The Sojourner's Truth

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Celebrating Kwanzaa

In This Issue...

What Comes After the Kumbaya?

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

The Truth Contributor

True peace is not the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Toledo began 2026 with something rare in politics today — unity. But as the year unfolds, what this unity means for the city's future remains unclear.

At last week's City Council's organizational meeting, there were smiles, tears, applause and heartfelt tributes to family, faith, public service and most of all — to each other. The tone felt less like a political transition and more like a reunion.

Council President Vanice Williams — unanimously re-elected, with Councilwoman Cerssandra McPherson advancing the motion — presided over a ceremony that symbolized a new moment in Toledo politics, while a historic third-term mayor stood beside a maturing legislative body that has — as one longtime observer put it — "come into its own."

Yet beneath the celebration lies a sharper question for a city marked by chronic disinvestment and inequity: Who pays the price for unity—and who truly gains?

The Rise of Vanice Williams — and What It Signals

Some political insiders expected a contest for the presidency between Williams and McPherson. Instead, the transition was smooth, even strategic—introducing a dynamic that clarifies what this unity truly means:

1. She has the mayor's ear.

Multiple sources say that among council's leadership, Williams may have the strongest working relationship with "her friend," Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz — a fact that brings both opportunity and caution.

2. Stability was prioritized over rivalry.

With a mere single newcomer (Erin Kramer, a Democrat) and a council seasoned by prior battles, members chose continuity over internal competition.

3. Representation now meets responsibility.

As Williams herself noted, leadership wasn't part of her plan — but "God" placed it on her shoulders.

Her re-election as City Council President dramatically raises the stakes. With Mayor Kapszukiewicz reportedly considering a statewide role as running mate for Amy Acton's gubernatorial bid, President Williams could, even if only temporarily, step in as Toledo's next mayor.

The crucial question is not whether the city is ready for another Black woman mayor, but whether the necessary infrastructure exists to support her. Simply put, unity without capacity is mere sentiment, not governance.

Still, beneath the surface goodwill, a key question remains: Is this the beginning of genuine harmony or merely a temporary truce? The next phase will test the durability of this collective optimism.

The meeting brimmed with optimism.

Councilman Sam Melden, the avowed Dad-Jokester-in-Chief, had the audience laughing —then, in a moment of seriousness, reminded them that politics can still represent "the best version of government." Point Place Councilwoman Theresa Morris spoke candidly about the weight of service

The newly-sworn in Toledo City Council members

— the joy, conflict, and personalities that define council life.

Even veteran George Sarantou — the former Republican, now Independent — embraced collaboration and renewed focus on public safety, economic development, and neighborhood conditions, leading one observer to label the meeting "Kumbaya but not naïve," especially in light of the looming $52 million deficit that cast a shadow over the "celebration.

The Challenges Ahead Are Real — Especially for Working-Class and Neighborhoods of Poverty

State disinvestment continues to drain city resources, while federal rescue dollars are drying up. Major initiatives — particularly housing — will determine whether investment and growth will reach youth, seniors and residents in under-resourced neighborhoods, including Toledo's central city.

The mayor promised an ambitious plan to expand Toledo's housing stock by 10,000 units. But Toledoans have heard promises before — and too often watched development bypass Black neighborhoods or accelerate displacement.

So, the real question, then, is what comes after the Kumbaya. The path beyond unity will determine how Toledo fulfills its promises and addresses its challenges.

It is about what Toledo will ask of a Vanice Williams-led city council — and what she will require in return to lead boldly on behalf of the communities that placed their trust in her.

Gestures of harmony may photograph well, but leadership is ultimately tested not in symbolic displays of allegiance, but in whether one stands with the people when their interests diverge from the mayor's.

Toledo—particularly Black Toledo—will be watching closely.

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Hey Pastors, Pass the Plate!

By Ben Jealous

Guest Column

Well everyone, hold on to your seats, hats, shoes, hymn books or whatever, because it is time for my bi-annual screed against the Black Toledo pastors who have serious trouble loosening their death grip on their Sunday offering plates.

It does not matter if you attend New Found Wealth Baptist Church, Lutheran Loose Change Church, The Methodist Money Madness Church, the Catholic Give Me The Coins Church, or the independent, Your Money Is My Money Church!

They are all controlled by the same mindset that collective economics is apparently seen as "Voo-Doo" and is to be avoided at all costs.

How did the Black churches in Toledo get to the point that they seemingly and adamantly refused to engage in wealth sharing with their congregants?

What is it about some Black churches not organizing amongst themselves to form various platforms of capital formation so that not only would they benefit, and here is the kicker: but also the very people who make their living possible by their weekly offerings and "tithes" (Note: tithes are placed in parentheses by this author to state that tithing is NOT a New Testament decree…shock of shocks!)

There has been some history (not in Toledo) across the country wherein charismatic figures such as Marcus Garvey or Father Divine (Note: there have been more than one such "Father") have been able to rally their communities on the benefits of shared economic wealth and the power that it has if it is organized and planned.

But somehow that liberating theory of economic empowerment has not taken root in the Black churches in Toledo.

When you calculate the gross weekly collections of the local Black churches, it would be in the tens of thousands of dollars and that does not include the obligatory chicken and fish dinners and special events (anniversary day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Pastor's Birthday,

Youth Sunday, Nurses Guild, Missionary Sunday, day care monies, etc.).

In other words, the local Black church is not "po."

Rather, you can say that the local Black church is, for all intents and purposes, a better place to put your funds and to borrow funds for projects if it was properly and legally set up to engage in financial empowerment.

But the truth is, how many Black churches at least use Black financial institutions to deposit their weekly collections and how many of those churches demand that such a depository engage their congregants with regular financial education and money making tips?

If you reasonably assume that each week, the collective total of tithes and offerings amounts to over $50,000.00; if you can visualize a tenth of that amount being deposited in an insured account, drawing interest, and being managed by a licensed professional team of money managers, the local community would win. Kudos to the Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union for their embryonic role in this endeavor.

Even though decades have been lost through fear and ignorance, including millions of dollars not being invested due to this simple concept not being implemented, there is always the new year to start this concept.

Imagine a community organization being funded by local churches and their congregants and the investment team loaning and lending funds for businesses, private schools, housing and community welfare projects.

To see the Black Toledo community not economically booming and vibrant is a slam against all of us and especially so in my humble opinion against Black pastors who cannot or will not see any monies leaving their clutches because that money is next to God!

If such a concept was presented to all of the Black pastors, regardless of the size of their congregations, how many would be amenable to the proposition or how many would run and hide in their offices hoping that they would not be asked to be engaged in sharing money.

I mean, after all, what would a large Black congregation numbering in the hundreds have in common with a small Black church with just 15 members?

Would the Right Reverend Bishop La De Da be willing to share bread and his "Benjamins" with the self-appointed Bishop of The Most Glorious Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church?

Would fragile church egos freeze anyone and everyone from joining hands and breaking the bonds that have prevented for decades such economic sharing from happening?

