

Af-Am

POINT OF VIEW

Our Community News Magazine

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Your VOICE
Your COMMUNITY
Your POINT OF VIEW

june 1, 2016

100 MALES TO COLLEGE

"By gender, race, English-language ability, income level and all level of needs, the graduation rate is on the rise."

By Daniel J. Warwick - 6

NEWS FLASH: PUERTO RICANS ARE AMERICAN CITIZENS

"More than 20,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War I; and thousands more have served in every U.S. war and/or conflict ever since."

By Orlando Ramos - 12

TAKE BACK YOUR TIME

"The daily negotiations of being me, deflecting or confronting bigotry, discrimination, sexism and a quagmire of utter stupidity, kept me VERY busy."

By Magdalena Gómez - 14

REFLECTIONS ON FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

"We are proud to be meeting our diversity goals and have had sixty-four People of Color participate over the last five years—36% of alumni. Additionally, 76% of our participants increased their cultural competency as a result of the program."

By Lora Wondolowski - 16

WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

"What these children need is someone to care enough to listen to them read a homework book, tie their shoe laces, and to let them know they are in a place where they can finally relax and just be a child."

By Sean Ludbrook, LSW - 18

MAYOR SARNO, THAT'S NOT AMERICA!

"If he believes such a condescending bunch of baloney, he's not qualified to represent the people of Springfield."

By Frederick A. Hurst - 24

BIG NEWS: MEN ARE FAITHFUL

"The media likes to portray that men and women cheat. It's not news when men and women are faithful to each other."

By Zaida Govan - 28

WILL DOWNING: THE PRINCE OF SOPHISTICATED SOUL WAS DRIPPING WITH CHOCOLATE

"He is known to take a classic R&B song and record it while adding that Will Downing chocolatey deliciousness to it."

By Moyah Smith - 29

HAPPY FATHERS' DAY

"Without you I would not be the man I have become with the vision to see how great it is to be your son."

By Justin Hurst - 32

GOOD PEOPLE WHO MAKE SMALL MISTAKES HAPPY FATHERS' DAY, DREW STRONG

By Frederick A. Hurst

He is a father. And he called me to talk about his daughter and a one-time mistake she made that carried consequences that will not, but should, go away but can't because modern technology will not allow it. And when he came to talk to me, I felt his pain and that of his daughter, who came to my office with him.

His daughter's name is Hanna Strong. I could tell when I first met her that she is a very nice person. But she was wounded and it showed. A one-time event in college had altered her life forever, it seemed, and she was stricken by the realization that she might have to carry the burden of her fleeting actions forever like a scarlet letter for all to see for all time.

For those who missed the most recent controversy, Hanna Strong is the White Syracuse University student who, at the end of a night of partying was caught on camera making

homophobic and racial comments to another student, who recorded her comments and broadcasted them over social media. When her comments were brought to the attention of Syracuse administration, after a hearing, Hanna was required to undergo a humbling series of corrective actions consistent with the college's code of conduct after which she was allowed to remain at school and to graduate.

Thus rehabilitated, Hannah later took a job as a long-term substitute in the Springfield Schools where she was "flourishing" until NAACP President Talbert Swan sent a copy of her social media comments to city officials, Mayor Domenic Sarno and School Superintendent Danny Warwick, who summarily "terminated" her.

Hanna actually thought she was resigning in return for school officials' agreement not to report her separation or the reasons for it to the

media. Hanna complied for several reasons, foremost of which was that her mother is employed by the Springfield School Department and she feared her mother might become a target of retaliation. But just as significantly, she didn't want the controversy around her comment to re-blossom and continue to negatively impact her future.

But, of course, unknown to Hanna, NAACP President Talbert Swan had already sent a copy of his letter to MassLive, which might explain Springfield city officials' hasty reaction, which seemed to be more designed to cover their derrieres rather than to fairly and fully investigate whether and what action might be justified, which is why I became involved and how my "due process" opposition to Hanna's hasty "termination" was publicized in an article in *The Republican*.

continues to page 5

An Effective Dad

By Patricia Spradley



Patricia Spradley

ally, and emotionally, takes a special father—one exactly like you!

No father is perfect. But good fathers keep practicing some basics of being an effective dad by loving, coaching and modeling for their kids. Whether you're a rookie father or a field-battered veteran, it's important that

continues to page 7

Men in Our Lives – Who Do You See?

By Pastor Anthony Roberson



Pastor Anthony Roberson

It is important as we begin to look forward to remember the rich and tremendous history we

as African American people have been blessed to possess. As we begin to reflect on our history, it becomes increasingly important for us to honor those who have paved the way and made invaluable contributions in our lives. Included in this reflection are the ordinary, hard-working, dedicated men in

continues to page 26

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Ben Swan Jr

State Representative



About Ben Jr.

Benjamin Swan, Jr. was born and raised in Springfield, MA. He resides in the McKnight neighborhood with his wife, Luz Maria Astacio Swan. They have three daughters, Luzed Guzman, Alice, and Cora Swan. Ben has built an over thirty-five year career in the private sector, including twenty years in product design and information technology at Smith and Wesson, and a decade at MassMutual where he also served in a range of information technology roles. He is now self-employed as an information systems consultant and rental property owner/manager. Swan has a career in serving the Springfield community as well.

- City of Springfield Planning Board; current Chair
- McKnight Neighborhood Council, Inc.; current Communications Chair & past President
- Springfield Library Foundation; current member of Board of Directors
- Springfield Partners for Community Action; current Clerk & past President of Board of Directors
- Sector F Community Police Beat Management Team; current Chair
- Habitat for Humanity; Volunteer
- Brookings Elementary School; Volunteer math and english tutor
- Springfield Public Schools; former Mentor
- Roca; former member of Advisory Board

“From Springfield, For Springfield...”

To the Voters of the 11th Hampden District,

I don't take lightly my decision to run for State Representative. I don't consider public service a game or opportunity for fame and fortune, but a role that requires responsibility, talent, experience, caring and serious commitment.

Nor do I think that a name is a qualification.

I intend to visit voters and introduce myself; but most importantly I will be listening to your concerns, and seeking to earn your vote. With your support I intend to continue my father's good work on your behalf, and build upon it, as I contribute my own perspective.

It is my hope that I and all the other candidates will run a positive campaign that consists of devoting our time to a public airing of our views and proposed solutions concerning the matters affecting the voters of the district.

I am not a professional politician, but a parent, community servant and concerned citizen who feels strongly that we all should be active participants in the democratic process - particularly in these trying times.

I don't intend to be a person who finds myself someday asking "...what happened?" Instead, with your help and insight, I want to represent our interests in Boston and make great things happen for the 11th Hampden District.

I promise that I will fight for:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Safer Neighborhoods ✓ Services for our Seniors ✓ Veterans Services ✓ Enhanced Educational Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Treatment on Demand to curtail the opioid crisis ✓ Environmental Justice ✓ Youth Development Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CORI/Criminal Justice Reform ✓ Job Training ✓ Community Health |
|--|---|--|

AN AFRICAN AMERICAN *Point of View*

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Community Beat	Terri Schlichenmeyer		Juanita Torrence-Thompson
Community Perspectives	Kenneth Harris		Justin Hurst
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Education & Hope	Nicole Blais		Pennie Woods
Entertainment Review	Gianna Allentuck	Political Happenings	Justin Hurst, Esquire
Features	Moyah Smith		Orlando Ramos
	Felicia Hunter	Positively Life Changing	John Roberson
	Sean Ludbrook	Reading to Succeed	Sally Fuller
	Rosalie Sutton	Religious Point of View	Rev. Dr. Atu White, Editor
	Willette Johnson	School Comm. Happenings	Pastor Anthony Roberson
Food for Thought	Zaida Govan	The Urban Cook	Denise M. Hurst
From the Supt.'s Desk	Daniel J. Warwick	Youth Premier Soccer	Rhonda Jones
Good News	Jay Griffin		Nylan Baldwin
Health Matters	Doris Harris, Editor		
Latin@ Groove	Lorna Isaac		
Leadership Pioneer Valley	Magdalena Gómez		
Life's Challenges	Lora Wondolowski		
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LOCATE OUR ADVERTISERS

Alden Baptist Church	27	NCCJ	5
American International College	22	New Life Calvary Baptist Church	27
Baystate Medical Center	40	Overflowing Love Church of the Living God	27
Bethel AME Church	27	Progressive Community Baptist Church	27
Branford Hall Career Institute	3	Roberta B. Johnson/Real Living Real Estate	17
Canaan Baptist Church of Christ	27	Shiloh Seventh-Day Adventist Church	27
Committee to Elect Ben Swan, Jr.	2	Solid Rock Community Baptist Church	27
Devereux Therapeutic Foster Care	18	Springfield Dept. of Health & Human Services	10
Family Church	27	Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services	15
Freedom Credit Union	9	Springfield Technical Community College	34
Gentle Smiles Family Dentistry	11	St. John's Congregational Church	27
Help Wanted	31	Third Baptist Church	27
Home Inspections by Marco, Inc.	17	Victory Cathedral	19
Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation	35	Wesley United Methodist Church	27
Leadership Pioneer Valley	16	Westfield State University	29
Mason Wright Senior Living	17	WTCC FM 90.7	34
Mount Calvary Baptist Church	27		
Mt. Zion Baptist Church	27		

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AF-AM NEWS bits

By Frederick A. Hurst

STRANGE HAPPENINGS IN THE WORLD OF MUSIC

Mr. Michael Butera was recently terminated from his position as Executive Director and CEO of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) for making negative racial comments about Black and Latino Americans' musical abilities. At a meeting on diversity in the arts convened by the National Endowment for the Arts and attended by sixty-four people from various arts organizations across the country, Mr. Butera said, with apparent pride, that his board was all white and couldn't diversify because they aren't appointed but, rather, he proudly pointed out, they are elected by the membership, which also isn't diverse because, "Blacks and Latinos lack the keyboard skills needed for this field." He also suggested that music theory is too difficult for Blacks and Latinos as an area of study. (I won't even stoop to debate such absurd nonsense.) Mind you, NAfME is a national organization of music educators with affiliates in all 50 states. Its primary mission is to advance and preserve music education as part of the core curriculum of schools in the United States, which makes it that much more inexcusable that an organization that has been around since 1907 and is represented by every state in the union remained blind to racism in its own ranks until this very day after its top leader of ten years exposed himself and the organization he led. And don't think for a minute that Black and Latino school children have not paid a price for this atavism as their urban schools struggle to recover music and art programs that were the first to be cut from tight budgets by callous administrators and politicians. The good news, of course, as pointed out to me by my friend, Michael Yaffe, Associate Dean at the Yale School of Music, is that the outcry in response to Mr. Butera's comments has been tectonic in the industry and needed changes are being debated by honorable people as I write.

GOOD FOR THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS!

For those who don't already know, London, England has elected Sadiq Kahn as its first Muslim mayor. In fact, Kahn is the first Muslim to be elected mayor in any Western capital. And after his election he made some very pointed comments about Donald Trump's Muslim bigotry even as he reaffirmed his friendship with America and even as Donald Trump continues his anti-Muslim bluster. Well, irony of ironies, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, whose president happens to be Stephanie Rawlings-Blake of Baltimore, MD, has invited Sadiq Khan to address its 84th annual meeting in Indianapolis in June. How's that for an in-your-face message to the Republican Party's nominee for President of the United States.

DON'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN

Don't let your guard down. When the pouting is over, Republicans will unite around Donald Trump because they have no other choice. They will embrace him as though they love him and he will reciprocate and both will stomach their differences until the conclusion of the November elections. After that, nobody can guess what will happen. If Trump wins, expect a roller coaster ride. He is as unpredictable as he is unable to be ruled, as is the electorate that has fueled his rise to power. Traditional Republicans might as well take a deep breath and go along for the ride and accept the fact that the tail will be wagging the dog. It is very possible that the Republican Party, as we know it, is dead, a possibility that doesn't faze me and many others. But the alternative could turn out to be very scary. So, don't let your guard down.

DR. CORY FIELDS "HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD"

When I read the *New York Times* article sent to me by a White

friend (Dr. Stephen Wittenberg) titled "What Black Republicans Care About (May 6, 2016)," I knew immediately it was written by an enlightened Black person. And I told him so. And my subsequent research confirmed that Corey D. Fields is a Black Ph.D (Northwestern, 2011) Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Stanford University whose main interests are race, identity and culture. And his article is a lesson-to-be-learned by Republicans who want to expand their ranks and for Black folks who need exposure to an alternative argument. The lesson is so obvious that it is missed by most White folks and especially White Republicans who are quick to embrace and promote "colorblind" Black Republicans, such as Clarence Thomas and Ben Carson, who most Black folks consider absolute traitors. Fields wrote, "Though colorblind black Republicans get a lot of attention, they fail to represent an important, if overlooked, type of black Republican, which I call "race conscious.... What I found was at odds with the message of most black Republicans in the public eye. These race-conscious Republicans saw themselves as closely linked to a broader black community, and most experienced this connection as empowering. They were committed to conservative politics as a tool for the uplift of the black community. While they supported most Republican policy positions, their motivations were grounded in their black identity.... For instance, in their view, the virtue of school vouchers was not the free-market approach to education but rather the empowerment of black parents. They championed smaller government as a way of stemming the influence of white bureaucrats in black communities. One activist described his support of Republican politics as a way to achieve "Black Power through conservative principles.... These Republicans expressed skepticism about G.O.P. outreach efforts and said they rarely felt their opinions were supported within the party. They sensed that while party leaders might want more black faces, the party was less interested in tailoring conserva-

tive messages to address the racial identity of black voters.... As a result, despite their activism, these Republicans found themselves sitting on the sidelines while their colorblind counterparts (who are small in number) were given all the playing time."

