

Volume 90 No. 6 *“And Ye Shall Know The Truth...”* July 16, 2025



National Church Residences, a national affordable housing developer for seniors based in Columbus, Ohio will soon start construction of a new affordable housing senior apartment facility called Arlington Senior Housing to be located at 2155 Arlington Ave., Toledo, Ohio adjacent to the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc. facilities.

The project is a partnership between National Church Residences and the Area Office on Aging Northwestern Ohio, Inc.

The new build four-story wood framed building includes 52 one- and two-bedroom apartments for seniors featuring an onsite fitness center and on-site Cores Certified service coordination, which offers essential services and critical links to resources in the community. There will be no cost to the residents. The first level of the new building will include approximately 15,000

square feet for the relocated Margaret Hunt Senior Center

General Contractor, **Ruscilli Construction Co. LLC**, Dublin, Ohio and Ruscilli consultant, **Gould Development Co., LLC**, Toledo, Ohio will be conducting an open **Outreach Meeting** to interested Minority Businesses, Women Owned Businesses and HUD Section 3 Businesses and individuals. The project is funded in part by the City of Toledo and includes a Project Labor Agreement with the Northwest Ohio Building & Construction Trades Council. The meeting will take place **July 24, 2025**, at Nitschke Tech, 1510 N. Westwood, Toledo, Ohio between **2PM and 4PM**.

National Church Residences has partnered with Ruscilli Construction for over 20 years successfully completing projects throughout Ohio and other states. The project is planned to start construction in August 2025.

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A Legacy of Righteous Resistance Lives On

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

The Truth Contributor



When historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last...

- John Lewis

"Good Trouble Lives On" protests are scheduled to take place in cities across all 50 U.S. states, including Toledo, on Thursday, July 17, the anniversary of civil rights icon John Lewis' death in 2020.

The organized peaceful action echoes Lewis' own prophetic activism and call to "get in good trouble, necessary trouble... and help redeem the soul of America," focusing on actively defending voting rights, challenging attacks on civil liberties, advocating against cuts to programs like Medicaid, and resisting policy rollbacks affecting working communities, women and other minorities.

I spoke with Melissa Portala, co-founder of Toledo Persists and one of the lead voices behind Toledo's "Good Trouble" protest event. Here is what she had to say about Toledo's effort to continue John Lewis' legacy of righteous resistance for such a time as this.

Perryman: What does John Lewis's legacy mean to you personally?

Portala: For me, it's a lesson for all of us in perseverance. I believe in never stopping and continuing to strive, pushing on every lever that's available to me. I see John Lewis as an example of that, and I have always found his words inspiring.

Perryman: Why is it important to organize this protest now, and how does it reflect the spirit of what John Lewis talked about when he said "good trouble?"

Portala: I think he meant to keep on bothering the powers that be, keeping on being in their faces, letting them know that we see what they're doing, we don't condone what they're doing, and we're watching what they're doing. Additionally, it is crucial to demonstrate to the public that pushback is occurring. When you have 8,000-10,000 people show up, as we did last time, and everybody posts about it on their social media, it demonstrates to the public that resistance is occurring, which leads to more and more people joining us as a result.

Perryman: What are the core demands or the messages behind this July 17 protest action?

Portala: We don't have demands. When I started this group, the goal was to attract more Democrats and improve the Democratic Party. They need to be better, and we actually need more of them because you can see what's going on in the State House. The Republicans have a super majority, and they have inflicted critical pain upon us now. So, we don't even have the checks and balances. That's why sometimes the Democrats are not perfect, but at least the Republicans wouldn't be able to do this kind of damage.

Perryman: Please explain.

Portala: The Republicans have this structural advantage across the country that makes me absolutely crazy. They wouldn't have the U.S. House if they didn't gerrymander Ohio. If they didn't have the federal House, they couldn't have passed their budget, which just made the U.S. the biggest police state in the entire world, with secret police now, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE). What's going on is horrible.

Perryman: How do you hope that Thursday's event will impact local policy or public awareness?

Portala: I hope it'll impact local awareness, letting people know that there are people out there standing up, and they could join the movement. Individually, we're also working to get people elected. I'm working with Erin Kramer, who is a Toledo Persists member, and we're trying to get her elected. One of our admins, Kristen Angelo, is running for council in Walbridge, Ohio. You know that's a ruby-red area, so that would be awesome. We're going to try to help her get elected. Our core is still trying to get people elected.

Perryman: What's the next step after Thursday's protest to commemorate John Lewis, and how can people become involved in the movement?

Portala: As for the protests, we will continue to participate in the National Calls for Action because it's essential to keep these issues front and

center. Protests have the power to inspire and give people hope, and hope is the most important thing when you're working toward real change. They (protests) also have the potential to energize people, motivating them to get involved in other efforts, like supporting Democratic candidates who are committed to fighting for change and defending democracy. Beyond that, protests create space for connection. They bring together like-minded individuals who might discover causes that align with their own passions and talents, turning that initial spark into lasting engagement.

Perryman: How can people become an ally of Toledo Persists?

Portala: Toledo Persists does a variety of things. Our primary focus is on involvement in electoral politics. However, we also undertake various community projects. So, for example, we're supporting a Syrian refugee family that we sponsored through the Federal Welcome Corps program, which, by the way, was shut down by the Trump administration after running for 30 years. If you're interested, check out our public Facebook page, which is called Toledo Persists. We organize more privately, but people who are activists, or even just activist-minded, usually end up finding us.

Perryman: What do you need from local leaders or institutions to make this change sustainable?

Portala: Change takes all of us. It takes courage and empathy. It takes people talking to their own people - educating their "crazy uncles," so to speak. It takes parents and grandparents showing up to school board meetings. It's community gardening (literally and metaphorically) and sharing resources with neighbors and strangers.

Change also requires people to step up to run for office. And once in office, actually doing something to make change that people can use and feel. That means programs that don't just work on paper, but that are easy for people to access. It is hard out here right now. People don't have the time or patience to jump through dozens of hoops and reams of red tape.

... continued on page 4



Melissa Portala

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Rising Waters Will Not Drown the American Spirit

By Ben Jealous

Guest Column

On the Fourth of July, Donald Trump signed his “megabill.” The law boosts the dying fossil fuel industry with tens of billions of taxpayer dollars. It invites an additional 470 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year by 2035 – that’s the equivalent annual emissions of more than 100 million gas-powered cars. And it aims to stop dead in its tracks the clean energy transition and the green manufacturing jobs boom the Inflation Reduction Act was already starting to create.

