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# The *Sojourner's* Truth

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*"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."*

March 6, 2024

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Ayana Parsons, Co-Founder, The Fearless Fund and Yardstick Management

# The Supreme Choice

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

The Truth Contributor

*History teaches that grave threats to liberty often come in times of urgency, when constitutional rights seem too extravagant to endure.*

- Thurgood Marshall



Our state and federal Supreme Court systems have recently been described as “constrictors of Democracy,” a characterization that resonates deeply when we consider contentious issues such as voting rights, reproductive rights, and gerrymandering, among others.

The loss of balanced judicial voices has tilted the scales in a way that no longer reflects the will or the welfare of the majority. Five counties hold 68 percent of Ohio’s population but only possess 35 percent of the voting power in the legislature. This disproportionate representation is a glaring injustice that undermines the principle of equal representation upon which our democracy is built. The math is simple, and the injustice is clear. The upcoming Supreme Court election is our “last stop,” the backstop that ensures the principles of fairness, equality, and democracy are upheld.

Yet, the good news is that the solution is within our grasp.

Although Republicans have held a majority on the seven-seat Ohio Supreme Court since 1986 - nearly four decades, the Democratic Party can shift the 4-3 court majority by defending two incumbents and winning an open seat.

Judge Terri Jamison, thus, emerges as a shining star in this critical race.

Jamison’s journey from a coal miner in Welch, West Virginia, to a respected judge on the 10th District Court of Appeals encapsulates the essence of serving with integrity, empathy, and a deep understanding of the legal sys-

tem’s impact on everyday Ohioans.

Judge Jamison represents the cross-section of average Ohioans in a way few can. Her non-traditional path, marked by hard work and a relentless pursuit of education, mirrors the challenges and aspirations of many in our community. Her experiences as a single parent navigating through law school and as a professional and small business owner breaking barriers in male-dominated fields offer a relatable and inspiring narrative. For women and minorities, her path is a testament to overcoming adversity through resilience and determination.



Judge Terri Jamison

Her legal career, particularly as a defense attorney and a juvenile judge, underscores the critical perspective she brings to the judiciary. Jamison’s firsthand experience with individuals from diverse socioeconomic positions allows her to apply the law equitably while maintaining compassion and understanding for those in crisis. This unique blend of empathy and legal acumen makes Jamison the right choice for addressing today’s complex issues.

With a background that aligns closely with the lived experiences of most Ohioans, Judge Jamison’s focus on critical issues like reproductive rights, the new marijuana law, redistricting, and the need for a statewide database of criminal sentences speaks to her commitment to transparency, fairness, and equity. Her support for the Ohio Sentencing Data Project accentuates her belief in the public’s right to know and understand how justice is meted out, ensuring accountability and fairness in sentencing.

Yet, it’s not just her professional achievements that make Jamison the supreme choice for the Supreme Court. Jamison’s role as a pastor and her active engagement in community service projects illustrate her holistic approach to leadership, emphasizing the importance of mental, financial, spiritual, and communal health and wellness.

As Ohioans stand at a crossroads, Judge Jamison’s blue-collar background, combined with her legal acumen and dedication to justice, makes her an exemplary candidate. Her understanding of the root causes of the problems affecting urban and underserved areas, coupled with her firsthand experience of overcoming adversity, positions her as a justice who would not only interpret the law but do so with a deep understanding of its impact on everyday lives.

At a time when public trust in our institutions is wavering, Jamison’s candidacy answers the call for a judiciary that not only applies the law impartially but does so with an unwavering commitment to equity and equality. In her words, Jamison’s emphasis on justice means “to treat everyone equally,

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Dawn Scotland – Assistant Editor

Tricia Hall – Reporter  
Asia Nail – Reporter  
Rev. D.L. Perryman – Columnist  
Megan Davis – Columnist

Jennifer Retholtz – Webmaster  
Jessica Crans – Layout

**A Certified MBE**

The Sojourner's Truth, 7 E Bancroft, Toledo, OH 43620

Phone 419-243-0007

[thetruth@thetruthtoledo.com](http://thetruth@thetruthtoledo.com)

# Why We Need Diverse Books in Schools

By Maya Pottiger, *Word in Black*

Guest Column

Ever since he was young, Marchánt Davis has always loved children's media and the power it possesses. Though his favorites were "Sesame Street" and "Reading Rainbow" — especially seeing himself represented on screen through LeVar Burton — he says he was "strangely" inspired by "Snow White."

"It was always playing on TV," says Davis, an actor, director, writer, and now author of *A Boy and His Mirror*. And it was this story that he wanted to repurpose for his own children's book geared toward the current generation.

Thinking about the relationship kids have with their phones and what identity means, Davis wanted to create a story that spoke to people coming up in a world with Tik Tok, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat.

But, mostly, Davis wrote the book hoping young Black boys would read it. Though he doesn't believe any one thing will cure problems, he wants the book to be a step toward boys acknowledging their feelings and countering some of the toxic masculinity in the Black community.

Davis called back to what Sheryl Lee Ralph said in her acceptance speech at the Critics Choice Awards.

"When you look in the mirror, you gotta love what you see," Davis quoted. "And so I wrote a book in an effort to help kids look in the mirror and love what they see."

Though he hopes the book empowers young Black boys, they aren't the sole audience Davis has in mind.

"It's a book for anybody who feels 'other' by the way they look, or anybody who has self-doubt," Davis says. "It's a book that I want kids to read and feel empowered, feel like they have agency."

The problem is that, around the country, books like Davis' are being removed from the shelves of classrooms and school libraries. Books that feature Black protagonists or talk about Black history.

And that's a problem.

## 'I Grew Up Thinking We Wanted to Learn History So We Wouldn't Repeat it'

Between books being banned, challenged, and removed from school shelves — and the College Board giving in to bullying and altering its AP African American Studies course — there's a lot of talk about what should be taught in classrooms, how it should be done, and who should have a say.

We shouldn't be hiding history from students because they need to learn the truth, says Kathy Lester, a middle school librarian and president of the American Association of School Librarians. Plus, when students find books they're interested in, they read more, and it creates conversation and opens up topics for discussion.

"I always grew up thinking that we wanted to learn our history so we wouldn't repeat it," Lester says. "We can learn from it and grow from it."

We can't understand our current politics and culture without understanding the treatment of African Americans in the United States, as well as the integral role they've played in shaping the country, says Caroline Richmond, the executive director of the nonprofit *We Need Diverse Books*.

"In order for us to be the nation that we claim to be — a land where all people are created and treated as equals — we have to teach our children how this has not been and still is not the case today," Richmond says. "And so, if

we're not teaching Black history in our schools, then our students — of all races and backgrounds — are not receiving a holistic education."

In its "Banned in the USA" report, PEN America collected book bans in states around the country between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. The analysis found that bans occurred in 138 school districts across 32 states, and these districts represent 5,049 schools with a combined enrollment of nearly four million students.

While the majority of states with reported bans saw less than 50, some states racked up over 100, with Texas topping the list at 801 bans.

But it's not just about history books. For Black and Brown kids, it's about seeing yourself represented in history, in a book, but also in the daily experiences that children face.