The urban legend is that there are two things that would cause a panic with a Black pastor and that is [1] a "Second Lady" showing up at a church service dressed in all purple or [2] he/she being asked to share a percentage from the weekly plate collection!

I contend that Black pastors may "like" each other but not "love" each other if that love requires them to share money with other pastors.

Of course, we can all avoid the temporary wrinkles of implementing such collective economics by simply saying "No" and go on to the next hymn thus keeping things static in the local Black community, as it now is.

Knowing that the local Black church is the biggest temporary depository of funds in the Black community, it makes common sense that those funds muscle up and take on the challenges that are not going away and nor will they be funded or solved except by "us."

Sorry, but there is no White Knight who will ride into the Black community in Toledo and save us from our economic malaise. That White Knight will have to be a Block Knight.

Money is like an obedient dog, it always follows its master.

Contact Lafe Tolliver at Lafe5x@gmail.com

Democrats Can't Win In 2026 on Trump Resistance Alone

By Kevin Harris and Richard McDaniel

Guest Column

Democrats ended 2025 with important victories that steadied a rattled party still reeling from Donald Trump's return to power. Yet even after those wins, Democratic approval ratings remain stubbornly low.

A recent Quinnipiac University poll found only 18 percent of voters approve of the way congressional Democrats are handling their jobs. A record low of 73 percent disapprove. In stark contrast, congressional Republicans have a 35 percent approval rating while 58 percent disapprove.

Democrats are even under water within our own party. The same poll found only 42 percent of Democrats approve of congressional Democrats with 48 percent disapproving.

Among Republicans, 77 percent approve of their own party in Congress. This data indicates Democrats will need to do more than run against Trump if we want to win in 2026. To keep the momentum going, Democrats will have to show working class voters we also know how to govern in the places where we currently hold power.

That starts with recognizing a hard truth: being anti-Trump is not a governing agenda. It can mobilize a base, raise money, and win a news cycle. It cannot, by itself, lower grocery bills, stabilize rents, or make healthcare more affordable.

Democrats must understand that while many working-class voters are exhausted by Trump, they are equally frustrated with a political system that seems incapable of improving daily life. The working class wants to see relief they can feel as sharply as the rising costs that are hitting their pockets each week.

Kevin Harris

Richard McDaniel

Our opportunity to win these voters back and improve our own favorability lies in policies that bring down costs, enforce competition, expand supply and protect consumers—paired with relentless communication about what's being done and why it matters.

The working class needs to see a coordinated effort with congressional Democrats taking the lead in holding Republicans accountable for rising costs while state Democrats follow through on the promises we made to prioritize affordability.

Coordination is key because it demonstrates to working class voters that Democrats can offer more than rhetoric and are prepared to wield power to bring down costs. And here again the South can demonstrate the leadership that's desperately missing.

Virginia Governor-elect Abigail Spanberger will prioritize affordability in her first legislative session. Her plans include working with the state legislature's expanded Democratic majority to pass a multifaceted health care package designed to tackle out-of-pocket costs.

Another proposal seeks to support Virginians most likely to lose access to health care due to Republicans refusal to extend Obamacare subsidies. Spanberger is also proposing additional policies that will reduce utility bills and expand the availability of affordable housing.

North Carolina Governor Josh Stein has put forth a budget that would raise public education spending, including a 10 percent increase in average teacher pay. Stein also wants to invest millions more in health care.

Maryland Governor Wes Moore signed an executive order last month aimed at reducing energy costs. Miami, Florida's first female and Democratic mayor in 30 years has outlined plans to create more affordable housing through permitting reform, a city housing trust fund and using city-owned land for affordable projects.

And Kentucky Governor and Democratic Governors Association Chair Andy Beshear has been a leading voice highlighting the impacts of the Republican affordability crisis on rural America. Beshear has noted the rural health care centers that have already shuttered due to Medicaid cuts and how reductions in federal food aid will hit poor and rural Americans while the wealthiest benefit from Trump tax cuts.

National Democrats are echoing Beshear with the launch of their first ever rural outreach program that will fund engagement and messaging efforts focused on rising costs and the chaos caused by Trump's tariffs.

And Georgia Democrats are planning a legislative agenda focused on affordability when the legislature returns; hoping to build off of momentum from last year's elections where the party flipped two Public Service Commission seats with a targeted message on relief from high utility bills.

What these leaders share is a refusal to reduce their politics to opposition alone. They talk about jobs, schools, roads, hospitals and costs. They meet voters where they are and they understand that governing well is the strongest rebuke to Trumpism.

The midterms will not be a referendum on Trump alone. They will be a judgment on whether Democrats used their moments of power to make life more affordable and healthcare more secure. If the party leans solely on fear of the alternative, it risks confirming working class voters' cynicism. If it leans into governing—clearly, confidently, and relentlessly—it has a chance to rebuild trust with working class voters.

Democrats don't need to abandon their values to win. They need to prove those values can produce results. In 2026, Trump resistance won't be enough. Democrats will have to show some receipts.

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

Holding the House Together: Rep. Elgin Rogers on Cuts, Community, and the People Who Refuse to Quit

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

Life in Ohio right now feels like an old house during a hard winter.

The heat still works, but it clicks on slower. The lights flicker sometimes. A door that used to shut easily now sticks. You can feel something shifting, even if you can't name it yet.

State Representative Elgin Rogers, Jr. (District 31) says families are not imagining it.

"The system is cracking," he states. "And when it cracks, it always cracks at the bottom first."

Federal budget cuts are quietly changing day-to-day life in Ohio in many ways. They are not loud. They do not come with sirens. They show up as a longer waitlist for daycare services. A food pantry with fewer boxes. A library that shortens its hours. A parent working late again because there is no one else to cover the next shift.

Childcare is one of the first places Rogers sees the damage.

"Childcare is a 'bridge' between home and work," he shares. "When that bridge deteriorates, everything above it collapses."

Many working families depend upon childcare subsidy programs to remain afloat, and when these programs run out of money, the daycare providers lose employees. Workers leave because the pay is no longer livable. Classrooms get crowded. Some centers close completely. Parents then face an impossible choice: miss work or leave their child with fewer options.

But that's not all.

Housing assistance shrinks. Food programs lose funding. Healthcare becomes harder to reach. Rogers compares it to pulling bricks from the base of a building and being shocked when the walls begin to lean.

"These are not efficiency cuts," he says. "These are life cuts."

Rogers also warns about how division gets used like smoke in a room. While people argue over labels and blame one another, the real damage happens quietly.

"Fraud is not limited to any particular color," he explains. "Crime is not limited to any particular culture."

When leaders point fingers at entire communities, it distracts people from where the money is really going. Funds that once helped stabilize families get redirected into tax breaks to those who already have sufficient financial resources.

Despite this, Rogers believes in providing tools to those who need them. His office operates much like a community map. Every month, he publishes a resource directory within his newsletter that includes food pantries, assistance programs and other forms of community support throughout the district.

