fatal shootings by police of White Americans."

But, the disparate impact on the Black community is not new. It has been long known by experts that African-Americans - just as in the cases of most other tragic social statistics - bears the brunt of the pain of gun violence physically, mentally and emotionally; even indicating that gun violence dramatically affects educational outcomes such as test scores.

A study led 20 years ago by Hampton University Endowed Professor Zina T. Mcgee, concluded that "Studies based on children raised in communities in which violence occurs have shown that direct encounters with violence (either as a victim or witness) increase the likelihood of experiencing anxieties, depression, social withdrawal, and difficulties in concentrating." Based on information collected from African-American youth "residing in areas plagued with violence and crime," Mcgee's 2003 study [academia.edu] states that "With regard to social class, research indicates that low socio-economic status serves as one of the many environmental factors that can contribute to the use of violence to resolve conflicts."

Despite credible conclusions that most gun-related homicides occur in low-income Black communities [penntoday.upenn.edu], it is clear that without the proliferation of guns the shootings would not be possible.

Dr. Valda Crowder, director of Emergency Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania witnesses the carnage up close on a regular basis. And it's gotten so bad that while treating victims; she and other medical professionals must also protect themselves.

"Many emergency departments now have armed guards because there have

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Gun Violence... continued from page 7

been threats against emergency medicine physicians, nurses, and hospitals. There have been actual shootings where emergency medical physicians were killed," Crowder said in an interview. "So many now have armed guards as a result of the increased threats. Many also have machines that you have to go through just like the airport and metal detectors. Patients are sometimes wanded. Those things used to never occur 20 or 25 years ago. I think people should realize that any person or entity that anyone could get mad at is a potential victim."

Crowder is among those struggling to end the carnage. Among a list of unique initiatives to end gun violence include the following:

- Crowder recalls how the historic photo of the mutilated body of Emmett Till, published in JET magazine, stunned the world and has been credited with sparking the modern day civil rights movement. Crowder believes that same kind of stunning moment could work again by placing on display bodies that have been mutilated by gun violence. "In 1955, the open-casket funeral of Emmett Till [r20.rs6.net] drew international attention to the savagery of Jim Crow segregation, spurring a national civil rights movement," Crowder wrote in an op-ed early this year. "Now almost 68 years later, we must 'do something' to stop the gun violence. Opening the casket of someone who was shot by an assault rifle in a mass shooting may be the shock the nation needs. It may be the photograph that launches a bigger, broader movement overwhelming the clout of gun manufacturers and other entrenched influences."

- U. S. Rep. Bobby Scott, who held a "Gun Violence Prevention Roundtable", in 2019 following an incident in which 13 people were killed in a mass shooting, listed a string of Virginia killings and gun injuries near the area where Sierra Jenkins and Devon Harris were killed. "We have evidence available to show that affective policies can reduce these shootings," Scott says. "When they are implemented, background checks work. Every day, background checks stop nearly 250 dangerous individuals from being handed a firearm. However, these same people can go to a gun show and purchase a firearm without any background check. Virginia laws are among the worst in the country," he said, describing the commonwealth as the "gun-running capital of the world."

- Scott says an assault weapons ban must be instituted because "the only thing that assault weapons are good for is killing many people quickly." He

said there is also need for sizeable gun magazine limitations. There are actually limitations on the size of a gun magazine to protect ducks but no limits on the size of gun magazines to protect people, he said.

- After a rash of mass shootings, including the racist killings of 10 people at a Buffalo, New York grocery store by a 19-year-old White man, the U. S. House and Senate finally passed a historic bi-partisan gun bill that was signed into law by President Joe Biden on July 11 last year. The first significant gun legislation in more than 30 years, it includes enhanced restrictions on gun ownership by people convicted of certain violent crimes; including domestic abuse. But it still fails to include restrictions on large bullet magazines. In fact, a similar racist killing of three Black people in Jacksonville, Florida recently on August 26 was by a 21-year-old White man who reportedly bought the AR-15-style rifle legally. Biden said he didn't get all that he wanted in the new law, but he vowed to keep trying.