"We want our kids — and we want every kid — to be able to see the experiences of Black children in the books that they read because it makes every person more relatable," says Derrick Ramsey, co-founder of the nonprofit Young, Black & Lit. "If you can see that person, a Black student, doing a science project through a book, then that's exciting to any student who wants to get into science."

Davis says there's more power in variety than singularity because there is so much more to learn.

"It's a very dangerous act to not allow children and people the experience of reading a variety of different texts because that's what informs us about the world. That's what helps us build our ideas and thoughts around what we believe," Davis says. "If we are showing kids a singular thing, then I think we're alienating them and we're manipulating them."

## The Message a Book Ban Sends

Banning these books sends a message — both to Black students and their non-Black peers.

"It sends a message to Black students that their history doesn't matter, that it's not important," Lester says. "Then, for white students, that it's not important for them to learn about it or that their history is more important — which are not good messages to be sent."

And their non-Black peers are also harmed because they end up learning a lopsided view of history that ignores huge swaths of the American narrative, Richmond says.

"They won't have the opportunity to really grapple with our shared past," Richmond says, "to read primary sources, to ask probing questions, and to engage in thoughtful discussion and build empathy. Acknowledging past harm and our current inequitable society is the first step in creating real, long-term, sustainable change."

Of the banned books studied by PEN America, they were most likely to have LGBTQ+ content (41%) or characters of color (40%). Among the top reasons for book bans were titles having to do with race or racism (21%), and titles with themes of rights or activism (10%).

When thinking about these book bans, Davis thinks there are some im-

... continued on page 11

## Community Calendar

**February 29**  
An Evening with State Rep. Elgin Rogers: Main Branch Library; 5 to 7 pm

**March 7**  
Kwanzaa Park Neighbors Community Meeting: Padua Center; 6 to 7:30 pm; Guest Lt. Gina Shubeta – TPD will speak on neighborhood crime statistics

**March 10**  
Indiana Avenue MBC: First pastoral anniversary for Rev. William and First Lady Brittany Foster; 10:30 am and 3:30 pm

**March 17**  
Toledo NAACP Youth Council meeting: 3:00-4:00pm at Sanger Branch Library.  
Election of Officers April 21, 2024 via Election Buddy 6-8 pm

**March 31**  
80th Birthday Celebration for Edward Dixon and Scott Band Reunion: Scott High School; 1 to 5:15 pm



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# Troy Brown: Passionate About Helping Minorities Get Ahead

By Dawn Scotland  
The Truth Reporter

"If I don't make you feel like you're the greatest person on earth when you come into those credit union doors then I'm not doing my job. My job is to build trust and make sure that people understand that they have help. Hope and help that's what we're providing every single day. When you marry those two, I believe you have success."

Troy Brown is a Compliance Officer at Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union. He started at the credit union in 2000 and left in 2002. Brown has returned to TUFCU in June 2023. "Life is a big circle. It's funny how 24 years later I'm back but I'm here in a different capacity."

"A compliance officer is the person that helps with policy adherence and policy making," he said, "and we also provide some safeguards for our members when it comes to transactions. We oversee different financial transactions to make sure everything is compliant with the law and different regulations. We're kind of like that third eye."

Brown graduated from college with a bachelor's degree in business administration with a specialty in international business and a minor in Spanish. He earned a master's degree in business education and taught four years in the charter school system, two years at Toledo Christian where he taught middle school and high school math and Spanish.

After leaving the school system he started his own catering company, Up-Per Echelon School Food Services. "For nine years I fed the charter schools. We had a very successful catering company where we fed hot breakfast and hot lunches to multiple kids. We averaged 1300 units a day – both breakfast and lunch. So, I have extensive experience in entrepreneurship."

Brown then worked at Amazon for a year and most recently worked as

a former college recruiter for TRIO for a year and half at Owens Community College. He is now pursuing his doctorate in Leadership Studies at Bowling Green State University.

Brown is a Toledo native who grew up witnessing entrepreneurship in his family. His grandfather, George Brown owned two bars, Zanzibar and The Yankee Inn - one downtown and one in the inner city in the 60s-- and his father Rev. Gregory Brown turned the bar on Detroit and Oakwood into an ice cream shop, Brown's Tasty Cream, in the 1980s. "At six years old I'm witnessing entrepreneurship of my father and saying to myself I want to own my own business too. That's how I got into business."

"I'm passionate about helping minorities start businesses in the inner city. That's why I'm here."

It was the pandemic that showed him the desperate needs that many have in our communities. He took his catering company to the children and fed them in apartment complexes when the schools closed. "Children depended upon those lunches and hot breakfast trays...access to capital and food [is a big problem]." There was a drive by-shooting in which a 19-year-old was killed one during one of his deliveries. "It woke this Black man up... with tears in my eyes I asked God what else can I do?...He's prepared me to be back here [at the credit union]. It's not about me. It's about God and how we can be a light."

"Dr. Suzette [Cowell] has the vision, and the bible says, 'write the vision and make it plain that they may run with it'. Who are the 'they'? It's all of us that work here...the tellers, the board members... God gave Dr. Suzette the vision and we're running with it... this didn't just happen overnight. I thank God that we have leadership of Dr. Suzette with the vision from God to build Toledo."

"It's not about us," remarked Brown, "it's about the next generation."

To learn more about the Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union visit their location on 1441 Dorr St. or their new second location on Monroe St. (former Fifth/Third at Swayne Field).

TUFCU offers checking, savings, mortgages, credit cards and loans, among other services, as well as a new down payment assistance program for first time home buyers and a low interest loan for home repair contractors.

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Troy Brown

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# Ayana Parsons: A Fearless Architect of Change

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

In today's world of transformative leadership, **Ayana Parsons** stands as an unwavering force, fueled by a profound passion for diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI) and a relentless commitment to closing the wealth gap. Her journey unfolds as a testament to the intersection of personal conviction and societal impact.

An award-winning leadership expert, board & CEO advisor, public speaker, and serial entrepreneur, Parsons' unwavering mission is nothing short of global change. Her life's purpose is to dismantle barriers, empowering generations to realize their fullest potential professionally and personally.

"I grew up in a small town in Arkansas outside of Little Rock named Hot Springs," she shares. "My love for diversity and belonging came from being in a lot of spaces where I was the 'only'."

Parsons' passion for belonging and economic equality traces back to the heart of her experiences. Growing up in a world where the intersection of race and gender often created barriers, she recognized the need for change at an early age.

"I remember being bused over to what was referred to as 'the all-school' to attend the gifted and talented program at Langston Elementary, named after Langston Hughes," recalls Parsons.

"At a young age my experience sparked so many questions for me. One of them being why the 'all black school' had no one in the gifted & talented program? I was also fascinated with money and making sure I'd have plenty of it one day."

With a vision of a leveled playing field, Ayana Parsons would later go on to receive her Bachelor of Science in Management and an MBA in Marketing, both earned at **Florida A&M University** in Tallahassee. Additionally, she completed Executive Leadership Programs at renowned institutions such as the **Wharton School** at the University of Pennsylvania, Smith College in Massachusetts, and the Tuck School of Business at **Dartmouth**.

