The Sojourner's Truth

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Heal Together: Race for Sickle Cell 5K

Evan and Emory Scott-- Young Sickle Cell Warriors

In This Issue...

Doing What They Said Can't Be Done

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

The Truth Contributor

I ran for the presidency, despite hopeless odds, to demonstrate the sheer will and refusal to accept the status quo.

- Shirley Chisholm

They said it couldn't be done, and Aubry Stallworth takes it personally. No Black individual or all-Black slate has ever mounted a serious campaign for leadership in a local union hall where, for decades, the only Black employee was the janitor. Yet, Stallworth and his team are determined to prove otherwise.

With Black members comprising nearly half of the Teamsters Local 20 labor union's 6,000 members, Stallworth insists the campaign is about more than representation: it's about reconnecting leadership to the rank-and-file. And with frustration mounting over contracts left unnegotiated and voices left unheard, Stallworth and his team say it's time for change.

I spoke with Stallworth, a 30-year member and president of the Teamsters National Black Caucus, who, like Shirley Chisholm before him, knows what it means to step forward when the odds seem stacked.

Perryman: Please tell our readers a little about Teamsters Local 20.

Stallworth: The Teamsters Local 20 is a 6,000-member labor union representing workers across more than 130 companies, including UPS, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Johns Manville and Frostbite.

Perryman: Why did you decide to run for president of Local 20 now?

Stallworth: I'm trying to do what they say can't be done. This is the first time ever that a Black person has run here in the local elections. For decades, at least since 1982, the only Black person working in the hall was the janitor.

Perryman: Please discuss the historical significance should your campaign for leadership in the local be successful.

Stallworth: I can't just say it's always been about bias or prejudice, but when you look at the hall and see no Black officers or administrators since 1982, it tells a story. The significance is that there is no more complaining. We have decided to just step up and finally put our names in the hat so that leadership can reflect the membership.

Perryman: How have members across different backgrounds responded so far to your candidacy?

Stallworth: People will try to make this about race. But the truth is, we've endured this reality for decades. However, in the last 13-14 elections, only about 485 of 6,200 members voted. We believe that if we mobilize our members, particularly those who've been overlooked, we can make history.

Perryman: You've talked about a campaign message of trying to "bring the hall back to the membership." Please explain.

Stallworth: Too many members feel disconnected. Take me, for example. I have been 12 years without a contract. I pay my union dues, but it still hasn't been done. Every three-to-four years, your contract is supposed to be renegotiated.

If we win, our goal is also to restore membership meetings — not just steward meetings — so that information flows back to the rank and file. We want to rebuild rapport with members and remind them that this union belongs to them.

Perryman: Should you be successful, what are your top priorities?

Stallworth: First, reconnecting leadership and members by making Local 20 more responsive to its members. We will bring the hall back to the membership because it has forgotten that it works for us and not the other way around. A majority of the members don't even know who the president is. So, we will be making sure contracts are negotiated and grievances are addressed.

Aubry Stallworth

Second, tackling automation and nonunion labor. Companies like UPS are restructuring in ways that hurt workers. We need to make sure our union members are taken care of first.

Third, protecting rights in the workplace. Too many people are being fired without due process, just because of some he-said-she-said without evidence or due process. That isn't right, and we need stronger protections.

Perryman: Labor unions have historically been powerful political actors. What role do you think the Teamsters still play today, particularly in this polarized political climate, and what role would your leadership play?

Stallworth: Unions have always played a political role, and Local 20 should be no different. We should endorse candidates who stand with workers' rights and oppose policies that weaken labor. Our slate wants to be part of making sure workplaces are fair, that workers have rights, and that unions reflect the communities they serve.

Perryman: What message would your election send to younger workers and to Black workers?

Stallworth: It would show them that leadership is possible, that the union hall is not closed off to them. If we're successful, it would also mean more economic opportunity. Right now, only about six percent of Black people in this country make six figures. At the union hall, leadership positions bring a different quality of life. Having Black leaders visible in those roles says to younger workers, "You belong here. You can lead here."

Perryman: You've been a Teamster for three decades. How has that shaped your vision for leadership?

Stallworth: I've worked at Toledo Paint and Chemical for 30 years. I've filed grievances, fought for contracts, and seen what happens when members are left behind. I've personally gone without a contract for more than 12 years.

I'm also president of the Teamsters National Black Caucus under the umbrella of the International Brotherhood of the Teamsters (IBT), led by Sean O'Brien in Washington, DC. Our main objective is to get Blacks in leadership roles within the local and IBT. That experience drives me to want a union that fights harder for its members and listens to them, rather than leaving them on their own.

Perryman: What do you want members to remember most when they cast their ballots this fall?

Stallworth: That this is about history and about the future. It's about making Local 20 stronger by making it more representative and more accountable.

We're not running to divide the union — we're running to unite it, to give every member a voice. For too long, too many have felt unseen. This election is their chance to change that.

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

Community Calendar

September 28
Bible Way Toledo "Lunch After Church – Community Event;" 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM; Baskin-Robbins, 4015 Secor Rd: RSVP: Text (567) 698-8428

October 19
St. Paul A.M. E. Zion Church: Connectional Lay Sunday; 11am; Speaker Deborah Sims of St. Paul; Colors - black and gold; MASKS OPTIONAL

George Orwell's 1984 … Redux in America

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq

Guest Column

Not trying to give anyone goose bumps but if you have been reading the latest dystopian rants from Dear Leader, you would think that we are resurrecting the very innards of the prescient novel, 1984, written by George Orwell who also penned *Animal Farm.*

Both the malevolent tone of 1984 and the tongue-in-cheek Animal Farm novella is beginning to take form in these United States via the auspices of Donald Trump and his likeminded cabinet members who are under the tutelage of the Project 2025 document.

Recently, Trump announced a "crack down" on a vast left wing terrorist movement that he believes caused the death of the now patron saint of the GOP… Charlie Kirk.

As usual, Trump was woefully short on details of the names of these so-called terrorist groups, their locations and the names of their leadership. But, that is intentionally done because Trump's main goal is to spread both fear and chaos into the ether and have people fearful to speak out on his mindless tirades about bogeymen in your closets.

One would think that after Trump says he wants the nation to heal after this regrettable shooting of Kirk, that he would go on national prime time television and offer constructive words of reconciliation and healing.

But not Trump. And that is because such feelings of empathy or compassion or caring about all citizens is not in his character or nature. His appetites are division and chaos hooked together by rambling sentences that amount to nonsensical chatter.

He is now threatening to march into Memphis but is also keeping his options open to take over Chicago and make it, "a great city again."

As you can discern, Trump is all over the board and map because he is clueless about governance and has no working knowledge of how it is done. His stock in trade is insults, caustic remarks to anyone who questions him and threats to your financial well being via firings and the cutting off of aid.

With the Epstein FileGate scandal not receding, Trump is in overdrive trying to get you to watch the silver shiny object and not focus on his deplorable record regarding the economy and his vendettas against any institutions that do not kiss his ring finger.