- Still, good old fashioned home training that instills non-violent morals and values is the best way to deter violence, says Bailey.

- "The respect for life, how your parents raised you matter. If you believe human beings are valuable you wouldn't shoot someone at all let alone shoot them for a non-violent offense," Bailey said. "But in many shootings now that are not self defense or life or death, people are said to have a beef over something that's non-violent and the person escalates it to violence by grabbing a gun and shooting someone."

- Parents, teachers and school officials could be in on this training in conflict resolution, Bailey says.

- "Children are on the playground bumping into each other all the time. How teachers and counselors handle it goes a long way in teaching a little kid that it's normative to jump around and bump into each other. But it's not normative to bump into each other and knock them down and not try to help them or try to offer them assistance. Those are the kinds of things that start the process. The other thing is you can also do roll play of arguments so that young people can recognize what you should and should not say in the middle of a really big argument. Young men are often 18, 19, 20 years old; so they can drive and move around. They just may not know how to handle conflict. We should be very involved in this process."



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Youth Suicide..... A Mental Health Moment (Part 2)

By Bernadette Joy Graham, MA, LPCC, LLC
The Truth Contributor

There are many boxes to check when a mental health provider is conducting a diagnostic assessment during the first session of a therapy session or at a mental health facility that law enforcement or an emergency room facility someone has first encountered. Youth or adult, a diagnostic assessment asks very specific questions such as previous abuse that includes physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or mental. ***“Have you ever been touched or fondled in a sexual manner in which you did not consent?” “Has anyone in your family completed a suicide or have you attempted a suicide in the past?”*** These are just two questions asked on a sometimes 5- page assessment,



Suicidal, homicidal, self-harm and abuse questions will be asked. Those pertinent boxes are some of the most important due to the risk of the individual repeating or attempting the behavior and gives the provider a better sense of your level of harm done by self, others or both.

When conducting a diagnostic assessment, not everyone tells the truth, especially youth and if there is a cultural difference between medical provider and youth being asked, that can only cause another issue of verifiable information. Suicide questions should be met with care such as is English the youth's first language? Is the youth being asked the question, Black, is the provider have cultural competency or Black, or is the youth being assessed have any other issues such as hearing deficiencies and need a provider who is fluent in sign language?

Marginalized populations often have to wait longer, and feeling treated disrespectfully due to a provider not available to meet the youth's needs.

In part 1 (August) issue of a mental health moment, I communicated that there would be more information on how to prevent youth suicide and how it can be addressed. I began this article with the boxes being checked during a diagnostic assessment for a few reasons. First reason, some providers do not even ask or check the boxes about suicide to include thoughts, plans or means to carry out the act, maybe they are in a rush, maybe they don't care or it's close to shift change and second reason even if it is asked or checked is there a follow-up with the parents/guardians such as are there means in the home the youth could carry out an attempt such as knives, firearms, or other forms such as rope or pills.

This is a difficult world we live in as not just adults but in general. Some have it worse than others and some have it better than others but the bottom line is when it comes to youth suicide, it's not about who is without material means it's about who is without a who? Role models, mentors, parents, family of any kind, coaches and I really want to say teachers but I know teachers have a very difficult job of spending more time with our children than we do. Something will be missed and they should not be held accountable completely about the safety of our youth. From my professional opinion from a mental health provider to a teacher is to acknowledge or report, ask the youth and plainly let them know that they care and direct them to the right places such as phone apps, other school workers such as counselors or coaches even parents but don't ignore the most basic signs. Yes, I clearly stated earlier that teachers are not counselors but you are still held responsible for the gatekeepers of our children, if you see, or hear or find something say something. It's the least you can do and if it were your child, you would want someone to do the same.

Below are some resources:

- 988 - A mental health care line like 911 but dedicated to mental health emergencies or concerns. English and Spanish.(24 hours/7 days a week)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (ASFP.org)
- Kids' Mental Health Apps and Websites for Anxiety, Depression, Cop-

ing Skills, and

-Professional Support. Apps, sites, and text hotlines help kids cope with issues from stress to suicide

**APPS
MY3**

(Available for Apple and Android Devices)

-MY3 allows users to create a network of people they can reach out to when they are having thoughts of suicide and to create a plan to stay safe. Encourage students to choose 3 adults to help when they need it the most.