Parsons aspired to create a world where historically disadvantaged, underrepresented, and marginalized individuals could rightfully claim their positions in business leadership. Her commitment extended beyond rhetoric, resonating in her future business endeavors.

"I went on to work in leadership roles at organizations like **Korn Ferry, Heidrick and Struggles, Procter and Gamble, and Kimberly-Clark**," she says. Each role contributes to the diverse skill set that has shaped her into the influential leader she is today.

"I co-founded **Yardstick Management** alongside my husband, Ebbie in 2012," recalls Parsons.

This venture, born out of a desire to reshape education and beyond, marked the beginning of Parsons' impact on a broader scale.

Yardstick Management, co-founded by Ayana and her husband, Dr. Ebbie Parsons, III, emerged as a response to a call-to-action. Prompted by concerns about the state of education, Dr. Parsons' mother challenged him to be part of



Ayana Parsons

the solution. This led to a deep dive into the world of education and eventually to the company's founding. Today, the firm serves as a beacon of transformative strategy consulting, extending its impact globally.

"Building a Black-owned management consulting firm came with hurdles," explains Parsons. "My husband and I bootstrapped our entire business. It wasn't easy."

With resilience and strategic vision, Parsons and her team have propelled Yardstick into becoming a trusted partner for major corporations, including **Facebook, Netflix, Amazon, LinkedIn, Prudential and Medtronic**.

"As it pertains to activism, it's interesting that I'm here but it's not a surprise. I've always wanted to help people who feel overlooked, marginalized or underrepresented because I know what that feels like," explains Parsons.

The color of our skin is an integral part of our identity as Black individuals, and it's essential to emphasize that this aspect of ourselves is immutable. Yet, the disheartening existence of numbers revealing astronomical differences in equity based on skin color does not reflect an inherent or justifiable distinction. Instead, it starkly highlights the enduring legacy of systemic biases and historic injustices that continue to shape our socio-economic landscape.

### Yardstick Management: Navigating Challenges in DEI

**Yardstick Management**, recognized as "**Best Management Company in America**" by **Inc. Magazine** in 2022, showcases Ayana Parsons' prowess as a co-founder. Her legacy extends beyond the boardroom— serving as a cabinet member at Stanford University's Clayman Institute for Gender Research and leading global discussions at the World Economic Forum.

"What's unique about Yardstick is DE&I were ingrained in the business from the very beginning," she shares.

In the realm of transformative impact, Yardstick stands tall—introducing over 300 historically disadvantaged C-level executive minorities to their clients' executive teams. Their extensive Rolodex is more than a list; it's a treasure trove of unparalleled talent, a mosaic of the nation's most skilled executive minorities.

"My husband and I had a joint vision of wanting to help organizations change the compositions and complexions of their leadership teams to change business outcomes leveraging DE&I to do that," explains Parsons.

"My mother was raised in Tuskegee, Alabama where there's a plethora of Black history; from George Washington Carver to the Tuskegee airmen. This work has been instilled in me from a young age."

**Yardstick's** purpose resonates with a top-down approach—a commitment to opening doors for unseen talent, ensuring they not only find a seat at the table but thrive in C-suite roles. They are architects of change, facilitating the journey for mid-level to C-suite executive talent across diverse functions and industries.

**Time Magazine** recognized Ayana Parsons for her groundbreaking contribution...continued on page 13



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# Open Arms Transformation Living Hosts Community Giveaway

The Truth Staff

“Threads of Love,” a clothing giveaway for 12-to-18 year olds, organized by Open Arms Transformation Living, was held on Saturday, February 24 at the Frederick Douglas Community Association.

Gently used clothes and shoes, hygiene bags and free food were the offerings for students.

The clothing and other items were supplied by a host of community organizations: the Land Bank, Marco's Pizza, Simply D'Vine Boutique, Sylvania Senior Center, Bags of Love, Advocating Opportunities, said Fonda Royster, founder and executive director of OATL.

The giveaway is part of OATL's “Our Voices Matter” program and is part of the mission of the agency, which is to assist homeless, exploited teenagers, aged 12 to 20, particularly girls and especially those who are homeless because they have been victims of domestic violence, said Foyster.



Fonda Royster



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# Local Trade Coalition Honors the Community

By Tricia Hall

The Truth Reporter

The 35th annual Black History Celebration, sponsored by the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) Toledo Chapter, was held on Saturday, February 24 at Premier Banquet Hall in Toledo.

Cheryl Folsom, CBTU Toledo chapter chairperson, and Anita Madison, event chair, opened the celebration with a welcome statement, followed by the innovation and singing of the Black National Anthem. Petee Talley introduced the moderator, Fletcher Word, owner and publisher of The Sojourner's Truth Newspaper.

"Fletcher is the real deal," shared Talley during the introduction. "He will lead a thought provoking discussion."

CBTU selected three honorees who also participated on the panel. Juanita Greene earned the Community Service Award, Toledo City Councilman John Hobbs III earned the Political Action Award, Mark Buford earned the Trade Unionist Award. The panelists addressed questions about workforce development, community involvement and youth engagement.

Buford joined the UAW in 1978, elected to various union leadership positions, appointed to the American Red Cross Labor Liaison position, married with three children, and works on numerous political campaigns. "People need to understand that unions are the largest voting block," he began. "We offer rides to the polls and advocate for those that we endorse. Union workers from every walk of life, from Toledo Zoo to school employees."

Juanita Greene worked for local banking institutions, worked for Toledo's Department of Neighborhoods and other government positions, and serves on the board of Black-Brown Coalition and Toledo Community Coalition. "Unions need to be a part of groups like CBTU," she began. "It shows that unions care, that unions are involved in the community and with nonprofits."

Councilman John Hobbs III is a lifelong Toledoan, third generation master barber, former coached track and field, current pastor, husband and father. "I don't have all the answers," he began. "But we need to empower youth in the workforce because we have to attract them so they can take on more leadership roles. Allow them to do it their way."

At the end of the panel discussion a number of attendees were asked to share thoughts about their activities in the union movement including, U.S. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur and State Sen. Paula Hicks Hudson.

Additionally, the Frederick Douglass Community Association and Executive Director Reggie Williams received a special recognition and monetary donation. The program concluded with closing remarks.

"Thank you to the panel, thank you. We are excited to honor you tonight," shared Folsom, CBTU president.



CBTU panelists Councilman John Hobbs, Juanita Greene, Mark Buford

"Thank you all for participating and supporting this program," said Madison. "Thank you to those who volunteered, thank you to the moderator and panel for agreeing to participate."

The mission of the CBTU is "to fulfill the dreams of Black trade unionists, both living and deceased, who ... have courageously and unrelentingly struggled to build a national movement that would bring ... strengths and varied talents to bear in an unending effort to achieve economic, political and social justice for every American."



Councilman Hobbs with Cheryl Tyler Folsom and Anita Madison



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LOVE

# An Evening with State Representative Elgin Rogers, Jr.

*The Truth Staff*

About 170 area residents gathered at the Toledo Lucas County Main Branch Library on Thursday, February 29, to spend "An Evening with State Representative Elgin Rogers, Jr."