When food banks such as Martin Luther King Kitchen for the Poor, Connecting Kids to Meals, and local Toledo-area pantries were impacted by budget cuts, Rogers and his legislative colleagues pushed back. They successfully lobbied to restore funding because hunger does not wait for politics to settle.

State Rep. Elgin Rogers

Libraries are another resource they will not allow to disappear.

"Public libraries are not quiet," Rogers insists. "They're loud with possibility."

Libraries provide free printing, job searching opportunities, internet access and a learning environment without the pressures of traditional school.

When libraries close or are scaled back, residents lose more than just books, they lose connections.

For Rogers, all of this comes back to one idea: life should be affordable without losing dignity.

"We want people to have the opportunity to be well-educated, gainfully employed and happy," he shares. "That should not be radical."

Rogers speaks plainly about labor because he has lived it. He remembers jobs where the boss made the rules without warning. Where you planned to go home and suddenly had to stay four more hours.

"That's called forced overtime," he explains. "It eats away at your life in little pieces."

As companies continue to grow in size and strength, it is common for employees to experience more pressure. More working hours. Less notice. Fewer benefits. Rogers describes labor unions as the "guard rails" on a "narrow road."

Unions protect people who do not yet know their rights. They assist in obtaining reasonable compensation, safe working conditions, paid time-off, and family medical leave. These are not luxuries, these are the differences between surviving and living.

"When workers are denied the benefits of their labor," Rogers warns, "families pay the cost."

He worries that attacks on labor unions weaken everyone, not just union members. Without protections, workers lose balance. Schedules become unpredictable. Family time disappears.

"You can't build a strong state on tired people," he adds.

Still, Rogers believes knowledge is power. Voting matters. Who people vote for shapes paychecks, schedules, and safety. Policy shows up at the dinner table whether people follow politics or not.

Yet even with all the heavy topics, Rogers is intentional about hope.

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Honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

Glenwood Lutheran Church will host a commemoration of the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 3:00pm.

Glenwood is located at 2545 Monroe Street, adjacent to the Toledo Museum of Art.

Where do We Go from Here is the theme of the program that seeks to consider our current moment in the light of wisdom from Dr. King and the Civil Rights Era.

Michelle Bannister Williams will be the guest speaker, an anti-racist DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging) educator, speaker and author.

The Musical Coordinator for the service, Anthony Pattin, has gathered an impressive slate of musicians, including the Clarence Smith Chorus, the Fellowship Community Choir of Toledo.

Glenwood Lutheran Church is excited to partner with the Northwestern Ohio Synod of the ELCA, Olivet Lutheran and Epiphany Lutheran Church to share this event with the Toledo community.

We hope you'll join us!

The Change Wall located behind Glenwood Lutheran Church based on the Change Sings by Amanda Gorman and illustrated by Loren Long. Mural by Dean Davis.

Federal Funds Available for 2026 Program Year

Special to The Truth

The City of Toledo announces the availability of federal funds for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) for the 2026 Program Year (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027), subject to the availability of funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Attendance is required at the mandatory application meetings in order to apply for funding:

** Mandatory Meeting for CDBG Non-Homeless Service Providers

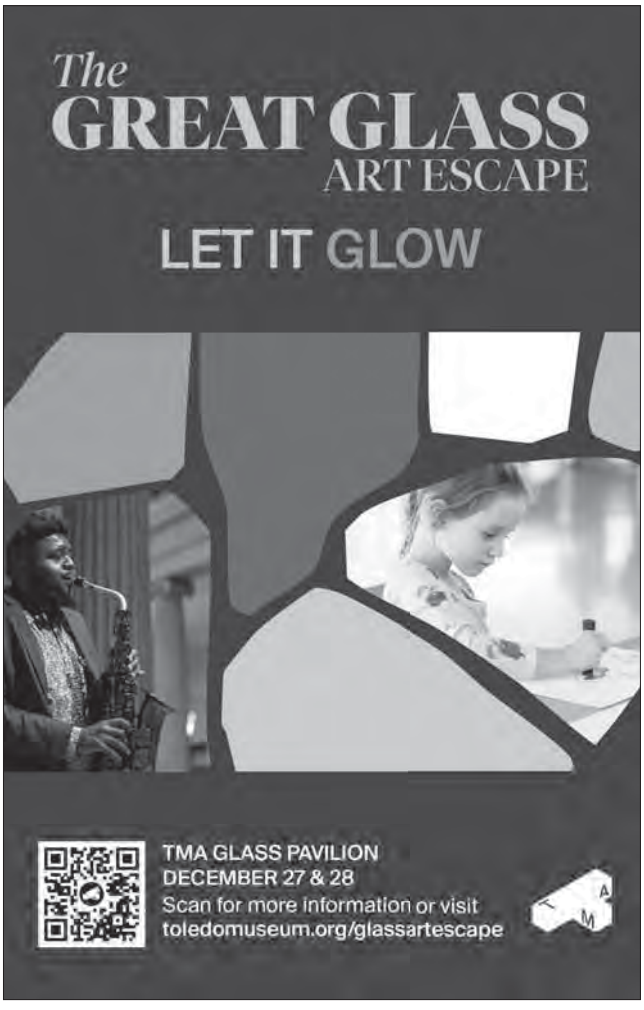
When: January 9, 2026, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Where: Toledo Lucas County Main Library, Large Glass Community Room

** Mandatory Meeting for ESG Homeless Service Providers

When: January 9, 2026, 1 - 3 p.m.

Where: Toledo Lucas County Main Library, Large Glass Community Room



CDBG applications will be accepted with a funding priority for the following programs/activities:

* Housing Preservation
* Public Services
* Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSAs)

Eligible applicants: 501(c)3 organizations, other nonprofits, government agencies (Government Entities/Quasi-Government Agencies (Not-For-Profit), and certified Community Based Development Organizations (CBDOs). New applicants must have participated in or be registered for the Toledo Neighborhood Capacity Building Institute and must have completed a Concept Meeting with the Department of Housing and Community Development.

ESG/CDBG applications from Homeless Service Providers will be considered, with funding prioritized for the following project components:

* Access and Prevention
* Emergency Shelter
* Rapid-Rehousing
* Permanent Supportive Housing
* Transitional Housing

HOME applications will be accepted from certified City of Toledo Community Housing and Development Organizations (CHDOs) for the following projects that demonstrate a gap in financing, address the City of Toledo's affordable and special populations homeownership needs, and leverage HOME funds with other funding sources.

* Construction/Rehabilitation of Homebuyer Units (non-CHDO)
* Construction/Rehabilitation of Homebuyer Units (CHDO)
* HOME Owner Program Management

Please note, for projects with construction components:

* Applicants must comply with all relevant Prevailing Wage laws, including but not limited to Toledo Municipal Code Section 187.2(b). Contractors and subcontractors will be required to pay prevailing wages and submit certified payrolls to the City of Toledo weekly for all labor performed on the project. To view current prevailing wage rates, please create an account with the Ohio Department of Commerce.