Just hours later, a climate-fueled storm settled over and dumped four months worth of rain on Texas Hill Country. The Guadalupe River rose 26 feet within 45 minutes. The resulting flash floods killed at least 104 people – at the time of this writing, although that number will go up – mostly in Kerr County. That death toll includes dozens of young girls attending the Camp Mystic youth camp.

This disaster was not a random event. It was a crisis written by the climate crisis and made far worse by the types of policies being pushed by this administration everyday.

Before the absurdly named One Big Beautiful Bill Act landed on Trump’s desk, his administration had already begun gutting America’s frontline defenses against climate disasters – like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s climate labs, the National Weather Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. As questions abound about why parts of the flood-impacted region did not receive adequate warning about the floods, Trump insisted that “nobody expected it” and it was a “once in 100 years” event.



But storms like this, as well as increased flooding from the Guadalupe River, were expected – and predicted. The US Geological Survey – another vital body Trump is trying to eviscerate – issued a report to that effect in 2019. The science is clear: warmer air holds more moisture, intensifying storms and accelerating flood risk. We’re now witnessing the violent proof of these predictions.

According to UCLA climate scientist Daniel Swain, “this kind of record-shattering rain (caused by slow-moving torrential thunderstorms) event is *precisely* that which is increasing the fastest in [a] warming climate.”

As for the “one in 100 years” claim, those once-in-a-century extreme weather events are now happening far more often thanks to the climate crisis! Between just 2015-2019, one St. Louis suburb had three major floods and at least two of them were considered “1-in-100-year events.”

It is not hard to see how the climate crisis became a political debate. Decades of anti-science propaganda from the coal, oil, and gas industries. Politicians bought and paid for by fossil fuel oligarchs. A current administration with a cabinet full of industry shills.

Big Oil alone spent a whopping \$445 million through the 2024 election cycle to influence Trump and Congress. A staggering figure to be sure, that does not include donations funneled through dark money groups (likely tens of millions of dollars more – at least). And it still falls short of the \$1 billion Donald Trump asked the country’s oil executives to kick in to his campaign -- an amount Trump insisted would be a “deal” for the industry because of what he was willing to give them.

But it is high time that our leaders, at every level and of every party, stop kowtowing to a toxic and unnecessary industry built on death, illness, and poisoning our communities. It is time they treat this crisis as a struggle for survival – a fight for the future our children deserve.

As the people of Texas grieve and the country grieves with them, their pain is our warning.

We are at a crossroads: We can double down on denial and let superstorms, heatwaves, droughts, floods, and fires determine our fate. Or we can lead – with science, resilience, courage, and a recommitment to our values.

If we harness our outrage and come together to fight like hell for our collective future, we will win. Because when people stand up and demand a safe planet, nothing – not even rising water – can drown the American spirit.

Ben Jealous is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club, former president/CEO of the NAACP and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.



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Perryman...continued from page 3

There are a lot of things to be against right now, but we also must be for positive changes. For example, while we fight what seems to be a losing battle to save Medicaid, we must also advocate for expanding access to healthcare; just advocating for holding on by our fingernails to the little bits the billionaires have left for us is not enough. For long-term sustainability, start with the kids. Anytime we can educate and support kids, we make an impact that will be felt years down the road. We need elected leaders who can set their egos aside and make the choices that may be difficult in the short term, but are the right choice for long-term sustainability.

Perryman:: What is the one message you would like Sojourner Truth readers to take from your action?

Portala: I continue to emphasize to readers that thousands of people in our city are showing up and fighting this fascist regime with everything they have. I want them to know that they are not alone. What is happening now is directly devastating to many of our sisters and brothers, and it is spreading. However, as long as we keep fighting, we will eventually win.

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, PhD, at drdlperryman@centerofhope-baptist.org

Trailblazer: Carol Moseley Braun Reflects on a Life of Firsts

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

If courage had a name, it just might be **Carol Moseley Braun**.

The former U.S. Senator and U.S. Ambassador has had a career full of powerful moments, bold firsts and beautiful breakthroughs. Now, in her new book *Trailblazer: Perseverance in Life and Politics*, she tells the world exactly how she did it—with humor, hope and heart.

And she's not done yet.

The First But Not the Last

In 1988, Carol Moseley Braun became the first Black person elected to an executive office in Cook County, Illinois. Then in 1992, she made history becoming the **first Black woman ever elected to the U.S. Senate, and the first woman to represent Illinois**. But she didn't walk alone, 1992 was called "**The Year of the Woman**" because four other women were elected to the Senate at the same time (Patty Murray, Barbara Mikulski, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer). Together, they helped bring new voices and new ideas to Washington.

"We were part of a wave," she said. "People were ready for something different."

A Journey That Started with Justice

Moseley Braun's career began in Chicago, where she earned a law degree and became an assistant U.S. attorney. But even before that, her passion for justice showed up early.

As a teen, she marched with **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** in Chicago.

"His example showed me that peaceful protest could lead to real change," she said. "It taught me to stand strong for what I believe."

That same spirit followed her into every role she took on, from public service to diplomacy.

The Day Destiny Called in Jackson Park

She never planned on becoming a politician. In fact, her first steps into politics happened by accident at a bird protest in her neighborhood.

"There were people protesting the removal of bobolink birds from Jackson Park," she shared. "I joined in—and a few neighbors said, 'You should run for state rep.'"

At first, she said no. But when a local pundit said she couldn't win because she was "a Black woman and not part of the political machine," she changed her mind.

"That did it," she said. "I decided I had to run—and I won."

The Day She Changed the Senate

When she joined the U.S. Senate, Moseley Braun brought more than just a fresh perspective, she brought positivity, professionalism and a deep love for the people she served.

"I worked hard," she said. "And I tried to stay true to who I was the whole



Carol Moseley Braun

time."

One of her proudest moments came in 1993, when she stood up to stop the renewal of a government patent for a symbol tied to the Confederacy. She gave a passionate speech about slavery, racism and the power of symbols. At first, the Senate voted against her.

"Symbols matter," she said at the time. "They speak volumes."

And then, something amazing happened.

As she spoke, senators began to understand. They listened. One by one, they changed their minds. A second vote was taken, and this time, Moseley Braun won.

In just a few hours, one voice changed the course of Senate history.

Fellow senators praised her leadership that day. Senator Barbara Boxer said, "If ever there was proof of the value of diversity, we saw it today."

A Global View

In 1999, President Bill Clinton appointed her U.S. **Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa**—and she made the most of every moment.