While it may be too late in the dawning of the Donald Trump era, Dr. Cory D. Fields has given the G.O.P. the formula for bridging its wide gap with the Black community if Republicans are sincere, which, of course, is much in doubt. Acceptance of Black folks among too many white folks, Republican and otherwise, is often based upon a willingness on the part of Black folks to deny their ethnicity, which is a price most Black folks are rightfully unwilling to pay, including yours truly.

PROBLEMS FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

"Since 2008, Democrats have lost 69 House seats, 13 Senate seats, 12 governorships and 900-plus seats in state legislatures. That drains the party of legislative power and empties its benches." (*Washington Post*, as reported in *The Republican*, May 4, 2016)

REALITY

"We cannot expect the Russians to trust us, however, while we rattle our NATO sword on their borders and off their coasts. Russia will not help us in some areas while we confront it in others.... When the United States decided to expand NATO, we pushed a stick in Russia's eye. That was part of a larger delusion. Americans see our projection of power into other parts of the world as inherently benign and are shocked when others consider it hostile. The United States, like China, seems genuinely puzzled by the fact that it is often considered an aggressive bully. Most other countries realize that when they act against the interests of others, others may react against them, and that when they shoot at someone, he may shoot back." (*Boston Sunday Globe*, May 1, 2016)

Good People Who Make Small Mistakes

continued from page 1

I didn't know Hanna from "Adam or Eve." I just knew that when I read about her termination, something didn't feel right. I got that "it could be me" feeling in my stomach or that "it could be my daughter" or "one of my sons" feeling. It seemed quite obvious to me that a truly responsible responding authority would have needed to know more before taking such drastic action. Who is this young person who is being caught up in the maelstrom of a career meltdown? Is she a bad person...or a good person who made a one-time bad mistake for which she had already paid dearly?

I would have felt compelled to probe such things as "Was her behavior at the time of the college offense normal? Is it continuing? Is she a good teacher, good for Springfield's students? Does her singular youthful transgression justify a life sentence as a racial pariah? Is summarily relegating her to a truncated future for a youthful mistake without learning more about who she was, and who she is now, justified after a review of the totality of the circumstances?"

And as the city's top educational official and as its Mayor, I would have probed NAACP President Talbert Swan's motives and requested some background information and certainly not been spooked into a summary adverse action by his title.

Forgiveness tends to come easily to us Black folks (sometimes, I must admit, too easily). And the fundamental fairness that is the bedrock of due process is something that has been ingrained in our psychological history and embraced by our culture and our spirituality. Because of our own history of struggle in America, I believe we tend to more readily take into account what Jesus meant by saying in defense of a sinner seeking forgiveness, "Let he who is without sin among you cast the first stone," which is why I struggle to understand how a minister of the gospel could have con-

spired with otherwise upstanding public officials to destroy a young woman's career in its infancy before so much as a decent inquiry about what kind of person she was before and what kind of person she is today.

I wasn't defending Hanna Strong in my comments in an article by Ron Chmelis in *The Republican* (January 30, 2016). I didn't even know her. I was defending the legal principal of due process and how essential it is for the well being of all of us. But now that I've met Hanna Strong and her father in person and communicated with them, I don't hesitate to go a step further and defend Hanna Strong, whom I am convinced is a lovely young person who has been cast in the role of the villain by a cast of political-minded characters who used her as a scapegoat to promote and/or protect their own political agendas and thereby callously contributed to making it that much more difficult for Hanna to move on with her life.

I wouldn't even begin to defend Hanna's spontaneous words that were understandably offensive to so many people and nor would she. But I am convinced they were out of character and unwisely spoken in the heat of the moment. At the time they were uttered it is not insignificant that she was with her African-American significant other who was on the Syracuse football team. Hanna was on the Syracuse soccer team and as many college athletes do, she hung out with her fellow athletes who were much more integrated than the student body. Their relationships were not unsimilar to that of entertainers who mix so naturally and almost completely.

But Hanna stepped over the edge when she responded as she did to her unexpected, uninvited and unwanted filming by another student who posted it on the web. And her punishment by school authorities was humbling and swift. And her many Black friends, who offered their emotional support, could do little to stem the public out-

continues to page 24

DIVERSITY

**It's the one true thing
we all have in common.**

let's celebrate!

Annual Human Relations Award Banquet

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National Conference for Community and Justice

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Evan C. Plotkin
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Youth Honorees:

Seth Barrett, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts
Tatieana Lopez, Springfield Central High School
Tiffany Adon, Springfield Central High School



Annual Human Relations Award Banquet

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NCCJ is a human relations organization that promotes inclusion and acceptance by providing education and advocacy while building communities that are respectful and just for all.

Potential banquet attendees can contact Donna Frezza for reservations and more information at 860-683-1039 or dfrezza@nccj.org.

EDUCATION

SCHOOL COMMITTEE HAPPENINGS

It's A Matter of Fundamental of Fairness – Part II

By Denise M. Hurst



Denise M. Hurst,
Springfield School
Committee Member
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After the publishing of my last article, "It's a Matter of Fundamental Fairness" (*POV*, May 1, 2016), I received feedback from readers that the information presented was helpful in understanding the "Charter School" argument and how the increase of charter schools places a great deal of pressure on not only the Springfield Public School district but many other public school districts throughout the Commonwealth. I, therefore, felt it important to provide further information to citizens during the midst of the state budget cycle and as we move closer to the November election with the hope that we will use our voices to advocate for necessary funding and exercise our right to vote in this coming election.

In November when citizens go to the polls to exercise their right to vote, they will find before them a ballot question addressing charter schools. I urge everyone to do their due diligence and research "An Act to Allow Fair Access to Public Charter Schools." This ballot question will allow the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to approve up to 12 additional Commonwealth Charter Schools each year above the limit set by current law.

Many parents and students are now exploring the charter school option for various reasons. The politically widespread argument has been around "choice" and ensuring parents and children are able to exercise options for an alternative to their public school. Another argument, undeniably the most popular and in my opinion the most inaccurate, is the notion that parents are getting a better education

for their children through a "High Performing" charter school. Many of the charter schools that currently exist have not been around long enough to have achieved the data/criteria necessary to be considered a "High Performing" school. In addition, it is not possible to fairly compare some charter schools and our local public schools if we do not have equal comparisons to measure. For example, charter schools do not have the same population of special education students, English Language Learners, higher risk students and students of low income, which we know are populations of students that have complex educational needs.

Contrary to popular belief, school districts who have been identified as failing, underperforming and challenging, such as Springfield and Holyoke, are not the only ones experiencing students fleeing to charter schools. Our surrounding suburban communities, such as Ludlow and Northampton, to name a few, have also begun to feel the adverse effects of charter schools on their student enrollment and operating budgets.

On May 17, 2016, the Senate Ways and Means Committee released its budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2017, with an increase to the Chapter 70 Education budget by \$116.1 million dollars from the last fiscal year. This recommendation is \$10 million more than the House, and more than the \$72 million being recommended by the Governor. This represents an effort to implement one of the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission (FBRC), which was to increase Chapter 70 funding. The Senate Ways and Means Committee is also requiring the Secretary of Administration and Finance and the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means to set an implementation schedule to fulfill the other recommendations to improve funding fairness and adequacy for all school districts. ■

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

100 Males To College

By Daniel J. Warwick



Daniel J. Warwick,
Superintendent at the
Springfield Public Schools

Another graduation season and I could not be more excited for our graduating seniors.



This year, we have the added attraction of a new initiative called 100 Males to College. Because the program launched about a year ago, the seniors who participated in the program are its first graduates.

100 Males to College, an initiative of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education in partnership with Springfield Public Schools (SPS), Springfield Technical Community College, Westfield State University and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, included 59 seniors and 41 juniors. Last year, they all pledged to graduate high school and go on to college.

They were each assigned a high school success coach and they spent the year visiting colleges, receiving guidance through the college application process, and many enrolled in a program that allowed them to take college courses for credit. The program also provided financial aid and

career counseling for the young men and their families and featured several workshops and guest speakers.

The efforts have paid great dividends. Of the 59 seniors, 56 are going to college in the fall and three have enlisted in the military. The 41 juniors will now become mentors to a new class of students joining the program.

Already, the rate of increase in the Springfield Public Schools gradu-

ation rate is the highest in the state. We are proud that our graduation rate is steadily climbing upward and the 100 Males to College program will only increase our rate of improvement.

Of course, the guys are not the only group making great strides in Springfield Public Schools. Across the district, our students are making it to the finish line in greater numbers. By gender, race, English-language ability, income level and all level of needs, the graduation rate is on the rise.

So, as our ever-increasing number of graduates walk across the stage to receive their well-earned high school diplomas this month, I congratulate each one of them, along with their families and the caring adults in their lives.

I salute you all because I know that no child makes it to graduation alone. It takes a village. ■

EDUCATION

PARENTS & COMMUNITY

An Effective Dad



Patricia Spradley is Chief Administrator for Parent and Community Engagement, Springfield Public Schools (413) 787-6597

continued from page 1
you let your children (male and female) see what good fathering looks like. That takes consistent practice!

Your children need your best, you. Every child needs a dad they can count on. And while I am clearly not a father, I do know that every child, especially boys, can only be fathered by men! So as a mother to a father, please accept my small gift, in a loving manner. I would like to share my perspective on a few of the basics, as I see them. They are by no means, the end all and be all to fathering.

Loving – responding to the emotional needs of your family members. It's time, talk and touch, laying a foundation for a child to grow and thrive. Your children need to know that you love them no matter what, simply because of who they are. Be careful not to have tunnel vision, focusing only on those "things" that they do. One way that might help, is to reflect back to your own childhood days. Some key behaviors include listening, encouraging and affirming. It also includes showing honor and respect for your wife or child's mother. Together, dads and moms can form a great parenting team.

Coaching – the lifelong process of shaping, mentoring and empowering your child as he or she moves toward

adulthood. As your children's "coach," you have a thorough awareness of their unique gifts, interests, challenges and vulnerabilities. Be certain to point out the positive qualities every chance you get. And help them work through those challenging areas. Then, you're able to use that knowledge to better meet your children's needs as you actively participate in their lives and carry out healthy discipline and correction, when needed.

Modeling – living with the constant awareness that your children are influenced by *watching* what you do just as much as (or even more than) by what you say. Demonstrating consistency in your character and your behavior helps your children have confidence and security to do their best. They will come to expect it. It also puts you in a great position to discuss and demonstrate the values and spiritual truths that are important to you. Remember, they love their dad and, therefore, they love the things that you do and share with them. They are really just imitators of you; so be careful.

God in His goodness, through this precious relationship between my children, grandchildren and their Dad and Pop Pop, has blessed me with a glimpse of what God's love for us looks like.

But, there is one big difference. His relationship with us is perfect and yours with your children is not. And that's all right because you are practicing to be an "Effective Dad"!

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!



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EDUCATION & HOPE

Destiny's Story

By Gianna Allentuck



Gianna Allentuck is an Adjustment Counselor at Elias Brookings School, Volunteer, Wife and Mother. For questions or comments on uniting in hope, call (703) 930-0243

If you believe in angels the way I do then you see, hear, feel, and sense them in the smile of a care-free child; the laughter of a wise older woman; the hug of a best friend; or the love of a cherished family member. And though typically pictured with wings floating in the Heavens or flying high watching over us, angels more accurately often walk and breathe among us. Sometimes, they are us.

Destiny Gonzalez was an angel who graced our hearts, our lives, and our earth with her big bright eyes, beautiful spirit, and precious smile. Whether walking through school in the loving wake of her mama; running and playing with friends on the playground for recess; nestling in between her mama and papa reading her favorite book; or snuggling and giggling with her brother and sister on the couch, Destiny touched and changed our lives. She inspired us.

And she loved to read.

In May, I had the honor and privilege of participating with Destiny's family and closest friends in a special lantern lighting ceremony at her graveside in celebration of her birthday. After sentiments were shared by her parents and loved ones, and her cousins took turns reading her a treasured story – one she was never able to finish – we lit the lanterns and floated them on the breath of God high into the clouds where they shone bright like stars. Little rays of hope winking to us and twinkling like the sparkle in Destiny's eyes. Reassuring us that her light will forever shine in our hearts and her story will continue on...

Author's note:

Please help us lift up Destiny's memory and story by supporting The Destiny Gonzalez Memorial Book Drive and Scholarship Fund, a non-profit project created to honor the life of a special little girl who enjoyed the wonderful world of reading. She religiously went to the library in search of her next weeks' worth of books until a tragic accident on one fateful trip to the library cost her her life. Even though she is not with us today, we would like to share Destiny's love of reading and literacy with the community by collecting and distributing quality and age-appropriate books to children in our City. These books would enable them to start a home library or add to a pre-existing one. Our wish is to provide the books needed to develop reading habits which will build the foundation for their lifelong love of reading and academic success.

Additionally, through any monetary donations we receive, we hope to reward an Elias Brookings Elementary School (Destiny's school) student who shows outstanding reading progress and creative writing skills with a scholarship to a Summer camp of his/her choosing. The recipient will be selected based on a school-wide essay contest.

Please help us keep the memory of Destiny alive through the smile a love of books can create on a child's face. For more information regarding the Book Drive or Scholarship Fund, please feel free to contact me at 703.930.0243 or gallentuck@aol.com or visit the Destiny Gonzalez Memorial Book Drive and Scholarship Fund Facebook page. Or drop off new or gently used books to Elias Brookings Elementary School at 433 Walnut Street in Springfield, where they will be distributed to Brookings students on June 15.