A reception was held in the lobby of the McMaster Center to start the evening's activities. Attendees were treated to food and also fruit drinks supplied by BottlesUP419's Shanice Sample.

The evening's welcome was presented by Nate Kolenda, after which Kayla Renee sang "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

Fa'Shawn Belcher introduced Phenomenal Women and Jodie Summers, a spoken word artist, presented one of his creations.

A critical part of the evening's activities was the recognition of Rogers' list of area "Difference Makers." That list includes Erik Johnson, Entrepreneur Institute founder and board president; Mark and Faye Lyons, community advocates - Fairside Community Center; Ed and Avie Dixon, educators and directors of the Marching 100; Theresa Gabriel, former City of Toledo and Lucas County official; Rev. I.J. Johnson, pastor, civil rights activist and founder of Fairside Community Center; Carmel Smith, EdD, principal of Scott High School; David Fleetwood, business manager of Laborers Local 500; Rev. Curley Johnson, director of Fairside Community Center and the 143rd Transportation Company of the Ohio National Guard.

Rogers, who represents the 44th district, spoke and stressed the need for voters to stay informed about the critical issues of the day and noted that the Columbus legislators are currently in the middle of the capital budget process "a one-time strategic fund, \$700 million for capital improvements in the state of Ohio."

In northwest Ohio, the funds will be directed towards improvements in the airport, county jail, zoo, among other projects.

Rogers also urged his constituents to keep in touch with him to let him know of the concerns they have about what he and other elected officials are doing.

Rogers is serving his first term as a state representative and his first time as an elected official. Prior to his election, he was the executive assistant to Lucas County Commissioner Pete Gerken and is the past president of the African American Leadership Caucus, a political action committee.



Mark Sobczak, Rep. Elgin Rogers, LC  
Commissioner Lisa Sobecki



Shanice Sample



State Sen. Paula Hicks-Hudson and  
Jodie Summers

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# Skate Away Heart Disease Event to Further Research

By Alexandria Leatherberry

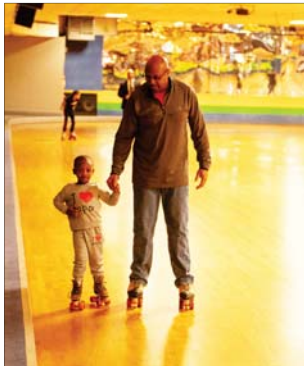
Special to The Truth

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., Toledo Graduate chapter, holds an annual skating event to promote heart wellness and emergency rescue. This event has gained the support of the community over the past four years and has been able to support the organization's donation to the American Heart Association.

Zeta Phi Beta members attend the annual Heart Walk to further their research to fight heart disease. This initiative was developed by Demetria Graham of Zeta Phi Beta in remembrance of the loss of her initiate sister, Victoria Pennamon.

Graham and members of Zeta Phi Beta performed a reenactment of an everyday scenario that could impact any of our lives with an unexpected fallen or incapacitated family member, giving the attendees an education on the protocol and proper delivery of CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) to keep loved ones alive for professional medical attention.

Members from all of the National Pan-Hellenic Council joined in supporting this cause with their friends and family for a night of fun, food and education on how they can contribute to saving lives.



Father and son of Victoria Pennamon, Verlon and Cam Pennamon



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A Mental Health Moment

# What About Issue 8, Mental Health Care & CHANGE?

By Bernadette Joy Graham, MA, LPCC, LLC

The Truth Contributor

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and over yet expecting a different outcome. One of the most difficult steps in receiving mental health care is change. To make progress an individual has to be willing to make some changes to meet their goals. Change causes discomfort, vulnerability and putting in work. Change leads to a different outcome, a new perspective and welcomed results. A new comfort zone is established and improved quality of life is quite welcomed.



As a mental health provider, I hear many stories from clients about the frustrations they incur from previous attempts to receive help. I also answer calls from clients desperate to get help but have no clue where or how to start. What is most mind boggling is the number of adults who do not understand the importance of mental health mostly due to it never being presented to them as an option to healthcare. Mental health is health but too often discounted, ignored and separated from healthcare.

The city of Toledo has done a tremendous job in hosting health fairs, health programs and funding many, many non-profit organizations that focus on substance abuse and mental health services with a lot of our tax dollars. Unfortunately, it is not enough.

Let's start with the importance of mental health. Without a healthy mind don't expect a healthy body. Don't expect a drop of statistics in the crime rate, school drop outs, overdoses, incarcerations, suicides, child abuse/neglect, homelessness, unemployment or longer life spans just to name a few things. A child can learn five languages, how to code, conduct scientific experiments, and test perfectly on all the state exams but if that child is unable to control her emotions, understand feelings or express her thoughts due to no knowledge of mental health that child will grow into an adult with sometimes so many mental impairments she will be unable to even keep a

job, engage with healthy societal morals and values.....she will not function well if at all.

Prevention has and will always be easier and cheaper than intervention. While Issue 8 is asking the public to support a mental health and recovery services levy for 1 mil, it also states "it will be used to maintain the current system and address the growing need for support services. It also states expanded services would look to focus on youth, seniors and 'compassionate' accountability at the new Lucas County Corrections Center." My question is what's changing? What are the predicted or forecasted improvements by maintaining the current services?

The Mental Health Recovery Services Board (MHR SB) lists a great number of service providers that help families and children regarding substance abuse but not many touch on educating communities about mental health. I was so excited when I clicked on one organization that provides Urgent Care for those in a mental health crisis only to find that their hours of operation are Mon - Fri 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. and closed on Saturdays and Sundays.

Of course, the site also provides phone numbers and hotlines for emergencies but mental health crises usually don't just occur during the day during the week before 6 p.m. Other listed services provide parenting courses, workforce development and criminal justice education and support but again there was no mention of mental health or mental health resources such as how to find providers.

Taking a step back, let's revisit the health fairs commonly held at a library. A plethora of information for managing one's diabetes, high blood pressure and other health issues that plague the Black community at large statistics....but no mention of mental health care. Stress, anxiety, depression left unaddressed all lead to health problems. You can view all of the listed services providers on the MHR SB website <https://www.lcmhrsb.oh.gov/service-providers/>

As far as insurance to cover mental health care, Lynn Olman, a former Ohio State Representative and currently on the Lucas County Mental Health Services Board, was key in getting mental health as part of medical insurance plans and that was a great victory. Unfortunately, not all insurance plans are the same so before choosing a plan ask how much is the deductible or co-pay if you seek mental health care. Some deductibles are as high as

...continued on page 11



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# Two Women Entrepreneurs Offer More

The Truth Staff

Iesha Austin and Krystal Jones-Shepard have opened new health care businesses on Eastgate Road in order to provide a wide range of services for the Black underserved population of the Toledo area.

Austin's Salubrious WellCare provides psychiatric services to those "who are struggling with mental health issues or those transitioning from drugs and alcohol," said Austin. "I am the youngest to open a psychiatric clinic," said the then 30-year old nurse practitioner, who holds a degree in healthcare management.

"I'm trying to bring more awareness and care to the African American community who seem to struggle in that area because of the stigma ... a lot of us are scared to go see primary care ... because of things we heard growing up in our culture."

