The Sojourner's Truth

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Keeping the Stories of Toledo's Black Wall Street Alive

Doris Greer: A trusted voice for preserving community history

In This Issue...

Generation Uprising

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

The Truth Contributor

You can't be neutral on a moving train. ***- Howard Zinn***

NEWSFLASH! The 2026 midterms are not about suburban moderates. They hinge on whether young people believe the system is worth their vote.

For decades, political power has centered around older, wealthier and often whiter voters. But, for the first time ever, Millennials and Gen Z make up more than 40 percent of the electorate. This signals a generational uprising that could completely reshape American politics— if youth turn out to vote.

This brewing political disruption exposes a deep, unresolved tension within the Democratic Party. Young voters, including those under 30, overwhelmingly dislike Donald Trump, yet they also distrust Democrats.

Research from Harvard's John Della Volpe reveals a generation responding to economic insecurity, climate anxiety, and a belief that institutions are rigged and unresponsive. They are not looking for reassurance; they are looking for disruption, policies, and bold leaders to accomplish change.

Meanwhile, many older Democrats and Party leaders want "kitchen table issues and affordability" to be at the forefront, continuing—as old people do—to place their faith in moderation, caution, and incremental change.

That internal divide—between a rising, bold progressive wing representing many young voters, and an establishment focused on risk-managed pragmatism—has become a quiet form of intra-party warfare. This division increasingly turns off younger voters.

Younger voters do not see issues like climate change or voting rights as isolated from economic justice. To them, rising energy costs, unaffordable housing, climate disasters, student debt, gun violence, and gerrymandered districts are all parts of the same unfair and broken system.

They want aggressive climate action because it can lower utility bills, create jobs, and protect communities from disasters. They care about fair elections and ending gerrymandering because they believe democracy itself has been co-opted and engineered to block reform. They demand solutions to gun violence, financial vulnerability or income insecurity, and systemic inequities—not as isolated policies, but as connected steps toward a livable future. For this generation, boldness is credibility, and structural change is proof that politics might finally work for them.

Older Democrats often approach these same issues differently. Issues like election reform or diversity are acknowledged, but often deprioritized or subordinated to succeeding under a system that favors entrenched power.

The bottom line, according to analysts like Amy Walters, is clear: "Don't assume recent Democratic Party special election wins or even historically low Trump approval ratings—automatically signal a rebound for the Party." It is a dangerous mistake to believe that young voters will turn out simply because the alternative is worse—they won't. Opposition to Trump may motivate headlines, but it does not guarantee participation.

The politics of today's youth are movement-oriented, not transactional. They respond to leaders who boldly name broken systems plainly and connect economic, climate action, and fair elections into a single argument about the future.

If these voters—Millennials, Gen-Z, and under-30s—connect with candidates who speak to their realities—such as a diverse society, high costs, climate fear, gerrymandering, and democratic dysfunction—while offering bold, integrated solutions, they will deliver majorities in upcoming races.

The core dilemma for Democrats in 2026 and 2028 is not the relevance of young voters—they are central. The true question is whether the Party will elevate them as the driving force behind a generational political shift.

If young voters remain disengaged, entrenched politics persist. If they show up, expect transformative change—new priorities and a reimagined definition of 'electability.'

The train is moving. Now, the only question is, who will get on board?

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

Community Calendar

December 18
Toledo NAACP Youth Council meeting: 3:00 pm @ Sanger Branch Library

December 21
Toledo NAACP Youth Council meeting: 3:00 pm at Sanger Branch Library

December 26
NAACP ANNUAL Meeting is scheduled for: December 16 th, 2025 at 5:00 PM
Location: 1326 Collingwood Blvd (AALP Building).

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Democrats Should Look to Southern Victories for National Roadmap

By Kevin Harris and Richard McDaniel

Guest Column

Now that the government shutdown has temporarily ended, Democrats can take stock of the 2025 election returns and assess what the results mean for the 2026 midterms. In a year when national political narratives were dominated by noise, it was the South—not Washington, not the coasts—that delivered the clearest lessons for Democrats. The South was the star of the 2025 elections and Democrats should invest meaningful resources to further position southern states.

Democrats certainly should not dismiss the lessons from New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani's resounding victory. Mamdani's relentless focus on affordability and expanding the electorate is necessary for Democratic success. Nor should we ignore the gains achieved among Latino voters in New Jersey who swung back heavily into the Democratic column this year.

Kevin Harris

Richard McDaniel

However, the party's strongest, most instructive victories didn't come from the traditional blue enclaves of New York City and New Jersey. We learned far more from southern battlegrounds and historically conservative terrains across Virginia, Georgia and even Mississippi. These states, often dismissed as too idiosyncratic or too culturally distinct to shape national strategy, in fact reflect the electorate Democrats must persuade to win back Congress and reclaim the White House.

For years, national Democratic strategists have looked everywhere but the South for answers. They comb data from suburban counties outside Philadelphia, war-game scenarios in the Midwest, or parse shifts in the Mountain West while ignoring the South. Yet the elections of 2025 made something unmistakably clear: the most competitive regions of the South now mirror the demographic, economic, and ideological complexity of the country as a whole. If you want to understand how Democrats can win nationally, look at how Democrats are already winning in the south.

Consider Virginia, where Democrats reclaimed the governor's mansion, overcame serious challenges in the Attorney General's campaign and expanded majorities in the legislature by building coalitions that were multiracial, suburban, and pragmatic—exactly the coalition the party needs nationally. These campaigns blended kitchen-table economic messages with firm stances on rights and freedoms, refusing the false choice between moderation and conviction. The result was durable statewide victories and in districts that reflect the modern American voter: diverse, fast-growing, and politically independent.

Look at Georgia, a state that is becoming the most dynamic bellwether in the nation. Democrats won big statewide contests for public service commission. These victories have set the stage for Democrats to hold onto a competitive seat for U.S. Senate in 2026, possibly flip the governor's mansion from Republican control for the first time in two decades and mount a serious challenge to GOP majorities in the legislature.