* Applicants must comply with Toledo Municipal Code Section 187.12(d), which requires awardees of a public improvement contract of $100,000 or greater, which is funded by the City of Toledo or other sources that do not exclude Project Labor Agreements ("PLA"), to enter into a PLA with the Northwest Ohio Building and Construction Trades Council ("NWOBTC").

* A performance bond may be required for construction contracts, equal to 100% of the construction contract.

Mandatory Application Meeting for CDBG Non-Homeless Service Providers

When: January 9, 2026, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Where: Toledo Lucas County Main Library, Large Glass Community Room

Mandatory Application Meeting for ESG Homeless Service Providers

When: January 9, 2026, 1 - 3 p.m.

Where: Toledo Lucas County Main Library, Large Glass Community Room

Open Office Hours for New CDBG Applicants

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Elgin Rogers..continued from page 5

That is why he created the Difference Makers recognition.

"In difficult times, we tend to bury good stories," he says. "I wanted to dig them back up."

Difference Makers are the people who quietly hold the house together. They fix cracks in the walls before anyone even recognizes they exist. They appear without cameras to record their efforts. They perform their duties regardless of applause.

"It only takes an ounce of effort to change someone's life," Rogers reminds us.

This year's theme for the Difference Makers' recognition is Unity in Our Community. This year's event will be held during Black History Month and will provide opportunities for community members to interact through music, storytelling, and youth performances. The goal is to create an atmosphere that feels less like a ceremony and more like a family reunion.

The honorees come from every corner of community life—education, healthcare, nonprofits, government, entrepreneurship, faith, and service. Some are business owners. Some are educators. Some are volunteers. Some are mentors.

Many did not even know they were nominated.

"That is typically the sign that you selected the correct people," Rogers shares.

State Representative Elgin Rogers, Jr. cordially invites the community to join him in celebrating "Unity in Our Community," a Black History Month celebration taking place on Saturday, February 15, at 4 p.m. at 2340 N. Holland Sylvania Road. The event will bring neighbors together to reflect on our shared history while looking ahead toward a stronger, more united future. Guests can expect an uplifting afternoon highlighting the importance of compassion, service, understanding, and community unity. There is no cost to attend, and all are welcome, though seating is limited.

During the celebration, Rep. Rogers will recognize local Difference Makers—individuals and organizations whose everyday actions positively impact the community. Honorees include Taria Blanchard (Toledo Public Schools), Melissa A. Stephens (City of Toledo Police Department), Coach Mose Hairson (Jesup W. Scott High School), Dr. Antwan Atia (The Toledo Clinic), Mick Murnen (Ottawa Jermain Park Advisory Board), Jack's Mens Wear, Pete Coates (Pete's Body Shop), Coach Alto King Jr. (Bethlehem Baptist Church), Maria White (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Ohio), Trevor Black (retired educator, Toledo Public Schools), Susan Mulligan (Community Advocate), Pastor Brandon Foster (Indiana Missionary Baptist Church), and Kim Highsmith (educator, Woodward High School).

Community members are encouraged to RSVP by February 6, 2025, by emailing rep42@ohiohouse.gov or calling Johnny Hutton at 419-215-7606.

Representative Rogers believes recognition does something simple but powerful. It tells people they are seen. It reminds them that their work matters. It helps refill the tank for people who pour themselves out every day.

He also hopes young people are watching.

Rogers wants youth to understand that difference making does not require a title. It does not require money. Sometimes it just requires being present.

"Sometimes the difference is being yourself," he reflects.

State Representative Rogers believes that unity is not about agreement. It is about deciding to proceed forward together despite disagreement. In a time when division feels loud and constant, he believes community remains the strongest safety net.

His message for Ohio families this year centers on resilience.

"I am your advocate at the Statehouse," he says. "But this work belongs to all of us."

Rogers continues to focus his efforts on increasing access to health care, strengthening education and job training programs, expanding affordable housing, protecting seniors, advocating for workers, and establishing stronger consumer protection policies to prevent families from experiencing unfair billing practices.

To Rep Elgin Rogers Jr., this is what the real American way looks like, not wealth without accountability, but community with care.

The house may be old. The weather may be rough. But as long as people keep fixing, supporting, and standing together, it can still be warm.

And standing in the middle of it all, Rogers keeps doing what he says difference makers do best: listening, fighting, and reminding people they are not alone.

Learn more about State Representative Elgin Rogers Jr.'s work and service to Ohio families by visiting his official profile

Ohio Minimum Wage Set to Increase in 2026

Minimum wage will increase to $11 per hour for non-tipped employees.

Starting Jan. 1, 2026, Ohio's minimum wage is scheduled to increase to $11 per hour for non-tipped employees and $5.50 per hour for tipped employees. This adjustment represents a 2.8% increase from the current 2025 rates of $10.70 for non-tipped employees and $5.35 for tipped employees.

The change reflects the mandate of the Constitutional Amendment (II-34a), passed by Ohio voters in November 2006, which states Ohio's minimum wage shall increase on Jan. 1 each year by the rate of inflation.

The minimum wage standard is tied to the Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners and clerical workers (CPI-W) for the 12-month period ending in August. The 2.8 percent increase corresponds to the CPI-W change from Sept. 1, 2024, to Aug. 31, 2025.

In addition to the wage rate adjustment, the threshold for business applicability will also change. Effective Jan. 1, 2026, the Ohio minimum wage will apply to businesses with annual gross receipts of more than $405,000, which is an increase from the current $394,000 threshold. For

employees at businesses with annual gross receipts of $405,000 or less per year after Jan. 1, 2026, and for 14- and 15-year-old workers, the state minimum wage remains tied to the federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour.

Any changes to this rate would require an act of the U.S. Congress and the President's signature.

To ensure compliance, employers are required to display the official 2026 Minimum Wage poster. The poster is currently available for download from the Ohio Department of Commerce's Division of Industrial Compliance website

Get The Lead Out – A Community Effort to Test for Lead Poison

By Emily R. Evans

The Truth Reporter

On Saturday December 20, a lead poison testing event was held at The Nexus on Jefferson Ave from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Lucas County children who were tested blood levels for lead which can be very dangerous for anyone also were able to take part in a toy giveaway. The children all seemed excited to pick gifts from Santa and have lunch with other children from all around northwest Ohio.

The lead testing event was sponsored by The Junction Coalition, Neighborhood

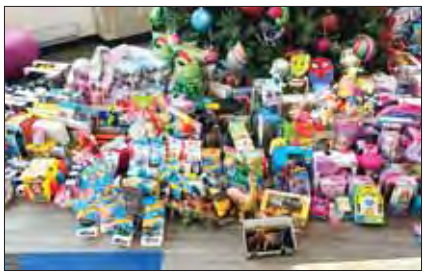
Health Association and other partners

Alicia Smith, executive director at the Junction Coalition, said: "Any amount of lead is unsafe for human consumption and we do not know where our children are being exposed. It's important for our community to make sure we are testing our homes and children for lead."