EDUCATION

READING TO SUCCEED

Summer Learning Programs: Fun AND Learning!

By Sally Fuller



Sally Fuller heads the Reading Success by 4th Grade (RS4G) initiative for the Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation, to build community support and align efforts for all Springfield's children to read proficiently on the 3rd grade MCAS. www.readby4thgrade.com

Reading Success by 4th Grade has produced a guide to summer learning programs in the City. This Summer Learning Guide provides a listing of 2016 camp programs available throughout the city to your children ... and to you!



Through fun and engaging activities and programs, children will be learning while they're having fun.

Keeping our children engaged during the long school break helps to avoid summer learning loss that often puts children behind academically when they return to school in the fall.

You can access this guide online by clicking <http://www.readby4thgrade.com/blog/news/summer-program-guide-2016/>

or
<http://www.readby4thgrade.com/resources/summer/>

Hard copies of the guide are

available at the Springfield City Library and its branches, the Springfield Public Schools Parent and Community Engagement Center (91 School Street), and New England Farm Workers Council (1628-1640 Main Street).

Some programs are free or at a very low cost, some have optional extended hours, and some accept vouchers and have transportation available. Most provide lunch and a snack.

Take time to read through the guide for information about all of the

programs and all of the details, including program locations, hours and registration requirements (contact information is included). There are programs for all ages and interests.

Swimming, arts and crafts, sports, reading and healthy activities will ensure that children are having fun while keeping their minds active. There are also academic programs to keep middle and high school youth on track for graduation.

Make the most of the summer break by preparing your children for school while they are having fun, making new friends and increasing their learning skills at the same time!

EARLY EDUCATION & CARE

Kindergarten Here We Come

By Nicole Blais



Nicole Blais is Director of Community Engagement HCS Head Start, Inc. blaisn@headstart.org

The end of the school year is finally here. It never ceases to amaze me how quickly the months fly by. The days may have been long but the year was short.

HCS Head Start experienced a tremendous growth spurt this past school year. We opened new classrooms, hired new staff and welcomed new families into the program. Your preschooler had a growth spurt of their own while they were in school. Working on their fine motor skills by using scissors or holding a paint brush, mastering the art of sharing (that's always a work in progress) and practicing their self-help skills by zipping up jackets and putting on their shoes are the growth spurts or milestones that are preparing your little learner for their next big step into kindergarten.

As preschoolers suddenly become kindergarteners we wanted to remind our parents to stay involved and engaged in their children's educational journey. Get to know the teachers and staff at your child's new school, join the PTO and ask your new kindergartner everyday about their day at school. Make sure they get plenty of rest, attend school regularly and are read to every night.

Your child has learned so much in the past preschool year and we do not want to lose the learning momentum during the summer months. Continue to talk with and to your child so you help build their vocabulary. Your 5-year-old should have about 1500 words in their vocabulary arsenal and you can increase their language development by talking and reading. Visit the library or tell stories about what you did during the summer when you were a little boy or girl.

Practice counting, identify colors and point out the letters that are in their name. Assign simple chores like putting toys back in the toy box, sort the laundry by color and help set the table for dinner. This extension of classroom learning will do wonders for your child and will make sure they have a smooth transition into kindergarten. It has been a year to remember and we would like to congratulate the graduates of the program and wish their families good luck as they leave the Head Start nest. Your child is primed and ready to learn.

HCS Head Start would like to say **Happy Father's Day** to all of the fathers and father-figures out there and invite you to the **18th Annual Dads Make a Difference Event scheduled for June 18, 2016 from 12:00 PM-2:00 PM at the Springfield Museums.** For more information on this wonderful, long-standing family event, please call 413-788-6522. ■



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BUSINESS & FINANCE

SPECIAL TO POINT OF VIEW

Federal Funds Available to Create and Expand Apprentice Programs

By Felicia Hunter

\$90 Million Committed to White House Job-Skills Initiative; DOL Accepting Proposals

From the beginning, President Barack Obama and his vice president, Joe Biden, knew that expanding the middle class would be a major focus throughout their administration.

"When we took office, we said our primary function was to restore and maintain the middle class," said Biden in a recent conference call with reporters. He and Obama "have said all along," Biden added, "that expanding the middle class is the single most important thing we can do."

To that end, the administration has introduced and supported a number of programs focused on training, education and job creation. Among the most recent is ApprenticeshipUSA, a \$90 million initiative to increase the country's skilled workforce through paid, on-the-job-training apprentice opportunities. Funding for the program, which is administered through the Department of Labor, was included in the Fiscal Year 2016 spending bill. The bipartisan-supported allotment is based on Obama's budget request. It was signed into law last year.

"It's not often that we see new investments of money in this divided Congress," said Secretary of Labor Tom Perez, adding, "We want to both double and diversify" the nation's apprenticeship programs.

Perez and Jeff Zients, director of the National Economic Council, joined Biden to speak with reporters about ApprenticeshipUSA on April 21. Elements of the program include grants for which proposals currently are being accepted.

The initiative addresses a pervasive need for technical expertise, Perez said.

"Employers say in order to grow their business they need a skilled workforce. That is the conversation I hear time and time again," he said.

According to a White House release, 87 percent of apprentices obtain employment after they complete their program, and those apprentice graduates average a starting wage of more than \$50,000 annually.

"Apprenticeships are a proven pathway towards good jobs and higher earnings," said Zients, calling the concept "a no-brainer" benefiting both

workers and employers. Echoing Biden and Perez, Zients said this latest program "will accelerate the growth of apprenticeships."

It is a growth President Obama jump-started during his 2014 State of the Union address when he emphasized the need for apprenticeships. Since then, 75,000 new apprenticeships have been added in the United States, said Biden.

Perez cited the success of apprenticeship programs over the past two years in states such as Iowa, California, Georgia and Connecticut. In Georgia, for example, workforce-development entities and community colleges partnered with more than 30 employers regarding apprenticeships. And in Connecticut, employers seeking to expand their apprenticeship programs can receive support through the state's Manufacturing Innovation Fund.

ApprenticeshipUSA seeks to build on such training opportunities, said Perez. He said \$60 million of the funds are targeted to "support state strategies to grow and diversify apprenticeship programs." Grants will be available to all states for apprenticeships in advanced manufacturing, health-care, transportation and other industries, he noted. The remaining \$30 million is intended for apprenticeship expansion through industry-driven partnerships with workforce development organizations, labor associations, industry groups, training providers and employers.

Perez said there is no particular course of action required from states in order to receive funds.



Vice President
Joe Biden



Sec of Labor
Thomas E. Perez

In fact, innovation might be necessary to help achieve one of ApprenticeshipUSA's goals: increasing the number of minorities, women and people with disabilities within the skilled workforce.

"We do not expect a one-size-fits-all end of the game here," said Perez. "What we do expect is a variety."

The ultimate goal is to create opportunity, he said.

"Opportunity is there for the taking, and apprenticeship is one of the best ways to open the door to seize that opportunity," Perez said, adding, "What we're trying to do with this program is to make sure we incentivize states to develop their own apprenticeship program."

That sits well with Paul Joseph, president and CEO of MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, based in Framingham, MA, who favors the concept of apprenticeship programs.

"I love it, [the idea of] the previous generation teaching the next generation. Learn by doing," Joseph said. Apprenticeships also have the advantage of "creating a knowledgeable worker that has both technical skill and expertise, but also institutional skill and expertise."

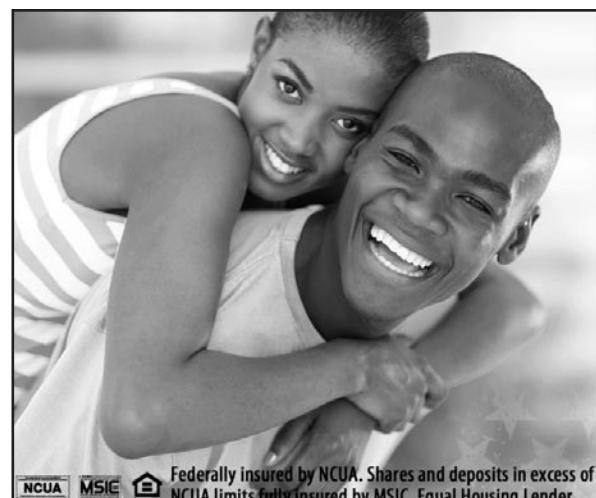
He believes there are "a lot of great ideas" about effective apprenticeships, but would like to see more exploration of the roles of the federal government, state government and private sector in providing them.

"What we lack in the United States is a nationwide workforce strategy, something that demonstrates the importance of investing in sustainability," Joseph said. Yet, he said, the specifics of apprenticeship programs should be determined by local administrators.

"When we put programs like this into place, we run the risk of over-defining," he noted. "How it's implemented should be left to local" entities.

Joseph said in his region it would be difficult to suggest which kind of

continues to page 25



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HEALTH

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Mother's Day Wasn't A Celebration for Everyone

Infertility, a condition which prevents the conception of children, is diagnosed in 1 in 10 American couples

Springfield, MA – Not everyone was celebrating recently on Mother's Day.

Infertility, a condition which prevents the conception of children, is diagnosed in 1 in 10 American couples throughout the United States. It's not just a woman's problem – it affects males equally. But, thanks to modern assisted reproductive technologies today, there is hope, and they may be celebrating next year on Mother's Day.

Each year more than six million people of childbearing age in the United States experience infertility, with one million seeking treatment from reproductive endocrinologists such as those found at Baystate Reproductive Medicine. For over three decades, doctors at the only full-service fertility program in Western Massachusetts have helped thousands of couples to become parents.

One of those couples is Jocelyn Martinez and her husband Miguel Martinez of Holyoke.

After struggling for two years to conceive, the couple turned to Baystate Reproductive Medicine for assistance where Martinez underwent in vitro fertilization.

"At the simplest level for explanation, in vitro fertilization can be described as technologists in a lab manually fertilizing an egg with sperm in a glass laboratory dish – and that is what in vitro means, in a glass – then later transferring the embryo to the woman's uterus," said Dr. Kelly Lynch, IVF program director.

The couple began in vitro fertilization in 2012, when after a few setbacks, including miscarriage, the couple on July 1, 2015, welcomed the birth of their adorable Sebastian Martinez.

"It was an emotional roller coaster, but my husband kept asking

me 'please, please, please' try just one more time, and that's when in October 2014, I learned that I was pregnant again," said Martinez.

"The doctors, nurses and staff were just amazing....always so warm-hearted to me and my family. In fact, I just sent an email to Ellen (Tougias) thanking her for always being there for me and having the right words throughout the sadness, when I miscarried, and the joy of my journey," said Martinez.

Ellen Tougias, RN, nurse coordinator for Baystate Reproductive Medicine, said, couples struggling with infertility face many emotional side effects.

"It is a difficult process filled with

anxiety, frustration, anger and fear of the unknown outcome. Our job is to help our patients through this process with compassion and empathy, so they know we truly care about them and want to make the process a little easier for them," she said.

Among the state-of-the-art fertility services offered at Baystate Reproductive Medicine are infertility treatments including ovulation induction, intrauterine insemination (IUI), in vitro fertilization (IVF), intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), assisted hatching, a donor egg program, and gestational carrier services. The program also offers reproductive surgery for patients.

According to Dr. Lynch, a treat-

ment plan depends on the reasons for infertility. Oral medications are often used to treat problems with ovulation. Fallopian tube blockages in a woman and general male infertility are treated more effectively with in vitro fertilization.

Baystate Reproductive Medicine's IVF data shows high success rates in four age categories, while adhering to the guidelines for number of embryos transferred. Fewer embryos transferred translates to a lower incidence of multiple births.

IVF success rates are reported to the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology (SART) by reputable IVF centers. SART lists the success rates of all IVF centers in the region, including Baystate Reproductive Medicine.

In addition to helping women with fertility problems, Baystate Reproductive Medicine now assists women who want to freeze their eggs for later use.

"This is especially beneficial for women undergoing cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiation, which can destroy their eggs. It's also for those women who want to delay childbearing for a variety of social reasons from pursuing an education to career or other personal goals," said Dr. Lynch.

"It's important to note, however, that most experts feel that the success rate for this procedure is best for women under the age of 38," she added.

Baystate is also the only fertility clinic in Western Massachusetts to offer women the option to freeze their eggs.

To schedule an appointment, or for more information, call 413-794-7045 or visit baystatehealth.org/bmc. ■



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"Preparation through education is less costly than learning through tragedy."

For more information or to schedule a training contact:

**Springfield Department of Health/
Human Services**
(413) 787-6761/787-6458(fax)
Email: bafrederic@springfieldcityhall.com

**Helen R. Caulton-Harris
Director**

HEALTH

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Learn and Live

Children May Develop High Blood Pressure

Springfield, MA – Despite popular belief, teens, children and even babies can have high blood pressure, also called HBP or hypertension. It's not just a disease for the middle-aged and elderly. As with adults, early diagnosis and treatment can reduce or prevent the harmful consequences of this disease.

High Blood Pressure in children can lead to heart and kidney disease. There are also diseases which can cause high blood pressure in children as well as adults. As with secondary hypertension, once the problem is resolved, blood pressure usually returns to normal.

When it comes to blood pressure in children, "normal" is relative. It depends on three factors: gender, age and height. Your child's doctor can tell you what's right for your child, because "normal" is a complicated calculation based on these factors.