Success didn't come from wishful thinking; it came from successive cycles of relentless organizing, year-round engagement, and leaders who understand that persuasion and turnout are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing. Georgia Democrats have shown how to speak to voters who are skeptical of both parties, who care about affordability and opportunity, and who respond to campaigns that show up—consistently, not just during election years.

And then there is Mississippi, often overlooked in national conversations. Democrats successfully broke the Republican supermajority in the state senate. But the Democratic gains there were no accidents. They were driven by local leaders who understand the lived experience of rural and small-town voters and who crafted messages around economic justice, healthcare access, and fair representation. Mississippi Democrats proved that even in the deepest red soil, voters will listen when you talk about real investments in communities too long ignored.

These victories share a common thread: Southern Democratic leaders are not trying to fit their voters into a national template. We are building strategies from the ground up—strategies that speak to working people, respect cultural nuance, and acknowledge the political landscape as it really is without failed identity litmus and purity tests that have failed to translate to the broader electorate.

And our success across Virginia, Mississippi and Georgia should make clear to national Democrats that rural voters are also Black and southern. The rural vote is not just white and midwestern. Black people must be a part of our rural engagement strategy.

If the national party wants to win back Congress in 2026 and the presidency in 2028, it must internalize what the South has already learned: voters respond to authenticity, local credibility, and messages grounded in the everyday challenges of raising families, accessing healthcare, and finding economic stability. They want candidates and a Democratic Party that shows up outside election season, who listen before they lecture, and who are as comfortable at a church barbecue as they are at a no kings rally.

The South wasn't just a bright spot in the 2025 elections—it was the roadmap. Democrats ignore it at their own peril. The Southern communities that decided this year's most competitive races look a lot like the America that will decide the next two national elections. It's time for the national party to follow the lead of Southern Democrats who are already demonstrating how to win and appeal to the coalitions turned off by our battered brand.

Kevin Harris and Richard McDaniel are veteran Democratic strategists of more than 100 political campaigns, including the past five presidential elections and several congressional campaigns. They co-host "Maroon Bison Presents: The Southern Comfort Podcast."

NBCI and ACHDC Release Major Report to the HHS and Congress Concerning Vaccine Confusion

Vaccines are good for America!

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a coalition of 150,000 African American and Latino faith communities comprising 27.7 million members, has released a 43-page report on the confusion surrounding vaccines and their effects on vulnerable populations. The report, Vaccines Are Good for America, focuses on the need for vaccines and the negative consequences of the confusion for African Americans, Latinos, young children, immunocompromised adults, and the poor.

According to health experts, vaccine confusion will lead to 100,000 premature deaths among African Americans with dual diagnoses over the next five years.

Rev. Anthony Evans, president of the National Black Church Initiative, says, "Vaccines are good for America. NBCI is proud to let its 27.7 million members know that there is 100 years of scientific data that support the effectiveness and safety of vaccines. The benefits of vaccines truly outweigh the risks—this is why you should check with your primary care doctor. NBCI eagerly and continuously seeks partnerships with BIO, Pharma, the CDC, NIH, all health foundations, and state and local health departments to promote immunization for all Americans. Let's keep America healthy and vaccinated."

Vaccines Are Good for America's relevant subtitle is Why all the confusion? This report strives to clear up the needless confusion around vaccine effectiveness, particularly because Blacks are at a crisis point when it comes to immunization. The American Clinical Health Disparities Commission (ACHDC) is working with NBCI to help provide clinical direction concerning teaching vaccine education to the general public. Vaccines Are Good for America states:

"We must warn the nation of the vulnerability of African Americans, in part due to higher rates of underlying health conditions that increase the risk of severe illness from vaccine-preventable disease (VPD). This increased risk, along with known health disparities in rates of severe illness from common VPD viral infections such as pneumococcal pneumonia, chickenpox, and measles, means that lower vaccination in African American communities will have an outsized health impact."

Vaccines Are Good for America draws on NBCI's comprehensive 2024 report, Moving toward a National Black Health Agenda (NBHA), to note that African American adults are less likely than their White counterparts to have received influenza, pneumonia, or human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines. This is especially troubling since African Americans already have the lowest life expectancy in the U.S., other than American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) peoples, and the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the life expectancy of both groups. Add to this that the confusion around vaccines is driving down childhood immunization rates amid changing vaccine schedules, and you have a recipe for multiple health disasters. As detailed in Vaccines Are Good for America:

"The door is open for the possibility that known communicable diseases, from measles and chickenpox to COVID-19 and the flu, will be ravaging African American and Latino neighborhoods across the country due to a lack of available . . . vaccines, and that these communities will also be more vulnerable to the ravages of the next pandemic."

Vaccines Are Good for America quotes experienced health professionals who argue that there is no fact-based evidence or counter-science to justify removing vaccine recommendations now. One of those health leaders is Dr. James E.K. Hildreth, the president and CEO of Meharry Medical College, who had served on a Food and Drug Administration advisory committee reviewing COVID-19 vaccine candidates.

Voicing his concern over HHS Secretary Kennedy's ouster of ACIP members, only to replace them with vaccine skeptics and others, Dr. Hildreth told Chief Healthcare Executive®, "When the agency that is charged with protecting the health of the public abandoned science in doing so, I'm not sure there's anything that could scare me more than that." He added, "I've been doing my best to advise the communities that we care about here at Meharry to let them know that if you're a parent of a school-aged child, you should get them vaccinated."

The National Black Church Initiative agrees that HHS must respect existing science and data on immunization. If science dictates significant changes to vaccine schedules, NBCI is willing to work with the Trump administration. NBCI would need federal support to conduct outreach, education, and health screenings for its 27.7 million members.

Vaccines Are Good for America describes NBCI's ongoing 10-year initiative on immunization and includes an informative, full-color "Vaccine Guide" as well. This report is vital reading for a "changing public health environment with less guarantees than before."