Stay Alive

...continued on page 11



Health Section • Health Section • Health Section • Health Section • Health Section • Health Section • Health Section • Health Section

Home Food Preservation

By Patrice Powers-Barker, OSU Extension, Lucas County

The Truth Contributor

Although home food preservation like canning, freezing, and drying is very popular in the summer with local vegetable gardens and farm market produce, home food preservation can happen throughout the year. September is a great time to think about home food preservation. What local foods do you and your family enjoy? Are there ways that you can preserve it to enjoy later in the year?

choose to preserve their own food. Some of these examples are to use an abundance of food from the garden, or for health and wellness such as choosing low-sodium options, or they preserve food because it's a tradition.



As with any food preparation, food safety is an important step for home food preservation. Basic recommendations include sanitizing countertops and spaces where food will be prepared and washing hands with soap and water. For home food preservation, it is recommended that you follow all the steps of updated, researched recipes. The National Center for Home Food Preservation is a good resource. Nchfp.uga.edu

Although home food preservation can be a large undertaking, from collecting all the ingredients, supplies and equipment and time invested, the good news is that there are many ways to do home food preservation on a small scale. For example, cooking a larger amount of a favorite meal and preserving part of it in a freezer safe container for a meal later is a basic example of freezing food. A larger scale example of freezing food might be buying a large amount of meat at a good price and freezing it for the year. In this example, in addition to the cost of a larger freezer, it might make sense to invest in a generator as well for times when the electricity goes out. Some people also invest in additional equipment like a food vacuum sealer. This might be a good investment when storing large amounts of food in the freezer. If you are storing smaller amounts, look for freezer containers or zip-top bags that are designed for the freezer.

For canning, it could be as simple as using an updated, researched recipe for four pint sized canning jars in a boiling water bath. For example, the National Center for Home Food Preservation's book, "So Easy to Preserve" Sixth Edition (2014) has a recipe for Chow-Chow that makes about 4-pint jars or a recipe for Tomatillo Green Salsa that makes about five-pint jars. On a large scale, some people preserve many kinds of food and use a pressure canner for safe canning of vegetables and meats. The water bath canner can be used safely for updated, research based acidic recipes like salsas, fruits, pickled vegetables, etc. For all low acid foods like vegetables and meats, the pressure canner is the only safe way to raise the temperature high enough for safe processing and storage.

What foods should be preserved? First, make sure it's a food that you use and like. If no one in your household likes applesauce, then it doesn't make sense to make it and preserve it even if there is a great price on apples at the store. There are many reasons why people

If you have any questions about food safety, either email or call Patrice at the OSU Extension, Lucas County office at powers-barker.1@osu.edu or 419-574-0983. OSU Extension staff are often out in the county offering programming so if you get voice mail, please leave a message. The OSU Extension, Lucas County office also offers testing of pressure canner gauges for \$5. Please use the contact information above to make an appointment to have your pressure canner gauge tested at our office at the Toledo Botanical Gardens.

Join us! OSU Extension, Lucas County is offering a free class, "Basic Home

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Food Preservation: Deciding What's Best for You" on Monday September 25th, 2023, from 6:00pm - 7:30pm at the Walbridge Park Community Building, 2761 Broadway Street, Toledo, Ohio, 43609. This class is free but please register online at go.osu.edu/LucasCanning or call and leave a message for Patrice at 419-574-0983.

This introductory class for home food preservation will help you decide what works best for you and your kitchen. This class will cover basic food safety principles, review ways to safely preserve different types of foods and help you know where to access current information for successful home food preservation.

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This Fall, Older Adults Should Protect Their Health

Special to The Truth

With cold and flu season upon us, it's time to protect yourself, not only from those seasonal threats, but also from other health risks.

"During the holidays, our lives get very busy with family and friends," said Dr. J.B. Sobel, chief medical officer for Cigna Healthcare's Medicare business. "Before then, please take time to ensure you get the preventive care you need to stay healthy."