"The country was breathtaking, and the people were so kind," she said. "I was even adopted as honorary Māori by the Te Āti Awa tribe."

She didn't just represent America, she connected with people on a personal level. She calls her time there one of the most enriching experiences of her life.

Laughing Through the Journey

Carol Moseley Braun is a woman of many firsts. But she's not bragging about it. She's still surprised her life became this historic. In fact, she says the whole reason she wrote her life story was because of one tiny but mighty person: her grandson.

"He was six at the time," she told me. "He said, 'Grandma Carol, are you famous?'" She laughed. "I tried to explain it to him, but I realized it was time to write everything down."

Her memoir *Trailblazer*, written with award-winning journalist Donna M. Owens is full of inspiring moments, but it also has plenty of laughs.

Like the time she attended the dedication of a school named after her in Chicago. Two boys saw her walking down the hall.

"One said, 'There goes Carol Moseley Braun!' And the other said, 'She's not dead yet?!'"

She couldn't help but laugh. "I guess he thought you had to be dead to get a school named after you!"



Elected to the Senate in 1992 - L to R - Patty Murray, Carol Moseley Braun, Barbara Mikulski, Dianne Feinstein, and Barbara Boxer

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Glass City JazzFest Lineup Announced

The Truth Staff

Coming soon! The Toledo Jazz Week and the Glass City JazzFest! On Monday, August 4, 2025, Toledo Jazz Week kicks off at various city venues, and continuing every night for a full week. On Saturday, August 9, the Glass City JazzFest, free as always, will take place at the Glass City Metropark on Front Street.

Later, Saturday night, a post-festival Jazz Jam at the Assembly American Brasserie will bring an end to the fourth annual JazzFest.

"We will have music from all around the world," said Toledo City Councilwoman Cerssandra McPherson last Thursday, July 10, during a press conference announcing the musicians who will perform and the sites that will hold the events.

On Saturday, August 9, the jazz festival will begin at 12:30 p.m. and go until sunset and it's free and open to the public. The festival is presented by the City of Toledo in conjunction with the Lucas County Commissioners, Toledo Metroparks and the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA),

The events have been organized by the Great Lakes Jazz Society (Hugh Ross and Cheryl Catlin).

The Toledo Jazz Week is the lead-in to the Saturday festival with a five-day series of jazz performances by different artists at five different venues.



Councilwoman Cerssandra McPherson announces Glass City JazzFest

Leslie Deshazor kicks off the week at the Assembly American Brasserie at the Downtown Hilton on Monday night, August 4. The second night will take place at the Middlegrounds Metropark as Lori Lefevre and the Toledo School of the Arts Jazz Vocalists perform.

On Wednesday Keith Bernhard & More Jazz Messengers hold forth at the Toledo Club's Red Room and Thursday night's performance will happen at Club 1343 with the Jerome Clark Trio.

Jazz Week concludes on Friday at the Glass City Metropark with Gene Parker & Damen Cook. Both Metropark venues are outside and guests can bring their own lawn chairs.

The Saturday Glass City JazzFest will feature the following artists:

"Toledo's First Lady of Song," Jean Holden will lead off the day of music, blending classic jazz, blues and R & B in a timeless and personal style.

Next up, from Japan, will be Akira Tana and Otonowa a quartet who fuse traditional Japanese folk melodies with contemporary jazz.

RiShon Odel & The 5th Element are the third group in the lineup. Odel, bassist, composer, producer is a multi-instrumentalist who has included smooth jazz and gospel along with his forays into classical composition and cinema scoring.

Straight Ahead is an all-female jazz ensemble from Detroit who have earned acclaim for pushing musical boundaries, weaving bebop, funk, Latin and blues influences into their innovative compositions.

The Vinicius Gomes Quintet with special guest SongYi Jeon are an international collection of artists. Guitarist/composer Gomes hails from Brazil and blends modern jazz with Brazilian rhythms. SonYi Jeon, a South Korean-born, Swiss-based vocalist is noted for her ethereal tone and global jazz sensibility.

Brian Bromberg, a Grammy-nominated bassist will close the JazzFest. Bromberg has had a career that has included acoustic jazz, smooth jazz, fusion, rock, Latin and orchestral music. His career has spanned more than four decades and he has more than 20 solo albums to his name.

The night isn't over after the last performance at the Glass City Metropark. The Post-Festival Jazz Jam, hosted by Ramona Collins and Hugh Ross, will follow at the Assembly American Brasserie starting at 10:30 p.m. The three-hour jam session is free to musicians and \$20 for the general public.

The JazzFest, free to the public, will also feature vendors with a variety of goods, along with food vendors. For those wishing to reserve seating, \$100 will allow one to have a premium seat near the stage in a shaded roundtable, along with complimentary food and drink. Eventbrite for tickets: https://GCJF_Reserved_Seating.eventbrite.com.

Should visitors not want to deal with parking at the Metropark, TARTA will be providing transportation to the JazzFest from Franklin Park Mall and from Dockside for \$3 roundtrip.

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Blair Johnson Continues His Town Hall Tour in His Campaign for Toledo City Council

By Jefferson Díaz

The Truth Reporter

Blair Johnson is on a mission: to be elected to the Toledo City Council and continue and expand the work he's done for years as a businessman and community leader.

One of the essential parts of that mission is connecting with citizens, with the voters and speaking with them face-to-face to learn about their problems, possible solutions and future plans for Toledo. Johnson wants to build this connection with Toledoans through town hall meetings.

Johnson is on a kind of a rock-star tour of town halls, and his most recent one took place at the Kent Branch Library. There, with a pen and a notebook in hand, he listened to every concern and suggestion the attendees had.

Security was one of the key issues, especially after the six violent deaths in Toledo last July 4th weekend. "The city's systems aren't working. And that leads not only to security problems, but also to housing and transportation issues, for example," Johnson said.

Next November, Toledoans will go to the polls to elect a new mayor and six new at-large council members. Johnson is running for one of those six seats as an independent candidate. His main slogan is to listen to the people, but "really listen to understand them," as he always emphasizes.

During the town hall at the Kent Branch Library the state of certain city

roads, especially those surrounding downtown, was also discussed. The condition of certain avenues, with their cracks and potholes, was a source of concern. "Ideally, road repair plans should have an established start and end times, and those times should be adhered to, so that citizens don't have to wait weeks for repairs," said the candidate.

Johnson wants to be a public servant who offers real solutions. He worked for the United States Postal Service for years and then moved into private housing development. "I understand your problems; I've experienced them myself because I'm a citizen of this city," he said during the town hall, where he also asserted that he is not "just another politician" but a candidate who offers "real solutions."