What leads to HBP in children? There may be many factors. These can include:

- Diseases including heart and kidney disease
- Some medications
- Family history
- Excess weight or obesity
- Race, particularly African-Americans are at increased risk

Visiting your pediatrician to discuss treatment options is

vital in controlling HBP. As in adults, HBP in children is typically managed with lifestyle changes, including:

- Enjoying a heart-healthy diet
- Participating in regular physical activity
- Managing weight

The doctor may also prescribe medication if an appropriate diet and regular physical activity don't bring the high blood pressure under control.

Children and teens should also be taught the dangers of tobacco use and protected from secondhand smoke. While cigarettes aren't directly related to high blood pressure, they do cause a number of health risks. Parents should set a good example by not smoking and educating their children about the hazards of smoking.

Give your kids the best possible start by helping them develop heart-healthy habits early. Learn more about preventing and managing childhood obesity at heart.org/kids. ■

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Be smoke free:

Smoking is linked to many causes of death, including lung disease, heart attack and stroke. Ask your primary care doctor for tips and medication on how to quit or for a referral to a tobacco treatment specialist.



Lorna Isaac

Vaccinations: Talk with your health care team about whether you need vaccinations (shingles, pneumonia, tetanus) or other vaccinations.

Depression: Your emotional health is as important as your physical health. Talk to your doctor or nurse about being screened for depression, especially if during the last two weeks you've felt sad or hopeless, and had little interest or pleasure in interacting with others or doing social activities.

Harmful behaviors: If you engage in harmful behaviors such as excessive alcohol and drug abuse, unprotected sex, domestic violence, or behaviors that put you or others at risk for injury or infection, ask your doctor for recommendations.

Remember, you know your body better than anyone else. Always tell your doctor or nurse about any changes in your health, including your vision and hearing. Use a car seat belt and motorcycle helmet, and use sunscreen and UV protective eyewear. Overall, live a life of good health, happiness, relaxation and peace. ■

The key to taking care of yourself is making sure you take simple steps to support your health, family and future.

Get moving: Regular exercise is one important activity that you can do for your health. Before beginning an exercise regimen, talk to your doctor.

Eat healthy: Focus on fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low fat or fat free milk products. Learn nutrition basics and how to read food labels.

Healthy weight: Get a healthy weight and stay there. Balance the calories you take in from food and drink with the calories you burn off by your activities.

Get routine exams and screenings: Ask your doctor about screening tests for certain diseases and health conditions, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, prostate and colon cancer. Be your own health advocate and find out how often you should be examined and be knowledgeable about the medications you're taking.

Dental care: Regular dental visits are important because they can help spot dental health problems early and help many problems from developing in the first place. Visiting your dentist regularly is also important because some diseases or medical conditions have symptoms that can appear in the mouth.

COMMUNITY

POLITICAL HAPPENINGS - SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL



*Justin Hurst, Esquire
At-Large Springfield
City Councilor
jhurst@springfieldcity-hall.com
413-374-5844*

Fiscal Year 2017 Budget: 616.8 Million Dollars

By City Councilor Justin Hurst, Esquire

Pros:

City of Springfield: The city will maintain **40 million dollars** in its stabilization account and **avoid layoffs or service reductions.**

Police Department: 60 new cadets will be graduating from the police academy in fall of 2016, which after attrition, will bring the total number of new officers to 20 (15 new Police Officers and 5 New Sergeants).

Department of Parks and Facilities: \$100,000 was added to the budget to expand **after school programs** as well as the number of schools **offering open gym** during the winter months.

Office of Veterans Affairs: An additional **Service Investigator** will be added to ease caseloads and provide improved veterans services. (It was great to learn that Tom Belton received an additional Full Time Employee this year after he was “**vilified**” in 2016 by the administration for having the courage to express to Councilors in a budget hearing that his department was understaffed.)

Cons:

City of Springfield: The city is using the **\$5.5 million dollars** in revenue from MGM as part of the host-agreement to balance the budget.

Police Department: Many, if not all, of the additional 20 police officers will support a new **E-3 Metro Policing Unit**, which will increase police presence on **Main Street** downtown. Meanwhile, there are people in other neighborhoods who would love to see the increased police presence where they live.

School Department: Over **30 million dollars** of the School Department’s roughly 395 million dollar budget is allocated for transportation, which is largely the result of an unfunded state mandate and an increase in charter schools.

Administration & Finance: Our pension liability is only **26% funded in Fiscal Year 2017**, which is down from **54% in Fiscal Year 2001**. We have the lowest percentage of pension funding in the state and must follow a more aggressive funding schedule in the coming years if we are to increase pension funding to where we were at in 2001.

NEWSFLASH: Puerto Ricans Are American Citizens!

By City Councilor Orlando Ramos

I’m amazed to see how many people don’t know that Puerto Ricans are American citizens. Here’s a brief history lesson for those who don’t know:

- The island of Puerto Rico was surrendered to the United States by Spain in December 1898 as part of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish-American War.
- On March 2, 1917 President Woodrow Wilson signed The Jones Act into law—which **granted U.S. Citizenship** to the people of Puerto Rico. The Act also meant that most United State laws went into effect in Puerto Rico as in the United States including the National Defense Act of 1916 which resulted in the United States military occupying the island, and the U.S Armed Forces recruiting (and eventually drafting) Puerto Ricans to help in WWI. More than 20,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War I; and

thousands more have served in every U.S. war and/or conflict ever since.

- On July 3, 1952, the people of Puerto Rico approved a constitution which among other things, established themselves as “The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.” Commonwealths enjoy more independence versus an unincorporated territory which does not share the same benefits. As a Commonwealth, they are a political unit having local autonomy but voluntarily united with the United States.

Although every person born in Puerto Rico is automatically a United States citizen, residents of Puerto Rico cannot vote for the U.S. President (this includes service men and woman who are required to take orders from the Commander in Chief). There is a very ugly history of what our ancestors had to endure during this process, that I will choose not to discuss here, but the details of that

history contradict the notion that citizenship somehow came easy, or that it was not earned. For anyone interested in reading more, feel free to Google the name Dr. Pedro Albizu-Campos and you will see what I am referring to.

I say all this to say that Puerto Ricans are NOT immigrants. We are citizens of the United States of America. With that in mind, it is important for Congress to act on Puerto Rico’s financial crisis. Puerto Rico currently has a 12.5 percent unemployment rate, and a 41 percent poverty rate. Since the beginning of the island’s economic downturn, 450,000 people have fled the island in search of employment. Where are they going? They are coming to the mainland—the lower 48 states. They are moving to New York, New Jersey, Florida, Connecticut, and, yes, Massachusetts. Our local economy is not equipped to handle this sort of influx. We already do not have enough jobs for Springfield residents; we are struggling to keep up with the rising

cost of public education and school busing; what is going to happen in 3-4 years when the population of our city rapidly increases by the thousands?

So for those who want to ask the question “What does this have to do with us?” This is “us” that we are talking about! We are talking about American citizens who need our help; and if we do not act swiftly, we will begin to feel the effects right here in Western Massachusetts very soon.

As I mentioned earlier, Puerto Rico is neither an independent nation, nor an U.S. state, but rather a Commonwealth of the United States. Because of this, Puerto Rico cannot claim bankruptcy in the same way other municipalities can (i.e. Detroit) under current U.S. bankruptcy laws. This needs to change! The Puerto Rico Chapter 9 Uniformity Act of 2015—which is currently before



Orlando Ramos

continues to page 25

COMMUNITY

POLITICAL HAPPENINGS - HAMPDEN COUNTY SHERIFF'S RACE



Michael Albano

Correction upon election, the Albano Committee announced today.

Stating the supervisory staff "needs to be

streamlined and made more efficient," Councillor Albano announced the following plan of action:

- reduce the classification of Superintendents from 29 to 6;
- eliminate the (six) positions of Primary Captains;
- reduce the number of Lieutenant positions from 20 to 11; and,
- reduce the Sergeants positions from 37 to 17.

The changes would be made through attrition

and the reassignment of personnel with a projected annual savings of \$4.2 million.

"The savings would be redirected for pay equity for correctional officers; inmate mental health counseling programs; and crime prevention initiatives," Councillor Albano stated.

"Based on a review of correctional centers across Massachusetts, there is no rational explanation for current supervisory model." ■



Thomas Ashe

Springfield, MA — Candidate for Hampden County Sheriff, Thomas M. Ashe announced today (April 20, 2016) that he has a comprehensive plan for a "Regional Lockup" if he is elected Sheriff and he has begun securing support from members of the legislative delegation and local law enforcement officials for his initiative.

"It is time for a Regional Lockup at the Hampden County Sheriff's Department. Our communities have waited too long," Ashe said.

Ashe proposes that a Regional Lockup facility be run by the Sheriff's Department at the current

site of the Hampden House of Correction on Randall Road in Ludlow. "There are empty pods at the jail that can accommodate those arrested by local police departments. As Sheriff, I would use that space to help reduce the burden currently put on local police departments so we can get our police officers back on the streets."

Currently, most individuals arrested in Hampden County cities and towns are held for short periods of time in the town in which they were arrested. Under Ashe's plan for a Regional Lockup, offenders would be brought to the regional facility in Ludlow, rather than being held at a local police department. "The Sheriff's Department has the re-

sources to secure and care for these individuals. Most importantly, the Regional Lockup would have a medical team."

Without a Regional Lockup that has appropriate medical staff, individuals that come under the custody of a local police department and who indicate that they have a physical issue which warrants a certain level of medical treatment must be transported to a hospital. "We have dozens of officers every week who need to be pulled off the streets to sit in hospitals and monitor offenders. It's outrageous and a waste of resources. As Sheriff, I will have a Regional Lockup with medical staff on our team." ■



James Gill, candidate for Sheriff of Hampden County, rolls up his sleeves to show his support of the DEA and local Police Departments' Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

On Saturday, April 30th, James Gill who, after submitting an excess of the required num-

James Gill Shows His Commitment to the County

ber of signatures on the State Nomination papers the previous Friday stated, "Now we move forward in doing and being what the people of this County deserve—an in-tune and visibly involved sheriff."

Supt. Gill then visited eight cities and towns throughout the county in support of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and local police departments' National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. The candidate visited Hamden, Palmer, Ludlow, Chicopee, West Springfield, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow and finished his tour in Springfield.

"It was both a long and rewarding day," the candidate said. "With

our growing opioid problem, it does the heart good to see how many amazing people we have in Hampden County that know and understand the importance of proper disposal of the prescription pills, which in the wrong hands, could enable the substance abuser to use and abuse these narcotics."

Gill says an estimated one-third of prescription medications are never used. Over 60 percent of teenagers who abuse painkillers say that the drugs were easily accessible in medicine cabinets of their families and 80 percent of heroin addicts report that they first abused prescription pain medication.

Gill saluted the police departments of Hampden County who hosted the Prescription Drug Take Back Day saying, "These men and women are the real heroes of Hampden County. As Sheriff I look forward to working with and supporting their initiatives. In all, a total of 2,032 pounds of opioids were collected from the eight cities and towns in Hampden County, with 880 pounds received in Springfield alone for incineration."

"I'm in awe of the turnout of the numbers of responsible citizens we have in our county. It inspires me more to work to be 'The People's Sheriff.'" ■

COMMUNITY

LATIN@ GROOVE



Magdalena Gómez is the Co-founder and Artistic Director of Springfield's first and only Latin@theater, Teatro V!da. Ms. Gómez has been a teaching artist for over 35 years.

With one exception, I have yet to experience a wake, funeral or memorial service that was truly a celebration of a person's life. Either the deceased weren't worthy of a celebration, or the living were too riddled with grief or guilt to pull it together; no instructions had been left, leaving it all to chance; or the events were taken over by impostors who took the opportunity to stage their own dog and pony shows.

I've seen people do some of their best networking at funerals. In any case, I've always felt the greatest travesty is when we save the best for last. The best should be first, and every day a reminder of our mortality. The time to say it is now; the time to do it is now; don't let yourself need a drink to dance, you might never get another chance.

I recently received a handwritten letter from a young playwright whom I have never met, telling me, in part, about the positive influence that my example and written words have had on his life. It reminded me how much I used to love writing letters to loved ones and poems for strangers. I had regular pen pals in Paris, Greece, Cuba and London. Then the Demon of Busy arrived.

The arrival of the Busy Demon in my life coincided with my arrival in Western Massachusetts, where it took me over a year to have someone respond to my job search letters and packets. My working artist savings circled the Reaganomics drain. Life became all about making ends meet and piecing together a livelihood in a place where I was viewed with suspicion. It just wasn't possible that a Puerto Rican could be so smart and competent. "You speak English so well."

Take Back Your Time

By Magdalena Gómez



"You don't look Puerto Rican." "What do you mean you don't have a Ph.D.?" "Where did you learn to speak Spanish? Oh, my God, I was sure you were *una gringa*." "I thought you were Jewish."

From my style of dress, to my looks, the Nuyorican accent, and my assertive ways, this Valley just wasn't feeling me. When I looked for an apartment on my own in Northampton, I was interrogated as to the depth of my Porto-Reeken-ness and a previous landlord was asked, "Is she the type to trash the apartment?" Another realtor told me how "hilarious" it was when his "Mexican best friend" changed his name and fooled everyone, with no clue as to how horrible it was that he felt he had to do this. Another time, an available house went unavailable as soon as I introduced myself. A school principal refused to shake my hand. A university professor turned to a friend of mine upon first meeting me and asked: "Does your friend speak English?" Apparently, I was considered incapable of speaking for myself. The daily negotiations of being me, deflecting or confronting bigotry, discrimination, sexism and a quagmire of utter stupidity, kept me

VERY busy. My New York City days of long talks at midnight cafe meetings and walking across the Brooklyn Bridge were over. Things have changed somewhat here, but I'm still in exile from all the boxes where I just don't fit nor do I want to. Yes, I used to write letters, and then the Demon of Busy decided that earning a living doing meaningful work that would benefit my community was simply going to drain the life out of me, as true and sustainable support was difficult to come by.