The event's main focus in partnership with the Centers For Disease Control was to test the children for lead and to give them lunch as well as a free gift from Santa. Lead testing through Nexus continues throughout the year and is available to families to sign up. If there are any questions or concerns, reach out to 419-408-0998.

Lead is a toxic metal that can cause serious health problems in humans and animals, even at low levels of exposure. It is commonly found in old paint, contaminated soil, water from lead pipes, certain household items and industrial pollution. Because lead builds up in the body over time, its effects can be long-lasting and sometimes permanent.

In adults, lead exposure can cause headaches, fatigue, memory problems, high blood pressure, kidney damage, and reproductive issues. Long-



term exposure has also been linked to heart disease and nervous system damage. Many adults may not realize they are exposed because symptoms can be mild or mistaken for other conditions.

Children are especially vulnerable to lead poisoning because their brains and bodies are still developing. Even small amounts of lead can cause learning disabilities, behavioral problems, reduced IQ, speech delays and difficulty concentrating. In severe cases, lead exposure can result in seizures, developmental delays or permanent brain damage. Because children often put their hands or objects in their mouths, they are at higher risk of exposure from dust, paint chips, or contaminated soil.

Animals, including pets and wildlife, can also suffer from lead poisoning. Exposure may occur through contaminated water, soil, food, or lead-

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Padua Center Hosts Annual Kwanzaa Celebration

By Dawn Scotland

The Truth Reporter

On Monday, December 29 at 3 p.m. at The Padua Center, the Kwanzaa Park Neighbors celebrated the Fourth Night of Kwanzaa, focusing on the Principle Ujamaa. The free event was open to all and featured the traditional Kwanzaa ritual and Karamu (traditional feast).

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. Monday night participants engaged in an interactive celebration discussing the Kwanzaa principle led by Brother Washington Muhammad of The Community Solidarity Response Network.

The event focused on the idea of pooling re-

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Sister Virginia Welsh, Executive Director of the Padua Center

Brother Washington Muhammad leads event

Former Mayor Carty Finkbeiner lights a candle

The Truth HEALTH

Easy, Tasty, Sheet Pan Meals

By Patrice Powers-Barker, OSU Extension, Lucas County

The Truth Contributor

Build your own sheet pan meal for taste and ease. These can be made in an oven or large toaster oven (if it's large enough for a small sheet pan). Once the ingredients are chosen and prepped by cutting into similar size pieces, it only takes a few minutes to pull together and then it takes approximately 35 – 60 minutes to bake depending on the ingredients.

Eat Smart, Move More suggests these basic steps for a Build Your Own Sheet Pan Meal. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

1. Pick a protein like chicken, sausage, beef, etc. Depending on the type of meat, you will need to use a thermometer to check the internal temperature. Looking for non-meat options? Sheet pan meals can also be made with protein like beans or tofu cut into cubes.

2. Choose your vegetables. Different vegetables have different textures and firmness so you will want to cut solid vegetables like carrots or potatoes into smaller cubes. Other vegetables like broccoli or onions can be cut in larger pieces as they aren't as hard and don't take as long to roast.

3. Drizzle all of the ingredients with olive oil

4. Pick seasonings to add like garlic, herbs, pepper, and a small amount of salt.

Bake in the oven for approximately 35 – 55 minutes. The timing depends on what ingredients you are cooking. Check meat with a meat thermometer to make sure it's cooked to a safe level but not overcooked. With this type of cooking, the vegetables might almost look as if they're starting to burn with dark brown edges. This is different than burning – this is the vegetable caramelizing in the oven and it will make it taste delicious!

An alternative to using one large sheet pan is to use two or three smaller ones and split up the ingredients of similar type and size to cook them at different lengths of time. For example, use one sheet pan for the protein and seasonings and another for all the vegetables. This way, if one is done cooking before the other, pull that sheet pan out and continue to cook the other ingredients. This recipe for root vegetables (all grow underground!) is adapted from the community gardener's cookbook, From Asparagus to Zucchini

Roasted Root Vegetables, Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

• 4 pounds of different root vegetables (like carrots, beets, turnips, potatoes, parsnips, onions, etc)

• 3 Tablespoons oil

• 3 Tablespoons chopped fresh herbs (like rosemary, oregano and sage) or use dried herbs but less

• 5 garlic cloves, minced (or sprinkle with garlic powder)

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 450 degrees.

2. Scrub vegetables under running water, cut off tops and root ends. Cut into 1-inch cubes.

3. Toss vegetables with oil and spread on a baking sheet.

4. Roast for 15 minutes.

5. Stir vegetables, turn heat down to 375 degrees and continue to roast another 10 minutes.

6. Add fresh herbs and garlic, stir again and cook until vegetables are soft when pierced with a knife. (about 15 – 30 minutes)

The best thing about these make your own options is that you can choose what you already have on hand, what you prefer to eat, and how you prefer to purchase the items. You can make choices that help you with saving money or time or planning a specific meal such as a low-sodium option.

In order to save money, it is usually the best price to buy the basic ingredients like carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, as fresh and in their own bag. You will need to peel some of the vegetables and wash all of them. This preparation takes a little more time compared to "packets" of vegetables that are already peeled and chopped like you might find in the freezer section or even in the fresh food section as "ready to cook" ingredients.

If you are short on time, check out the options of prepared ingredients. Often, these will cost more for the amount but it might be the right amount and price to help you save time in order to enjoy the final meal. Also, this does not necessarily save on cost but to help you save time with clean up, some people line the sheet pan with foil before adding the ingredients. Then clean up includes throwing away the foil and a quicker washing of the sheet pan.

If you are following a specific diet such as low-sodium, be sure to check the prepared items to see if they have added salt. The advantage of making your own recipe with individual ingredients is that you can choose to add herbs, garlic and onions for flavor and not add extra hidden salt. It is not uncommon for frozen bags of ingredients to have added sauces and flavors. Check to make sure it fits your nutrition goals.

Wishing you comfort, enjoyment, and good foods this new year!

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

Dry Skin Is Not the Whole Story: What Every Skin Type Needs to Know in 2026

By Dr. Hope Mitchell, MD

The Truth Contributor

Dry skin does not just affect people who identify as "dry." In fact, some of the most uncomfortable dryness I see in my dermatology practice shows up in people who swear they have oily, acne-prone or combination skin. If your face feels tight after cleansing, makeup separates by mid-day, or your skin looks dull no matter how many products you use, your skin barrier may be asking for help.

Dryness is often misunderstood as a lack of moisture, but the real issue is usually a compromised skin barrier. Your barrier is responsible for holding hydration in and keeping irritants out. When it weakens, water escapes, inflammation increases and skin becomes reactive. This can happen to any skin type due to stress, weather changes, medications, over-cleansing or layering too many active ingredients at once.

Yes, even oily skin can be dry. Many people with oil production still lack water in the skin, especially if they use foaming cleansers, exfoliating acids, or acne treatments too aggressively. The result is skin that feels tight but still breaks out, a frustrating combination that often leads to overcorrecting and more irritation.