Blair Johnson

Trailblazer...continued from page 5

Still Leading Today

Even now, Moseley Braun is blazing new trails. In 2023, President Biden appointed her **Chair of the U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF)**, which supports small businesses across Africa. She's focused on health, housing, and innovation—and helping people build strong futures.

"We're funding real change," she said. "That's legacy work."

What Trailblazing Really Means

I asked her what the word trailblazer means to her. She paused thoughtfully, then answered with the grace that defines her.

"It means moving forward, even when times are changing," she said. "It's about having the spirit and belief that you're doing the right thing. If you hold onto that, you'll be blessed in your work."

As we wrapped up, I asked what she hopes people will remember, not just about her career, but about her as a woman and a leader.

"That I stood for something," she said. "That I was real. That I tried to live up to the ideals I believe in. No gimmicks, no shortcuts. Just the truth."

A Book and a Message for the Next Generation

Her memoir, *Trailblazer: Perseverance in Life and Politics*, is more than just a history book. It's a love letter to those who dare to do things differently.

It's for the dreamers, the doers, and the people who know that being first might be hard—but being authentic is what truly matters.

So what does she want young girls, especially young Black girls, to know?

"Don't let the noise distract you," she said. "Keep your eyes on your purpose. If you stay true to that, you'll be just fine."

Trailblazer: Perseverance in Life and Politics is available now wherever books are sold. Order on Amazon

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 Alethea Easterly	"We extend our sincerest appreciation for their steadfast support and invite all to join us in acknowledging this outstanding achievement."		 Mayor Wade Kapszkiewicz

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St. Paul MBC Congregation Honors Pastor James Willis Sr. During Appreciation Banquet

By Alexandria Leatherberry

The Truth Reporter

Members of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church gathered Saturday evening for a heartfelt Pastor Appreciation Banquet honoring the Rev. James Willis Sr., DMin, for his 22 years of dedicated service.

Rev. Allen T. Smith led the event at The Premier banquet hall, drawing more than 300 attendees consisting of community leaders, longtime members and visiting clergy. The guests enjoyed dinner, music and expressions highlighting Willis' leadership and spiritual guidance. The musical performances by Rev. Thomas J. Hutchens moved the guests into a reaffirming keynote address from Rev. Kevin Bedford of Progressive Baptist Church of Aurora, Illinois. "Tonight, we say we love you," stated Bedford.

State Senator Paula Hicks- Hudson and Toledo City Councilwoman Cerssandra McPherson joined in the celebration with the presentations of state and city proclamations to Willis as a commemorative to his contributions to his congregation and community.

Rev. Willis, originally from Grenada, Mississippi, relocated to Toledo in 1970 and for 33 years worked in leadership and managerial positions with Ford Motor Company. He began his service in the ministry in 1993 with Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of Rev. H.M. Crenshaw.

Willis is a member of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA) and Toledoans United for Social Action (TUSA). He also serves on the President's Committee of African American Recruitment and Retention for Pharmacy Students of the University of Toledo Medical

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First Lady Linnie and Rev. James Willis



Councilwoman Cerssandra McPherson



Rev. Allen Smith



State Sen. Paula Hicks-Hudson

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St. Paul... continued from page 8

Center.

He is active with the Masonic Organization and Past Master of Amazon Lodge #4, a member of Mecca Temple #43, an Honorary Past Potentate of Mecca Temple #43, Honorary Past Grand High Priest, Grand Chaplain of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Ohio, Past Grand Advisor for the Order of Pythagorans, Past Deputy Grand Lecturer for the 7th Masonic District, State of Ohio. He currently serves as the Grand Chaplain for the MWPH Grand Lodge of the State of Ohio.

He and First Lady Linnie Willis share two adult sons, Shelby Willis, Sr. and James Willis, Jr. They have five grandchildren.

First Lady Willis retired as the executive director of the Lucas County Metropolitan Housing Authority and leads her own contributions of service that have been recognized by the YWCA, Girl Scouts of NWO, and

the African-American Legacy Project.

Linnie Willis has served in leadership roles with the Toledo Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc; Toledo Chapter of the Links, Inc; Zonta Club of Toledo 1; Mental Health and Recovery Services Board; Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities among other organizations. She currently serves as a board member of the Mercy Health Foundation – Greater Toledo.

Linnie Willis was recognized for leadership by the YWCA Milestones – A Tribute To Women; a Pioneer by the Girl Scouts of Northwest Ohio and the African American Legacy Project.

Rev. Willis expressed gratitude and humility for the honoring received throughout the evening. “We are reminded that the strength of our church lies in unity and our shared commitment” he stated.

The banquet concluded the congregation’s celebration of recognizing Willis’ pastoral service and community impact.



Rev. Kevin Bedford





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St. Paul MBC Pastoral Appreciation Sunday Service

The Truth Staff

Following a Saturday night of celebration at the Premier Banquet Hall for the 22 years of service of rendered by Pastor James and First Lady Linnie Willis, the St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church's congregation honored the couple the next morning during Sunday service.

This year's pastoral appreciation theme was "A Man of God Worthy of Double Honour"- 1 Timothy 5:17-18, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, Jeremiah 3:15.

The deacons thanked the Lord for bringing their pastor to St. Paul for helping him "be the leaders that he is." Said Ray Wood during the praise and worship: "We want to give him his flowers while he can still smell them."

After the Praise and Worship opening by the Deacons, Sis. Deborah Gardner presented the stirring musical selection and then the honorees, Pastor and First Lady Willis, were escorted in by grandchildren Jackson and Jace Willis.

Sunday's speaker, as he was on Saturday evening, was Rev. Kevin Bedford. Rev. Bedford, a Chicago native, has served since 2013 as senior pastor of Progressive Baptist Church of Aurora, Illinois. However, prior to his move back to the Chicago area 12 years ago, he was senior pastor of Toledo's Historic Third Baptist Church from 2004 to 2013.

During Bedford's time in Toledo, he was also president of the Toledo Branch NAACP, the African American Leadership Council and actively participated in a number of initiatives that addressed criminal justice reform, academic improvement and economic development for poos and underserved communities.

Bedford's academic accomplishments include a bachelor's of Arts degree from Union University of Jackson, TN; a master's of Divinity from Memphis Theological Seminary and a master's of Science Degree in Organizational Management from Eastern Connecticut State University.

After the celebratory message delivered by Rev. Bedford, Sunday's service concluded with a musical selection, the recognition of guests and remarks by Rev. Willis thanking the congregation for the recognition.