Preventive care is critical for everybody, but particularly for older adults, and especially in fall when risks can increase, Sobel said. Recommendations vary based on age, gender and health status, but the following are some of the most common for seniors, according to Sobel.

Vaccinations

There are a number of vaccines older adults need to consider to protect themselves. Flu and pneumonia, for example, are among some of the most common causes of senior deaths. There is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to vaccination. Timing and frequency vary, depending on your health history. Ask your health care provider which vaccines are appropriate for you.

- Flu. This vaccine is administered annually, generally before the end of October, and is designed to match the latest circulating flu strains.
- Pneumonia. Administration varies based on health history. If you're 65 or older and you've never had the vaccine before, then you'll likely need two shots, which are administered a year apart.
- Shingles. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends two doses of the shingles vaccine for healthy adults aged 50 and older, spaced two to six months apart, to prevent shingles and related complications.
- COVID-19. Ask your doctors about current recommendations for prevention of COVID-19 infections.
- RSV. Earlier this year, the Federal Drug Administration approved two separate vaccines to address respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in older adults. RSV, a common respiratory infection, usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms, but can be more severe in older adults and children. Talk to your doctor about whether you should get an RSV vaccine.

Health Screenings

The following health screenings are commonly recommended for older adults.

- Mammogram. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women in the United States, according to the CDC. Every woman is at risk, and risk increases with age. Fortunately, breast cancer can often be treated successfully when found early. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends women 50 to 74-years-old at average risk get a mammogram every two years.
- Colorectal screening. Colorectal cancer risk increases with age. Screenings can find precancerous polyps early, so they can be removed before they turn into cancer. The USPSTF recommends colorectal cancer screening for adults age 45 to 75. Though colonoscopy is the most comprehensive test, there are other options you may consider with the help of your provider.
- Bone density scan. USPSTF recommends women aged 65 and older, and women 60 and older at increased risk, be routinely screened for osteoporosis, a disease in which bones become weak and brittle. Screening may facilitate treatment that helps prevent fractures.
- Eye exam. Routine eye exams can identify early signs of eye disease that are more likely as

people age. People with diabetes in particular are prone to retinopathy, which leads to vision loss. It's recommended that people with diabetes have annual retinal screenings.

- Mental health checkup. Many people experience seasonal depression during fall. Mental health is strongly linked to physical health. Talk to your health care provider about both, including your personal and family history. They can connect you with additional mental health resources.
- To prevent unpleasant surprises, Sobel suggests talking with your health care provider, pharmacist or insurer about preventive care costs. Fortunately, costs are often covered fully by Medicare or Medicare Advantage, he said.

The information contained in this article is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or treatment and before undertaking a new health care regimen.

Courtesy StatePoint

Youth Suicide... continued from page 10

(Available for Apple and Android Devices)

Stay Alive is full of information and resources for people struggling with thoughts of suicide. It allows users to find help, identify signs of suicide and resources to understand suicide better. It includes a safety plan and a life box where users can store information and photos that are important to them. Great tool for parents of children with suicidal ideation.

HELP Prevent Suicide

(Available for Apple)

HELP lists warning signs and provides information on how to talk to a person who may be suicidal. It also provides national and Oklahoma specific resources that users can reach out to for additional help.

Suicide Safer Home

(Available for Apple)

Suicide Safer Home provides support for families of people at risk for suicide. It offers tips on how to be aware of warning signs, how to take action and risk factors to be aware of.

Virtual Hope Box

(Available for Apple or Android)

Virtual Hope Box is designed as an accessory to treatment to remind people struggling with mental health or suicidal ideations all the positive things they have in their lives. It provides tools for coping, relaxing, and positive thinking to help them create a positive envi-



...continued on page 12

Bernadette Joy Graham, LPCC, LLC
 Licensed Professional
 Clinical Counselor
 419.409.4929
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ProMedica Community Events in September and October

ProMedica will offer the following community events in September and October:

September 17, 2023 - BE FAST 5k Run & 1 Mile Walk - The BE FAST 5k Run & 1 Mile Walk will be taking place at Promenade Park (400 Water St. Toledo, OH 43604). The event works to raise awareness of stroke and stroke risk factors while raising money for the Stroke Patient Assistance Fund that provides financial coverage for patients with limited financial means as a result of their stroke. The event will feature a free community resource fair that is open to the public (race participation not required) where there will be health screenings, door prizes, music, face painting, activities for the kids and more. For more information or to register, visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/OH/Toledo/BEFAST5kRunWalk>.