From my viewpoint, Trump is disdainful of America as it is now constituted and he wants it remade in his image of the 1940's and 1950's where only white males ruled the roost and everyone else, including foreign nations were and are mere benign place settings for his ramblings and incoherent statements about windmills.

Sadly, the castrated GOP is now signing as a falsetto choir to his foolishness…and they do not mind! If you ever wanted to see a bunch of eunuchs prancing and parading around Trump, it is the GOP aka: The MAGA Party.

And before anyone runs and tries to make Charlie Kirk a saint and place a halo on his head, remember, Kirk was disparaging of people of color and other groups he found offensive. Kirk had harsh words for Black women, Martin Luther King Jr., the Civil Rights Acts and had nothing but contempt regarding the underlying reasons for the mass nationwide George Floyd protests. More can be learned of Kirk by visiting the websites that publish his proclamations and his baseless dribbles about DEI and fairness in America.

The GOP/MAGA base apparently is striving to have Charlie Kirk as their rallying cry against unknown left wing news agencies and financiers, i.e. George Soros but their myopic vision does not include the right wing fanatics and overlooks one of the major acts of political violence ever conducted in this country…January 6!

For obvious reasons, the GOP members shut down their reasoning processes when it comes to ferreting out the instigators of that attempted coup because that agitator now sits in the White House as a convicted 34 times felon!

And it is this felon who pardoned 1500 mobsters who stormed the Capitol building and nigh took down the US government. Oddly, the GOP/MAGA people conveniently suffer from amnesia when this debacle is mentioned as being a planned right wing conspiracy.

Political violence by anyone is wrong. Full stop. But…when either side tries to portray its position as altogether righteous and noble as against the other political party, everyone loses.

I do not see any personality or a religious leader who has the vibrancy and character and guts to take a stance against this current wildfire and speak to those acts that can bridge the chasm that is growing wider and wider.

Trump is totally incapable of such acts because it is not in his DNA or character or moral underpinnings to soothe and create harmony. He is a small person with base impulses that do not lend themselves to be a rallying or unifying figure on the national stage for a time such as these.

America is in the valley of decision and with sounds of resentment and fury that bespeak of further agitation and needless drama because each political house has not spent their capital of vengeance and vindictive pride.

JUST IN: Trump is using his office to both intimidate the major networks by impliedly threatening them with "license problems" if they continue to host comedians who criticize his authoritarian rules. Unless the courts step in or there are mass protests by Congress, freedom of speech is being gagged by a bully who is terrified of what the Epstein Files will reveal about him and his best buds.

The Almighty Dollar reigns and rules. The corporate bosses at the groveling news networks have no shame or self respect.

Contact Lafe Tolliver at tolliver@juno.com

A Forgotten Chapter of Hope: What the Readjusters Teach Us About Healing Our Divided Country

By Ben Jealous

Guest Column

There's a deep sense of despair settling over America. Families are working harder and falling further behind. The cost of raising children grows, while schools, housing, and healthcare remain out of reach for too many. It's no wonder people across this country — rural and urban, Black and white — feel left behind and politically homeless.

But our past offers a powerful, largely forgotten story of how people once came together — across race and class — to put their children first. It happened in post–Civil War Virginia, through a political force called the Readjuster Party.

The Readjusters emerged in the late 1870s, when Virginia's elites were insisting the state repay its massive pre-war debt in full — even if that meant closing schools and slashing public services. Poor and working-class families, Black and white, saw clearly what was at stake: the future of their children's education. Public schools had been significantly expanded during Reconstruction, and they were now under threat.

In response, Black voters and white working people — farmers, laborers, veterans — formed the Readjuster coalition. Their message was simple but bold: public debt should be "readjusted" so that education and opportunity for all children could come first.

For a brief but impactful time in the 1880s, the Readjusters controlled Virginia's state government. They raised public school funding, protected Black voting rights, and pushed for reforms that served the working class, not just the elite. It was one of the most successful examples of cross-racial, working-class solidarity in American history.

One of the leaders of this movement was Edward David Bland, a Black Reconstruction-era legislator from Petersburg. Elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1879, Bland was supported by both Black and white working-class voters — the kind of broad, grassroots coalition our politics rarely sees today. While in office, he championed public education and helped secure funding for Black schools and institutions. But his base was never just "the Black community" — it was the working people of Petersburg, Black and white alike, united by a shared demand for dignity and opportunity.

The Readjusters were eventually dismantled by a well-funded and racially charged backlash that ushered in Jim Crow. But the impact of their brief victory endures. Virginia's public school system — now ranked among the strongest in the country — still benefits from the foundational reforms won by that movement.

Their story offers urgent lessons for today.

Too often, the struggles of poor white families are rendered invisible, while Black poverty is hyper-visible but rarely treated with empathy. Both distortions serve to divide people who might otherwise stand together. In a political environment designed to pit us against each other, the Readjusters remind us that it doesn't have to be this way.

We can choose something better.

We can build a politics rooted in our shared concern for our children. We can refuse to let race be used to divide the working class, as it so often is, and instead invest in a future where every child — rural or urban, Black or white — gets a real chance at success.

The Readjusters weren't perfect, and they weren't permanent. But they proved what's possible when people stop fighting each other and start fighting for each other. If they could do it — in the shadow of the Civil War — then surely, we can find the courage to do it again.

Ben Jealous is a professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania. For more on the Readjuster Party, see his latest book, Never Forget Our People Were Always Free.

Rep. White Announces $2M in Funding to Expand Infant Mortality Prevention Programs Across Ohio

Special to The Truth

State Rep. Erika White (D-Springfield Township) Monday announced that the Ohio Controlling Board approved $2M in funding for the second year of a three-year expansion of the Queens Village and Cradle Cincinnati model, programs designed to combat infant mortality and support mothers and families across Ohio.

"Infant mortality rates are a significant public health concern, especially in Black and Brown communities, highlighting ongoing systemic inequalities. I am excited that this important issue is receiving additional funding to help address these disparities. By improving access to education, essential resources, and support systems for new mothers—such as prenatal care and parenting workshops—we can make this crucial role more manageable. This initiative promises to enhance health outcomes for families

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Twelve City Council's Candidates Debate Solutions for Toledo

By Jefferson Díaz

The Truth Reporter

Toledoans gathered last, September 18, at the Indiana Avenue Missionary Baptist Church to hear from all 12 candidates running for the six at-large City Council seats in the November general election. The forum offered a chance for voters to compare incumbents with challengers in a single, organized setting.

The event was hosted by a coalition of several neighborhood organizations such as the Junction Coalition, NAACP Toledo and The Movement. The debate covered a broad spectrum of city issues such as public safety, the budget, housing, homelessness and community engagement.

Incumbents Carrie Hartman, George Sarantou, Mac Driscoll, Cerssandra McPherson, Brittany Jones and Nick Komives were joined by former councilman Tom Waniewski, retired engineer Tom Names, small business owner Blair Johnson, real estate broker Robert Pasker III, higher education admissions director Erin Kramer and restaurateur Ed Beczynski.