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 150,000 African American and Latino churches, comprising 27.7 million members, that works to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment.

NBCI's mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches, and the public. The National Black Church Initiative's methodology utilizes faith and sound health science. We also offer our member congregants and the public helpful, science-based tips on developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The National Black Church Initiative's purpose is to partner with major organizations and officials whose primary mission is to reduce racial disparities in various areas, as cited above. NBCI provides faith-based, innovative, and cutting-edge solutions to complex economic and social challenges. Credible statistical analysis, science-based strategies and techniques, and effective methods govern NBCI's programs.

The American Clinical Health Disparities Commission (ACHDC) is a coalition of African American and Latino clinicians and clergy that educates, generates interest and improves clinical trial participation among NBCI's constituents. ACHDC is an award-winning, accredited provider of continuing medical education with a substantial catalog of clinician and patient education focused on unconscious bias, health inequities, and diversity, equity and inclusivity.

Doris Greer: Keeping the Stories of Toledo's Black Wall Street Alive

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

Before Dorr Street was labeled a "redevelopment zone" or a "corridor," it was a front porch, open, watched over and shared.

There, everyone knew your name, your parents, and your business; and cared enough to check on all three.

Doris Greer has vivid memories of it. When speaking about the historic Dorr Street community her voice is warm, not nostalgic, but instructional.

"What I think about most is the community," Greer says. "How we are as a people, from youth to seniors, and how we relate both inside the community and outside of it."

Lessons From Black Wall Street

Miss Doris is a long time Toledo resident and respected community leader whose roots run deep along Dorr Street. She grew up in the historic neighborhood often called Toledo's Black Wall Street, where her earliest lessons about responsibility, respect, and belonging were learned simply by watching how people treated one another.

Now retired after years working in administration and invoice control for Toledo Public Schools, Greer continues to serve as a trusted voice for preserving community history and protecting the culture that shaped generations.

A Community Woven Together

Back in the good ole days students walked to school, neighbors walked to stores, adults watched and children were visible.

"We felt safe," Greer explains. "Not that we did not have disagreements, but we knew each other. The people working in the stores knew our families."

Dorr Street functioned much like a woven quilt. Each square was important.

If a child misbehaved, someone spoke up. If a fight started, adults watching over stood up, and intervened.

"They would stop the fights," Greer shares. "They would tell you, 'Go home,' or 'I will take you home and tell your parents.' They protected you. They were a part of your extended family."

That kind of protection was patient, like roots holding a tree upright through every storm. Adults disciplined children, not to humiliate them, but to keep them from getting hurt.

Respect went both ways.

"You could not argue with an elder," adds Greer. "Even if you were right, you could not disrespect someone trying to teach you."

When the Village Fades

Today, Doris sees what occurs when that safety net falls apart.

"That feeling of community as a village is fading," she stresses. "And that makes a big difference in how people deal with problems. Yesterday, you may have got a bloody nose, but the next day you walked side by side."

Today, conflicts often lead to death. Greer does not believe that the difference is toughness —she believes it is the connection between people.

"Defend your neighbors the way you defend your children," she says. "And you must also advocate for them, too."

The Power of Connection

For more than 50 years, Doris Greer has been a community advocate, board member and activist. To her, community is more than neighbors living side by side; it is doctors, teachers, ministers, pharmacists, judges and families all connected, supporting one another as part of a larger whole.

"That is community," she says. "It's all of us, the people who live, love, work, and play together."

Doris Greer

Dorr Street

As Toledo begins to revitalize Dorr Street, Greer encourages city officials to remember what made it successful in the first place: not just businesses, or buildings, but people who came to help.

Historic Dorr Street was not perfect. However, it worked because everyone had a part, and everyone counted.

Greer believes the future of Dorr Street will depend upon the ability of people to cooperate with one another, not compete with each other.

She speaks out against what she refers to as "the divisiveness of division." It is when people fight each other rather than fighting the problem.

"We have to listen, even when it is difficult to do so. I am not always in agreement," Greer explains. "However, after I am finished listening, I am always more knowledgeable."

Doris Greet believes that many times confusion stems from a lack of un-

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Are You Financially Prepared for the New Year?

Special to The Truth

A new year is a chance to embrace a wallet-friendly mindset and make a fresh financial start. But what changes will make the most impact?

CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professionals are sharing their favorite resolutions for 2026:

Calculate spending: Before any other money planning in 2026, you need to calculate your spending. Did you end 2025 with more money than you had at the beginning of the year? If so, your budget is likely in good shape and you can thoughtfully leverage excess funds to pay down debt or save for a specific goal. If you're facing a net deficit, it's time to cut spending where you can or identify ways to increase your income.

Build savings: Make 2026 the year you automate savings, increase your contributions to your retirement accounts and adopt a "pay yourself first" approach to building your nest egg. The sooner you take these steps, the longer you'll have to watch your savings grow. Your financial advisor can help you determine how much you'll need for the future you want — whether that involves becoming a homeowner, paying for your children's college education or taking an early retirement. They can also provide strategies for reaching these goals.

Adopt tax planning strategies: Learn how new tax rules ushered in by the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" could impact your taxes. A CFP® professional and your tax advisor can help you understand the changes and strategize accordingly so you can maximize benefits and minimize missteps.

Review your insurance coverage: One unexpected event can have devastating financial consequences without the right insurance. Review your policies to determine whether they meet your current needs and add coverage where necessary. This is also a good opportunity to comparison shop among providers to ensure you're not spending more than you need to.

Seek expert guidance: Varied factors such as insurance, investments, taxes and credit work together to form your complete financial picture. Make working with a CFP® professional a New Year's resolution. They are specially trained to holistically evaluate all these components when offering financial advice. Visit LetsMakeAPlan.org to find a CFP® professional near you.

This year, don't be afraid to take a deep dive into your finances to determine whether your current financial plan is working. A few small tweaks may be all you need to course correct for a brighter financial future.