Dryness also shows up differently across skin tones. In lighter skin, it may look flaky or red. In melanin-rich skin, it often appears as ashiness, tightness or a loss of radiance rather than visible flakes. Scratching itchy, dry skin can also trigger dark marks that linger long after the dryness improves, making barrier care essential for maintaining even tone.

The biggest shift in dermatology heading into 2026 is how we treat dryness. The conversation has moved beyond simply "use a thicker moisturizer." Today, we focus on repairing the skin barrier itself. Healthy skin depends on a precise balance of ceramides, cholesterol, fatty acids, and natural moisturizing factors. Without these, hydration cannot last, no matter how luxurious your routine may be.

When dryness becomes persistent, itchy, or uncomfortable, a dermatologist can help identify what is driving it. Treatment may include medical-grade barrier creams, prescription moisturizers, or short-term anti-inflammatory therapies to calm irritation and reset the skin. Once the barrier recovers, skin often becomes clearer, smoother and more balanced overall.

Daily habits play a major role in how your skin responds. Long, hot showers may feel indulgent, but they strip essential oils from the skin. Lukewarm water, gentle cleansers and shorter showers are far more skin-friendly. One of the most effective habits I recommend is moisturizing within three minutes of stepping out of the shower while the skin is still damp. This simple step helps seal in hydration for every skin type.

Product choice matters, too. Look for fragrance-free formulas with ingredients like ceramides, glycerin, hyaluronic acid, shea butter, or petrolatum. If your skin is breaking out, avoid the temptation to skip moisturizer. Dehydrated skin often produces more oil in response, not less. And do not forget areas like hands, feet, lips, and elbows, which often show dryness first.

Emerging research also highlights the importance of the skin microbiome. The healthy bacteria living on your skin support barrier function and help regulate inflammation. Overusing harsh antibacterial products or over-exfoliating can disrupt this balance and worsen dryness, even in oily skin.

The Bottom Line

Dry skin is not a category. It is a condition that can affect every skin type at different times and especially during different seasons. When you focus on barrier repair instead of chasing quick fixes, skin becomes calmer, stronger, and more radiant. No matter your skin type, healthy skin starts with a healthy barrier.

Hope Mitchell, MD, FAAD is a board-certified dermatologist who practices at Mitchell Dermatology in Perrysburg, Ohio.

Ask Ryan

By Ryan Rollison

The Truth Contributor

It is a time for celebration and joy, and by focusing on balance and moderation, you can enjoy holiday foods without compromising your fitness goals. Good nutrition supports your immune system, helps manage energy levels, and contributes to heart health. Mindful eating prevents overindulgence, which can lead to discomfort, irritability, and guilt. Research indicates that overeating during the festive season is a major predictor of long-term weight gain, increasing the risk of conditions like type 2 diabetes and hypertension. By making conscious food choices, you can better tune into your body's hunger and fullness cues, this creates a healthier relationship with food. Here are simple tips to help navigate healthy holiday eating.

• **Practice mindful eating:** Eat slowly, savor each bite, and put your fork down between bites to allow your brain time to register fullness.

• **Don't skip meals:** Eating regular, smaller meals or healthy snacks (like apples with peanut butter or veggies with hummus) throughout the day prevents you from arriving at a party famished and overeating.

• **Prioritize fiber and protein:** Fill at least half your plate with nutrient-dense options like vegetables, and lean proteins, leaving less room for unhealthy dishes.

• **Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day, as thirst can often be mistaken for hunger. Opt for water or herbal teas instead of high-calorie drinks like too much sugary beverages.

• **Limit unhealthy fats and sugars:** Enjoy high-calorie treats in small portions and occasionally. Try making healthier versions of traditional recipes using ingredient substitutions like heart-healthy oils in place of butter.

• **Stay active:** Make time for physical activity, even a short walk after a big meal can aid digestion and manage stress. It is amazing how much a short walk drops your glucose levels.

• **Enjoy your holiday and keep those realistic New Year resolutions!**

UNLEASH YOUR HERO

Ryan Rollison

Dream Bodies 419-944-4200

A Mental Health Moment

Movement is Medicine

By Bernadette Joy Graham, MA, LPCC

The Truth Contributor

On a quiet Saturday morning, Brian tied his sneakers and stepped outside his apartment. Life had been heavy lately—school stress, family responsibilities, and the constant feeling of needing to be strong for everyone else. His doctor and counselor had both suggested exercise, not as a cure-all, but as a way to support his mind and body.

Brian started small, walking through his neighborhood park. As the weeks passed, those walks turned into light jogging and pickup basketball games with friends. He noticed changes he didn't expect. Moving his body helped release the stress he carried, and his mood slowly lifted. Exercise gave him time to breathe, think, and feel in control again.

Physically, Brian felt stronger and had more energy. His sleep improved, and his body felt less tense. Mentally, exercise became a healthy outlet—a way to manage anxiety and frustration that many African Americans face due to daily pressures, discrimination, and limited access to mental health resources.

Soon, Brian invited his younger cousins to join him. What started as exercise became connection, laughter, and support. Through movement, Brian learned that taking care of his physical health also helped protect his mental health—and that wellness could be a powerful form of self-care and resilience for himself and his community.

Moving for the Mind: **Why Exercise Matters for Mental Health in Black Communities**

Mental health is health. For Black communities, caring for mental well-being is especially important because of the unique and ongoing stressors many face—such as racism, economic inequality, and barriers to quality healthcare. One powerful, accessible tool that supports mental wellness is regular physical activity. Exercise is not about perfection or a certain body type; it's about movement that helps the mind heal and thrive.

So how does exercise support mental health? Research consistently shows that physical activity improves mental health across age groups. Regular movement helps reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, improves sleep, boosts self-esteem, and enhances overall mood (Schuch et al., 2016; Schuch et al., 2019). Exercise increases the release of brain chemicals like endorphins and serotonin, which are linked to positive mood and stress relief (American Psychological Association [APA], 2023).

For Black individuals who experience chronic stress related to factors such as discrimination, exercise can act as a healthy coping strategy. Studies show that racism-related stress is linked to poorer mental health outcomes, including depression and anxiety (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). Physical activity helps regulate the body's stress response, lowering cortisol levels and supporting emotional resilience (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022).

Exercise also strengthens community connections, which are vital for mental health. Group activities—such as walking clubs, dance classes, church-based fitness groups, or youth sports—create spaces for social support and belonging. Social connection itself is protective against depression and loneliness (CDC, 2024). For Black communities, culturally grounded spaces for movement can affirm identity, joy, and collective healing.

Many Black communities face barriers to exercise, including lack of safe spaces, time constraints, and limited access to recreational facilities. Mental health messaging must recognize these realities. The good news is that **exercise does not require a gym.** Short bouts of movement—like 10–30 minutes of walking, stretching, dancing at home, or playing with children—still provide meaningful mental health benefits (WHO, 2022).

Faith institutions, schools, and community organizations can play a key role by offering free or low-cost programs and advocating for safe parks and sidewalks. Health professionals should also encourage movement in ways that respect culture, body diversity, and lived experience.