Let's talk about budget

Council President Carrie Hartman, a Democrat, emphasized the council's role in responsibly allocating funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

"We've been required to appropriate all those dollars, so that's why our budget is getting a little tighter this year because we've spent the ARPA dollars, and we invested them in the way that we were supposed to," Hartman said.

Independent candidate Ed Beczynski went with a different approach, highlighting the need for economic growth rather than cuts. "The one thing I heard from everybody is cut, cut, cut. How about growth?" Beczynski said. "How about bringing more tax money into the city? Because we know where the money is going. Are we going to cut police and fire? No. Let's grow the city, make it clean and safe, where people will come to Toledo and bring more jobs."

Talking about the city's budget, the housing problem was also a central focus with the candidates offering solutions to the city's housing challenges.

Real estate broker Robert Pasker III argued that increasing housing inventory and renovating existing properties were key.

"For me, it's about how we can create more inventory first and foremost," Pasker said. "The demolition list is about 300 properties right now. It's cheaper to renovate than to demolish."

Blair Johnson, a candidate with experience in construction, emphasized funding opportunities to rehabilitate homes already in the city's inventory.

"One of the biggest things I see is we tear down a lot of houses," Johnson said. "There are a lot of houses that are structurally unsafe, but we also have a lot of houses that can be saved. The foundation of these houses, they may need to be torn down on the inside and put back together, but that gives us a baseline and foundation to be able to get people in homes."

Retired engineer Tom Names connected housing to broader economic opportunity.

"My number one priority is supporting the American dream," Names said. "You do that through home ownership. I'd like to see more people engaged with owning properties, and I want to see diverse ownership."

Erin Kramer, who works in higher education, stressed the importance of resources for unhoused residents to achieve self-sufficiency.

"I'm worried about the cuts from the federal government and how that will impact the services we have here in Toledo," Kramer said. "I work very closely through my job at Owens Community College with the Cherry Street Mission in order to make sure that folks are able to get certificates and training, so they can go get a job and have a sustaining wage."

Working with communities of color

Questions on representation and accountability prompted several candidates to outline ongoing efforts to engage with communities of color.

Mac Driscoll highlighted his work through the Toledo Design Center. "We do a lot of community engagement in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown," Driscoll said. "We talk to folks who are involved in neighborhood organizations like Junction, Vistula, East Toledo."

Brittany Jones emphasized her efforts to meet constituents through town halls. "I've hosted town halls," Jones said. "I've had two per district to make sure that I cover all of the areas and hear all of the concerns, and I want to continue that."

On this topic, working with youths and seniors was also a focus point, on that matter Cerssandra McPherson highlighted the importance of reaching both youth and seniors who may not otherwise engage with city government.

"We need to reach out to the seniors who are unable to go to different meetings," McPherson said. "We need to go and have a conversation with them

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South Toledo Residents Hold the First "El Centro SMART Community Conversation"

By Jefferson Díaz

The Truth Reporter

The Sofia Quintero Art & Cultural Center hosted, this past September 11, the first El Centro SMART Community Conversation, calling for parents, students, teachers and community leaders to discuss the future of a new community hub at Escuela SMART Academy.

This initiative, led by Toledo Public Schools (TPS) in partnership with Escuela SMART and the Sofia Quintero center, aims to transform the school into a full "Community HUB", a place where families can access educational support, health, wellness and immigration services and cultural programming under one roof.

Superintendent Romules Durant, EdD, attended the event and for him the evening represented a step toward realizing that vision. "There were great discussions at the Community Conversation Event at a community HUB at Escuela SMART Academy called El Centro. TPS Proud!" he said in a statement following the event.

The gathering centered on results from a recent survey of residents in the Old South End, where Escuela SMART is located. Organizers shared initial findings about what services people want most from the hub. Among the recurring themes: expanded mental health counseling, after-school activities, bilingual support, food and clothing resources and community events that celebrate local culture.

Attendees were invited to respond and suggest priorities. Parents asked about practical details such as staffing, hours of operation and funding. Others emphasized that El Centro should reflect the identity of the neighborhood, which has a strong Latino presence.

That focus on cultural identity was reinforced by the presence of the Sofia Quintero Art & Cultural Center, which has long served as a hub for arts and community life in South Toledo. The organization helped host and facilitate the meeting, offering translation and encouraging residents to speak in both English and Spanish.

After the event some community members asked how TPS would ensure the hub remains accessible and sustainable, particularly once the initial attention fades. Others pushed for transparency: publishing the full survey results, forming a steering committee with local residents, and committing to follow-up meetings.

Organizers promised to share the survey publicly and to involve community members directly in planning next steps. While no final decisions were made, the session was widely seen as a beginning rather than an end.

Whether the promises made at this first Community Conversation will translate into a fully functioning hub remains to be seen. But the turnout and dialogue suggested strong local interest in building El Centro into a space that reflects the needs and identity of South Toledo.

TPS Superintendent Romules Durant, EdD, discusses the future with South Toledo residents

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Debate Solutions...continued from page 5

to ask them, 'What is the need? How can we help you?' And with our young people, we need to continue to listen to them, and provide opportunities where they can come and speak and be free."

Nick Komives underscored creating opportunities for youth development beyond after-school programs.

"It's also about creating the opportunities for them to think about what their future looks like," Komives said. "I would point specifically to our Re-Tree grant, where we built into that grant the opportunity for youth to learn tree-trimming and other important jobs."

More safety

Safety and policing were also central issues. Former councilman Tom Waniewski focused on bringing back Block Watch programs to strengthen neighborhood relations with police.

"If you've been to a Block Watch meeting, the community officer will tell you all the crimes that have been committed. I want them to come back because it will improve the public relations and the community relations in the neighborhood," Waniewski said. "Police are our friends. They should be. It takes a big chunk of the budget, so we have to support that."

Independent incumbent George Sarantou highlighted the importance of a broader approach to public safety, including domestic violence prevention.

"When I returned to city council four years ago, I was a very, very strong advocate, and I am still a strong advocate, for the city's administration and council working closely with the courts, the juvenile courts, the municipal courts, the common pleas courts because those judges and magistrates see it all every day," Sarantou said.

The forum concluded with brief closing statements from each candidate. Residents stayed after discussing policy proposals, evaluating candidates' vision, and considering how each might influence Toledo's future. Voter registration for the election closes October 6, with early in-person voting beginning October 7. Election Day is November 4.

More Than a Report: Toledo Public Schools Tells Its Own Story

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

When people think of school, they often picture grades on a paper or letters on a report card. But just like a person can't be summed up in a single snapshot, neither can an entire school district. Imagine judging someone's whole life by one photo, you'd miss the laughter, the struggles, the hard work and the triumphs. That's how **Toledo Public Schools** (TPS) leaders feel about the state-issued report card.

Recently, TPS released its own version of a report card to give parents and the community a full picture of what's happening in classrooms, hallways and graduation stages across the city. I spoke with **Jim Gault,** chief academic officer for TPS, who has served the district for 28 years.

He began as a teacher at the former Mount Vernon Elementary and progressed through the ranks to assistant principal, then principal and now district leader. His tenure gives him a broad, informed perspective on how far TPS has come.