Jones-Shepard's Shepard's Geriatric Care is sharing the space with Salubrious WellCare at 1850 Eastgate Road, Suite B.

"I hear a lot of 'I don't trust my provider because they don't look like me,'" said Jones-Shepard, who has 15 years of experience as a registered nurse. "The motivating factor was to be a provider that looks like the population I want to serve."

The mistrust of the healthcare system is in great part due to the fact that the medical establishment has a long history of mistreating Black Americans — from gruesome experiments on enslaved people to the forced sterilizations of Black women and the infamous Tuskegee syphilis study that withheld treatment from hundreds of Black men for decades to let doctors track the course of the disease.

Even today, studies have found Black Americans are consistently under-



Iesha Austin and Krystal Jones-Shepard

treated for pain relative to white patients; one study revealed half of medical students and residents held one or more false beliefs about supposed biological differences between Black and white patients, such as Black patients have higher pain tolerance than white ones (The Commonwealth Fund)

"My goal is for people to come into the office and feel safer and for me to go into people's homes and be respectful and provide care," said Jones-Shepard.

## A Mental Health Moment... continued from page 10

\$5,000 which means you are responsible for paying the first \$5,000 before your plan will cover any mental health care.

As I've mentioned in the past, I focus on solutions and while, yes, mental health anything should be supported but can we please step out of this comfort zone and try more preventative measures such as putting mental health education in health programs. Can we add a health class in our public schools that teach our children about mental health; I am sure all licensed clinical mental health therapists in this city would be happy to teach that course. How about adding more information and resources on how to get mental health care in primary care offices, medical clinics and urgent cares around the city because I don't know how many people just randomly check out the MHR SB website.

We say there is a stigma attached to mental health so let's do something about it and normalize it. Every billboard, bus stop, Uber, library, school, public and private, religious centers, and what the heck, at this point, even marijuana dispensaries should have information available about mental health.

Take a mental health moment and really think about how much better your physical health could be if your mental health was first addressed. Think about how the crime rate and incarcerations would be lowered if people understood how to handle their emotions, express their feelings and behave accordingly.

When we are not thinking straight or our minds have taken a turn for the worse due to a mental health disorder we can do some pretty damaging acts that there is no coming back from. Receiving mental health while incarcerated is a bit late for everyone involved but mental health care should not be withheld to those incarcerated either because people can and do CHANGE.

As a licensed clinical mental health therapist who has helped thousands of individuals with their mental health, I'm pleading for change. I see and witness the damage caused by unaddressed mental health issues. I see families

fall apart, children suffering, and people who wish they were dead as opposed to living with the trauma of their mental health.

I am not here to advise anyone how to vote on Issue 8, I am here to bring awareness and knowledge to those who need help and to those who do have the power to make these changes please consider putting in place changes of this current system not maintain it, otherwise continued damage will continue to the people of this city and the city itself. Insanity.....

**Bernadette Joy Graham, Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor and Certified Grief Recovery Specialist can be reached at 419 409 4929. [www.bjgrahamcounseling.com](http://www.bjgrahamcounseling.com) Email: [graham.bernadette@gmail.com](mailto:graham.bernadette@gmail.com)**

*If you feel you may be in a mental health crisis, please call 988 or go to the nearest emergency room.*

## Diverse Books... continued from page 3

portant questions to ask those doing the banning: What do you want? What do you want Black children to feel by removing those books? What does removing them actually do?

"I'm just like, 'Why?'" Davis says. "What's your intention? What are you saying to the kids about that book, specifically?"

For Ramsey, the message is clear: "Your history doesn't matter. Your experiences don't matter. Who you are doesn't matter." It's a challenging space for a child who is already trying to find their path in the country and in the world.

Plus, it's not just talking about Black history or Asian history, Ramsey says, it's American history.

"Education should be the space where you can learn about everything and anything that you want. There should be no limits to the creativity of the ideas and the dreams that you inspire into every child," Ramsey says. "This really takes away a lot of that opportunity to see what you could be, even if you hadn't thought about it before."

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# Recommendations for a Healthy Heart

By Patrice Powers-Barker, OSU Extension, Lucas County

The Truth Contributor

Leading heart health experts remind us that we have the power to protect against heart disease. All the small, heart-healthy actions like adding more movement to the day or choosing more healthy foods can have a big, positive impact on our heart health. Certainly, the medical aspect of health care is extremely important! Work with your health care professional to make sure that your get your cholesterol checked and your blood pressure checked. Ask your health care professional about your personal risks for heart health and take their advice.

In addition, small changes to your daily routine and choices can help keep a strong heart. Some of the recommendations might not seem directly related to nutrition but all the health recommendations work together. For example, one of the recommendations for heart health is to **sleep well**. According to the American Heart Association, most people need six to eight hours of sleep each day. Way too little or way too much sleep can increase the risk of heart problems.

Staying **hydrated** is another recommendation for heart health. When the body is hydrated, it helps muscles work efficiently. It helps the heart easily pump blood through the body. When dehydrated, your heart needs to work harder. Certainly, water is a good choice but other drinks as well as foods like fruits and vegetables help make sure our body stays hydrated. It's also a good idea to take a drink of water before exercising or being out in the sun, as well as drinking water while doing those activities. It will help the body – and heart – work well.

When it comes to healthy food choices, there are foods to limit for heart health. Some of these include limiting sodium (salt), saturated fat, added sugars, and alcohol.

On the other hand, there are foods you can eat more of to create a heart-healthy eating plan. For **vegetables**, think dark, green such as broccoli and leafy greens such as spinach, collard greens, kale, and cabbage.

Heart healthy **fruits** include apples, bananas, oranges, pears, grapes, and prunes. Choose **whole grains** like plain oatmeal, brown rice, and whole grain bread or tortillas. Choose fat-free or low-fat **dairy** products like milk, cheese, or yogurt. There are many **protein-rich** foods that are good for heart health, some of them meat, some of them plant products. Choose. Fish high in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, tuna, and trout), Lean meats such as 95% lean ground beef or pork tenderloin or skinless chicken or turkey, Eggs, seeds, and soy products (tofu), and such as kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas, black-eyed peas, and lima beans. In addition, use oils **and foods high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats like**, Canola, corn, olive, safflower, sesame, sunflower, and soybean oils (not coconut or palm oil), and Nuts such as walnuts, almonds, and pine nuts, Nut and seed butters, Seeds (sesame, sunflower, pumpkin, or flax), Avocados and Tofu.



Use the following shopping and cooking tips to prepare food that is better for your heart.

- Read food labels to compare two different food products. Choose the food with less sodium and less fat per serving size.
- Look for food that is labeled low-sodium, reduced-sodium, or no-salt-added products.
- Choose fresh or frozen foods and then season them yourself. Often a pre-seasoned, sauce-marinated, brined, or processed meats, poultry, or vegetables will have added salt and fat.
- Use plain rice, noodles, and ready-made pasta and add your own flavors. Often the premade sauces, mixes, and instant products are high in fat or salt.
- Flavor your vegetables or meats and poultry with herbs and spices versus salt.
- When cooking, use vegetable oil (canola, olive, peanut, etc.) instead of butter. Avoid fats high in saturated fat like coconut and palm oils.
- Oil-based salad dressings like balsamic vinaigrette or Italian are usually a better option instead of creamy dressings like ranch.