September 19, 2023 - Women's Cancer Support Group - The Women's Cancer Support Group is a gathering of women who have a cancer diagnosis. It is a safe harbor to come to give or receive support. The group provides education, encouragement and sharing in an informal social environment. Meetings are on the third Tuesday of every month at ProMedica Monroe Regional Hospital's main campus, 4th Floor Conference Room A - 6:45 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

September 28, 2023 - Celebration of Life for Brain Aneurysm Survivors - The annual Celebration of Life for Brain Aneurysm Survivors hosted by the ProMedica Stroke Network will take place at the Toledo Botanical Gardens Crosby Conference Center (5403 Elmer Dr. Toledo, OH 43615) from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. The event includes guest speakers, survivor testimonies, vendors, dinner, the Toledo Symphony Youth Orchestra and more. Admission is free but registration is required. To register, please visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/celebration-of-life-for-brain-aneurysm-survivors-tickets-536005947217?aff=ebdshpsearchautocombine>.

October 14, 2023 - A Bite for the Fight - The 10th annual A Bite for the Fight is taking place at ProMedica Flower Hospital (5200 Harroun Rd, Sylvania, OH 43560). This event is a one mile walk with local restaurant tastings along the way. All proceeds go to the ProMedica Hickman Cancer Center and its

programs for patients and survivors such as Art Therapy, Bridge to Fitness, Healing Care and more. Entertainment will be available for the entire family. For more information or to register, visit <https://give.promedica.org/event/bite-for-the-fight/e486381>.

October 17, 2023 - Women's Cancer Support Group - The Women's Cancer Support Group is a gathering of women who have a cancer diagnosis. It is a safe harbor to come to give or receive support. The group provides education, encouragement and sharing in an informal social environment. Meetings are on the third Tuesday of every month at ProMedica Monroe Regional Hospital's main campus, 4th Floor Conference Room A - 6:45 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

October 21, 2023 - Trunk or Treat - ProMedica's 3rd annual Trunk or Treat sponsored by ProMedica Patient Access is taking place at the ProMedica Health & Wellness Center in Sylvania (5700 Monroe St. Sylvania, OH 43560). Activities include face painting, character meet and greets and a chance to win door prizes. Food trucks available from 1-5 p.m. and trunk or treating from 2-4 p.m.

October 26, 2023 - Stroke Support Group - The ProMedica Stroke Support Group will be meeting and joined by assistance dogs from the Ability Center and stroke survivor Marcia Rosenberg. The event will take place at the ProMedica Flower Hospital Conference Center (5200 Harroun Rd., Sylvania, OH 43560). The event begins at 5 p.m.

ProMedica is a mission-based, not-for-profit health and well-being organization headquartered in Toledo, Ohio. The organization offers acute and ambulatory care, an insurance company with a dental plan, and post-acute and academic business lines. The organization has 12 hospitals, 2,500+ physicians and advanced practice providers with privileges, 1,000+ health care providers employed by ProMedica Physicians, a health plan, and assisted living facilities, skilled nursing centers, memory care communities, outpatient rehabilitation clinics, and hospice, home health and palliative care agencies. Driven by its Mission to improve your health and well-being, ProMedica has been nationally recognized for its advocacy programs and efforts to address social determinants of health. For more information about ProMedica, please visit.

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Older Adults... continued from page 11

ronment for themselves.