Take a mental health moment and a call to move – together. Exercise is not a cure-all, and it does not replace therapy or other mental health care when needed. But it is a proven, empowering tool that supports emotional well-being. By promoting joyful, culturally relevant movement and addressing systemic barriers, Black communities can harness exercise as part of a broader approach to mental health equity.

Movement is medicine—and it belongs to everyone.

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https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240015128

Bernadette Joy Graham is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Therapist. Please find office information below if you may be interested in beginning your mental health journey:

Maumee location in office - 419 866-8232

Toledo location in office - 419 578-2525

If you are in a mental health crisis, please call 988 or go to your nearest emergency room.

Books for Mental Health by various authors

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

c. 2025
various publishers
$29.99 - $34.95
various page counts

For months, your brain has been full.

Full of holidaying and end-of-year-ing and remembering all the things that needed done by the new month. Full of gifts and celebrations and news and weather. Now, maybe it's time to see what else goes on inside your cranium with these great new books about mental health…

If you struggle to know what's truth these days and what's not, then ***The Gaslit Brain: Protect Your Brain from the Lies of Bullying, Gaslighting, and Institutional Complicity*** **by Jennifer Fraser, PhD** (Prometheus Books, $34.95) might be the book you need.

Using stories to show, not tell, Fraser helps readers put themselves in situations, so they can learn how to identify a gaslighter. She then looks at the personality traits of someone who gaslights before teaching readers how to deal with the person who tries to lie to you. This is an especially helpful book for anyone who relies on the truth, and accepts nothing less.

Worldwide strife is on everyone's mind these days, and ***Warhead: How the Brain Shapes War and War Shapes the Brain*** **by Nicolas Wright** (St. Martin's Press, $30.00) is a science-based book that will help you understand long-term ramifications of conflict. It takes you from wars and warriors throughout history, to modern warfare and why it might seem like the world is constantly at battle.

This not just a book for warriors on the field, though. Wright says that we are wired to do battle – whether its overseas, in your neighborhood, or sitting at your workstation. You'll be fascinated by this book.

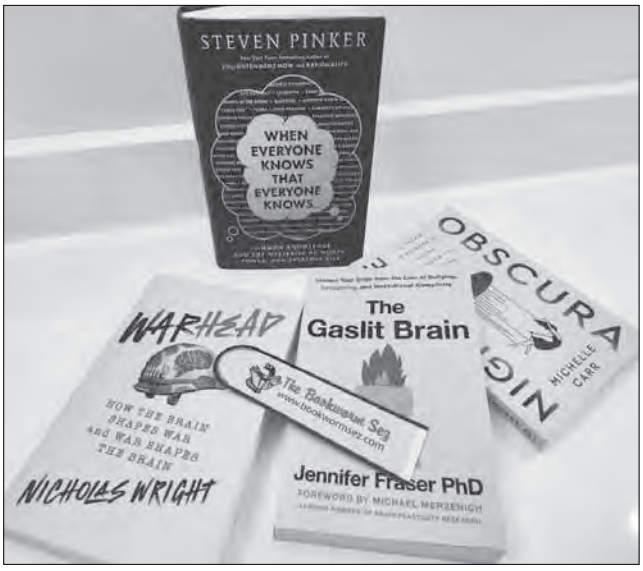
So how do you know what you know? Is it because someone else knows it? Do they know that you know? Ach, so confusing, so relax your mind a little and read ***When Everyone Knows That Everyone Knows… Common Knowledge and the Mysteries of Money, Power, and Everyday Life*** **by Steven Pinker** (Scribner, $30.00), and it'll all make sense.

In this book, you'll see how "common knowledge" is uncommonly necessary for human society, and how we naturally slip right into using it – until we don't, and then all kinds of bad things can happen. This is a book that may boggle your mind sometimes, but it'll also open your eyes to how our society works.

If this all enough to keep you awake at night, well, then you need ***Nightmare Obscura: A Dream Engineer's Guide Through the Sleeping Mind*** **by Michelle Carr** (Henry Holt & Company, $29.99).

Your alarm goes off, you're wide awake, but what do you remember about your dreams? Carr says that you can learn to "harness" the dreams you have for better mental health, including problem-solving, and you can learn to avoid those bad, troubling dreams that ruin your rest – and the rest of your day.

Not enough reading for your mental health? Then ask a librarian or bookseller for more, and they'll usher you to a section filled with self-help. Grab these four great books and others, then open your mind with good information, and fill it up.



Federal Funds...continued from page 6

If you have never applied for a CDBG opportunity, we can help! Bring your completed application to the office-hours session.

When: January 21, 2026, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Where: Housing and Community Development Department

One Government Center, Suite 1800

CDBG Application Training Session

When: January 22, 2026, 9 - 11 a.m.

Applicants will receive the Zoom link after attending the mandatory application meeting.

ESG Application Training Session

When: January 22, 2026, 1 - 3 p.m.

Applicants will receive Zoom link after attending the mandatory application meeting.

HOME Application Training

When: January 23, 1 - 3 p.m.

Where: Zoom (https://toledo-oh-gov.zoom.us/j/82298371798)

Applications must be submitted via Zoomgrants by 4:45 p.m. on February 6, 2026.

Get The Lead Out...continued from page 8

based objects. Symptoms in animals include vomiting, loss of appetite, weakness, seizures, and neurological damage. In wildlife, lead exposure can reduce survival rates and disrupt entire ecosystems.

Regular lead testing is one of the most effective ways to prevent harm. Blood lead level testing can identify exposure early, often before serious symptoms appear. Testing homes, water sources, soil, and consumer products helps locate and eliminate sources of lead. For children and pregnant individuals, routine screening is especially important. Early detection allows families and communities to take action—such as removing lead sources, improving nutrition, and seeking medical care—before long-term damage occurs.

Lead exposure is a preventable health risk that affects humans, children, and animals alike. Awareness, prevention, and regular testing play a critical role in protecting health, supporting healthy development, and creating safer environments for everyone.

Frederick Douglass Center... continued from page 16

the new year", he stated.

Created in 1966 by Maulana Ron Karenga, Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan-African holiday that celebrates history, values, family, community and culture.

The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa (Ngoza Saba) are :

1. Umoja (unity) 00-MOH -jah: To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation. And race.

2. Kujichangulia (Self-determination) KOO-gee-CHA-goo-LEE-ah: To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves instead of being spoken for by others.

3. Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) 00-GEE-mah: To build and maintain our community together to make our sister's and brother's problems our problems, and to solve these problems together.

4. Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics) 00-jah-MAH: To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses, and to profit from them together.

5. Nia (Purpose) Nee-ah: To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

6. Kuumba (Creativity) KOO-00M-bah: To do always as much as we can, in the way e can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than when we inherited it.

7. Imani (Faith) ee-Mon-EE: To believe with all our hearts in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle. (Source: officialkwanzaawebsite.org)

To learn more about Kwanzaa visit: officialkwanzaawebsite.org

To learn more about the Frederick Douglass Community Association visit: thedoug419.org

The next event the Kwanzaa House will host is a Black History Month Celebration held at the Frederick Douglass Center in February.