"We're trying to tell what we think is the real story," shares Gault. "Our test scores last year compared to the state were the highest they've been in a decade. Our graduation rate has risen from around 60 percent to nearly 80 percent. That's not just a statistic—it's thousands of students crossing the stage with real opportunities and the potential to build extraordinary lives."

A State Report Card's Limitations

The Ohio Department of Education reports an annual Scorecard grouping scores in categories ranging from Achievement to Progress and Graduation Rate. Surprisingly the report card for 2021 rated Toledo Public Schools (TPS) "Not Reported" on almost all counts. The reason? Approximately 4,000 students, more than a tenth of the district's enrollment, opted out of testing that year because of the pandemic. Under state rules, any student who is not tested is counted as a zero.

Jim Gault

It's like judging a basketball game when half the team never showed up on the court to play—you can't honestly say the score reflects all the players' skills.

"The state numbers don't really capture the full picture," Gault emphasizes. "We're proud that when students graduate from Toledo Public Schools, they're ready, whether that's college, the workforce or the military. Not all states have report cards reflecting this kind of readiness."

A Graduation Rate on the Rise

One of TPS's proudest accomplishments is its steady climb in graduation rates. A decade ago, less than 60 percent of students were earning diplomas. Today, that figure has soared to over 80 percent, a dramatic jump that now ranks TPS second among Ohio's eight largest urban districts.

Behind those numbers are big changes. Superintendent Romules Durant, EdD, made both graduation and college-and-career readiness his top priorities. TPS also continues developing magnet schools and increasing students' opportunities for college credit while simultaneously building

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A Bubbly Bounce Back: F45 Coach Celebrates Birthday With Free Trampoline Class

By Alexandria Leatherberry

The Truth Reporter

Destiny Oshodin brought celebration and bounce Saturday to F45 Training at 4204 W. Sylvania with a free class and mimosas in honor of the fitness coach's birthday.

The high-energy session brought members and guests together into the studio for the hour trampoline circuit workout. The free class was both a celebration and an introduction for newcomers to experience the F45 special classes, which blends cardio and functional movement.

Oshodin has taught trampoline fitness for over two years and is dedicated to sharing her expertise monthly with the members at F45. The low-impact cardio has proven to be transitional between age groups and fitness abilities.

The added fun of childhood nostalgia and upbeat playlist leave attendees with as much joy as it does the full body results.

Oshodin has recently recovered from her own injury to her physical and mental body from medical challenges. Destiny shared how her internal confidence, physical appearance and emotional regulation, shifted due the activity limitations she faced after a knee injury.

This followed her discovery of a dermatology diagnosis that previously called for a significant change for the fitness coach. In recovering her determination for total wellness, she focuses on sharing her lessons through group training sessions.

"Once I started finding the help I needed for myself, I knew it was important to share how simple movement plays a big role in not prolonging health issues" stated Oshodin.

The fitness coach doesn't limit her community upbuilding to just the gym, she hosts bonding opportunities in public spaces. "I love getting people together to work as a team," stated Coach Oshodin, in explaining her passion for ensuring supportive, energetic and fun environments to encourage the promotion of caring for individual health.

Oshodin hosts the trampoline fitness circuit on a monthly basis but can be found coaching regularly at F45 Training: Monday- 5am & 6am, Tuesday- 5am & 6am, Thursday- 5am & 6am, Friday- 5am, Saturday- 8:30am & 9:45am. A full schedule of specialty and regular circuit training classes can be found on https://f45training.com/studio/franklinpark.

Back to the Beach @ Sexy Sandals South Coast, Jamaica - Another Working Vacation

By Ricky Tyus, Owner, Tyus Tours and Travel

The Truth Travel Correspondent

From the moment Pamela and I stepped onto the property, we were greeted with warm smiles and a welcome drink, making us feel right at home. The resort's lush landscaping and pristine beaches created a picturesque backdrop for our days of both work and leisure. Each morning, we took time to stroll along the shoreline before diving into our projects, finding that the serenity of the island made it easy to stay inspired and focused. Whether we were savoring local cuisine at one of the on-site restaurants or relaxing in the shade of a palm tree, Sandals South Coast offered the perfect balance of productivity and paradise, setting the stage for unforgettable memories and meaningful experiences

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Back to the Beach...continued from page 9

Sandals South Coast in Jamaica covers 50 acres and offers 380 rooms and suites. The resort is situated on the southwest coast of Jamaica, approximately 90 minutes from Sangster International Airport and 45 minutes from Negril.

We spent three nights/four days at the Sandals South Coast Longbeach Beachfront Club Level Suite, where we appreciated the balcony tub offering views of both the beach and pool. The ocean breeze combined with a generously sized king bed contributed to a comfortable and relaxing experience.

The first evening commenced with a meet and greet session, followed by dinner at Jasmine's, a restaurant specializing in Pan-Asian cuisine that was exceptional. Later, we attended a live band performance at Retro Live, presented by the Sandals entertainment team.

Sandals South Coast

The following day, we participated in a guided tour of Sandals South Coast, an impressive resort spanning 50 acres. The property features water elements that run throughout the grounds, complemented by a modern design influenced by the ocean's restorative qualities. Expansive tropical landscapes and the sound of waves create an atmosphere conducive to relaxation, with a range of accommodations including Rondoval Villas, Swim-Up Suites, and Overwater Bungalows, all situated in close proximity to the shoreline. Numerous bars and restaurants, both on land and over the water, contribute to the tranquil environment found along Jamaica's southern coast.

We dined at Eleanor's Restaurant for dinner, which required advance reservations and evening attire; the menu showcased Pan-Caribbean cuisine. The quality of both food and service was consistently excellent. Following dinner, we attended a Caribbean Carnival Beach Party featuring fire performers, a live band, tropical dancers, and organized entertainment, all set on the beachfront.

The atmosphere throughout the evening was lively, with guests dancing and mingling under the stars, which perfectly captured the vibrant spirit of the resort. We found ourselves swept up in the energy, sharing laughs and making new friends, all while enjoying the sounds of the Caribbean. The combination of excellent entertainment and the gentle ocean air made it a night to remember, highlighting the exceptional hospitality that Sandals South Coast is known for.

On the final day of our Familiarization Tour (FAM) with Sandals, we proceeded to Negril to tour both Beaches Negril and Sandals Negril. Our initial visit was to Beaches Negril.

Beaches Negril

Situated along the widest expanse of Negril's renowned seven-mile white sand beach, this resort features the Pirates Island Water Theme Park, which includes eight slides, a meandering lazy river, pirate bucket drops, and a splash deck. Guests can enjoy the Caribbean Adventure with Sesame Street-themed activities, including daily character appearances, parades, and stage shows. The Kids Kamp & Nursery offers a comprehensive selection of supervised activities, while the Interactive Teens Program provides a dedicated "Trench Town" Teen Center and a coordinator to oversee teen programming.

Expansive two- and three-bedroom Together Nest Suites with butler service are also available to accommodate families and groups.

Beaches Negril features 197 rooms and suites across 29 room categories and is located on 20 acres of land. The Penthouse Four Bedroom Butler Beachfront Walkout Suite and the Penthouse Four-bedroom Butler Balcony can accommodate up to 18 guests. Sandals Suite includes personal butler service.