Technology helps us to reach students we may otherwise lose if we were to provide them with only the traditional methods of support: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Phone Number: 1-800-273-8255

Online chat

Adults, please take a mental health moment if you are caring for a child or responsible for a child in any capacity please speak up. I know most adults these days think our youth to be "out there" but remember there was a time when you were a child, you were a teenager and knew EVERYTHING! Let them think what they want let's just do our best to keep them alive, I guarantee if you reflect back now you can think of those one or two adults who really saved your life. Mine was my fifth and sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Washington, at Lagrange elementary school. I even remember her exact words that stuck with me for life. "Be sure to get your education because no one can ever take away that piece of paper you receive and the knowledge will be with you forever.: Thank you Mrs. Washington, I have a couple of those pieces of papers today and I may not have had you not taken the time to say those few words.

Bernadette Joy Graham, MA, LPCC, LLC

Graham.bernadette@gmail.com

Weekly Youtube Mentally In-Tune

I Wasn't Supposed to Be Here by Jonathan Conyers

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
The Truth Contributor

Something's all wrong about this scenario.

c.2023
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It doesn't even look right. It's a mess, which isn't how you expected it to be. No, you should've turned around the minute you saw it, walked out the door, and denied all responsibility but now you're involved. And in the new memoir *I Wasn't Supposed to Be Here* by Jonathan Conyers, making things good is going to take some work.

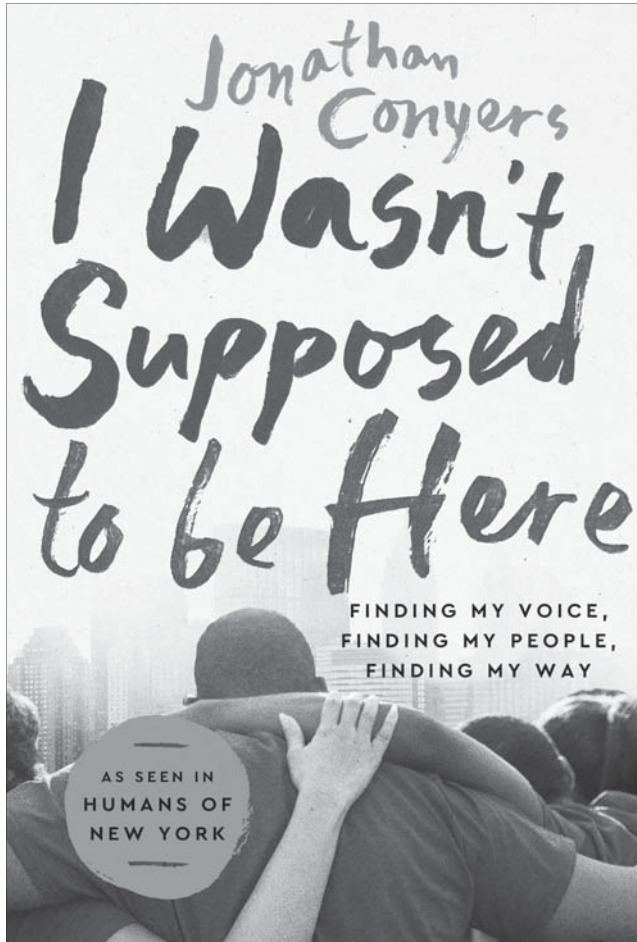
For most of his earliest life, Jon Conyers was never totally sure where he'd wake up the next weekend. His parents were both addicted to crack, and moving from apartment to shelter and back and from state to state happened all the time for him and his siblings.

"I just knew I never felt safe," he says.

Despite that his childhood was "tinged with trauma," Conyers' parents insisted on one good thing: that their five children get an education. That was the family beacon, an unwavering base that never changed. Conyers says his parents were often high but they still showed up to parent-teacher conferences, without fail, and his older brothers each attended college.

Conyers, however, struggled. He did well in school while the family lived in Virginia, but back in New York, the streets were often more appealing than a classroom.

He says that the old African proverb is correct, though: it *does* take a vil-



lage to raise a child. He saw, early-on, that if you don't have a village, you need to build one yourself – and that's what he did.

When he had trouble staying in school, a mentor held him accountable. Others saw past the righteous anger that surfaced from him sometimes, and they pushed him to study at a Harlem high school that helped him channel his energy and succeed. He was further encouraged to apply for a summer program that expanded his horizons.