Courtesy StatePoint

Doris Greer...continued from page 5

derstanding regarding the rules. Funding. Planning. Accessibility.

Not all groups have equal access to funding, so it's important to understand the rules of the system. To learn these rules, you have to ask questions. Find the doors. Never accept a "no" for an answer.

"Dr. King did not give up," she reminds us. "Malcolm X did not give up. Du Bois did not give up. And neither will we."

"If Toledo's businesses, non-profits, and community leaders come together more consistently," she reflects, "it will spark a powerful ripple of positive change."

Preserving Our History

Doris Greer sees the stories we often overlook: buildings constructed by Black architects, funded by Black professionals, and built to serve the Black community, now rebranded, their original purpose and history erased from view.

"That's how culture is taken away," she says. "Slowly."

The Drew Hale Building was built by Black professional men and women, judges, doctors, pharmacists. The name remained on the building for many years. And then suddenly, it was gone.

"Say Thank you," she recommends. "Recognize people and what they built."

She applauds those who have done it correctly, such as the Historical Marker placed at Ella P. Stewart's old pharmacy.

"That marker means something," she says. "It tells the truth."

Greer believes that churches should also receive preservation. They were not just buildings; they are life lines.

"Our churches allow us to thrive both spiritually and physically," she says.

Still she fears what may happen if history is intentionally erased.

"If our history weren't important," she says, "They would not put so much effort into erasing it."

Saving Stories at Home

Greer encourages families to save their own histories.

"Save the obituaries," she encourages. "Save the pamphlets. Save the stories."

Preserving Black history begins at home. Families can save old photos, church programs, obituaries, letters, and school records instead of throwing them away. Elders' stories should be written down, recorded on a phone, or shared with children before they are lost to time.

Visiting libraries, museums, and historic neighborhoods helps keep the past visible, while teaching young people who came before them gives meaning to where they are going. When Black families protect their stories, they protect their identity—and ensure future generations know they come from strength, resilience, and purpose.

Knowledge Protects, Love Sustains

When you lose the past you lose part of your strength for the future.

Learning about where you come from helps you know what to build upon and what to avoid.

Greer believes that knowledge is protective.

"Read," she shares. "Ask Questions. Go to the Library. It is Free."

But above all, Doris Greer believes that love as an action is most powerful.

"Love your community," she says. "Love your street. Love your people."

History cannot defend itself.

Only people can.

Queens Village Toledo's Protecting Our Children: Awareness Session

By Fletcher Word

The Truth Editor

Queens Village Toledo held a session on Monday, December 8, to help attendees learn about the risks of human trafficking, sexual violence and unhealthy teen relationships.

Celia Williamson, PhD, and Fonda Royster, MA, conducted a workshop for about two dozen observers at the Mott Branch Library on the causes and pitfalls of unhealthy behavior and relationships, and the signs to look for Royster is head of operations at RESA Solutions, LLC, an agency focused on helping organizations build trauma-responsive systems to support vulnerable individuals and communities and she is also the founder of Open Arms Transformation Living (OATL), a nonprofit organization focused on addressing youth homelessness, teen dating violence and human trafficking.

Williamson, a distinguished professor of Social Work at the University of Toledo, is the executive director of the Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute School of Social Justice.

Royster focused her presentation on the types of dangers that young people face, particularly teens, from a combination of physical, emotional/mental, sexual, financial and digital abuse.

"Kids do what they see, not what you tell them to do," she said of the way young, unformed minds can operate. Those various abuses that teens face lead, according to available statistics, to violence that can and should be prevented. Seventy percent of youth homicides "have to do with relationships," she noted.

Interestingly, the most vulnerable parts of the population, contrary to the emphasis that one so often finds in the media, are Black female youth. The reasons, said Royster, range from poverty, a lack of two-parent households, a tendency to grow up too early.

"Black Girls need to be kids – let them be kids," she implored her audience. Race and poverty are certainly factors in the susceptibility to fall prey to violence, but so are other factors such as LGBTQ status and disabilities.

Royster presented eight warning signs to determine if young people are having issues with one type of violence or another: a need to check in constantly, sudden isola-

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Fonda Royster

Celia Williamson, PhD

Lucas County Recorder's Office Holds Annual Christmas Luncheon

The Truth Staff

The Lucas County Recorder's office held its annual Staff Appreciation Christmas Luncheon on Thursday, December 11 at One Government Center. Staff and family members were treated to a buffet lunch of ham, roast beef, green beans, mac and cheese and cake. The highlight of the luncheon, however, took place when the Lucas County Recorder Michael Ashford recognized the service of five long-time Recorder Office employees.

"We are here to recognize our staff," said Ashford leading off the honors. "We have a great staff … they do all the hard work."

Ashford introduced the honorees who received recognition plaques for their years of service – Phil Wineland, Eric Smith, Makyla Wollenbecker, Misty Wheeler, Alecia Carson-Robinson. All have served at least 10 years in the office – Wineland, an IT specialist, being the most senior with 18 years in the office.

The Recorder's office has the smallest number of employees of all the county branch offices but it may well be the most important, said Ashford.

"We are the most important part of the county because of the work we do," he said. "Homeowners depend on us to be accurate."

Ashford spoke of early days in the nation's expansion as settlers moved into the interior of the continent away from the settled East Coast 13 original states. The two most important territorial officers, he noted, were the sheriff and the recorder. The recorder was so very crucial to verifying the ongoing land claims.

And the office still files and maintains those very important homeownership records.

Lucas County Recorder Michael Ashford

Phil Wineland and Michael Ashford

Lucas County Recorder employee Eric Smith and his mother

Blue Gill Fishing Club Members Bring a Little Christmas Joy to a Young Girl

The Truth Staff

The members of the Blue Gill Fishing Club – the Team Black Diamond and the Competition Corvette Club – brought Santa Claus in a little early this year in order to make sure that Cassidy Green had a joyful Christmas.