The Beaches Suite Concierge program provides assistance with a variety of requests, including arranging excursions, as well as making restaurant and spa reservations, to ensure all guest needs are met. The Suite Concierge Center is available daily from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Accessible rooms include a sofa, a writing desk, and a four-poster king-sized bed. The bathroom offers a twin washbasin designed for wheelchair access, a whirlpool tub, and a separate walk-in overhead rain shower that is also wheelchair accessible. Each suite features a large flat-screen TV and has a balcony.

Sandals Negril

Sandals Negril is situated directly on the broadest section of Jamaica's renowned Seven Mile Beach, offering a refined setting ideal for relaxation. Guests can enjoy a variety of complimentary aquatic activities, including water skiing, glass-bottom boat tours, and paddle boarding, ensuring abundant opportunities to engage with the natural surroundings. After a day spent participating in these activities or simply relaxing, it is recommended to witness one of the beach's acclaimed sunsets before enjoying drinks and dinner.

Sandals Negril features 244 rooms and suites across 19 categories, situated on a 12-acre property. The resort offers Butler Elite, Club Sandals, and rooms designed for guests with physical challenges. The SkyPool Butler Suite with Roof Terrace, located on the fourth floor, provides a spacious living area alongside a separate dining room, a rooftop terrace, and a private skypool.

Also included above is Chef Garrett Mariott. I am pleased to announce that Chef Mariott and his distinguished team from Sandals Negril, whose culinary expertise I have specifically requested for our wedding, will contribute their talents to make our special day memorable.

Ricky Tyus, Tyus Tours & Travel 866-547-5362

Heal Together 5K...continued from page 16

about her own family. Over time, she became a guide for thousands of others, helping families navigate the complex healthcare system.

Her children, Emory and Evan, are her daily reminders of why this work matters. Emory, now 10, even took the microphone and spoke at the event. "He told me he needed to let young warriors know that they need to use their voices," she shared proudly.

For Scott, the Heal Together 5K is not just about raising money, it's about visibility. "There's already mistrust in the healthcare system, especially in Black and Brown communities. This race is about saying to patients and families: you are seen, you are heard, and you are valued."

What began in her living room soon became the foundation for something much larger.

Shaping a Legacy

The S.C.O.T.T. Center has grown into a hub for support, training and advocacy. From providing resources to partnering with organizations like the Ohio Sickle Cell and Health Association and the Kidney Foundation of Northwest Ohio, the mission is clear: no family should feel alone.

Through programs like the Champion initiative—where volunteers sit with children in the hospital so parents can work—families receive practical, compassionate support. "I don't have all the answers," she admitted. "But I am trying to mitigate as many barriers as I can."

Her personal experiences as a mother have shaped much of the Center's approach. She and her husband even wrote a children's book to help their then-four-year-old understand why his brother was in and out of the hospital—a tool that has since helped many other families explain the disease to young children.

"Our experiences shape who we are. God has used me to be a blessing to other families," Scott said. "If I can give them resources and hope, that makes me happy."

Family First, Community Always

Her household reflects both the challenges and the resilience of life with sickle cell. Of her four sons, two live with the disease, one carries sickle cell trait, and another carries alpha thalassemia. Their diagnoses came through unexpected routes, including routine sports physicals.

... continued on page 12

More Than A Report...continued from page 7

strong Career Technology Education (CTE) programs.

"Fifty-five percent of our graduates last year earned college credit, an industry credential or scores showing they were ready for the work in college," Gault says. "That's a huge deal. It means that these young people are not just graduating; they're ready for what's next."

Career Tech: Creating Pathways to the 'Real World'

Think of Career Tech like a bridge—students step onto it in high school, and by the time they reach the other side, they've crossed into real opportunities.

If the graduation rate is the heart of TPS's academic success, then Career Tech is its strong right arm. With over 2,200 participating students, about 10 percent of the district's enrollment, CTE options include everything from health care to construction to business technology.

Students on this path graduate with an average 91 percent graduation rate, and 96 percent go on to gainful employment, the military or college. Some even go on to full apprenticeships and are hired directly by the companies they trained with.

TPS Report Card

"It's about creating pathways for kids," Gault said. "We want them to make a viable wage and be contributing members of society. At the same time, we're helping our industry partners by preparing the workforce they need."

Lessons from the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic hit schools like a storm no one saw coming. But it forced TPS to rethink and innovate, Gault says. One example is the Virtual Academy, which now serves more than 800 students who learn best in an online environment.

"A lot of students felt isolated at the time," shares Gault. "So we created social-emotional teams at all our high schools to support them."

Another notable change? From now on, there are no more cell phones in school during the day. "This has been incredibly helpful," he notes. "Students are interacting with each other more. They're looking up instead of down."

As you might expect, not all lessons were positive. Attendance took a hit during the pandemic, and TPS is still working to rebuild habits of consistent school attendance. Missing class, even just a few days here and there, adds up like missing bricks in a wall, it weakens the whole structure. To address this, TPS launched an attendance initiative aimed at getting students back in class every day.

Measuring What Matters

So how does TPS measure success beyond the state's narrow lens? Gault identifies three key areas:

1. **Improved test scores.** Last year, TPS saw a 2.5 point increase.

2. **Graduation outcomes.** The district has grown its graduation rate four years in a row.

3. **College and career readiness.** More than half of graduates earn college credits or credentials while still in high school.

Those numbers are simply overwhelming but the people attached to those numbers are even more overwhelming! Gault stresses that TPS serves a uniquely diverse student body: 21,000 children, 98 percent of whom are economically disadvantaged. The district also educates 1,800 homeless students, 450 in foster care, 23 percent with special needs, and over 500 English learners.

"We want our community to realize that we are not just numbers," he points out. "We are dedicated to serving every segment of this population. Our commitment is to make sure all of our students graduate college and career ready.

Support Systems That Catch Kids Early

Central to TPS's student success strategy has been building safety nets for students who stumble. Early warning systems flag those at risk of falling behind. To help them stay on track, education credit recovery programs offer free after-school and summer opportunities to catch up.

"Not everybody walks the same path," Gault adds. "A student may struggle at first, but that doesn't mean they have to end that way. We want to give kids the chance to get back on track."

This flexible approach recognizes that learning isn't one-size-fits-all. It's more like a road trip: students may hit detours, potholes, or wrong turns, but with guidance, they eventually reach their destination.

Looking Ahead

When asked what he hopes the community takes away from TPS's self-published report card, Gault's answer is simple: "Being 'TPS Proud' is more than a letter grade. We have great stories to share in Toledo Public Schools."

Those stories include a steady rise in graduates, industry-ready students stepping into jobs, and young people who overcame pandemic setbacks to find new ways to learn.

A report card may offer a snapshot, but it can't hold the sound of a classroom buzzing with questions, or the sight of a student holding the first college acceptance letter in their family. It misses the teacher who stays after hours, the bus driver who learns every child's name, the small triumphs that never make it into the data.