Information from the Million Hearts, National Institutes of Health, and the American Heart Association

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### Perryman...continued from page 2

regardless of background or circumstance, while considering mitigating factors individual to each case.” This perspective reflects a balanced approach to the bench.

Should Judge Jamison secure a position on the high court, she would become the third African American woman to hold a seat on the Ohio Supreme Court. Since 1803, the court has seen 163 justices, among whom only four African American and 13 women. Yet, her potential victory in the primary and subsequent general election also ensures that our judiciary mirrors the rich diversity, values, and aspirations of all Ohioans.

Voting for Judge Jamison also champions democracy and safeguards our collective future while sending a collective voice that echoes through the ballot box, signaling our demand to restore balance, fairness, and integrity to our democratic institutions.

Therefore, let us seize this opportunity to shape our state's future by supporting Judge Terri Jamison – a candidate whose life story, values, and vision for justice offer a path toward a more equitable and just Ohio.

Her experience, empathy, and understanding of the systemic issues facing our communities make her the supreme choice for the Ohio Supreme Court.

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

# Kids Books about Women's History by Various Authors

By Terri Schlichenmeyer  
The Truth Contributor

You can do it.

All your life, you've been told that you can do anything you set your mind to do. Try new things, get better at old things, dream big and act bigger. You can be soft and tough at the same time. And if you need any inspiration, well, look to these great picture books...

c.2024  
Various Publishers  
\$18.99 Each  
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Shortly after her birth in India, Minda Dentler got terribly sick with a disease called polio, and doctors said she would never walk. Alas, her birth mother was very poor and couldn't afford to care for Minda, so she put Minda up for adoption. In *The Girl Who Figured It Out* by **Minda Dentler**, illustrations by **Stephanie Dehennin** (Sourcebooks Kids, \$18.99), that's just the beginning of a story that started in Mumbai, came to America, and continues at the Ironman World Championship. Kids who say, "I can't," will learn from someone who could; for that, it's great for five-to-seven-year-olds.

For a similar story, look for *The Fabulous Fannie Farmer: Kitchen Scientist and America's Cook* by **Emma Bland Smith**, pictures by **Susan Reagan** (Calkins Creek, \$18.99). Yes, Fannie Farmer was a real girl once, a girl who learned to cook from her mother. Back then, recipes weren't written down but after Fannie recovered from polio as a teenager, her "passion" for cooking simply boiled over. Young cooks ages 7-to-10 will love this delicious tale even more because the book contains recipes!

Growing up with four sisters in a poor New York City neighborhood didn't stop Sarah Brenner, either, even though girls then were treated differently than were boys. In *One of a Kind: The Life of Sydney Taylor* by **Richard Michelson**, illustrated by **Sarah Green** (Calkins Creek, \$18.99), Sarah grew up looking for ways to make the world a fair place for everyone. She gave herself a new name, got an education, and wrote a book about her life and Jewish children like she was once. Six-to-10-year-olds will love this story, especially if they've ever read Green's iconic children's book.

And finally, for the seven-to-10-year-old who's rarely far away from her bicycle, *Pedal, Balance, Steer: Annie Londonderry, the First Woman to Cycle Around the World* by **Vivian Kirkfield**, illustrated by **Alison Jay** (Calkins Creek, \$18.99) will be a favorite read. It's the story of Annie Londonderry, who was a very hard worker. When she learned of a challenge—\$10,000 for the first person to bicycle around the world in 15 months or less (which was a lot of money in the 1890s)—well, how could anyone resist something that fun?

Fun— but also lots of work!

Could she do it? Be sure to check out the biography at the back of the book because your five-to-nine-year-old will want to know.

If your child needs more women-powered inspiration, be sure to ask your favorite bookseller or librarian for ideas. They've got plenty of great stories you, or for kids of any age. Take a look through the shelves and see what you can find. Go ahead. You can do it.

## Ayana Parsons... continued from page 5

Contributions in its "The Closers" edition. Standing among 18 distinguished Black leaders, Parsons is acknowledged for her dedicated efforts to address and alleviate the racial wealth gap. This recognition underscores her impactful work in reshaping economic landscapes and promoting inclusivity.

Parsons notably sold Yardstick Management last January 2023 to a private equity firm as the largest Black-owned management consulting exit in history.

"Activism is in my DNA. My mother has worked tirelessly in the social work sector. For over 40 years she's dedicated her life to equal rights for children, fair housing and advocating for closing the education gap," recalls Parsons fondly.

"To think of it, my Mom was also the first Black woman in our town to become the school board president."

From the onset, Parsons stands at the intersection of race and gender, navigating the complexities of unique experiences with grace and tenacity. Her story, akin to many others, is a testament to the indomitable spirit of Black women leaders who have tirelessly fought for equality.

"Black women start businesses at a higher rate than any other demographic, yet are the least funded," explains Parsons.

In 2018, U.S. companies raised a total of \$130 billion in venture capital funding, yet only 2.2 percent of that total went toward female-founded companies and less than one percent of total funding was allocated toward businesses founded by women of color (FORTUNE, 2018 & GIRLBOSS, 2019).

When we confront the numbers, it's not about accepting a predetermined fate or accepting an inevitable disparity. It's a collective call to action against

...continued on page 14



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Ayana Parsons... continued from page 13

the structural inequalities that have persistently held back entire communities. These disparities are not an inherent reflection of our capabilities or worth but are the shadows cast by historical injustices and discriminatory policies that demand our attention, rectification and dismantling.

In lieu of this, Parsons' body of work includes co-founding **Fearless Fund**, the first venture capital firm for women of color by women of color. Today, the fund has a diverse and dedicated team of committed professionals who have invested \$30 million in more than 40 companies, driving substantial economic impact.

"What's interesting about Fearless Fund is co-founder Arian Simone and I just set out to solve a problem. We didn't set out to be pioneers, or to win awards. We certainly didn't set out to be the face of a federal lawsuit." ([Follow The Fearless Fund For Updates](#))

In a world where political headlines often overlook the impactful contributions of Black women, Ayana Parsons' journey breaks through the silence, punctuating the narrative with her dedication to economic justice. From the historic election of Kamala Harris to the groundbreaking appointment of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, Black women are making history, yet they remain a minority in leadership roles, facing enduring economic disparities.

When the Fearless brand was born the mission was to create a world where women of color have equal access to the resources and support they need to succeed in business. **Fearless Fund** invests in women of color led businesses seeking pre-seed, seed level or series A financing. Their mission is to bridge the gap in venture capital funding for women of color founders building scalable businesses

"We've invested in more than 40 companies over the past four years," says Parsons.

Fearless Fund proudly received the 2023 **TRIUMPH AWARDS** honor, a distinction presented by **Rev. Al Sharpton** and the **National Action Network**. This recognition aligns Fearless Fund with a prestigious lineage of historic figures, including Vice President Kamala Harris, Tyler Perry, Angela Bassett, Quest Love, Queen Latifah, and Spike Lee, who have all passionately championed social, racial, and economic justice.