Cassidy lost her mother, LaTashia L. Caldwell, to cancer recently. Cassidy and her grandmother, Carmen Ford, stopped by the Blue Gill on Sunday, December 14, to take a look at the gifts that Santa and his helpers at Team Black Diamond and Competition Corvette Club had delivered to Cassidy for Christmas.

Blue Gill Fishing Club was organized in 1992 by five community men, initially as a social club. Over the years, the Blue Gill has also evolved into a service club that raises funds for scholarships, to feed neighborhood youth and to assist community action organizations in their missions.

In addition to the annual Christmas gifts they provide, the Blue Gill Fishing Club's members raise money year round to donate funds to local agencies and to local scholars heading off to college.

Team Black Diamond with Santa

Santa and a Competition Corvette rep deliver some Christmas goodies to Cassidy Green and her grandmother Carmen Ford

The Team Black Diamond

Santa and a few helpers arrive

Queens Village...continued from page 7

tion, anxiety when phone notifications pop up, mood swings, deleting messages quickly, fear of upsetting partner, loss of confidence and personality changes.

Royster's emphasis on Black girls' issue with violence is well founded.

Locally 36 percent of youth have reported being survivors of dating violence and 50 percent of those reported survivors are Black; 86 percent come from low-income families.

As parents or guardians, Royster urged adults to "be a safe, non-judgmental person," in order to preserve a youngster's feeling of self worth.

"Our biggest issue with our girls is a lack of self-esteem," she added.

Williamson focused on the issue of human trafficking, an issue she has been working on for 32 years. She founded the first anti-trafficking program in Ohio in 1993.

"Trafficking does not require movement," she said at the onset of her presentation, dispelling the idea that the only victims of trafficking are those who are abducted. "You can be in your home and be trafficked." She explained that fear, dependency, shame, distrust of authority and trauma bonding (with a trafficker) are all ways in which people may be victims of trafficking.

"When you believe that someone is responsible for your very breathing, then you are unable to leave."

While there is the snatcher – the "gorilla pimp" – she said, there is also the "finesse pimp" who manipulates.

Trafficking also includes more than just the sexual variety, it also includes labor trafficking – getting someone into a job, for example, from which he or she will never be able to earn freedom.

Who is at high risk? Williamson asked of her audience. The typical response, she noted, is that anyone can be trafficked. But reality is different. Those at high risk are youngsters who are not doing we, are runaways, are in child protection or juvenile court or in relationships with older adults.

Of the 94 percent of trafficked victims who are female, 40 percent are Black, she said.

The media "often portrays the ideal victim as a young white female," said Williamson. But the reality is much different. Exacerbating society's attempts to deal with trafficking is the common attitude about runaways. "The common approach is that we wait for kids who run away to run back," she said.

Typically a community has no well thought out plan to deal with the issue of runaways. In Lucas County, for example, there are about 1,000 runaways every year. The Toledo Police Department has assigned one officer to deal with the issue.

The problem of human trafficking is also one that the African American

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Ten Doctor-Recommended Health Resolutions for 2026

Special to The Truth

With a new year ahead, the American Medical Association (AMA) is offering Americans 10 evidence-based tips for staying healthy in 2026 and beyond:

• Get health screenings: Schedule preventive visits, tests and screenings so your physician can catch conditions before they become more serious.

• Manage stress: Mental health is part of overall health. Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing and yoga can help reduce stress. Ask for help from a mental health professional when you need it.

• Be physically active: Start the year off by prioritizing physical activity. Strive for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity each week. If you have a sedentary lifestyle or primarily sit for long stretches at work, build in frequent breaks to stretch and move throughout your day.

• Follow a healthy diet: Drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages and eat nutritious, whole foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, low-fat dairy products and lean proteins. Avoid unhealthy ultra-processed foods, especially those with high levels of added sodium, saturated fats and sugar. Drinking sugary beverages, even 100% fruit juice, is associated with a higher mortality risk, according to a study published in JAMA Network Open.

• Stay hydrated: Drink plenty of water or other beverages composed mostly of water, such as milk or herbal tea, to avoid dehydration and to keep your body functioning properly. Even mild dehydration can drain your energy and make you tired. Adult men should get about 15.5 cups of fluids a day and women should get 11.5 cups, according to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

• Get plenty of good sleep: To maintain your health and emotional well-being, most adults need 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep. Rest helps boost immunity and improve mental clarity.

• Update vaccinations: Vaccinations remain the best defense against flu and other serious respiratory viruses. Since significant flu activity can stretch into May, it's not too late to get a flu shot. The AMA recommends vaccination as long as the threat of flu remains. Talk with your physician or other health care professional to determine which vaccines are right for you. To cut through vaccine confusion and have open, honest conversations with your physician, first go to the AMA website for evidence-based information. For help finding a flu vaccine in your area, visit GetMyFluShot.org.

• Drink in moderation: If consuming alcohol, do so in moderation as defined by the U.S. Dietary Guidelines: up to one drink per day for women and two drinks for men, and only for adults of legal drinking age.

• Quit tobacco, nicotine and e-cigarettes: Ask your doctor or health care professional for resources and guidance to help quit smoking, vaping or using other nicotine products. Make your home and car smoke-free to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure.

• Follow medication directions: When taking prescriptions, store them safely to prevent diversion or misuse, and properly dispose of any leftover medication. If you're prescribed antibiotics, complete the full course to prevent antibiotic resistance.

For more health tips and resources visit ama-assn.org.

"With the holiday cookies eaten and those missed workouts officially last year's worry, the new year is a great chance to refocus on the healthy choices you want to make in 2026," said AMA president Dr. Bobby Mukkamala. "Even tiny changes now can snowball into major gains for your long-term health."

Courtesy StatePoint

Queens Village...continued from page 10

community and individuals need to deal with internally. Who are the society's heroes, for example, said Williamson as she showed slides of various male film stars of the 1970s in their "blaxploitation" roles.