TPS isn't claiming perfection. Like any large system, it faces challenges with attendance, equity, and meeting the needs of every child. Still, leaders like Gault remain determined to show that progress is happening, even if the state's numbers don't always capture it.

"Every student who walks across that stage deserves to be prepared for the workforce or their next adventure in life," That's our true measure of success."

Learn more about Toledo Public Schools at TPS.org

Rep White...continued from page 4

in the Lucas County area and signifies a commitment to fostering equitable health opportunities for all in the 41st District," said Rep. White.

Ohio continues to have a high infant mortality rate. The Cradle Cincinnati Collective Impact Model is a cross-sector network of partners working collaboratively to improve infant mortality rates and eliminate differences in outcomes for mothers and babies. This model gathers the community together to address infant mortality by transforming systems, supporting families, and elevating women's voices. Cradle Cincinnati will provide individualized training to four communities with the highest rates of infant mortality (Franklin, Lucas, Cuyahoga, and Montgomery counties) on interpreting causes of infant death. Cradle Cincinnati will also lead a collective impact workshop and provide tools to help each grantee build a tailored, community-specific collective impact model. The four grant recipients are the Hospital Council of NW Ohio (Lucas), Celebrate One (Franklin), Nationwide (Montgomery), and First Year CLE (Cuyahoga).

Queens Village is a nationally recognized model for engaging Black women in maternal and child health efforts that creates an infrastructure for community leaders to serve as an advisory to local maternal and child health efforts. This strategy will provide training, skill-building, and technical assistance in eight Maternal and Infant Vitality Initiative communities with the greatest differences in birth outcomes (Butler, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery and Summit counties).

Collaboration Helps Improve Health Care

Compassionate healthcare for every child and every family requires meaningful collaboration, shared accountability, and a collective commitment to putting children first. While the path to partnership has not always been easy, the growing complexity of pediatric care makes it clear that working together is essential.

Since 2019, collaboration between Mercy Health and Nationwide Children's Hospital has helped improve pediatric care within our community in meaningful ways. Families in our region have seen expanded access to care, new pediatric specialists, and broader services that meet children where they are. These outcomes are proof that when institutions align around a common purpose, real progress is possible.

At the same time, recent tensions have raised concern and threatened to slow the momentum of this important work. As a greater community we recognize those concerns. We also know that no single organization can meet the needs of our children alone. It will take a unified approach to move forward. That approach must be grounded in transparency, cooperation and the inclusion of all.

We are encouraged that dialogue has resumed. We thank Lucas County Commissioner Pete Gerken, Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz and Tina Butts of The Movement for their leadership in bringing stakeholders back to the table. Their efforts show what is possible when trusted voices step forward with courage and clarity to keep the focus where it belongs, on the children and families of this community.

Now, with that foundation reestablished, we call on ProMedica Health System to join Mercy Health and Nationwide Children's Hospital in charting the next phase of pediatric care in northwest Ohio. A stronger future is within reach, but only if we continue this work together.

We stand united in support of a renewed, transparent, and inclusive partnership that places children at the center of every decision. Let us move forward as one community, committed to a shared vision of building a better community.

Through sincere collaboration and with transparency among all three health systems, our entire community stands to benefit. The time is now.

Michael Alexander
AFL/ CIO / UAW Community Services

Robert Baxter
President
Mercy Health Toledo

Benjamin Boothby, D.O.
Orthopedic Traumatologist Assistant
Orthopedic Surgery Residency Program Director, Mercy Health St. Vincent Medical Center

Balhinder Brar, M.D.
Nephrologist
Chief of Staff Elect, Mercy Health – St. Vincent Medical Center

Tina Butts
President
The Movement

Kevin Dalton
President
Toledo Federation of Teachers, Local 250

David Fleekwood
President, Northwest Ohio Building Trades, Business Manager Laborers Local 500, President, Northwest Ohio AFL-CIO

Pete Gerken
Lucas County Commissioner

Dave Green
Region 2B Director
United Auto Workers (UAW)

Paula Hicks-Hudson
Ohio Senator, 11th District

David Johnson, M.D.
Emergency Room Medical Director
Mercy Health – St Vincent Medical Center

Wade Kapszukiewicz
Mayor – City of Toledo

John Leskovan, D.O.
Chief of Staff, Mercy Health - St. Vincent Medical Center
Trauma Director, Mercy Health – St. Vincent Medical Center

Anita Lopez, Esq.
Lucas County Commissioner

Doni Miller
Chief Executive Officer
Neighborhood Health Association

Miguel Morillo, M.D.
Pediatric Anesthesiologist
Chief Medical Officer, Mercy Health – St. Vincent Medical Center

David Paolini, M.D.
Vascular Surgeon
Section Chief, Vascular and Cardiovascular Surgery

Seth Philips, D.O.
Orthopedic Traumatologist Orthopedic Surgery Residency Program Director, Mercy Health St. Vincent Medical Center

Susan Pratt R.N.
President Local 2213
Professional Registered Nurse

Gina Skolmowski
Chair, Mercy Health North Board & Executive Vice President, Enterprise Strategy, Risk and Quality, NAMSA

Lisa Sobecki
Lucas County Commissioner

Vanice Williams
Council Member
Toledo City Council, District 4

Heal Together 5K...continued from page 11

"I just know it's divine," she reflected. "That's why I tell people, get tested. Don't guess or wonder. If you were born in Ohio before 1990, you weren't tested for sickle cell at birth. Ask your doctor to run a test."

Her message is urgent yet hopeful: "We need empathy, not sympathy. Just because they look well doesn't mean they aren't fighting a battle on the inside. Every crisis is a fight for their life."

As her children grew and her advocacy expanded, so too did her reach beyond Toledo.

A Voice Beyond Toledo

La'Shardae Scott's work now reaches far beyond her city. She provides trainings for community health workers, contributes to research that has been published in national journals, and has earned recognition such as the Tower Award for community health workers.

"We recently did a study on food deserts and how lack of nutrition increases hospitalizations in sickle cell patients," Scott explained. "If they're not getting the right nutrition, more than likely they're going to have more hospitalizations because their bodies aren't getting the nutrients they need to function and heal."

The study highlights how access to healthy food is not just a lifestyle issue, it's a critical factor in health outcomes for those with chronic illnesses like sickle cell.

"Wherever I'm called to serve, I show up. But no matter what, I want patients and families at the center of every decision.

Building Warriors

Through it all, Scott returns to one central belief: those living with sickle cell are warriors.

"We call them sickle cell warriors. I tell my sons, you are superheroes. Your blood is different, but you're still capable of being whoever you want to be. My son has wanted to be a civil engineer since he was six. Why not? Who's to say he can't?"

Her philosophy extends to every child she meets. "We can't put them in a bubble. That's not reality. Everything they say my kids can't do—they do it. I don't take their power by telling them no. They live, they play sports, they thrive."

Looking Ahead

This year's race surpassed its goals, with more than 200 participants and $20,000 raised. Next year, the S.C.O.T.T. Center will launch scholarships for warriors, siblings, and parents pursuing higher education or trade school.