"Dear Beloved Members and Friends of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, Gace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!," wrote Pastor James and First Lady Linnie Willis in a letter to the congregation. "It is with full hearts and deep gratitude that we write to

express what a true joy and blessing it is to serve in this community and to walk alongside each of you as part of the St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church family ... thank you for allowing us to serve you ... "



First Lady Linnie and Rev. James Willis



Rev. and First Lady escorted to their seat



Revs James Willis and Kevin Bedford



Sis. Deborah Gardner



The Deacons' Praise and Worship

SPONSORED BY TOLEDO URBAN FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

A MILESTONE CELEBRATION

THE 20TH ANNUAL AFRICAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL

MON PRAYER IN THE PARKING LOT
WHEN: MONDAY, JULY 14, 2025 5PM
WHERE: TOLEDO URBAN FCU - MONROE BRANCH, 3053 MONROE ST. TOLEDO, OH 43606

FRI PRAYER BREAKFAST
WHEN: FRIDAY, JULY 18, 2025 @8AM
WHERE: INDIANA AVENUE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH 640 INDIANA AVE. TOLEDO, OH 43604

SAT AFRICAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL PARADE
WHEN: SATURDAY, JULY 19, 2025 FROM 10:00 PM - 12:00 PM
WHERE: BEGINNING AT THE CORNER OF DORR ST. & N. DETROIT AVE.

MUSIC FEST
WHEN: SATURDAY, JULY 19, 2025
DOORS OPEN AT 2:00 PM
WHERE: HUNTINGTON CENTER 500 JEFFERSON AVE.

COMMUNITY DAY
WHEN: FRIDAY, JULY 18, 2025 FROM 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM
WHERE: TOLEDO URBAN FCU - MONROE BRANCH, 3053 MONROE ST. TOLEDO, OH 43606

MENTAL HEALTH & HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS PANEL
WHEN: FRIDAY, JULY 18, 2025 FROM 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM
WHERE: GHDT WORSHIP CENTER 2210 COLLINGWOOD BLVD

FOR MORE INFORMATION

EMAIL AAFESTIVAL@TOLEDOURBAN.NET OR CALL (419) 255-8876

Big Brothers Big Sister Presents ‘Empowering Future Leaders’ Career Summit Open House

By Emily R. Evans
The Truth Reporter

This transformative event aims to connect youth with accomplished professionals across a variety of fields – inspiring the next generation of leaders and innovators.

A career summit open house took place on July 10 from 4:00 -5:00 p.m. at Keyser Elementary School presented by the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Ohio.

Those in attendance received a lot of information from the speaker and CEO of BBBSNO, Marvin Whitfield, PhD, to aid them in numerous disciplines, including CPR training locations that people in the community can take advantage of.

The main objective of the program was to learn how to impact minors in a positive way and provide experiences for them that they will always remember. They were taught a number of skills and lessons that will guide them in those activities.

The event highlighted BBBSNWO's commitment to preparing the next generation through four core pillars: Life Skills, Leadership Development, Cultural Competency, and Career Development. Participants heard from various community leaders, and engaged with hands-on leadership activities. The program runs Monday through Thursdays weekly until July 31 from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Whitfield shared many of his lessons with those in attendance. He had the group repeat mantras. They heard stories about what made him the man he is today and how the different things he learned in his life helped him become who he is.

The program also gave away four bike helmets to each household and had a bike giveaway by hidden raffle tickets where people in the room all won a bike or two!

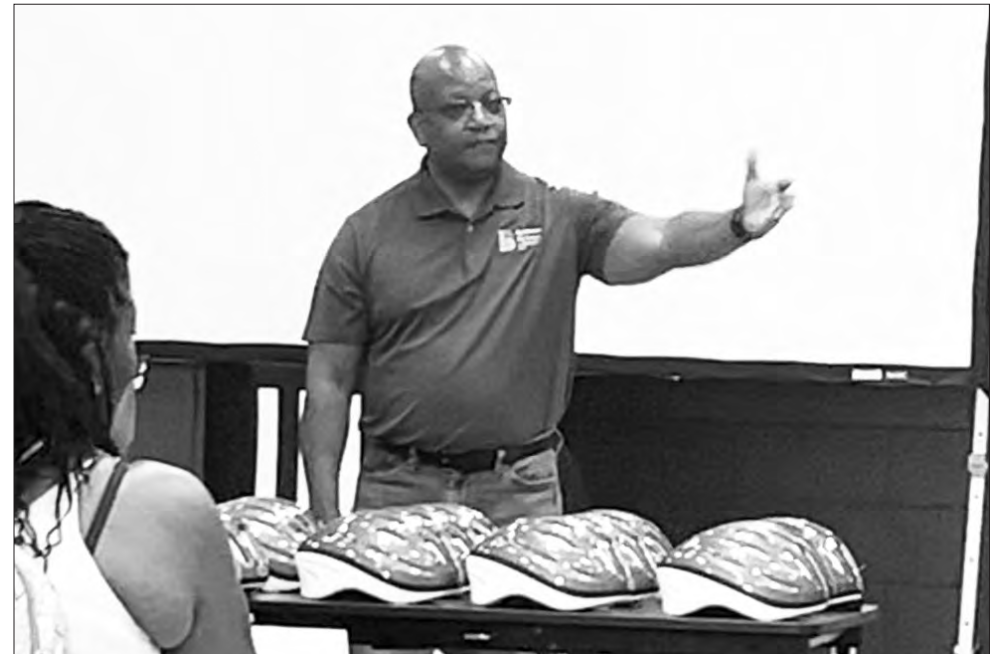
This program gives back to the community in many ways including a food pantry and information on CPR classes to help save a life in any event. "It's always best to have the information and not need it than need the information and not have it."

Whitfield said "the mentor program teaches the four pillars of success." He advocated for leadership, how to survive in today's world including mental health and many other skills such as cultural awareness. He also taught entrepreneurial skills and concepts for leadership development and emphasizes respect for other cultures and how to learn from them.

There is a list on the website you can sign to find your child a mentor or you can volunteer by applying, passing a background check and training, so you can be a big brother or sister at age 18.

"Peer support is very important. We cannot continue to depend on the government but we need to develop skills and information to depend on ourselves," said Whitfield.

Community members, attendees and supporters are encouraged to contribute to BBBSNWO's mission through the following donation channels:



Marvin Whitfield, PhD

- Checks: Donations can be mailed to PO Box 1369, Toledo, OH 43603.
- Website: Use the donate button on the BBBSNWO website (signify purpose).
- PayPal: Donate conveniently through the PayPal link (signify purpose): paypal.me/BBBSNWO.