But in addition, "we adultify … we treat kids as if they are fully-formed adults." This attitude can lead to suggesting that the child is the problem. Boys are praised for being premature ("he's a little man") in a way that foster a certain toxic masculinity

Queens Village Toledo is an initiative of the Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB and an organization of Black women who have come together to help each other and to help the community at large in enhancing health outcomes and enabling connections to health and social services for area families.

The key priorities of Queens Village Toledo are: to reduce Black women's stress; to change the narrative about Black women by creating spaces that celebrate their voices; to invest in Black women's leadership; to promote economic and professional pathways for Black women to succeed and to engage with social, political and medical organizations to support equity and reduce implicit biases that affect Black women.

To learn more about Queens Village go to Facebook; Instagram (Instagram.comqueensvillagetoledo); website (blackwomenforthewin.com)

Queens Village Toledo is a program of the Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB whose mission it is to support enhancing health outcomes, promoting healthy births, and enabling connections to health and social services for Northwest Ohio residents impacted by social risk factors through collaboration with local partners and community health workers.

Here in Toledo, Queens Village (QV) is a supportive community of powerful Black women who come together to rest, relax, re-power, and take care of ourselves and each other. In addition to providing a safe space for Black women to relieve stress and build authentic community, we also strive to improve access to QV and other health and social services by reducing the barriers Black women face when receiving care.

Contact us

Crystal Martin - cmartin@hcno.org

Amber Currie, Pathways HUB Coordinator - acurrie@hcno.org

Follow us

Facebook: @qvtoledo

Instagram: @queensvillagetoledo/

The Local Thread News Show to Premiere on WGTE FM 91

Special to The Truth

WGTE Public Media is proud to announce the debut of a one-hour news and information program, *The Local Thread*, which will air for 13 weeks on WGTE FM 91 beginning Monday, January 5, 2026.

The Local Thread is a collaborative series presented in partnership with La Prensa, The Toledo Free Press, The Sojourner's Truth, Toledo Public Schools and veteran journalist Jerry Anderson. The program unites local voices and trusted storytellers from across the region, weaving together the people, issues and ideas shaping our community—and strengthening the fabric of our social life.

The program will air weekdays at 7:00 p.m. New episodes will be released on all major podcast platforms the morning of each broadcast, giving listeners early access to every conversation.

"The Local Thread brings our community's voices together in a way we've never done before, setting out to build something that's truly collaborative," said Shane Potgieter, the show's Executive Producer. "Together, we're creating a community news series that's relevant, deeply connected and unapologetically local."

By presenting a broad coalition of local journalists and storytellers, the program helps WGTE and its partnering organizations fulfill their commitment to presenting diverse perspectives on the regional scene.

According to Fletcher Word, owner and publisher of The Sojourner's Truth and one of the program's hosts, "At The Sojourner's Truth, we pride ourselves on keeping everyone involved and informed. We are so very excited to be part of The Local Thread as it will enable us to better inform so many more in our community about what others are doing to help and enhance the lives of our neighbors."

WGTE Public Media, licensed and operated by The Public Broadcasting Foundation of Northwest Ohio, is a non-profit, non-commercial, educational TV and radio broadcaster and center of learning for northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan. WGTE is proud to be a PBS and NPR member station. It was founded as a low-power educational television broadcaster in 1953. Education remains at the heart of what we do every day. From our entertaining, informative and educational programs that air on WGTE TV and FM 91 to our professional development opportunities for K-12 teachers and preschool daycare providers and community engagement activities, WGTE makes northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan a better place to live. For more information, visit www.wgte.org.

If you would like more information about this topic, please call Marcus Harrison at 419-380-4646, or email marcus_harrison@wgte.org.

Monday, December 29, 2025 3:00 pm at The Padua Center, 1416 Nebraska Ave. Toledo, Ohio

On Monday December 29 at 3 pm the Kwanzaa Park Neighbors will celebrate the Fourth Night of Kwanzaa, focusing on the Principle Ujamaa. After the traditional ritual the Karamu (traditional foods) will be served. The "Becoming Young Ladies" of the Padua Center will also be there to help in the service.

The fourth night of Kwanzaa "Ujamaa" (cooperative economics) is celebrated by lighting the second red candle on the Kinara and coming together in support for black-owned businesses, with emphasis on maintenance and operations. It is a time for celebration of the idea of pooling resources together in unity to benefit the entire community. Emphasis is placed upon support of local businesses and Black Owned businesses where available.

Come and celebrate "Ujamaa" with the Kwanzaa Park Neighbors. There will be Karamu served at the conclusion in the celebration and everyone is welcome.

(l) Art Jones, Sr. Fidelis Rubbo, Sister Virginia Welsh were among the guests at the Kwanzaa Celebration in 2024.

Let Me Be Real With You by Arshay Cooper

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

c. 2025
HarperOne
$26.00
240 pages

The hole you're in is a deep one.