"We want to invest in their futures," Scott explained. Applications will open in January 2026, with scholarships awarded publicly at the next walk.

And while the programs, collaborations, and initiatives are important, La'Shardae Scott's mission remains simple: "This is bigger than us. I just want families to feel celebrated, supported and empowered."

"The event would not have been possible without the support of a host of generous sponsors and dedicated community partners whose contributions helped make the day both meaningful and memorable."

How to Support

Whether it's giving your time, your voice, or a donation, there are many ways to stand with families affected by sickle cell. You can sign up to be a Champion, volunteer, or donate at scottcenteroh.org/donate.

Connect with the SCOTT Center
Scott Center for Observation, Treatment, and Transition
3100 W. Central Ave. Suite 202
Toledo, OH 43606
La'Shardae Scott, DSW, MSW, CHES, CHW
President and Chief Executive Officer
lscott@scottcenteroh.org
(419) 301-4188 (Office)
(419) 452-8016 (Fax)
Website: scottcenteroh.org

The Double Tax: How Women of Color are Overcharged and Underpaid by Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman, foreword by Chelsea Clinton

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

c. 2025
Portfolio
$29.00
256 pages

Your favorite Uncle will want to hear from you in about six months, maybe sooner.

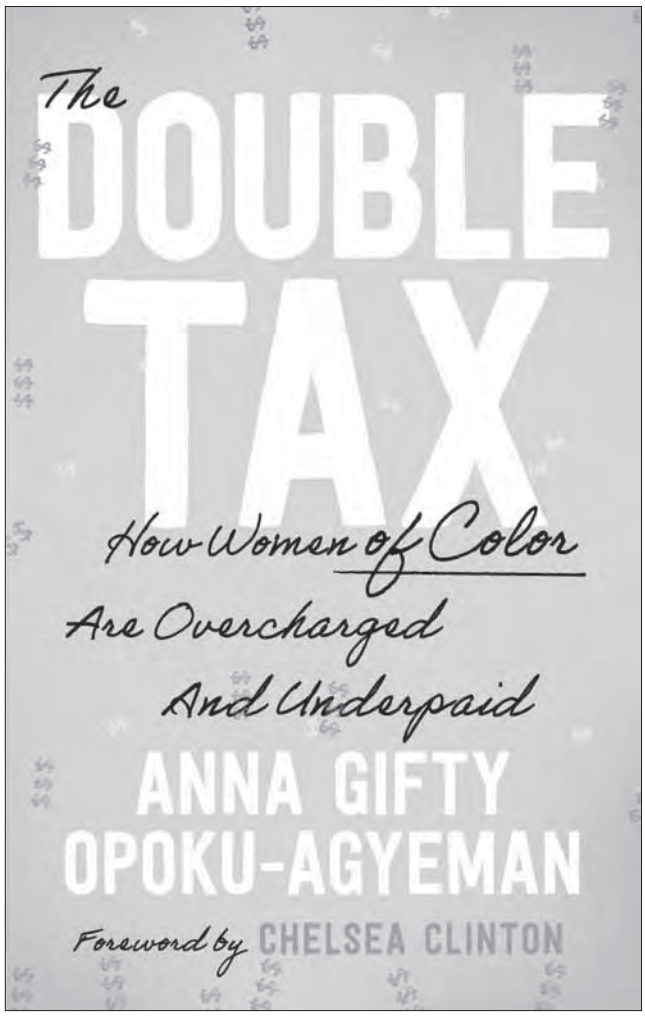
He'll want to talk about your wallet, first and foremost. He'll be interested in your home and your workplace and he'll check your memory and your math skills. Nice guy, he'll probably ask after your family, too. You can't avoid Uncle Sam's inquisitiveness but with ***The Double Tax*** **by Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman,** you'll see how to stop the "pink tax" from being worse if you're black.

When she was a young child, Anna Gifty Opoku-Ageyman noticed that when it was time to leave for church, the women in her family struggled to get ready on time. Hair, make-up, dressing, it all took more effort for her mother and sisters than it did for the menfolk.

Generally speaking, women have social requirements they must follow that manufacturers have seized upon, leading to "pink taxes," or extra costs placed on things for women that are identical to products made for men. Unfair, yes, and in the case of Black women and life, she says, there's often a double-tax.

Take, for instance, hair.

Studies show that a woman's looks are linked to her checkbook, and hair and beauty products matter. Products marketed to women cost more than that which is marketed to men, and the cost is even higher for Black women's products. That's if they can find them nearby.



Women go up against gender stereotypes when applying for jobs; Black women go up against stereotypes of gender and race – which can also lead to "tokenism" and wage gaps. Women get stuck in lower-paying jobs and are often discouraged from reaching for STEM-related careers, but studies show that Black women suffer higher rates of this discrimination.

So what can be done?

Fund minority businesses, Opoku-Ageyman says. Change how your business uses resumes. Support better access to education for Black women. Be transparent in your organization's pay scale. Revisit your company's policy on motherhood.

Double Tax author, courtesy @corbanswainphoto

Finally, identify gaps in the system and close them. Doing so will help now, and later.

Sometimes, it seems like life is all uphill. And that may be twice as apt for women of color, as you'll see in *The Double Tax.*

But is this a book you need?

Read a little, think about its first few pages, and you may decide that author Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman isn't talking to you. If you're a woman of color, what's here is old news; instead, she seems to be talking more to male supervisors, bosses and CEOs of all races with personal stories that underscore her points. That doesn't mean white woman won't learn a few things – raising another woman up is always a good action - but men who don't pay the pink tax will surely get more from it.

Although what you'll find here is a bit broad, this book will open eyes to what's hidden in plain sight and you'll find ideas for change that can affect the status quo. For that, *The Double Tax* is a singularly helpful book.

MINORITY WAY

CORNER OF BANCROFT & FRANKLIN

A LIST OF BLACK OWNED BUSINESSES

optigo

By Twix N Between

Kristin Moncrief, the owner of Optigo by Twix 'N' Between, has opened a new shop in the Minority Way Plaza (corner of Bancroft and Franklin) in order to provide vision care in a setting anyone can find at any time of the day or week.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call or text 419-754-0278 or visit twixnbetween.com.

The Truth Colours Gallery

ART & CRAFT WORKSHOP

Painting, Crafting and Drawing!

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Franklin n Bancroft

Facebook
The Truth Colours Gallery

Nikolacolours
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Gerald B. Aaron is a dedicated and compassionate Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) who has made significant strides in the healthcare industry. As the owner of **We Care Home Healthcare Agency LLC,** Gerald has been pivotal in delivering exceptional home healthcare services to individuals in need. His agency is renowned for its unwavering commitment to compassionate care, helping chronically ill, disabled, and injured individuals receive the support they need in the comfort of their own homes.

567-702-0329 – wecarehcc@hotmail.com

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3.02 Non-Profit

GOLD STAR VETERANS LIFE ENRICHMENT SERVICES is designated as a non-profit corporation.