BBBSNWO is proud to share that it has resumed full operations following previous program pauses.

For more information about the "Empowering Future Leaders" Careers Summit and to register for the event, please visit <https://bbbsnwo.org/empowering-future-leaders>.

The mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Ohio is to provide one-to-one mentoring relationships between qualified adults and children in order to help children develop into competent, confident, and caring individuals. The agency provides services to more than 650 children annually in several different mentoring programs. It is the agency's vision that every child who needs a mentor gets one. Through advanced programming, including the Empowering Future Leaders (EFL) program, the organization focuses on four youth development areas (aka Pillars): Life Skills, Leadership Development, Cultural Competence, and Career Development.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Ohio is partially funded by United Way of Greater Toledo, and The Lucas County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board. For more information, please visit <http://www.bbbsnwo.org/>.

Slam Dunk Strategies for Reducing Your Debt

Special to The Truth

Is mounting debt causing you stress? If so, you're not alone. Average consumer debt is on the rise in the United States.

To help you create a winning financial game plan, Experian is offering tried-and-true money management strategies, along with tips for taking advantage of new tools to reduce your spending.

Get a complete picture. Do a 360-degree assessment of how much you owe, tallying up any loans, credit cards or installment debts you might have. As part of this assessment, you can check your Experian credit report for free at www.Experian.com.

Review your budget. Doing so will help you hone in on how much money

you can allocate to paying off debt and help you avoid impulse spending or indulging in extras that might set you back financially.

Choose a repayment strategy. Find a repayment strategy that works best for you and stick to it. This could mean prioritizing debt with the highest interest rate, the debt with the smallest balance, or the debt with the highest credit utilization. However you go about it, the important thing is to keep tabs on your progress and stay the course until your debt is paid off.

Keep it up. Continue to practice good financial habits, like regularly check-

... continued on page 12

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Taylor Automotive Launches Billboard Challenge: Win a Car This Summer!

Taylor Automotive Family is excited to unveil the **Taylor Billboard Challenge**, an interactive summer contest inviting participants across Northwest Ohio to take part in a one-of-a-kind outdoor puzzle — with the chance to win a **2025 Kia K4 or 2025 Hyundai Elantra**.

The contest kicks off on, **July 11, 2025, and runs through Monday, September 1, 2025**. Throughout NW Ohio, 40 Steve Taylor billboards have been strategically placed, each featuring one of **9 unique creative designs**. Every design contains a slogan and hidden within each is **one keyword**. Together, those 9 words form a **complete sentence about Steve Taylor**.

How to Participate

Participants must:

- Locate the billboards across Northwest Ohio
- Write down the slogans
- Identify one keyword from each of the 9 designs
- Rearrange the keywords to form a complete sentence
- Submit their guess via the contest form at www.taylorauto.com/billboard-challenge

Clues and Help

Daily hints and clues will be available:

- On Cumulus Toledo radio stations, including K100, 93.5, 94.5, 105.5 and 100.7
- Taylor Automotive’s and Cumulus Radio Facebook pages
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/803080484199462/>

What You Can Win

One lucky winner will receive a **pre-owned low mileage 2025 Kia K4 or 2025 Hyundai Elantra**. The winner will be chosen at random from all correct sentence submissions and notified by **September 6, 2025**.

Entry Details

- **No purchase necessary** to enter or win
- **One entry per person**
- **Open to legal U.S. residents, 18 years or older**

Complete contest rules and alternate methods of entry are available on the contest landing page.

The Taylor Automotive Family is the largest dealership group in Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan, recognized for its commitment to community, exceptional customer service, and making car buying fun and accessible.

ABLE League of Justice

RE: Organizing UAW Legal Aid Workers in Dayton, Defiance, and Toledo, Ohio

Last week, a supermajority (78 percent) of attorneys, paralegals, advocates, administrative assistants, and other union eligible staff at Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE) came together to ask their employer to voluntarily recognize their right to organize a union.

The ABLE League of Justice (ALJ) seeks to become the newest chapter of the UAW-NOLSW Local 2320. Staff formed the ABLE League of Justice last year and requested voluntary recognition on December 2, 2024. ABLE responded by hiring the law firm, Bricker Graydon, and a union avoidance group MPI Consulting. In February of this year, the group withdrew their election petition and took a pause to file Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charges against ABLE.

The Union alleges that ABLE management and their consultant John Hawkins violated the National Labor Relations Act by threatening to retaliate against employees if they joined or supported a union; promising better working conditions if employees did not join or support a union; engaging in surveillance or creating impression of surveillance of employees’ union activities; interrogating employees about their union activity; maintaining work rules that prevent or discourage employees from forming, joining, or supporting a labor organization and protected concerted activities.

Further, the Union alleges ABLE management violated the rights of the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) staff by trying to force them into the bargaining unit against the wishes of the majority of that cohort, in order to try to dilute the potential vote of the rest of the union eligible staff.

LTCOP workers do not share a community of interest with other ABLE workers because ABLE is merely the sponsoring agency of LTCOP while the program is statutorily managed by the State of Ohio Long-term Care Ombudsman. Now, the ABLE League of Justice is again asking for voluntary recognition so that we can begin the important work of bargaining a fair contract that will improve retention, morale, and client services.

We encourage community members to voice their support at <https://form.jotform.com/251934985517167>. ALJ is confident that ABLE management will do the right thing and recognize our union, so the workers are planning a solidarity rally on July 31st, 2025.

More details to follow. You can follow ALJ on Instagram and Facebook @ABLE League of Justice. For press inquiries please contact Ben Dormus at bdormus@nolsw.org, Lance Rhines lrhines@nolsw.org, and the ALJ organizing committee email letsdothisable@gmail.com.



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Slam Dunk...continued from page 11

ing your credit report and credit score, spending within your means, and paying your bills on time to avoid taking on additional debt.

Use tech tools. Easy tools can help you cut out unnecessary spending. For example, the Experian app has a subscription cancellation feature that does the work of tracking and cancelling subscriptions for you. Experian data shows that consumers have about four subscriptions on average, totaling almost \$1,000 per year in potentially unused expenses. With over 200 subscriptions eligible for cancellation through the app in categories like streaming services,

... continued on page 13

Memoirs by Various Black Authors

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

Sometimes, you just don't want to know any more.