Conyers says "I was going to learn all I could, be successful, and come back to help the people in my community."



I Wasn't Supposed to Be Here author, courtesy Gabriel Taliaferrow

And then his dream was almost derailed by one small thing...

Does this story sound familiar? If you're a fan of *Humans of New York* on social media or in books, then you might have read bits of author Jonathan Conyers' story. In *I Wasn't Supposed to Be Here*, you'll get the rest of it.

And you'll see the grace inside this story, so much grace that it almost makes you weep.

Starting before he was born, Conyers writes, it seemed as though the universe was conspiring against him: he was almost aborted, he was sometimes hungry, and sometimes homeless. His education was often in question, as was his life, but there's no real complaining in the telling of any of this. Readers just get the facts, in a voice that uplifts as it conveys awe at the presence of angels in a "village."

While this book seems aimed at adults, it could be a wonderful, meaningful gift for older teens, too. If anyone needs a feel-good, *I Wasn't Supposed to Be Here* is all kinds of right.

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Bowling Green State University is a nationally ranked public university committed to redefining student success in a high-achieving, innovative environment. In 2021, Forbes ranked BGSU as the No. 3 midsize employer in the United States, highlighting the University's commitment to its faculty and staff. Serving as the core of the University's academic community, more than 800 full-time faculty members are engaged in teaching, research and creative activities, with over 2,000 full-time staff members to support the operations and education of over 20,000 students.

The Retention Specialist is an entry level administrative staff position within the TRIO Programs Department that has primary responsibility for Student Engagement Services, maintaining a participant caseload, and supporting recruitment and programming within the Student Support Services program. Deadline to apply: The search committee will review applications until the position is filled; however, for best consideration, applications should be provided by September 12, 2023.

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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.

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.

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 or by calling 419-243-7433. Customers and others from the public interested in submitting questions may do so by sending them to customer-relationships@tarta.com.

ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICE BOARD OF LUCAS COUNTY

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.

Naturalistas... continued from page 16

causes and the unique ways they celebrate their natural hair.

Kristie McKnighten

Blessed to Bless is a passion project born from divine instruction given to my daughter Chayna, simply stating: "help those in need." So she decided to fill bags with items loosely, yet strategically, based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and give to the homeless. The contents include snacks, a nominal amount of money (perhaps to catch a bus somewhere) and even a handwritten note of encouragement.

Her mission is now two-fold. The bags are created to help those in need, as instructed. However, the second and perhaps most impactful aspect is the method of distribution.

Chayna purchases all the items, packs the bags, but then freely gives them for others to give away. This allows them to experience the gift of giving to those in need!

Chayna says it "teaches others to hear that small voice, recognize opportunities to serve, and be prepared to answer every call to be the hands and feet of Jesus."

I am so very proud of Chayna and an active supporter of this cause. Hopefully, this photo reminds people of what I too believe: that we are naturally Blessed to Bless!

Any inquiries can be directed to BlessedToBlessToledo@gmail.com.

Erika White

"Lifting as we climb"

Black women continue to be the largest and most consistent voting demographic since 2006. With their power at the polls, Black women continue align their voices in the discussion on policy on critical issues from advancing economic justice to vot-rights to maternal and child health.



Black women don't ask political parties or politicians for their policies or agendas; they uplift and advocate for policies that improve their lives and the lives of everyone around them.

The Black Women's Roundtable works to engage, educate, organize, and mobilize African Americans of all ages to participate in American democracy. Having the ability to vote in fair elections, to legislate and shape public policy, and to run for higher office (and win) is how we gain a voice for Black women and our country as a whole.

I see my natural hair and my passions intersecting to create the representation that I am not easily swayed to change my mind and deeply value my roots. My hair is a unique representation that shows I stand by what I believe in, I celebrate uniqueness, value freedom, passion, and resilience.

Maya Williams

I chose to wear the shirt that expresses "Black by Popular Demand" celebrates history of Black people and the accomplishments made by them throughout the nation. This is also an expression I want to represent through



my Naturalosity brand and for Black women to remember their roots. Naturalosity is a brand to inspire, educate, and empower women to get the best advice for proper natural hair care.