I wish to encourage you who have experienced and entertained the Demon of Busy, that is rooted in economics and discrimination, to take back your moments of liberation. It can begin by writing a hand written letter to someone you love. Perhaps it is time to say those things that have been left unsaid. Don't wait for the eulogy. Think about the last time you received a thoughtful (not obligatory) card or letter in the mail. When was the last time you received a handwritten letter or note? Who in your life could you benefit right now with a thoughtful letter? How will you feel once you've addressed the envelope and stamped it?



In June, many people's thoughts in the U.S. turn to weddings, Father's Day, high school graduations. Imagine sending a letter to a young graduate (homage to Rilke) sharing blessings and wisdom and stories of what that transition might mean. Graduation is a rite of passage – a moment to mark with your heartfelt words. The same for a young couple entering a new life together – one might offer good wishes and thoughts for reflection. Is there a father figure in your life? How about a letter of gratitude?

Not all letters are for happiness alone; some are for healing. Perhaps he hasn't been the best father and there are things you need to say to clear the next stage of life for you both. Again, a handwritten letter demonstrates commitment and underscores a bond.

I once dreamt that my mother was in a coffin in a golden palace filled with golden peacocks in their full, expansive glory – heaven's Drag Queens, bringing joy to death. However, my mother's face was pinched and angry. I heard a voice in the dream say: "Truth is better than consolation." I proceeded in the dream to tell her how she had harmed me. She understood that by telling her, I was releasing her and the hurt between us. Her face melted into a beatific peacefulness.

I want the letters now, and the Drag Queens later, bringing joy into the room where my ashes are on display, as people tell real stories, laugh, dance to disco, eat gourmet hors d'oeuvres, served by beautiful half-naked men and women gliding on vintage roller skates that require a key. ■

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES



Bishop
Talbert W. Swan, II
is Pastor of The Spring Of
Hope Church Of God
In Christ

The attack on gender norms across America has now hit a feverish pitch as biologically-assigned gender has become offensive and states like Massachusetts and North Carolina consider laws that will allow people to use the bathroom of their choice based upon whatever gender they “identify” with. While I empathize with those who struggle with transgenderism, America is headed down a slippery slope by rejecting our God-given gender, based on the internal struggles of a small fraction of the population. The reality is, no matter how loud the LGBTQ community gets while accusing those

Gay Or Transgender Is NOT The ‘New Black’

By Bishop Talbert W. Swan, II

who believe that sex and gender are not socially constructed, cosmetic and surgical additions or subtractions do not make one a male or female. Furthermore, contrary to the rantings of academic and political commentator John McWhorter and others, neither gay nor transgender is “the new black.” Any such suggestion is insulting at best and downright ignorant and disrespectful at worst.

In *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Frederick Douglass details the struggles faced by African American slaves as he writes:

It is a common custom...to part children from their mothers at a very early age. Frequently, before

the child has reached its twelfth month, its mother is taken from it, and hired out on some farm a considerable distance of... For what this separation is done, I do not know, unless it be to hinder the development of the child's affection toward its mother and to blunt and destroy the natural affection of the mother for the child. This is the inevitable result (pg. 17).

Those who would later fight in the Civil Rights movement struggled against the effects of these societal malpractices. The legacy of broken families forged the DNA for how African-Americans were viewed then, during the Civil Rights movement, and even today. Even after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, slaves were constitutionally free, yet weren't institutionally, culturally, or lawfully free.

So, let's be candid, there has never been a time in the history of America—and never will be—where homosexual or transgendered men or women will know the horrors of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, or the generational degradation as a result of their long lasting effects. I could easily list more than one hundred reasons why it's historically insulting to the legacy and current identity of African Americans to call “gay the new black” or to compare the so-called “struggle” of transgendered persons to use the bathroom of their choice with the African American struggle for civil rights. However, for the sake of argument, let's look at a few reasons why there is a stark difference between the issues surrounding the Civil Rights movement and those surrounding the fight for certain LGBTQ “rights.” Here's why the two shouldn't even be mentioned in the same conversation:

There has never been—“heterosexual only” and “gay only” water

fountains, diners, buses, or schools. The LBGTQ community will never have to face 75 years of oppressive Jim Crow laws;

Neither homosexuals nor transgendered persons have been systematically snatched away from their families at birth for the purpose of division and dehumanization;

Homosexual and transgendered men and women have never endured a slave trade for generations or witnessed their ancestors dying by the tens of thousands during a “Middle Passage” and being sold as chattel;

Homosexuals and transgendered persons have never been—and never will be considered—non-citizens by laws of the United States, which rob them of inalienable rights;

Homosexuals and transgendered persons will never face societal norms, which allow, and even promote, them to be beaten because of their perceived inferiority and status as property.

All historical, anthropological, and philosophical data should lead any rational minded person to conclude that neither gay nor transgendered will ever be “the new black” and that there’s a stark difference between the Civil Rights Movement and today’s push for LBGTQ rights.

To compare the struggle of homosexual and transgendered men and women to that of African Americans is not just offensive, it discounts more than three centuries of historical fortitude that saw African Americans and their allies fight to recapture their identity, regain their legacy, and affirm their humanity, all of which, was denied them from their arrival to America and throughout subsequent generations. ■

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COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP PIONEER VALLEY



Lora Wondolowski,
Director of Leadership
Pioneer Valley, she is
passionate about
strengthening the
Pioneer Valley.
Contact her at
413-737-3876 or
www.leadershippv.org

This month we will graduate the 5th Class of Leadership Pioneer Valley. It is hard to believe that it has been 5 years since we kicked-off the organization! As we prepare to celebrate the accomplishments of the 34 individuals from up and down the Valley in the Class of 2016, I've been thinking about our organization's accomplishments.

Leadership Pioneer Valley was launched to build a cadre of diverse leaders from throughout the region who would be interconnected across racial, geographic, and employment sectors to make an impact in their organizations and more importantly as civic leaders in their communities. We are so gratified to be reaching these goals.

As of this June, 180 people will have participated in our core leadership development program representing more than 82 companies and organizations. We hear stories about our alumni making impacts large and in more subtle ways across the region. Everything from starting new organizations to being more effective leaders



The Clemente Course in the Humanities Springfield coordinated by Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Services recently held their first graduation at the Springfield History Museum. Pictured are the graduates, faculty and staff along with Executive Director of MassHumanities David Tibaldi, Executive Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Services Ronn Johnson, Springfield College Vice President for Inclusion and Community Engagement Dr. Calvin Hill and Board Member Anne E. Harrison.

Reflections On Fifth Anniversary

By Lora Wondolowski



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within their organizations. More than 53% of our alumni have a new leadership role at work. We measured statistically significant skill increases in areas of collaboration, leading teams, creativity, managing conflicts, and confidence. These leadership skills will translate to better retention of workers in the region and stronger companies and organizations.

We are proud to be meeting our diversity goals and have had sixty-four People of Color participate over the last five years—36% of alumni. Additionally, 76% of our participants increased their cultural competency as a

result of the program. We hope this will lead to more diverse leaders in our companies and on the boards of organizations. Developing a generation of inclusive leaders should also lead to more inclusive practices within companies and organizations. Additionally, building more diverse networks has a plethora of benefits from diversity of thought to innovation.

The most important impact is in the arena of civic leadership. Sixty-four percent of our alumni reported joining a board of directors since graduating. Another 47% reported taking on new leadership responsibilities with a community organization. Currently the average age of board of director's members

in the US is 68. Few boards have gender parity or racial diversity. With the aging of the Baby Boom generation, we are facing huge changes in the leadership and membership of our non-profit and municipal boards. Leadership Pioneer Valley is preparing a generation of new leaders who want to be involved and have the skills to be effective and increase the effectiveness of our organizations.

I am thankful for all of the companies, donors, and individuals that took a leap of faith on Leadership Pioneer Valley five years ago. We appreciate their continued participation and support. We are so proud of all that we and our graduates have accomplished over the last five years. I look forward to our next five years and how we can engage new audiences in our work to strengthen the region by building and connecting diverse leaders. **We are now accepting applications to our 5th Anniversary Class until July 1st at www.leadershippv.org.** ■

COMMUNITY

POSITIVELY LIFE CHANGING



John Roberson is Vice President of Children and Family Services for The Center for Human Development (CHD), 332 Birnie Avenue, Springfield, MA 01107, 413-733-6624

You've probably heard of 4-H, the youth development program of our nation's Cooperative Extension System and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Many people (including me) grew up thinking of 4-H as a great program for teaching kids how to farm, and it still is.

But today, many other topics that aren't "traditional" 4-H are included as well, including science, technology, citizenship, leadership, entrepreneurship and more. In partnership with 110 universities, including UMass Amherst, 4-H provides research-backed, life-changing programs delivered to youth through 4-H clubs, camps and afterschool programs—and now, at a residential treatment facility for youthful offenders, operated by CHD.

Lauren DuBois, Extension Educator for 4-H Youth Development

4-H for Youthful Offenders

Leadership Training to Benefit Young Men in Residential Treatment

By John Roberson, VP of Children and Family Services for CHD

Program, UMass Extension, explains: "CHD reached out and told me about a Department of Youth Services lock-in facility that CHD operates in Springfield," she says. "They have 16 young men there in residential treatment, and I learned that CHD staff had asked them what they'd want to learn so they could do positive things with their lives upon their release. Most of them wanted to know more about becoming a leader and starting a business."

These young men already run a screen printing business from inside the DYS facility, so their interest in business makes sense. They also have supervised access to a commercial-grade kitchen, and some want to learn about running a restaurant. Others expressed interest in starting a dog training and pet care business.

DuBois, alongside students from the UMass Amherst Student Bridges organization, has been working to make the 4-H leadership curriculum come alive for these young men by bringing in successful business and community leaders – all men – to share their experience and provide the positive influence of strong male role models.

"We want to present these young men with an opportunity to learn answers to questions they are already starting to ask," says DuBois. "How can I learn to be a leader? What does it take to start my own business? What makes someone a professional, and what do I need to do to become one? The program we're going to present, called Your Future Starts Now, modifies

a proven 4-H leadership curriculum to cater to the voiced interests of these young men. We are delivering the program by bringing in adult males who have built success doing good things and who can teach the young men about professionalism, entrepreneurship and leadership. We're really looking forward to working with this group."

CHD's residential treatment program is about rehabilitation and learning, so we think the 4-H program is a perfect fit. We are excited to be applying grant money generously provided by MassMutual, leveraging existing community resources through 4-H, UMass Extension, and the Student Bridges organization, and providing

programming that reflects what the young men in residential treatment are eager to learn and apply in a positive manner after their release.

DuBois points out that we cannot control the world around us, but we can control how we respond to this world. CHD is excited to build this overarching message into the many life lessons we work to impart on the young men in residential treatment. ■



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COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY FOCUS - FOSTER CARE

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

What You Can Do for Foster Children

On June 25th, learn how to become a foster parent

By Sean Ludbrook, LSW

To ensure safe, stable foster homes are available when needed, the Baker-Polito administration is supporting recruitment events across Massachusetts in May and June as part of National Foster Care month (May).

The Department of Children and Families is looking for foster parents who can make a commitment to providing a supportive and healing environment for the Commonwealth's most vulnerable children.

In addition to traditional foster homes, there are opportunities to provide short-term care to children who are taken in custody after hours or on weekends and holidays.

Known as hotline foster homes, children are placed until the next business day when DCF workers are able to secure longer term arrangements.

On June 25th, DCF's Western Mass foster care recruitment team is hosting foster care informational sessions and a Foster Care Appreciation and Recruitment Fair from 11am - 2pm at the Westfield Boys and Girls Club at 28 Silver St, Westfield MA. The free event includes entertainment by former contestant on NBC's *The Voice* Noah Lis, a bounce house, zoo animals and various kid-friendly activities.

"Anyone from the community who is thinking about becoming a foster parent is invited with their children," said DCF Social Worker Michelle Daries. "DCF is excited be able to offer this opportunity to talk about this worthy and fulfilling service."

While families are enjoying activities, DCF will facilitate information sessions and breakout groups

while current foster and adoptive parents will be on hand to answer questions. Applications to become a foster parent will be available at the event.

DCF provides a support system for foster parents starting with introductory training to help understand the needs of children coming into care. Once a child is in placement, DCF social workers continue to work closely with the child and foster parents.

"DCF is always recruiting individuals and families willing to support children in both short and long term placements," said DCF Social Worker Kristen Condon. "No matter the time commitment, any foster parenting role makes a difference. What these children need is someone to care enough to listen to them read a homework book, tie their shoe laces, and to let them know they are in a place where they can finally relax and just be a child."

At any given time, there are approximately 1600 children from Western Massachusetts in foster care.

To learn more about foster parenting, call **1-800-KIDS-508** or visit the Massachusetts DCF Foster Care Webpage: www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dcf/foster-care/, which includes details of the application process, application forms, a FAQ page, and contact information for DCF.

If you become aware of a family member in foster care and wish to get in touch with the child, please reach out to a DCF office. This communication can be confidential and without expectation or obligation.

MassMutual to Host Free Summer Law Camp for High Schoolers



More than 25 local students participated in MassMutual's Summer Legal Institute last year and called the program "fun and inspiring."

Each year, MassMutual teams up with Just the Beginning to sponsor and host a **free**, five-day Summer Legal Institute to inspire students to consider careers in law. MassMutual is once again looking for students interested in the program which will take place **July 11-15, 2016**.