You've had it with bad news, up to your eyebrows and no more. So maybe it's time for some good news. Maybe it's time for some memoirs, biographies, and the goodness you'll find inside these great books...

c. 2025
various publishers
\$28.00 - \$34.00
various page counts

What goes better with a warm summer evening than a few tunes? A book about a musician, that's what, and ***From the Shadow of the Blues: My Story of Music, Addiction and Redemption*** by John Lee Hooker Jr. with Julia Simon (Rowman & Littlefield, \$34) is a great summertime read. It's the story of a born singer, the son of a sharecropper who struggled and got through it to become a Grammy Award winning bluesman. Inspirational and lively, this memoir is as entertaining as are its author's performances.

No doubt, you've read some of Toni Morrison's work and you might be eager to learn more about her long career. In ***Toni at Random: The Iconic Writer's Legendary Editorship*** by Dana A. Williams (Amistad, \$29.99), you'll understand about the great author's somewhat-hidden career, work that many of her fans don't know much about. Working at the publisher Random House gave Morrison a chance to nourish the careers of many Black authors and, in doing so, she helped change the entire publishing world, making it more open to diversity for readers, both Black and white. With its insight to Toni Morrison's career and the behind-the-scenes of publishing past, this is truly a reader's book.

If you can't help yourself, you have to watch politics, you'll want to read ***Trailblazer: Perseverance in Life and Politics*** by former Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun (Hanover Square Press, \$32.99). Here, readers are taken back to Braun's childhood, to see what launched her to success. There were many barriers that Braun smashed through: she made history as the first Black woman elected to the Senate. First woman representing Illinois in Washington. First senator to be appointed as an ambassador (to New Zealand). And even if you're not particularly a politics-watcher, this book is inspiring and empowering.

And, finally, if you haven't exhausted your examination of racism yet, ***The Science of Racism: Everything You Need to Know but Probably Don't – Yet*** by Keon West (Abrams Press, \$28.00) offers a very different

way of looking at the subject. West, who has "always been Black," argues that we've left science out of the topic of racism for far too long. By adding scientific measures to the realities of racism, we can understand the issue a little better, he says, and we might be able to have a different conversation about it.. Go into this book with an open mind; it's full of examples, thought-provokers, smart words, and ideas. Look closely, and you'll also find a bit of humor to get you through...

If you need additional books on Black history or you want another memoir by a Black authors, then head to your favorite bookstore or library. Ask the friendly face there, and you'll find lots more.

Slam Dunk...continued from page 12

meal kits and entertainment, that could spell big savings. Access the tool as part of a paid Experian membership. To get started with Experian's subscription cancellation feature and other tools, download the iOS or Android app or visit www.experian.com.

"It's easy for subscriptions to add up and become costly expenses. While tracking them down can be overwhelming, you don't have to do it alone," said Rod Griffin, senior director of Consumer Education and Advocacy for Experian.

In addition to the app, as well as other financial resources and tools available to help consumers reach their financial goals, Experian is active in initiatives to help with consumers' financial health. The company is relieving \$5 million of consumer debt among more than 5,000 families in Louisiana. Additionally, Experian is teaming up with Flau'jae Johnson, a junior guard for the Louisiana State University women's basketball team, to champion the program and financial empowerment. With 69% of college basketball fans holding debt and 49% saying they are stressed financially, according to an Experian survey, sports fans and all consumers can use extra support to manage their finances.

Reigning in spending and getting a handle on debt don't have to be insurmountable goals. By leaning on available resources, you can become the financial champion of your future.

Experian app subscription cancellation feature disclosure: Results will vary. Not all subscriptions are eligible, savings are not guaranteed, and some may not see savings. Experian members for whom Experian canceled at least one subscription averaged \$306 a year of anticipated savings. Available with eligible paid memberships and requires connecting payment account(s) to Experian account.

Debt relief initiative disclosure: Experian membership not required. ForgiveCo is settling one outstanding account in full for each beneficiary and not all accounts are the same size. Beneficiaries are randomly selected from the debt pool. For more information go to experian.com/relief or forgiveco.com.

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POSITION SUMMARY

WGTE Public Media seeks a visionary, mission-driven President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to lead the organization into its next chapter of service and innovation. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the CEO is responsible for advancing WGTE's mission by guiding all aspects of the organization, including strategy, content, operations, fundraising, technology, and community engagement.

About WGTE Public Media

WGTE Public Media is a non-profit, multi-platform public media organization serving northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. Based in Toledo, WGTE provides high-quality, educational, cultural, and informational programming through its public television (PBS), public radio (NPR), and online services.

Key Responsibilities

- * Lead the development and execution of strategic initiatives that serve diverse audiences across platforms.
- * Oversee all departments, ensuring a collaborative, inclusive, and innovative organizational culture.
- * Build strong relationships with staff, board, donors, partners, and the broader community.
- * Serve as the chief spokesperson and advocate for WGTE at the local, state, and national levels.
- * Direct fundraising strategies, including membership, underwriting, grants, and major gifts.
- * Ensure fiscal responsibility, regulatory compliance, and operational excellence.
- * Champion digital transformation and technological innovation to grow WGTE's reach and impact.
- * Deepen WGTE's public service role through educational outreach and community-centered initiatives.

Qualifications

Required:

- * Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
- * Proven experience in executive leadership, strategic planning, and financial oversight.
- * Excellent communication, relationship-building, and team leadership skills.

Preferred:

- * Advanced degree in public administration, nonprofit leadership, media management, or related field.
- * Experience in public media, education, or digital content strategy.
- * Successful track record in fundraising and public advocacy.

Location

Located in Northwest Ohio within the western Lake Erie basin. The city is home to institutions that draw regional, national, and international visitors, including the Toledo Zoo-voted #1 in the nation-the nationally award-winning Toledo/Lucas County Metroparks System, the award-winning and globally recognized Toledo Museum of Art, and the Toledo Lucas County Public Library, a recipient of the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. Cultural highlights include the Toledo Symphony, Toledo Ballet, and Toledo Opera. With top-ranked schools, several local universities, and easy access to Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Chicago, Toledo is an exceptional place to live, work, and grow.

How to Apply

Please submit a cover letter and résumé to employment@wgte.org or mail to: Human Resources, P.O. Box 30, Toledo, OH 43614.

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AT RISK

The Toledo Lucas County Public Library is requesting statements of qualifications pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 9.33, et seq., from firms to provide construction manager at risk services for its Holland Branch Project. Questions may be directed to, and Requests for Qualifications may be obtained by written request from Nick Hamilton, Project Coordinator, at Nick.Hamilton@toledolibrary.org. Qualifications will be accepted until 12:00 p.m. local time, August 8, 2025.