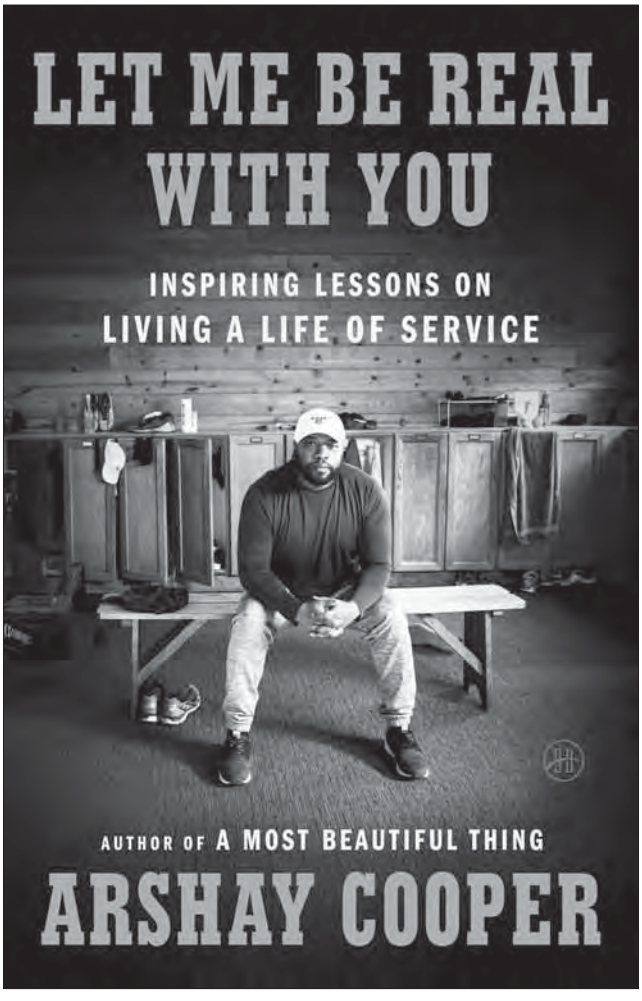
You can see the clouds above, and they look like a storm; you sense the wind, and it's a cold one. It's dark down there, and lonesome, too. You feel like you were born there – but how do you get out of the deep hole you're in? You read the new book ***Let Me Be Real With You*** **by Arshay Cooper,** you find a hand-up, and bring someone with you.

In the months after his first book was published, Arshay Cooper received a lot of requests to speak to youth about his life growing up on the West Side of Chicago, his struggles and his many accomplishments. He was poor, bullied and belittled, but he knew that if he could escape those things, he would succeed. He focused on doing what was best, and right. He looked for mentors and strove to understand when opportunities presented themselves.

Still, his early life left him with trauma. Here, he shows how it's overcome-able...

We must always have hope, Cooper says, but hope is "merely the catalyst for action. The hope we receive must transform into the hope we give."

Learn to tell your own story, as honestly as you know it. Be open to suggestions, and don't dismiss them without great thought. Know that masculinity doesn't equal stoicism; we are hard-wired to need other people, and sharing "pain and relatability can dissipate shame and foster empathy in powerful ways."



Remember that trauma is intergenerational and can be passed down from parent to child. Let your mentors see your potential. Get therapy, if you need it; there's no shame in it, and it will help, if you learn to trust it. Enjoy the outdoors when you can. Learn self-control. Give back to your community. Respect your financial wellness. Embrace your intelligence. Pick your friends and relationships wisely. "Do it afraid."

And finally, remember that "You were born to soar to great heights and rule the sky."

You just needed someone to tell you that.

Let Me Be Real with You author, courtesy Clayton Hauck

At first look, this book might seem like just any other self-help offering. It's inspirational for casual reader and business reader, both, just like most books in this genre. Dig a little deeper, though, and you'll spot what makes *Let Me Be Real With You* stand out.

With a willingness to discuss the struggles he tackled in the past, author Arshay Cooper writes with a solidly honest voice that's exceptionally believable, and not one bit dramatic. You won't find unnecessarily embellished stories or tall tales here, either; Cooper instead uses his real experiences to help readers understand that there are few things that are truly insurmountable. He then explains how one's past can shape one's future, and how today's actions can change the future of the world.

Let Me Be Real With You is full of motivation and instruction that's doable for adults and teens. If you need that, or if you've vowed to do better this coming year, it might help make you whole.

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT FOR PROPOSALS
TOLEDO-LUCAS COUNTY PORT AUTHORITY
TOLEDO, OHIO

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Electronic Bids will be received by the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority for all labor, material, insurance, and equipment necessary for the Pavement / Utility / Demolition and Regrading project at 1045 Post Street, Toledo, OH 43610, in accordance with the approved plans and specifications, for the Port Authority at One Maritime Plaza, Toledo, Ohio 43604.

The "Pavement / Utility / Demolition and Regrading project" at 1045 Post Street Property is the former location of Toledo Edison's Delaware Service Center, which was used by Toledo Edison from approximately 1936 to 2008 for offices, storage, and maintenance of lamps; lighting ballasts; utility poles, transformers, and equipment scrapping. The property secured a Covenant-Not-to-Sue (CNS) from the Director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2018 and future land use is limited to commercial/industrial purposes, with a construction/excavation worker direct contact point of compliance of ten (10) feet below the existing ground surface (bgs). No excavated soil is to be removed from the Post Street Property without characterization and prior written authorization from the Port Authority. Shallow groundwater, if encountered in conjunction with the work, shall not be discharged to surface water, or storm/sanitary sewers without prior written authorization from the PORT AUTHORITY.

The Base Bid for the Demolition and Regrading consists of
• Mobilization/demobilization
• Preparation of a Health and Safety Plan for the project;
• Concrete removal, crushing, and regrading;
• Asphalt removal, crushing, and regrading;
• Utility termination (as necessary); and,
• Pollution control/storm water management.
Alternate Bid
• Trucking, Excavation and Hauling

The total engineer's estimate for the base bid is approximately $1 million. Bids that are in excess of 20% above the engineer's estimate would be considered non-responsive. This project may be awarded by the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority at its sole discretion.

Bids will be received through Bid Express, an online electronic bidding system, until Thursday, December 18, 2025, at 10:00 AM, at which time all bids will be opened through the Bid Express website.
The plans and bid proposal documents are available through Bid Express at: https://www.bidexpress.com/businesses/66075/home. Bidders new to the electronic bidding system must first register on the Bid Express website (www.bidexpress.com). Registration is Free. It can take up to five (5) business days to process a Digital ID and it is highly recommended that a Digital ID be enabled 48 hours in advance of submitting an electronic bid. Bidders must plan accordingly. For additional guidance regarding electronic bidding, bidders must contact Bid Express directly. Each bidder shall be responsible for submitting its electronic bid before the bid deadline.

Electronic Proposals must be submitted on the form(s) included in Bid Express and shall be accompanied by a certified check or an acceptable Proposal Bond with satisfactory surety specifying the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority as the obligee, in the sum of not less than ten percent (10%) of the total proposal amount.