During the week, students are provided with hands-on experiences exploring the legal system, including meeting attorneys and judges, participating in a mock trial and oral argument, visiting courts, networking and more. At the end of the week, the top three performers are selected to go on an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C. where they will meet other legal professionals, visit the U.S. Supreme Court, meet a Supreme Court Justice and network with members of the legal field.

Just the Beginning is

a pipeline organization aimed at increasing diversity in the legal and judiciary professions by inspiring students to pursue a career in the law. This year, the program will take place at Western New England University, MassMutual and local area courts. Travel reimbursements are available.

Rising 9th – 12th grade students may apply to the Summer Legal Institute. Applications are being accepted online at www.jtb.org. For further information, call 312-258-5930. ■

JANET KNAPP, LCSW
Foster Care Program Recruiter

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COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY BEAT

The Sector B Community and Police Meeting

By Kenneth Harris



Kenneth Harris is a graduate of the High School of Commerce and STCC. He has served as a Special Police Officer, Atlanta Corrections Officer and Courthouse Officer.

The Sector B Liberty Heights police and community beat management meeting was held on April 14th at the Hungry Hill Senior Center. In attendance were Lt. David Kane, Officer Daniel Murdock, neighborhood council members, Hannah Chapman, Animal Control Supervisor, and area residents.

Highlights

- A power plant will be built on Marvin St. that runs directly to Baystate Hospital. An empty lot on Cleveland St. was up for auction and an individual had bid on it.
- A petition was pushed forward for the demolition of the vacant house on 66 Newbury St. that is reportedly over 100 years old. Only a single family home can be built in its place.
- The 5 motor vehicle thefts were crimes of opportunity. Victims left keys in the ignition with the car still running, or left spare keys inside of a car. These types of scenarios have made owners soft targets.

Hot Spot Calls for Service

- There have been complaints of drug activities (13), robbery (1), shots fired (2), and weapons offenses (4). There have been no arrests because the incidents were either unfounded or there was an inability to locate suspects. Special attention for hotspots are based on accumulation of reports.
- Springfield Police are not allowed to pursue dirt bike operators utilizing four wheelers due to the public safety risk. Residents are still encouraged to report disturbances by calling 911. Po-

lice prefer to catch operators entering their driveway to engage them in order to minimize risks.

- Residents were appalled by not only the disturbance from the usage of dirt bikes; but also by riders' tendency to race each other without helmets. Police feel these bikers know the Police Department's concern for safety and are using that to taunt them.

- Van Sickle Middle School students are reportedly jaywalking after school over a busy bridge over the 291 interstate that links to St. James Ave.
- A city wide grant will be implemented to encourage safe driving by cracking down on texting and the use of illegal drugs while operating a motor vehicle. Some residents complained of seeing police officers text while driving in their cruisers. The Police Department has zero tolerance for such activities.

Thomas J. O'Connor Animal Control & Adoption Center

- The focus of the department is to pick up stray animals like dogs and cats, protect animals subjected to cruel conditions, and investigate wild life calls.
- The majority of animals the department runs into are in the South End and Six Corners sections of the city.
- Owners can have no more than 2 dogs that are not spayed or neutered. A 3rd can legally be taken. Up to 4 dogs can be kept if all are spayed/neutered.
- A dog barking longer than 10 minutes can be considered a nuisance.
- Questions or concerns can be addressed to Hannah Chapman at (413) 781-1484
- Officer Murdock spoke of putting together a Crime Watch group for anyone who is interested. He can be reached at (413) 636-427. His e-mail is DMurdock@springfieldpolice.net. ■



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AIC to Offer Post-Professional Occupational Therapy Doctorate

New online program designed to create educator leaders

Springfield, MA — American International College (AIC) will launch a new online Post-Professional Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) program. The online program, approved by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, will begin fall semester 2016. It is uniquely designed to create faculty and educator leaders for the future who incorporate their occupational therapy knowledge with experience from clinical practice, research, education, and advocacy while integrating the core philosophy of the profession.

The program focuses on four curriculum threads that align with key areas in the occupational therapy profession: clinical practice, research, education, and advocacy including coursework in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and Occupational Therapy Leadership. These courses form the foundation for the cur-

riculum threads and include active learning, a cohort model, critical reflection, and assignments that can apply to students' own areas of occupational therapy workplace practice.

According to Dean of the School of Health Sciences Cesarina Thompson, PhD, RN, ANEF, "Employment for occupational therapists is projected to grow by 29% through 2022, a much faster growth than the average for all other occupations. With the growing demand for rehabilitation and disabilities services, there is a need to prepare more occupational therapists who will be equipped to practice in an evolving and complex health care system and advocate for the profession. As 2017 marks the 100th year of the existence of occupational therapy, this programs helps fulfill the centennial vision for the practice."

More information is available online at www.aic.edu or by calling Dean Thompson at 413-205-3700. ■

Around Town & . . .



Western Mass Chapter of Girl Friends at their annual Scholarship Luncheon along with the Scholarship committee members and Scholarship recipients.



Springfield Technical Community College President Dr. Ira Rubenzahl recently celebrated his retirement with family granddaughter Elana Schenkel, daughter Stephanie Schenkel, Dr. Rubenzahl, grandson Daniel Schenkel, daughter Jennifer Barrett and grandson Gabriel Barrett (left) and (right) Tracye Whitfield, Dr. Rubenzahl, Jose Delgado, Lidya Early and Saibo Ndlovu, representing Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker.



Attorney Wayman Lee, Springfield's first African American City Clerk, recently celebrated his retirement with family and friends. Wayman with daughter Adriane, wife Ethel, and son Darrell (left). Wayman with friends and co-workers (right).

. . . In The Community



Community Music School students perform at Springfield's annual Pancake Breakfast. L to R: vocalist Christina Colon, Tariq Woods playing drums and Jordan Johnson performing on keyboards (left) while members of the Springfield Department of Health and Human Services volunteer. L to R: Brenda Evens, Lorene Leembruggen, Linda Franklin and Commissioner Helen Caulton Harris.



At the recent Western Mass Black Nurses Scholarship Luncheon Baystate Mason Square Neighborhood Health Center Community Liaison & Outreach Specialist Mable Sharif was recognized for her outstanding community service. The recognition was presented by Gloria Wilson (left). Members of the group pose for a photo (right).



During the Arbor Day Ceremony at Brookings School trees were planted and dedicated in memory of student Destiny Gonzalez who passed away last year and in honor of Attorney Paul Doherty who was a great supporter of the school.



Area youth pose for a photo as they are about to embark on the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Black College Tour.

Blumenthal, Murphy and Larson Announce Federal Grants to Expand Job Opportunities for Hartford Youth

Hartford, CT — Today (May 16, 2016), Sen. Richard Blumenthal, Sen. Chris Murphy, and Rep. John B. Larson (CT-01) announced that Hartford's Promise Zone YES! project was selected by the White House and the Department of Labor (DOL) as one of eleven recipients of *Summer Jobs and Beyond* grants. The Promise Zone YES! project is dedicated to supporting youth and development services for 275 young people in Hartford through partnerships with the Capital Workforce Partners, City of Hartford, Hartford Public Schools, and Connecticut State College & Universities.

"For so many of our most vulnerable young people, a first job pro-

vides more than pocket change. It can mean learning valuable skills and fostering connections to help them build a foundation for a brighter future," said Blumenthal, Murphy, and Larson. "We are thrilled that the White House and DOL selected the Promise Zone YES! project for this grant. Hundreds of children and young people in Hartford will now have the support they need to land their first job."

The \$21 million in *Summer Jobs and Beyond* grants will benefit 11 communities across the nation. Last year, Hartford's North End was designated a Promise Zone, and given priority consideration for federal grant programs. ■

CONGRATULATIONS CORNER

Congratulations to Kamari A. Collins on his appointment as Vice President of Student and Multicultural Affairs at Springfield Technical Community College. He takes over for Myra Smith who recently retired.

Congratulations to the family of Lucille Gibbs (8/8/1926-10/16/2011) for her posthumous Honorary Doctorate from Westfield State University of the Horace Mann Award for Public Service. This award recognizes individuals who embody the spirit of Horace Mann, a public servant, social reformer and the founder of Westfield State University. Like Mann, Lucille believed in the power of education to improve society and in the value of community service to change lives.

Congratulations to Gumersindo Gomez whose tireless perseverance has led to the opening of a \$2.8 million housing complex for homeless veterans, very aptly named the Sergeant Gomez Veterans Campus. Gomez is the Executive Director of the Bilingual Veterans Outreach Center. The complex will house 20 veterans.

Congratulations to Teka J. Harris who will receive the Gunnar Dybwad Supporter Award on June 17th. This yearly award is given to one person in the central/west region of Massachusetts for supporting and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities.

Congratulations to Jynai McDonald who was recently hired as Regional Manager of the Training Resources of America, Inc. (TRA) – Western Mass. Offices located in Holyoke and Springfield. Ms. McDonald holds a BS Degree in Digital Marketing & Social Media Management, an Associate of Science Degree in Business Administration, and ABA Approved-Paralegal Program Certificate in Legal Studies, all from Bay Path University, Longmeadow, Massachusetts.

Congratulations to Dr. Arlene Rodriguez, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Springfield Technical Community College, who was named the 2016 Woman of the Year by the Professional Women's Chamber of the Springfield Regional Chamber for her leadership, community involvement and professional goals.

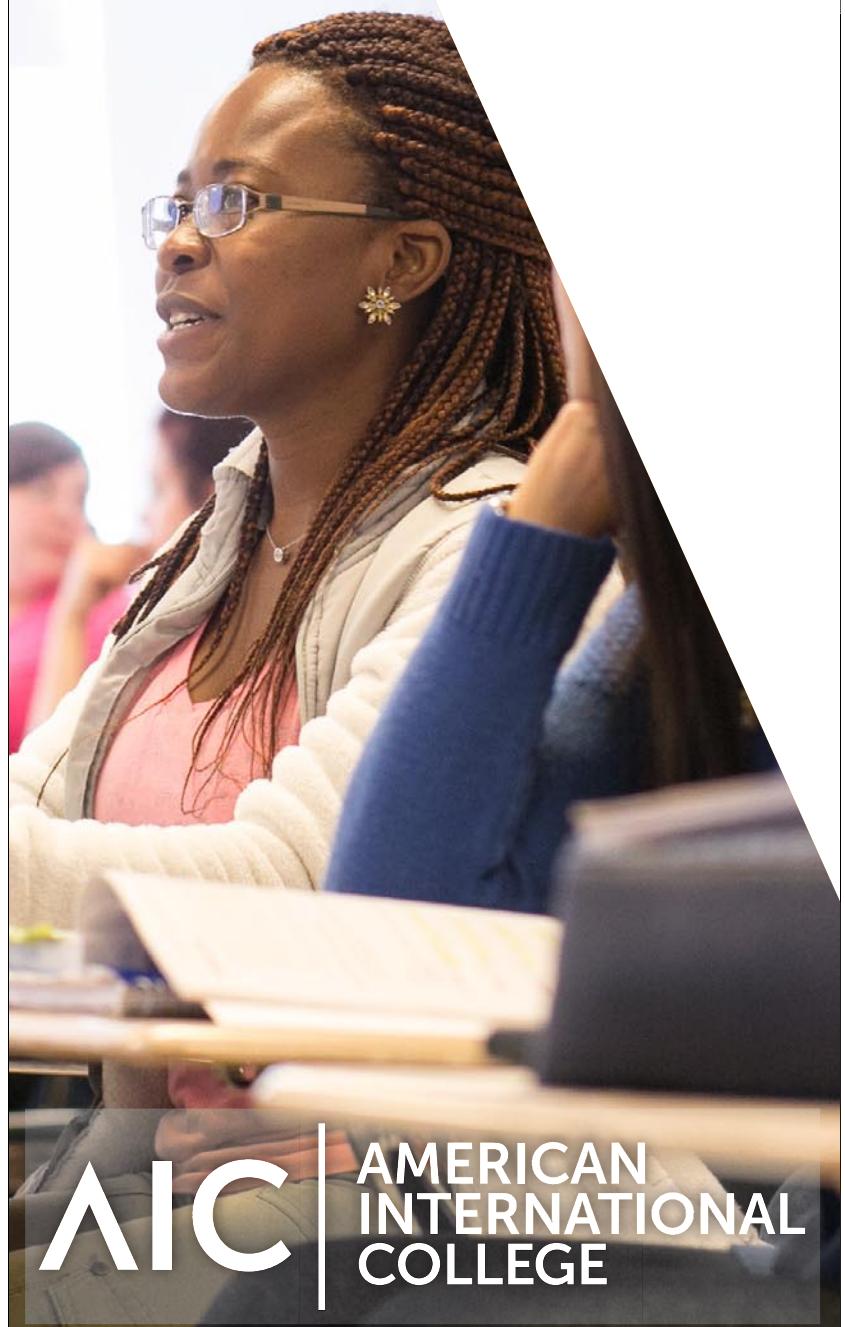
Congratulations to Bishop Talbert W. Swan, II, pastor of Springfield of Hope Church of God in Christ, on the celebration of his 22nd Pastoral Anniversary.

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COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY FOCUS - CONNECTICUT

The Hartford Public Library presents “World of Sounds” 2016

World of Sounds is a series of seven outdoor concerts, supported by a \$4,000 grant from the Evelyn W. Preston Memorial Fund. The Evelyn W. Preston Memorial Fund was established in 1978 under the will of Evelyn Wallace Preston. The Evelyn W. Preston Memorial Fund provides grants for music concerts during the months of June, July, August, and September in parks and other public places for the general public in the City of Hartford.