POSITION AVAILABLE: SENIOR ATTORNEY – AGRICULTURAL WORKER AND IMMIGRANT RIGHTS PRACTICE GROUP

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE) seeks a Senior Attorney to join its AIR Practice Group to provide legal representation, community outreach, and systemic advocacy for low-income immigrants and agricultural workers. The position is based in Toledo with hybrid work possible.

Requirements: Licensed to practice law in Ohio or eligible for admission by motion/temporary certification. Minimum 5 years of litigation, policy advocacy, or community legal experience. Experience in immigration law, including USCIS and removal defense. Strong leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills. Spanish proficiency preferred.

Salary and Benefits: Annual salary ranges from \$81,000 to \$108,202, with comprehensive benefits including health insurance, loan repayment assistance, and paid leave.

To Apply: Submit applications via ABLE's Careers Page<<https://www.ablelaw.org/careers-with-able>>. Position open until filled.

Equal Opportunity Employer: ABLE values diversity and encourages applicants from underrepresented backgrounds. For accommodations, contact hrteam@ablelaw.org.

Lucas County Board of Mental Health and Recovery is now accepting applications for the following position:

Manager, Benefits & Claims

SUMMARY

The Manager of Benefits and Claims will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of client enrollment and claims services on the Board's Claims Processing Software. The Manager will serve as the point of contact with provider agency billing and intake departments regarding these processes and support accounting functions as assigned. The position will support the development and implementation of business rules related to the Board's Claims Processing Software and provides accounting support for payroll and accounts payable functions.

EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

Associate or bachelor's degree in a health, behavioral health, business, or financial field; five years of claims processing experience. Demonstrated knowledge of claims, Ohio Medicaid coding regarding Behavioral Health, plus familiarity with the national standard 837 Professional and 835 Remittance forms and 270/271 Medicaid eligibility inquiry and response files. Working knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel. The ability to work without the direct supervision of others and to report results in a timely and accurate manner. Excellent written, oral, and analytical skills required.

Starting Salary \$54,000, salary dependent on experience.

For detailed position description and to apply please visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/5cpd285x>

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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND INCLUSION MANAGER

Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities is now hiring, and offers competitive compensation and a comprehensive benefits package. We are currently recruiting for the following positions:

- Organizational Culture and Inclusion Manager
- Requirements Bachelor degree in HR, BA, SS or related
- Two years fostering positive workplace
- Valid driver's license with acceptable driving record

Please visit our website at www.lucasdd.org for additional details and to apply. All candidates must submit a resume and cover letter along with an employment application via the online application process. We are an equal opportunity employer. If in need of ADA accommodations, contact us directly at 419-380-4033.

Michael Ashford's 21st Summer Picnic

By Fletcher Word
The Truth Editor

The July 12 Saturday afternoon rainstorm may have dampened the turnout for Lucas County Recorder Michael Ashford's 21st annual summer picnic but the rain certainly did not dampen the enthusiasm.

In spite of the downpour, over 50 guests turned out to hear a few Democratic officeholders and candidates address some issues, to partake of some delicious picnic food – grilled hot dogs and hamburgers and a potatoes au gratin dish whipped up by the host himself - and to admire the horticultural accomplishments of the Recorder's wife, Ruth Ashford.

The rain came just as the party was getting started which forced the proceedings into the large garage at the back of the yard. That venue, however, was comfortable enough for the guests and enabled the various Democratic Party elected officials, particularly those on the ballot in the fall, to put forth the case for re-election in the few short moments allotted.

"We have to do everything we can to get out and retain these folks," said Michael Ashford as he began introducing those officials.

Chris Varwig, vice president of the Toledo Board of Education, kicked off the addresses by explaining some of the goals of Toledo Public Schools and the access to information that the district will continue to provide in the future in ever greater detail.

Blair Johnson is an independent candidate for a City Council at-large seat who noted that he wants to approach the task of governing from a "different perspective ... and not just fix things when they are broken.

"We have options," said Johnson. "We have a lot of good systems but they are not being used properly."

Councilwoman Brittany Jones, PhD, is seeking to retain her at-large seat in November. She emphasized that the issues an at-large council member faces involve the entire city – all Toledo are her constituents.

Lucas County Auditor Katie Moline was appointed to her position in January 2024 and is running for election in her own right this fall. Her concern, she noted, was the continued smooth operation of the property evaluation process which has been of paramount concern for her office.

Judge Myron Duhart of the Ohio Sixth District Court of Appeals is not on the ballot for re-election until 2026, but he observed that voters need to "make sure that elected officials are aligned with your values."

Also, "know who your judges are," said Duhart as he noted the national issues that are filtering down to the local level. "This is a time of unprecedented assault on the due process of law ... on the rule of law," said the judge. The

defenders of due process and the rule of law, added Duhart, tend to be judges and lawyers.

Fortunately, the afternoon was not all storms, rain and confinement in the garage. The bad weather cleared up and the guests kept in order to enjoy an event that continued into the late afternoon.



City Councilwoman Brittany Jones, PhD



Lucas County Auditor Katie Moline



Lucas County Recorder Michael Ashford



Toledo Board of Education Vice President Chris Varwig



Ruth's Garden



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The AALP and Friends Celebrate Freedom Day

The Truth Staff

Juneteenth 2025, June 19, brought with it some very questionable weather so the African American Legacy Project's Juneteenth celebration was postponed. Finally on July 10, the event happened and, judging by the reaction of the packed crowd, the enthusiastic guests who turned out for the event, the wait was well worth it.

"Celebrating Marvin Vines" was the other theme of the night – a moment of remembrance, recognition and hope. Vines (May 7, 1943 – February 19, 1997), a gifted artist who grew up in the Brand Whitlock Homes, graduated from the University of Toledo with a master's in Art Education and spent his adult life teaching and creating.

Vines was also a visual storyteller using mixed-media creations "to evoke pride, introspection and community spirits," wrote AALP Executive Director Robert Smith in the evening's program. The art on display was curated by Vines' sister, Alice Vines.

The musical guests were Gerard Gibbs and ORGANized Crime, a Detroit group that blends gospel, funk, jazz and hip-hop.

Freedom Day was sponsored by the African American Legacy Project in partnership with Lucas Metropolitan Housing, the Juice 107.3 Radio, AMADAOP and Game One.



Helen Cooks, PhD, Robert Smith



Gerard Gibbs and ORGANized Crime



Rick Hogan, Robert Smith, Larry Sykes

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The artistry of Marvin Vines