Against the backdrop of pressing civil rights concerns, this year's dedication to the plight of equity takes on heightened importance.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives have faced increased scrutiny and criticism, a challenge further intensified by the recent Supreme Court decision to curtail affirmative action in higher education, making the recognition of Fearless Fund's courage in the realm of business particularly poignant.

This legal development has now provided ammunition for those seeking to criticize DEI efforts within corporate America.

Still, companies like Revolt media acknowledged Fearless Fund's impact by featuring it on the esteemed 2023 Power List. This list spotlights influential personalities and catalysts for change across various domains, such as music, entertainment, sports, business, fashion, and social justice. In the company of other influential names, Fearless Fund's recognition reflects its powerful influence on the intersection of business and societal progress.

One of the many success stories of Fearless Fund is **Melissa Butler**, Detroit owner and founder of **The Lip Bar**, who is now the largest Black-owned cosmetics brand in Target.

"Melissa didn't come from the beauty industry; she just sought to solve an unmet need," explains Parsons.

"In her first year of sales, she generated about 27K, and now she operates a multimillion-dollar business, underscoring the importance of capital support when you're scaling operations for product development and supply chain growth."

#### Breaking the Bias: Dismantling Assumptions Tied to Identity

As we weave together the narratives of being Black and the broader fight for women's rights, recognizing the intersectionality of these challenges illuminates a shared journey towards equality. Women of color, grappling with the dual impact of racism and gender-based discrimination, stand at the convergence of these struggles. The quantified inequities should not be a verdict on any group's abilities but a stark reminder of systemic barriers obstructing progress.



#### Impact-Driven Investing: Parsons' Perspective

As a veteran in the field, Parsons navigates the intricacies of impact-driven investing, offering a nuanced view of its integration into mainstream business practices. With a keen eye on the broader investment community, she gives insights into how the landscape is evolving, sharing,

"Venture capital and private equity are very male and very white. The broader investment community isn't always open to differences, so there's work to do."

Impact-driven investing emerges as the bridge that connects profitability with a broader societal purpose. Breaking free from the misconception that impact equals diminished returns, this paradigm shift challenges racial biases ingrained in conventional investment mindset.

"In 2024 impact investing doesn't mean that there's not a positive return on investment," asserts Parsons.

This signifies acknowledging that perhaps in the future genuine success will be measured by both financial prosperity and positive societal change.

#### Future Aspirations: Changing the World

In looking toward the future, Parsons paints a vivid picture of her aspirations. Yardstick Management, Fearless Fund, and her other ventures are not just enterprises; they are instruments of change. Parsons envisions a world where inclusivity and equality redefine the landscape of business and leadership.

"Before I was wealthy, I read everything I could get my hands on," shares Parsons. "I recommend all business owners do three important things: expose yourself to successful people in your field, access conversations in decision making circles and continually seek knowledge."

The practical application of Parsons' strategies in organizational settings ensures that the principles of racial equity and justice are not confined to theory. Her work provides tangible tools for CEOs and companies alike to reshape their structures, policies, and cultures, fostering environments where diversity, inclusion, and fairness breed innovation.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, let Ayana Parsons stand as a luminous example of the extraordinary journey women have undertaken to rewrite history, one transformative action at a time. She is an innovator, a trailblazer, and a change-maker inspiring future generations to reach their full potential on the stage of progress. Thank you for standing as an architect of change. In your story, we find not just inspiration but a blueprint for redefining the norms and creating a world where everyone has a seat at the table.

Follow her work @ [ayanaparsons.com](#)

## A Brief Synopsis of the Legal Battle Against the Fearless Fund

The Truth Staff

In August 2023, the **American Alliance for Equal Rights**, led by conservative activist Edward Blum, who was instrumental earlier in the U.S. Supreme Court successfully challenging affirmative action in college admissions, filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the Fearless Fund, its management, and the nonprofit Fearless Foundation.

The lawsuit alleges that Fearless engages in racial discrimination by operating the **Fearless Strivers Grant**, which awards \$10,000 to \$20,000 and business-development services to start up Black-woman-owned businesses.

The Alliance, in challenging the Fearless Fund, is using the Reconstruction-era Section 1981 of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 prohibiting race in making and enforcing contracts, to argue that the program discriminates

against non-Black women. The Alliance claims it represents three Asian and white businesswomen, all unnamed, who cannot apply for the grant.

After the district court ruled in September on behalf of the Fearless Fund, the Alliance appealed, seeking a preliminary injunction from the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals that would bar Fearless from closing the application for the program. The appeals panel granted the injunction.

On Wednesday, January 31, 2024, Circuit Judges Robin Rosenbaum (an Obama appointee), Kevin Newsom and Robert Luck (Trump appointees) heard arguments from the Alliance and Fearless which is challenging the temporary injunction. Luck was one of the judges who sided with the Alliance in the initial motion for a preliminary injunction. The decision from the circuit court panel is pending.

## Position Available Supervising Attorney-Special Projects



**Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc. (LAWO), a non-profit law firm that provides free legal help in civil legal matters to eligible individuals and groups in western Ohio, seeks a supervising attorney for the Special Projects practice group in the Toledo office.**

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

*LAWO 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 [lawjobs@freelawyers.org](mailto:lawjobs@freelawyers.org).*

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### 2024-2025 ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

To all interested agencies, groups, and persons:

The City of Toledo is seeking comments on its **Draft July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 One-Year Action Plan** to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on or before May 17, 2024. The One-Year Action Plan is based on the HUD-approved Five-Year 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan submitted by the City of Toledo for housing, community, and economic development.

The One-Year Action Plan includes a description of the federal funds anticipated to be received, as well as other resources expected to be available within the City of Toledo during the 2024-2025 program year. The Action Plan provides a description of the activities to be undertaken when using these resources and the expected results of those activities. Also, the Action Plan depicts a geographic distribution of assistance including Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSAs) and the newly approved Junction-McClinton Nunn Choice Neighborhood Plan, special needs activities, general and public housing actions, and activities specific to the 2024 50<sup>th</sup> Year Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), 38<sup>th</sup> Year Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), 33<sup>rd</sup> Year HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), the Neighborhood Stabilization Programs (NSP) (if applicable), and the 2020 Lead-Based Paint and Healthy Homes Grant. In addition, the Plan will contain HUD-required certifications, as well as a summary of the community input received at the public hearings regarding the Action Plan.