Please note that there will be a pre-bid meeting for this project for all prospective bidders on Thursday, December 4, 2025, 9:00 AM, at the Port Authority's administrative offices at One Maritime Plaza, 2nd floor conference room, Toledo, OH 43604.

Attendance is suggested, but not mandatory. Please submit all questions through the Bid Express service by Wednesday, December 17, 2025, at 10:00 AM local time. Questions submitted after the deadline will not receive a response. Additional information can be found at https://www.toledoport.org/public-notices

Thomas J. Winston
President and CEO
Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority

Job Duties:

Develop/publish high-quality, authoritative content (books, articles & reports) focusing on veganism, plant-based nutrition, health & business empowerment. Research, write & edit materials that align with the organization's goals, ensuring accuracy & distinctive tone of voice.

Collaborate on development of educational materials/marketing campaignstargeting niche audiences. Provide executive-level assistance, leveraging extensive entrepreneurial experience to support projects related to recovery, wellness & personal/business development. Conduct market research, identify opportunities for growth & provide actionable insights for business strategies. Develop materials & guidance grounded in a deep understanding of fitness & plant-based nutrition.

Create content that educates & motivates individuals to enhance their physical health & overall life quality. Apply life-enhancing principles to support personal transformation & sustainable wellbeing. Utilize relevant tools & resources to create content/strategies that inspire mindset shifts & personal growth.

Collaborate on projects/initiatives designed to enhance mental resilience & overall wellbeing. Design content/strategies that foster personal empowerment & long-term recovery outcomes.

Requirements:
- High School Diploma or GED
- Certified in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP)

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
Racing for Recovery – Holland, OH

Develop/publish high-quality, authoritative content (books, articles & reports) focusing on veganism, plant-based nutrition, health & business empowerment. Research, write & edit materials that align with the organization's goals, ensuring accuracy & distinctive tone of voice. Collaborate on development of educational materials/marketing campaigns targeting niche audiences. Provide executive-level assistance, leveraging extensive entrepreneurial experience to support projects related to recovery, wellness & personal/business development. Conduct market research, identify opportunities for growth & provide actionable insights for business strategies. Develop materials & guidance grounded in a deep understanding of fitness & plant-based nutrition. Create content that educates & motivates individuals to enhance their physical health & overall life quality. Apply life-enhancing principles to support personal transformation & sustainable wellbeing. Utilize relevant tools & resources to create content/strategies that inspire mindset shifts & personal growth. Collaborate on projects/initiatives designed to enhance mental resilience & overall wellbeing. Design content/strategies that foster personal empowerment & long-term recovery outcomes.

Requirements: High School Diploma or GED; Certification in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP).
To Apply: Submit resumes to Racing for Recovery, Inc., Attn: Human resources, 6202 Trust Drive, Holland, OH 43528, or email humanresources@racingforrecovery.org

The 14th Annual Christmas Bazaar

Special to The Truth

The 14th Annual Christmas Bazaar hosted by the Social Butterfly was held Saturday, December 6, on cold, frigid day at the St. Clement Hall in west Toledo. Over 800 people attended and participated in the Bazaar events and activities. Some had to wait for a parking space due to the overwhelming number of guests.

The were 75 local small businesses and crafters displaying their products and wares, such as candles, wreaths, jewelry, desserts, ornaments, women's apparel and travel, among other merchandise.

A Mary Kay Consultant, Buckeye Broadband rep, Savvy Sistas Boutique owner and many more.

Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus arrived and distributed treats and took plenty of photos. Also, a special highlight for the first time this year was a one-hour harp performance by Rebecca Swett. Also on hand was long-time DJ Steven Wolfe playing music from Christmas carols and other great hits. New Tacos Del Patron Food Truck provided Tacos for Christmas.

Donnetta Carter made it a point to thank the sponsors and volunteers such as Taylor Automotive Family, Lucas County Mental Health and Recovery Service Board, Huntington National Bank and The Sojourner's Truth Newspaper.

Volunteers were Kamisha Braswell, Shareese Norwood, Carla Moore, Marsha Dodds and the Aces International Students Executive Director Tracee Eliis.

The next events will be held at the NEW LOCATION ALERT: Epworth United Methodist Church 4855 W. Central Ave. Toledo, OH.

The 15th Annual Business and Health Expo Saturday, April 4, 2026 from 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. and the 15th Annual Christmas Bazaar Saturday December 5, 2026 from 10 a.m.- 3 p.m.. For more information visit www.thesocialbutterflyllc.com or email: events@thesocialbutterflyllc.com








Black Wall Street Community Development Hosts December Business Gathering

By Fletcher Word

The Truth Editor

The Black Wall Street Community Development – a collaborative effort organized by The Juice Radio Station, The Truth Newspaper, Pursuit Magazine and Kristi Knighten of KK Apparel – brought together about four dozen Black business owners on Wednesday, December 17 at The Entrepreneurs Club to network, to share experiences and to learn about growth opportunities.

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

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

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

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

The Black Wall Street Community Development Organizers - Stayce Fowler of Pursuit Magazine, Deb Hogan of The Juice 107.3 Radio, Kristie Knighten of KK Apparel, Toni Battle Gaines of The Juice 107.3, Fletcher Word of The Truth Newspaper

The keynote address was presented by LeSean Shaw, owner of Actual Reality Technologies and vice president of Empowered AI. Shaw's message, however, was focused on the upcoming rebirth of the Toledo African American Chamber of Commerce. The location, online information, bank accounts have already been set up and the reception for potential members will be held early in 2026.

Shaw explained the programming and benefits that members can expect from the revived TAACC.

After Shaw's presentation each attendee had a chance to explain his or her business – all voices were heard.

The BWSCD networking events began in the summer of 2023 – this latest event brought together contractors, artists, restaurateurs, realtors, among others.

LeSean Shaw