Padua Center...continued from page 9

sources together in unity to benefit the entire community. Emphasis was placed upon support of local businesses and Black Owned businesses where available. The Padua Center hosts Kwanzaa every year since the center's inception and utilizes the principles in its programming year round.

The mission of Padua Center is to be a Christian community-based presence empowering people at all stages of life to achieve their maximum potential through education, counseling, support and community involvement.

To learn more visit: paduacenter.org

Ohio Residents Pay Smallest Share on Dental Work

Special to The Truth

Ohio residents pay the smallest share of their outgoings on dental work, 2.29 percent, accounting for one dollar for every $44, lower than any other state.

Ohio residents spend 28 percent less of their annual outgoings on oral health than the US average.

Of total per capita healthcare expenditure, Ohio residents allocate significantly less to dentistry compared to neighboring states like Indiana (2.95 percent).

Ohio residents face the lowest dental care cost burden of any state, paying just over a quarter (28 percent) less of their annual outgoings on oral health than the US average, new analysis shows. This comes as almost half of US adults say it is difficult to afford health care costs, according to a July 2025 KFF poll.

Research conducted by Toronto dentist Thorncrest Dental (https://thorncrestdental.com/) analyzed Bureau of Economic Analysis data for 2023 on the average annual per capita expenditures across the US. Researchers compared total spending to dental care spending to determine where residents allocate the highest proportion of their income to dental health.

Ohio residents pay the lowest proportion of their outgoings for dental care. Data shows the average resident spends $420 annually on dental care, the sixth-lowest amount nationally. However, Ohio has the 14th-highest per capita spending ($18,381), meaning dental costs account for 2.29 percent of total expenditure, or around one dollar for every $44, making the burden significantly lower than any other state, and 28 percent lower than the US national average.

Neighboring states also rank lowly, with Pennsylvania placing third-lowest at 2.36 percent and West Virginia fourth-lowest at 2.40 percent of personal spending going to dental care.

The US average percentage of annual spending on dental care is 3.2 percent, based on average yearly per capita spending of $16,244 and dental costs of $524.

Speaking on the findings, Dr. Max Dawabsheh from Thorncrest Dental said:

"Northwestern and rural states show the highest proportion of outgoings on dental care. In these states, even modest dental bills can represent a big share of yearly spending, with per-capita personal expenditure below the national average, meaning the percentage spent on going to the dentist is higher than the rest of the country. Secondly, rural states such as Idaho, North and South Dakota, and Montana may have lower living costs, inflating the relative costs for maintaining good oral health compared to other parts of the country.

"While you should never negotiate on quality care, you should always do your research before spending large amounts of money at any dental provider. Check out online reviews on trusted sites and always investigate the option of a free consultation so that any spending on dental work that you may have done is justified and you're ultimately satisfied with what you're spending your hard-earned money on."

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Methodology: 2023 personal expenditure data from the BEA was analyzed to determine which state spent the highest proportion of personal expenditure on dental care costs. This data is given at a state level, and the state with the highest percentage is ranked at the top, descending.

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR DESIGN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The Toledo Lucas County Public Library Board of Trustees is accepting qualifications from design professionals to provide services for its New Library Branch Project on South Detroit Avenue. Interested firms may request an RFQ from Nick Hamilton, Project Coordinator, at Nick.Hamilton@toledolibrary.org<mailto:Nick.Hamilton@toledolibrary.org>. Qualifications will be accepted until 12:00 p.m. local time, Friday, January 23, 2026.

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

Lucas County Child Protection Task Force

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Lucas County Child Protection Task Force will hold public meetings on

December 10, 2025	April 8, 2026
January 14, 2026	April 22, 2026
January 28, 2026	May 13, 2026
February 11, 2026	May 27, 2026
February 25, 2026	June 10, 2026
March 11, 2026	June 24, 2026
March 25, 2026	

All meetings are at 5:30 p.m. and will be held at
Lucas Metropolitan Housing
424 Jackson St.
Toledo, OH

Session 1 Scholarship Deadline Approaching Soon

Winter is here at the Toledo Museum of Art! Join classes in painting, glassblowing, blacksmithing, jewelry making, and more. Perfect for beginners and returning artists. Learn and grow with our welcoming instructors.

Class Dates
* Session 1: January 24 - February 21
* Session 2: February 28 - March 28

Deadline to Apply for Scholarships
* Session 1: January 8, 2026
* Session 2: February 12, 2026

Scholarships are available for both youth and adult students and can cover 100% of the registration fee for most classes. Don't wait—secure your spot and make this winter one to remember.
Classes
Scholarship Info is available at
(https://toledomuseum.org/learn/scholarships?utm_source=ArTMAil&utm_campaign=b017d25dad-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_fall_25_G_s3_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_bc9b2225fc-b017d25dad-579048898&mc_cid=b017d25dad&mc_eid=UNIQID)

Visit Us

2445 Monroe Street
Toledo, OH 43620
419.255.8000
toledomuseum.org

Museum Hours

Wednesday: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thursday: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Friday: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Saturday: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

The Museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
MISSION POINT APARTMENTS

Rudolph Libbe in partnership with Boyd & Associates, will receive proposals for Mission Point Apartments, a 65 unit, 4 story, wood framed supportive housing project. Located at 1401 Monroe St, Toledo, OH.

Bids are due January 23, 2026 at 10:00 am. A community townhall will be held on Thursday January 8, 2026 from 4:00-5:30 pm. Located at Cherry Street Mission Gymnasium at 1501 Monroe, St. Toledo OH.

Documents and additional information are available on Building Connected or by contacting Mary Willbur at 419-725-3249.

This project has MBE/WBE requirements and is covered under Section 3 of the HUD Act of 1968.

This project requires an executed Project Labor Agreement (PLA).
For more information on this project, please contact Mary Willbur at 419-725-3249 or mary.willbur@rlgbuilds.com. This information is subject to change, so please contact us to be added to the information distribution list.

The Frederick Douglass Center's Annual Kwanzaa Celebration

By Dawn Scotland

The Truth Reporter

The Kwanzaa House hosted its annual Kwanzaa celebration from December 26- January 1 at the Frederick Douglass Center at 1001 Indiana Ave. The free weeklong celebration featured activities for adults and as well as for children and included vendors, food, speakers and performances celebrating African American culture and heritage.

Rodney Gordon, president of the Toledo Kwanzaa House, emphasized the importance of the holiday "Kwanzaa teaches the community a lot of valuable things. When it comes to each of the seven principles, I firmly believe you can use them every single day."

Gordon is the grandson of Diane Gordon whose family first started the local Kwanzaa celebrations in Toledo in 1967 in her home. He is continuing the legacy today.

"I really think it's important for the community to continue to grow and develop. To strengthen our bonds and really try to take this time [after Christmas and before the new year] to think about how you want to be in

... continued on page 14

Noble Rose