Hartford Steel Symphony
Saturday, June 4, 1:30-2:30 PM
Downtown Library Terrace
500 Main Street, Hartford, CT

Since 1989, the Hartford Steel Symphony has provided musical enjoyment around the New England region. Musical genres include: soca, calypso, reggae, pop, classical, gospel and jazz, all with an island rhythm.



Gozá Latin Jazz Band
Wednesday, June 22, 1 PM
Dwight Branch
7 New Park Ave., Hartford, CT

Gozá is an engaging Latin/Latin Jazz musical ensemble that performs exciting music and dance rhythms from Latin America, Brazil and Spain, featuring guitar, violin, horns, latin percussion and beautiful, romantic vocals. Gozá styles include samba, rumba cha-cha, salsa, cumbia, flamenco, tango, and bolero.



Negrura Peruana
Wednesday, July 6, 6 PM
Dwight Branch
7 New Park Ave., Hartford, CT

Negrura Peruana performs the music and dance of Peru's African and criollo population, especially from the coastal area around Chincha (located south of the capital Lima). Although they are not trained musicians, their performances show a deep love for the music and a spontaneous but highly skilled mastery of the complex rhythms, accents, and phrasings especially when accompanying the dancers.



Caribbean Vibe Steel Drum Band
Tuesday, August 2, 6-7 PM
Albany Branch
1250 Albany Ave., Hartford, CT

A festive steel drum Calypso/Reggae band performing pop favorites and island music.



Da 4 Ah Wee & Crucial Massive
Sunday, August 14, noon-1 PM & 2-3 PM
Webster Theater parking lot, 31 Webster Street, Hartford, CT
(as part of Barry Square Community Day)

De 4 Ah Wee & Co. is a steel pan band which consists of the conga drums, tenor pan, double second pan, guitar pan, electric base, and drums. The band performs different genres of music which include calypso, soca (Caribbean-Trinidad & Tobago), reggae, gospel, Latin, and R&B.

Crucial Massive Reggae Band is the hottest and the most excellent crowd pleasing reggae band in Hartford and throughout New England. Since the early 1990's this band has been pervading the cultural side of reggae music throughout Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. The band plays roots reggae, contemporary lovers' reggae, hard core dance-hall reggae, soca, and R&B.



White-Eyed Lizard Band
Thursday, August 11, 3-4 PM
Albany Branch
1250 Albany Ave., Hartford, CT

The White-Eyed Lizard Band is Connecticut's premier steel drum driven calypso party band, delivering toe tapping, foot stomping Island music from the Caribbean, including reggae and other world musical styles.



Trombeatz Latin Jazz Band
Thursday, September 15, 1-2 PM
Downtown Library Terrace
500 Main Street, Hartford, CT

Directed by Trombonist Hommy Ramos and percussionist Nelson Bello, TROMBEATZ's compositions and arrangements explore various Latin music forms including rumba, bomba, plena, salsa and Latin Jazz.

EDITORIAL

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

MY POINT OF VIEW

Frederick A. Hurst



Residency has finally become a hot issue in Springfield. Too many of the folks who work for the City of Springfield live outside of it and many of those are part of the cacophony of the "Springfield is dangerous" chorus. So it is good to know that some of our City Councilors are finally putting their foot down and demanding that the residency laws of the city be enforced. Not only do people who work for Springfield and live in Springfield care more about Springfield, they also enhance the economy of Springfield to everybody's benefit.

And let nobody be confused.

This controversy is not just about the Springfield Fire Department's blatant violation of the law with the support of Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno. It goes much deeper than that. Blatant disregard for the residency law or the spirit of it reaches into all levels of Springfield government where mayoral waivers are so routine that nobody feels compelled to follow the law even without a waiver.

And the residency issue is not a race issue as some claim although there are racial implications since many of those who would fill positions that are held overwhelmingly by White outsiders would be drawn from qualified candidates from Springfield's majority/minority Black and Hispanic populations. But they would also be drawn from qualified mem-

bers of Springfield's substantial White population. And there are plenty of qualified folks living in Springfield. And for those who do not live in Springfield and do not want to move to Springfield and circulate their income to the benefit of Springfield's economy, let them seek employment elsewhere.

The silliest comment on the residency issue came from the mouth of City Councilor Tom Ashe, whom I consider a friend. He said that while he appreciates "the passion of some of my colleagues around the issue of residency, I do not agree that unilaterally wiping out the entire senior structure of the Fire Department is the way to address the situation."

First, nobody has said anything about "wiping them out." All of the

discussion has been about "bringing them in," according to the law. If they choose to stay out, let that be their problem.

But, second, does Councilor Ashe really believe that there are no qualified Springfield residents to fill the positions of those nonresidents who refuse to move in? If he believes such a condescending bunch of baloney, he's not qualified to represent the people of Springfield. And he should be considered part of the problem as, it seems, is our current mayor, who seems to believe that his declarations of support for Springfield employees who violate the law takes precedent over the law itself.

That's not America!

Good People Who Make Small Mistakes

continued from page 5

rage from those who did not know her and might never know her unless they have reason to take the time to know her.

It was almost a month after I made my comments in *The Republican* that Hanna's father, Drew, emailed me. Within days, he and Hanna were in my office and all of the

tough questions I had for them went unasked because it was immediately obvious that these were very good people who were nonplussed about how to handle a frustrating situation that in no way reflected their way of life or their mindset about people of color or different sexual orientations even though they seemed to accept that, because of the times, Hanna

might have to suffer for a lifetime for a one-time mistake, which is why, as a father of three, I felt their pain.

The Strong family felt they couldn't defend themselves because they were White even though they knew that Hanna's mistake was not even close to a reflection of who she is or how she was raised. If there was any indication to the contrary, I could-

n't detect it, which is why, as I spoke to them, a feeling of deep regret came over me as I realized, by this firsthand encounter, how badly confused we have become about how to resolve the problem of racism that has lingered in America for so long. It was abhorrent to my intellectual sensibilities that the only way the Strong family felt it could cope with the terrible injustice of their daughter being unfairly and

continues to page 25

AF-AM NEWS bits

By Frederick A. Hurst

continued from page 4

WHERE IS THE OUTRAGE!

Why would it take more than seven months for relatives of Jerry Bradley to be given the circumstances that led to his death in the Springfield police lockup? Bradley died of an aneurism after apparently repeatedly asking his jailers for help. During the seven month period that an investigation was taking place,

even though the investigation had been completed and two officers were suspended, the family was given no information. Suspended for what? Nobody in the family nor their attorney was informed. The facts leading up to Bradley's death still remain a secret. Does Springfield have a functioning independent police/community review board? It doesn't seem so.

GOOD NEWS

Disparities in health between blacks and whites in the U.S. have never been smaller. In 1970, the gap in life expectancy was 7.6 years. Whites lived 72 years on average and blacks about 64. By 2010 the gap had been cut in half. Whites lived about 79 years and blacks about 75....This progress reflects concerted efforts in minority communities to improve public health, increase access to medical care, and better manage chronic conditions. (*The Wall Street Journal*, April 28, 2016)

BAD NEWS

Homicide is the No. 1 cause of death for blacks between the ages of 1 and 44. Blacks make up 13% of the U.S. population, but they are half or more of all homicide victims. The high homicide rate lowers the life expectancy of black men by almost a full year. In other words, homicide accounts for almost a quarter of the remaining racial gap in men – more than cancer, and more than stroke and infant mortality combined." (*The Wall Street Journal*, April 28, 2016) ■

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Good People Who Make Small Mistakes

continued from page 24

callously used as a political pawn by the head of the NAACP and White Springfield city officials was to quietly accept their fate, which, in the current scheme of things seemed to them frustratingly unalterable.

Thanks to cyberspace, the optics of Hanna's youthful indiscretion will never go away. And she will be asked to explain her actions every time it pops up on the web and ends up in the hands of those whose responsibility it is to scrutinize it, as is what happened when it ended up in the hands of NAACP President Talbert Swan, who, without the slightest bit of research, passed it on to the press and on to the mayor of Springfield and its superintendent, both of whom, without a bit of research, summarily terminated her. And all of this played out on MassLive, adding to the accumulating dossier that remote parties will continue to use to further punish Hanna Strong for one simple, youthful indiscretion, which explains even further why the Strong family felt the need to simply remain silent.

Any way one views it, whenever the topic of race is injected into a controversy, how we choose to respond to

the situation becomes complicated. But in every instance, we should respond responsibly. But, unfortunately, altogether too often, how we respond depends upon who we are and what our role is in the controversy. Thus, Syracuse University officials put Hanna through a humbling series of procedures that were designed to show the larger student body and the general public that it was responding responsibly. It remains arguable whether or not Hanna needed the procedures to adjust her attitude but that did not matter. They were part of the pre-prescribed punishment and Syracuse University needed to apply its rules to preserve its credibility. And the end result was that Hanna was able to graduate. It was a bit humiliating for her but in the end it was a win-win outcome that should have ended there... but for cyberspace.

Reverend Talbert Swan's response, though certainly well within his official concerns, appears to have been less than responsible. Swan simply forwarded his web discovery to MassLive and the Mayor and Superintendent responded even more irresponsibly by summarily terminating Hanna Strong without so much as an investigation or hearing.

Unfortunately, convenience, if not cowardice, appears to have had a lot to do with the actions of White city officials. How they responded had much to do with how race complicates. They probably felt the need to make a callous calculation which was: "What would be most politically safe and convenient, the immediate termination of Hanna Strong or combating specious claims of racism sure to be made against them loudly and publicly by the NAACP for letting Hanna remain on the job until an adequate and fair investigation was completed?" And, so, to use an old saying, they threw Hanna Strong under the bus and justice out of the window (my saying), which is something none of us should have tolerated or should tolerate quietly.

Hanna's situation has weighed on my mind since it unfolded in January of this year. Her father's pain and Hanna's courageous resignation still haunt me, mostly because her apparent life sentence for a fleeting offense is so disproportionate to any ever-so-minor impact continuing to persecute her would have on even legitimate efforts to curb racism. Her continued persecution in no way reflects the weighty civil rights concerns of our

times and we should all be ashamed for treating it as though it does.

I am struggling for a way to help Hanna put the past permanently behind her, and a way to offer some relief to her parents who don't deserve the stigma of having raised a bad kid. I'm certain guilt is part of my motivation. I didn't fight in the Civil Rights struggle to beat up young, White Millennials who slipped up but who are our best hope for a racially neutral future. I've met the real enemy and the Hanna Strong's of the world are not it.

I have offered to write follow-up articles on the Strong family to give them an opportunity to tell their stories individually so they have an outlet to express their feelings and tell their story as they know it without having to fear that they are being prejudged. Even though they have agreed to it, I would understand if they decided otherwise because public scrutiny is not easy to bear even when you are right.

Nevertheless, the Strong family has a fan in me. And I hope the next time Hanna runs into a similar situation she doesn't hesitate to use me as a reference. And as for her father, Drew Strong, who reached out to me and appealed to me, a father of three, I wish him genuine relief from his pain and a Happy Fathers' Day. ■

Federal Funds Available to Create and Expand Apprentice Programs

continued from page 9

employer – small or large, start-up or established, for example – might benefit most from an apprenticeship program.

However, he said community colleges definitely must be part of any discussion about apprenticeship programs.

"An apprenticeship is truly an extension of formal education," Joseph noted. Also included in a conversation about apprenticeship-program sustainability must be ancillary issues such as transportation, housing and child care. Access to and availability of these variables are especially pertinent when apprenticeships are part of a plan to address workplace issues such as diversity and inclusion, he said.

Rick Sullivan agrees.

"The number-one issue right now [for employers] is the workforce, workforce development, workforce retention," said Sullivan, president and CEO of the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts, head-

quartered in Springfield, MA. "It's really across all the sectors. How to scale up the workforce in a meaningful way?"

Sullivan said he and his colleagues are aware of the federal apprenticeship initiative, and believe it has a positive impact.

"We certainly are supportive of it," he said.

The Obama Administration urges states, businesses, colleges, employment-training organizations and pre-career individuals to take advantage of apprenticeship opportunities.

"We have to make sure we have the best trained workforce in the world, the most skilled workforce in the world," said Biden. "That's not hyperbole. I mean that in the literal sense." ■

For more information about ApprenticeshipUSA and other apprenticeship investments, and to find out about proposal requirements and deadlines, please visit www.dol.gov/apprenticeship. ■

Puerto Ricans Are American Citizens!

continued from page 12

Congress—would amend Title 11 of the United States Code to treat Puerto Rico as a state for the purpose of adjusting the debts of municipalities. Access to bankruptcy for the Commonwealth would provide an orderly, established, process for both debtors and creditors that balances public and private interests. The Springfield City Council recently passed a resolution calling on the United States Congress to pass, and President Barack Obama to sign into law H.R. 870, also known as, the Puerto Rico Chapter 9 Uniformity Act of 2015; and to engage in the political process to resolve the future relationship of Puerto Rico. ■

RELIGION

RELIGIOUS POINT OF VIEW



Dr. Atu White, Editor,
serves as Pastor of the
Mt. Zion Baptist Church,
368 Bay Street, Springfield,
MA and as Second Vice
President of the United
Baptist Convention of
Massachusetts, Rhode
Island, and New Hampshire.
atuwhite@gmail.com

continued from page 1

our lives who were given the monumental task of raising families and creating better futures for their sons and daughters.