My story begins with being told that I wasn't going to excel at anything if I wore my hair kinky. After hearing those words, I immediately transitioned from straight to kinky hair with my mom and two sisters. I have been 11 years natural, and it has been the best decision and I wanted to express

my experience with Black women who have dealt with or are dealing with stereotypes or microaggressions.

Celeste Smith

This is so much more than a photo shoot for me personally. I remember saying many years ago that my hair in its natural state is not professional. A very wise woman told me. "Celeste, you have slave mentality." I was very bothered by her comment to me. What other race says that their hair in its natural state isn't professional? Even after that it took me a few years to embrace my natural hair. It wasn't until 2010 that my whole attitude changed.



Being photographed with all these beautiful Black, Bold and Powerful women with their natural hair sends a beautiful message. As I walk this road called life, successes and failures are going to come my way. My "Attitude Matters" on how I handle them!

Kim Taylor

Be Real not perfect... I realized after a health scare this year that I needed to be thankful for what God has given me thus far and not take anything for granted. With that being said, I also realized that what we often expect from ourselves, and others is perfection... there has only been one perfect person to walk this earth... Jesus Christ, just live in your truth... your reality and be kind to others and you will be BLESSED!



Donnetta Carter BKA The Social Butterfly

The t-shirts I chose to wear "Fancy and you already know" and "Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated", represent my personality and describe self-love, resilience, transparency, loyalty, uniqueness and commitment.



Sandra Gill

I decided to wear my "I AM" t-shirt because I am enough and beautiful, worthy, loved, an overcomer and strong in Christ. The world wants to 'other' me; make my cultural expression a constraint, but I heard Gwendolyn Brooks' declare, '(natural) hair is a celebration in the world.' Therefore, I am never a limitation but qualified to be who I am!



Fonda Royster

I chose the Open Arms Transformation Living T-shirt to bring awareness of the increasing numbers of teen homelessness and exploitation, esp. in Toledo. Additionally, I wanted to promote a safe non-judgmental space (organization) for these babies in need.



AGELESS & ACTIVE SENIOR RESOURCE FAIR

October 12, 2023
11:00AM - 2:00PM

The Indiana Avenue Baptist Church
Stephenson Roberts Fellowship Hall
640 Indiana Avenue
Toledo Ohio 43604

A variety of area organizations with products and services geared towards seniors will be on hand with resource information and giveaways. Don't miss the chance to ask one-on-one questions directly to the people who can answer them! Bring your friends, neighbors, and anyone else you

Rocking Their Cause and Natural Hair: The 2023 Naturalistas Photo Shoot



By *Carla Thomas*
The Truth Contributor

Ten years ago, I embarked on a remarkable endeavor known today as the Naturalistas Photo Shoot. It was a tribute to honor the beauty and strength of Black women and girls who embrace their natural hair. This year, however, will mark the ninth annual photo shoot, as there was one year when I did not hold the event.

For this year's shoot, I felt compelled to ensure that these remarkable women have the opportunity to showcase their multifaceted identities beyond their hair. I decided on the theme, "ROCK YOUR CAUSE!" and invited the ladies to wear a t-shirt representative of their values, passions, or causes



Caniecia Arney



Felicia Howard



Denise B. Davis



Carolyn Rankin

that are important to them. This shoot was not just about hair, but about the diverse and empowering issues that drive us as African American women forward.

ward.

As a way of giving back, a \$25 donation is required to participate with 100 percent of the proceeds going to support a charity of choice. This year's charity is Open Arms Transformation Living (OATL), under the leadership of Fonda Royster. OATL's mission is to create a community where youth homelessness is a thing of the past.

The 2023 Naturalistas donated \$375 to help support their mission.

As you read on, you'll not only have the pleasure of admiring the diverse and captivating images of each woman, but also get to delve deeper into their stories as they share the significance behind the T-shirts, they've selected to champion their

... continued on page 15

THINK, ACT AND LIVE!

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