Public Bid Advertisement (Electronic Bidding)

State of Ohio Standard Forms and Documents

0016-26-006
SU Office of Student Engagement and Connections
The University of Toledo
Lucas County, OH

Bids Due: October 7, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. through the State's electronic bidding system at https://bidexpress.com

EDGE Participation Goal: 5.0% of contract of the contract sum with EDGE-certified business(es).

Domestic steel use is required per ORC 153.011.

Contract	Estimated Cost
Base Bid - General Contract	$447,435.00
Alternate 1	$1,000.00
Alternate 2	$5,000.00

And any proper combination submitted on electronic Bid Form

Pre-bid Meeting: September 23, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. – Main Campus, Plant Operations Building - Room 1000, The University of Toledo, 2925 East Rocket Drive, Toledo, OH 43606

Walk-Through: Immediately following Pre-Bid.

Bid Documents: Available electronically at https://bidexpress.com.

More Info: Buehrer Group Architecture & Engineering, Inc., Kent Buehrer, President, 419.893.9021, kent@buehrergroup.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
LEGAL SERVICES
RFP25-R002

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive proposals for **Legal Services in accordance with RFP25-R002.** Received in accordance with law until **October 2, 2025, at 3:00 PM EST.** For documents: 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.

LUCAS METROPOLITAN HOUSING

TARTA SEEKS FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED SERVICE CHANGES

The Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) will host 5 public events to gather community feedback on proposed service changes which – if approved – would take effect January 25, 2026.

Proposed service changes include:

- Service every 30 minutes for routes 3, 10, 20 and 31 between the hours of 6:30-9:30 a.m. and 2:30-5:30 p.m.
- The extension of Route 2 to Lourdes University
- The extension of both fixed route and TARTA Move paratransit service stop time (from 10:49 p.m. to 11:19 p.m.)
- A new route: 18, covering Alexis Road from Jackman Road to the Meijer on Alexis Road.
- The elimination of all route letters (i.e. 31H, 20F, 10L etc.). Branches of those routes would be covered by other schedule changes
- The elimination of routes 14 and 52. Other routes would be adjusted to cover the Route 14 area, and portions of Route 52 will be covered by Route 17, with TARTA Flex still providing service to that section of Secor Road
- Less frequent service on all routes after 6 p.m. Service every 90 minutes would begin at the 6 p.m. lineup for all routes.

The purpose of these events is to seek comment from the public and the business community on these proposals. These forums will focus on the Title VI equity analyses surrounding the service changes. Public meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- In-person Open House at TARTA Transit Hub, 612 N. Huron Street, Toledo, **Monday, Sept. 29,** 10 a.m.-noon
- In-person Open House at TARTA Transit Hub, 612 N. Huron Street, Toledo, **Monday, Sept. 29,** 1-3 p.m.
- In-person meeting at Mott Branch of Toledo Lucas County Public Library, 1010 Dorr Street, Toledo, **Monday, Oct. 6,** 6-8 p.m.
- Virtual meeting, **Monday, Oct. 13**, 6-7 p.m. via Zoom
- Virtual meeting, **Wednesday, Oct. 15,** 10-11 a.m. via Zoom

A complete list of proposed changes will be posted at tarta.com/servicechange beginning **Monday, September 22**. For more information on any of these public meetings, visit tarta.com/community/events/public-meetings. Customers and others from the public interested in submitting questions or comments may do so by emailing them to servicechange@tarta.com.

DIGITAL MARKETING SPECIALIST

WGTE Public Media is seeking a Digital Marketing Specialist who is creative, organized, and passionate about connecting audiences with the mission of public media. In this role, you'll support marketing efforts for WGTE's TV, radio, and educational services, as well as development and outreach initiatives.

You'll help strengthen WGTE's digital presence across websites, podcasts, streaming platforms, the WGTE app, e-newsletters, and social media.

What You'll Do

• Write press releases, promotional content, and member communications
• Design and coordinate e-blasts, newsletters, and digital campaigns
• Manage and grow WGTE's social media presence through daily posts and promotions
• Update and maintain WGTE websites and online content
• Graphic Integration/Creation
• Support community outreach events through displays, materials, and public engagement
• Collaborate across departments to ensure consistent branding and messaging

What We're Looking For

• Bachelor's degree in marketing, communications, journalism, media production, or related field
• At least 2 years of relevant professional experience
• Strong writing, editing, and communication skills
• Experience with Adobe Creative Cloud, Canva, and Microsoft Office
• Experience with email marketing platforms (e.g., Constant Contact)
• Familiarity with AI tools such as ChatGPT
• Self-starter with excellent attention to detail and ability to manage multiple priorities
• Special event coverage and coordination, including occasional evening and weekend hours, as needed
• Familiarity with nonprofit fundraising or public media ethics a plus

Send your letter and résumé to employment@wgte.org or Human Resources, P.O. Box 30, Toledo, OH 43614.

INVITATION FOR BIDS
NEW SITE SANITARY SEWERS AT OAK GROVE ESTATES
IFB25-B011

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive bids for **New Site Sanitary Sewers at Oak Grove Estates in accordance with IFB25-B011**. Received in accordance with law until **October 8, 2025, at 3:00 PM ET.** For documents: 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.

LUCAS METROPOLITAN HOUSING

Heal Together 5K: Celebrating Warriors, Families, and Community

By Carla Thomas

The Truth Reporter

On Saturday, September 20th, Ottawa Park was filled with energy, music and unity as the community gathered for the Heal Together Race for Sickle Cell 5K. The event featured vendors, cheer performances from Scott High School and Rise and Shine Academy and a moving rendition of *Lift Every Voice and Sing* performed by The Voices at BGSU.

Attendees enjoyed free food and refreshments, face painting, photo opportunities and dancing throughout the day, with DJ Syck Cecil keeping the energy high. Dr. Ashley Benson and Jim Snodgrass emceed the day, while guest speakers included Annie J. Ross Womack of the Ohio Sickle Cell and Health Association, Tanya Jenkins, International Director of St. Jude, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., young sickle cell warrior Emery Scott, and city council candidates Blair Johnson and Rob Pasker.

Proclamations were presented by state Senator Paula Hicks-Hudson and Ohio Representative District 41 Erica White, honoring warriors, their families and posthumously recognizing those who have "gained their wings." The BRB Running Group led the warm-up, ensuring the race began with strength and purpose.

For founder La'Shardae Scott, DSW, MSW, CHES, CHW, president and CEO of the Scott Center for Observation, Treatment, and Transition (S.C.O.T.T.), the fight against sickle cell disease is deeply personal. Alongside her husband Eric Scott, she has turned their family's journey with sickle cell into a mission of advocacy and support.

A Journey Born of Necessity

Scott's advocacy began in her own home. "I'm a Detroit native. I moved here in 2014. My first son Emory was diagnosed with sickle cell in 2015, and Evan was diagnosed in 2016. There weren't a lot of resources, so I went back to Detroit, educated myself and brought all of that back to Toledo."

What began as a mother's search for answers turned into a mission that has impacted thousands. "It all started with me advocating for my kids. I didn't intend on it, but God led me. I'm just being obedient and trying to make sure people feel supported and less stressed."

For La'Shardae Scott, this wasn't just

...continued on page 10