The **Draft** One-Year Action Plan will be available for review beginning **Wednesday, March 27, 2024**, on the website of the following entities:

Department of Housing and Community Development  
One Government Center, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Downtown Toledo, Jackson & Erie Streets  
website: <https://toledo.oh.gov/departments/housing-community-development>

Office of the Mayor  
One Government Center, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Downtown Toledo, Jackson & Erie Streets  
website: <https://toledo.oh.gov/government/mayor>

Clerk of Council  
One Government Center, 21<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Downtown Toledo, Jackson & Erie Streets  
website: <https://toledo.oh.gov/government/city-council/>

The Fair Housing Center  
326 N. Erie Street  
Toledo, Ohio 43604  
website: [www.toledofhc.org](http://www.toledofhc.org)

Lucas Metropolitan Housing  
424 Jackson Street  
Toledo, Ohio 43604  
website: [www.lucasmha.org](http://www.lucasmha.org)

Toledo Lucas County Homelessness Board  
1220 Madison Avenue  
Toledo, Ohio 43604  
website: [www.endinghomelesstoleado.org](http://www.endinghomelesstoleado.org)

Toledo-Lucas County Public Library  
325 Michigan Street  
Toledo, Ohio 43604  
website: [www.toledolibrary.org](http://www.toledolibrary.org)

Lucas Co. Board of Developmental Disabilities  
1154 Larc Lane  
Toledo, Ohio 43614  
website: [www.lucasdd.info](http://www.lucasdd.info)

Public Hearings on the **Draft** One-Year Action Plan are scheduled as follows:

**Thursday, March 28, 2024, 5:30 p.m.**  
City Council Chambers, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
One Government Center, Toledo, OH 43604

**Thursday, April 4, 2024, 5:30 p.m.**  
City Council Chambers, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
One Government Center, Toledo, OH 43604

The City of Toledo will also receive comments from the public in writing beginning **Wednesday, March 27, 2024** through **Thursday, April 25, 2024**, at the following address:

CITY OF TOLEDO  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
2024-2025 ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN  
ONE GOVERNMENT CENTER, SUITE 1800  
TOLEDO, OHIO 43604

The City of Toledo supports the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you would like to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion ADA coordinator at (419) 245-1198 or submit a request online at [toledo.oh.gov/ada](http://toledo.oh.gov/ada).

## INVITATION FOR BIDS CONCRETE & ASPHALT REPLACEMENT SERVICES IFB24-B003

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive bids for **Concrete & Asphalt Replacement Services in accordance with IFB24-B003**. Received in accordance with law until **March 29, 2024, at 3:00 PM ET**. For documents: [www.lucasmha.org](http://www.lucasmha.org); 424 Jackson Street., Toledo, OH 43604; or 419-259-9438 (TRS: Dial 711). Bidders are required to meet Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity requirements as described in Executive Order #11246. This contract opportunity is a Section 3 Covered Contract, and any Section 3 Business Concerns are encouraged to apply.



## INVITATION FOR BIDS TREE REMOVAL & TRIMMING SERVICES IFB24-B004

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive bids for **Tree Removal and Trimming Services in accordance with IFB24-B004**. Received in accordance with law until **April 2, 2024, at 3:00 PM ET**. For documents: [www.lucasmha.org](http://www.lucasmha.org); 424 Jackson Street., Toledo, OH 43604; or 419-259-9438 (TRS: Dial 711). Bidders are required to meet Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity requirements as described in Executive Order #11246. This contract opportunity is a Section 3 Covered Contract, and any Section 3 Business Concerns are encouraged to apply.



## INVITATION FOR BIDS GLENDALE FIRE ALARM UPGRADES IFB24-B002

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive bids for **Glendale Fire Alarm Upgrades in accordance with IFB24-B002**. Received in accordance with law until **March 8, 2024 at 3:00 PM ET**. For documents: [www.lucasmha.org](http://www.lucasmha.org); 424 Jackson Street., Toledo, OH 43604; or 419-259-9438 (TRS: Dial 711). Bidders are required to meet Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity requirements as described in Executive Order #11246. This contract opportunity is a Section 3 Covered Contract, and any Section 3 Business Concerns are encouraged to apply.



Call to place your ad: 419-243-0007

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

# The Black Wall Street Community Development Gathering

The Truth Staff

Dozens of Black business owners came together on Wednesday, February 28, at the Entrepreneurs Club in east Toledo to network and brainstorm about the ways in which collective actions can benefit both Black-owned businesses and the Black community in general.

It started as a networking event organized by the Toledo Black-owned media in August of last year. WJUC 107.3 The Juice, The Sojourner's Truth Newspaper and Stalwart Magazine hosted an event providing marketing and advertising support to about 15 Black entrepreneurs.

The now bi-monthly event grew in October to about 36 participants and on Dec 13, with the Creative Summit at the Entrepreneurs Club, it blossomed to over 60. The aim is to create a strong and supportive Black business community in NW Ohio.

The Black Wall Street Community Development's mission statement "is to empower a community of business owners through activities such as mentorship, networking, leadership coaching and financial literacy initiatives for advocacy, support and collaboration for each other that leads to equitable and generational wealth," shared Stayce Fowler, owner of Stalwart Magazine.

The prototype for the project is 'Black Wall Street' the burgeoning Black business community in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which was infamously and tragically destroyed by white mobs over 100 years ago in 1921.

After about 45 minutes of mixing and networking, last week's event was opened by Toni Battle-Gaines, the lead organizer of the collaborative. Battle-Gaines emphasized that the group is not merely an opportunity to mingle. The next steps are to develop funding sources and resources from a wide range of government and non-government entities.

BWSCD attracts like-minded businesses owners, nonprofit leaders, and supporters at every stage of the business. There is no invitation or charge - just an opportunity to grow together and support and grow our community of businesses.

This event was held at the Entrepreneurs Club (222 Fassett St.) owned by Black entrepreneur Vince Evans. Organizers of BWSCD are Battle-Gaines, sales manager at WJUC 107.3 The Juice; Rick Hogan and Debra Hogan, owners of WJUC 107.3 The Juice (Fleming Street Communications); Fletcher Word, owner and publisher of The Sojourner's Truth Newspaper; and Stayce Fowler, owner and publisher of Stalwart Magazine. The leaders wore newly designed custom-made apparel by black owned designer Kristi Knighten, owner and designer of KK Apparel.

The inaugural kickoff event in August served as marketing and advertising support by the Black media. The next featured a Black banker providing information and financial advice and resources. The event last week hosted information from local businesses, networking, and an opportunity to celebrate our people on the journey.

Designers, bakers, architects, nonprofit leaders, bankers, restauraners, realtors, brokers, childcare centers, boutique owners, bloggers and podcasters all convened in an elevated evening with a similar mission: sharing information, ideas and contacts while celebrating each other's accomplishments-- from grand openings to features and specials.

Vince Evans, owner of the Entrepreneurs Club and multiple nonprofits and businesses, remarked "I work with a lot of entrepreneurs to help them grow and be more successful because as my journey went I ran through a lot of problems...if we would work with each other and helped out each other it would make our journey a lot less troublesome."

He stressed the importance of doing better for our race by unifying and supporting each other and circulating our money within our community. "Let's work together as a race... every other race [works] together to help each other prosper, as a race we do more tearing down each other than we do helping each other grow... that's the way to break everything that we have a problem with... because we won't work with each other."

"The biggest thing is sticking together. With unity and with numbers we can do a lot more than being divided. United we can do a lot." Evans recited a poem he wrote entitled about his journey as an entrepreneur.

In addition, on March 9, Evans and The Entrepreneurs Club will host a gathering for Black business owners to introduce them to a new concept at the club involving Black business owners and informative, instructional opportunities in a private club.

The next event will be held in May with more details to come. To learn more about BWSCD visit Facebook @ Black Wall Street Community Development.

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Stayce Fowler



Ann Hych, Nolan Hych, Kathleen Greely



Vince Evans and Shanice Sample