It is important for us to remember that there is a legacy left behind each of us and along with this legacy comes the gift of love, determination, commitment, and extraordinary sacrifice. As a people, we ought to see it and become what it represents. Remembering the legacy and honoring the legacy is what will not only help us gain a better understanding of who we are, but it will illuminate the di-

Pastors, Ministers, Professors and Theologians, please submit your articles for this page to Rev. Dr. Atu White at: atuwhite@gmail.com

Men in Our Lives – Who Do You See?

rection in which we should be headed. Far too many of us have lost sight of what is important in this world. We have lost our focus. It is time for us to regain our focus and begin to close the gap by taking back our rich heritage and begin to run “the race” that has been set before us.

As I reflect on my own legacy, I remember my father, Aaron Roberson, Sr., who traveled to Springfield in the early 1960s from Monroe, Louisiana. He was in search of a better way of life for his wife and children during a very difficult time in our nation’s history. I think of how he must have envisioned a future of promise for all of his children, despite

the challenges he faced. It moves me to think of how much strength it took as a man for him to leave his place of comfort and go, not knowing what the future would hold. He was courageous and ventured out realizing he was indeed on a mission. He was mission-minded and that is what I remember today. I think about how he would work two jobs while we were growing up and how he would get up early in the morning and work late at night just so we could have what we needed. I think of how he was a true leader, and how he led his family by example—not just “talking the talk” but “walking the walk” daily.

He showed me, along with my

three brothers and two sisters, how to live, and that family was most important. He taught us how to love and to be loved. He shaped us into the individuals we are today, and showed us how to become productive members of society. Therefore, as we look in the mirror, who do we see?

We should see the characteristics that Jesus wants all of us to exemplify. We should see more of Him and less of us. As we look deeper, we should see ourselves building our own legacy like the men in our lives have done for future generations to come. ■



Pastor Anthony Roberson



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Wednesday Morning 10:00 am
Adult & Youth Bible Study
Wednesday Evening 7:30 pm



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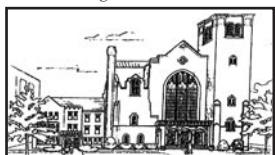
Wednesdays

Mid-day Prayer & Praise--12:00-1:00p.m.
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Prayer Service
Mondays
6:00 p.m.
**Wednesday
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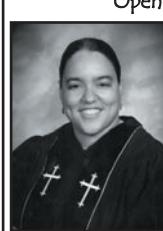
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Morning Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

LIVING

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Big News: Men Are Faithful!!!

By Zaida Govan



Zaida Govan is a native of Springfield via Puerto Rico with a passion for improving the community she serves. She can be reached at 413.301.2533 or zaida.govan@yahoo.com

This month the suggested topic is focused on men. It is a myth that all men cheat. I don't believe this is true. I believe that most "grown" men are faithful to their partners. Young boys who have no impulse control may find it hard to say no to their thoughts, feelings and emotions, but that is a different story.

I know that many women are going to say "all men are dogs" and they can't be faithful. I know some men will say the same thing. The other day my husband said an acquaintance of his got mad because he wouldn't say that he cheats on his wife. The guy was really upset that my husband would not admit that.

The media likes to portray that men and women cheat. It's not news when men and women are faithful to each other. But the good news is that most men and women who are in long-term, committed relationships are faithful to each other. At least that is the result of the unscientific research I conducted. I asked 100 men if they have been unfaithful to their lifetime partners. Eighty percent of them said they are faithful. I thought about this because the other day I found out that my man crush Morris Chestnut has been married to the same woman since 1995 and I have never heard about him being unfaithful. Then I thought about Denzel, Tim McGraw and others. As I said it's not news because when men are faithful, there is no drama in that.

In *Psychology Today* 9/2012, there is a study by Kinsey and Masters and Johnson that suggests that

about 50% of men are faithful to their wives. These studies were done some time ago and followed a period of time when men were separated from their wives for long periods of time because of war. I know many people will not agree with my theory that most men are faithful to their partners when they are in a committed relationship, but remember I am talking about "grown" men here. These men have good impulse control and think about the consequences of their actions.

At the hair salon the other day I asked this question to the five women that were there and three of us said yes, a man can be faithful to one woman. One of the women was adamant that a man cannot be faithful to one woman because he sees other women and admires them and might have thoughts about these other women. She said women cheat, too, which I agree is true and I have the same theory about females but since June's *POV* is focusing on men, I am as well.

This is a touchy subject and no one wants to admit that their husband or boyfriend is unfaithful, but I choose to celebrate that my husband is and always will be faithful, not because he is perfect, but because that is the choice he is making in his life. There are more men out here making that choice, no matter how cute the next girl is or how much they might think things might be better. Always remember the 80/20 rule from Tyler Perry's movie "Why Did I Get Married?" You don't want to give up the 80% you have for 20% you don't have. I commend the faithful men out there who have chosen to be faithful to their wives and lifetime partners. You are real men!!! ■

LIFE'S CHALLENGES

What is Emotional Healing?

By Sweets H. Wilson, Ph.D



Dr. Sweets S. Wilson is a Christian life purpose coach, motivational speaker and CEO of Inspire ME, LLC. wilson.sweets@gmail.com or 860-869-8067

FROM HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

A change in your circumstances, large or small, can trigger varying degrees of hurt, grief or deep unhappiness. Over the years many individual have inquired about the process of overcoming emotional hurts. Observing the process of emotional healing makes one become aware of their feelings. You can then expect the healing process to follow, which can be activated by a conscious decision to let go, forgive or surrender to the reality of a loss.

Experiences, such as betrayal, relocation or death of a loved one, getting divorced or losing a relationship can trigger a sense of loss. Heartache can also be felt as an existential loss due to an ego or identity crisis, such as:

- The birth of a child, where you leave your own childhood behind to enter parenthood.
- Marriage, where you leave your identity as a single person behind in order to take on the role of a married person.
- Illness, where you must let go of your identity as a sick person and embrace your life as a healthy person. Or where, for the most part, you have experienced good health, and now you are ill.
- A wounded childhood, where you exit your identity as a broken or wounded person, letting the circumstances that supported a wounded identity fall away from

you as you enter a new identity as a healthy, more care-free person.

The stages of healing can be felt on many levels of your being: Physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. Since everyone is different and so are their coping mechanisms, these stages may not necessarily occur in the sequence outlined below. Some may skip a stage and then return to it later. Regardless of the order, the entire healing process may last for days, months or even years. An important point to note is that you do not need to go through this on your own. It is prudent that you seek professional help from those qualified in the area of counseling or spiritual mentoring or both and if this is not possible, the wise counsel of a supportive friend or understanding relative is recommended.

There are phases involved in the process of healing. It is a universal journey that comes with an easy to read map once you recognize the chaos in your life for what it really is. Each stage on the path to healing is necessary and normal:

- Avoidance
- Confrontation
- Staying with the emotions
- Clarify and action
- Epiphany and gratitude

Change can often be a daunting process that leaves you feeling out of control. When you are in control, you tend to feel secure and comfortable. Change can destabilize your emotions, triggering feelings of insecurity and a greater loss of control. Change can create chaos, confusion, and even symptoms of depression, but its presence in your life means that growth and healing is taking place. ■

THE ARTS

ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW

Will Downing: The Prince of Sophisticated Soul Was Dripping in Chocolate!



Internet photo by Chuck Gee

Will Downing has been touted the "Prince of Sophisticated Soul." If you had the honor of attending his performance presented by Gator Jazz at the Hu Ke Lau in Chicopee on May 14th, you know why. His current tour is appropriately named "Chocolate Drops" (taken from the title of his latest album release). Throughout the evening, the chocolate was dripping with vocal ease as he crooned and serenaded the audience with his signature octave range. Will Downing makes use of his natural deep baritone and transitions to his crisp falsetto so effortlessly, it will make your head spin.

Downing has such a large repertoire in his library, that there was no telling what would be his opening song for the night. He chose to open with his version of a classic Marvin Gaye tune, "You Sure Love to Ball." This set the tone for the rest of the night. Jazzy, sensual and soulful. He is known to take a classic R&B song and record it while adding that Will Downing chocolatey deliciousness to it. A great example is his classic arrangement of Angela Bofill's "I Try." Will has a way of taking an already classic and making it....dare I say, better? That is up for debate but there is no argument that Will Downing's version of a classic is never a

By Moyah Smith
d o w n g r a d e
from the original. He keeps it classy.

When you go to a Will Downing concert, you might not anticipate seeing a bit of a comedy show. However, Will has a very light,

possibly unexpected, sense of humor to keep you entertained between songs. I have personally been to several of his performances over the years and do not recall laughing quite as much in the past. It was quite enlightening, actually. Will Downing has more than enough reason to be enjoying life to the fullest. During his performance, he spoke briefly of his health bout that he experienced back in 2006. He didn't go into much detail, but mentioned how he was blessed to be able to record one of his albums from his hospital bed at that time. He was fighting through the debilitating effects of the muscle disorder *Polymyositis*. This was a life-threatening and potentially career-ending experience. Will has more than enough reason to sing, smile and laugh his way through life. When he is on stage, it shows that he has complete love and passion for the gifts he is able to share.

Backed by a full band and two backup singers, Downing satiated the audience by performing some of his most popular songs like "A Million Ways," "Send For Me," "Wishing On A Star," and my second personal all-time favorite of his, "I Go Crazy." Even

still, I don't think any Will Downing fan would feel complete leaving a Will Downing show without hearing his and Rachelle Ferrell's classic, and my absolute favorite, "Nothing Has Ever Felt Like This." The challenge being, if Rachelle Farrell is not on the ticket, how could anyone dare compete with the rich vocals of a singer like Farrell. The answer....Carol Riddick, Will's back-up singer. You might not know her name, you might not know her face, but you have definitely heard her voice. She hails from Philadelphia – a city that consistently feeds the world of Soul Music with some of the best. She has sung backup for acts such as DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince, Anthony Hamilton and Jill Scott to name a

few. Riddick is most notably the voice behind MusiqSouchild's song, "Soulstar." Keep your eye out for her. As Will Downing himself said, he sang for 45 minutes giving his best, while Ms. Riddick sang one song and completely stole the show! Thank you Philly.....you have done it again!

All-in-all, the show was amazing. I believe it is the ultimate compliment to a singer when you must go to a food source to get the best description of what their vocal stylings do for you. Will Downing is the perfect example. His vocals are smooth, silky, sweet, deep and rich.....just like drops of chocolate. ■



Moyah Smith

What if you could seize the day?

“

Every practice,
there's something
new for me to work on.
I'm always improving.

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THE ARTS

FEATURE - PEN & INK

PRINCE: A NON-REVIEW of “WEAR SOMETHING PURPLE: 2”

By Juanita Torrence-Thompson (Dec. 4, 2005)

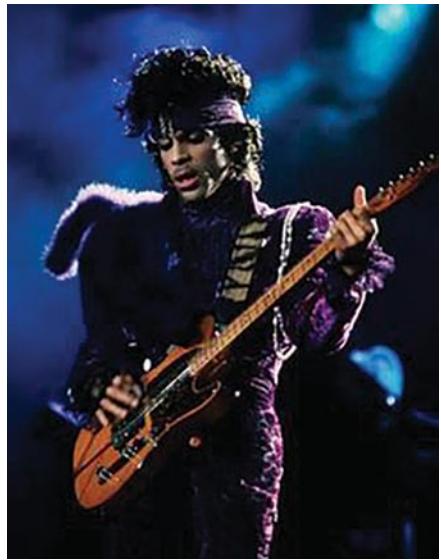


Photo taken from pinterest.com

Prince ascended from below wearing red hat, red suit with a black vertical stripe up the sides and sleeves. Later he removed the jacket to reveal a red top and gold chains. Halfway through the concert, he ascended from below in a red shirt with white polka dots and red heels.

When he returned for his encore — the final being his signature, “Purple Rain,” he sported a bright yellow shirt, white pants and white shoes, as white streamers dangled from the cavernous Madison Square Garden ceiling while purple lights showered upon them.

Now that the fashion show is concluded, this is more an experience by someone who went purely because I was intrigued and curious and was converted into a Prince fan. I know people who were and are Prince fans, while I was listening to Sinatra, Ella, Streisand and the New York Philharmonic. I only knew Prince’s work through osmosis. I saw his film, “Purple Rain,” with relatives while on the West Coast.

So, in a way, I was at a disadvantage at Madison Square Garden because I was more or less a Prince virgin and didn’t know the songs Prince sang except for about three, including “You Don’t Have to be Rich to be my Girl” and “Purple Rain.” So, it was as if I’d been on a mountaintop in Outer Mongolia or in the Mohave Desert with no computer, radio, TV or access to films or civilization. It was as if I was hearing Prince’s songs for the first time and indeed many of them were on a virgin voyage to me.

Prince asked the audience to stand when he first came out and I did, but I sat down during most of the concert. However, by the time it was 9:45, I was so into the concert that I was up on my feet clapping with everyone else and grinning as wide as the Grand Canyon.

It is a dire understatement to say that Prince was enigmatic, intriguing, graceful, rhythmic, charismatic and more. He sang edgy, melodic, unpredictably as he punched or massaged the lyrics and caressed the microphone. He spun, strutted and cast those sexy eyes at the audience like a naughty boy. At 46 it still worked! At one point early on he said something like “I’m never going to leave! Are you ready for me New York?” whereupon everyone shouted an emphatic “Yes!”

Towards the end of the performance, about 20 young women from the audience danced on stage while Prince sang, danced and played one of his five guitars. Each guitar a different color.

His band, Musicology, was incredibly good, especially John on drums, the keyboardist and female saxophonist. But the crowd and the decibels were a bit loud for me. The male singer brought the house down and tears glissaded when he sang “Georgia on my Mind,” in tribute to the late Ray Charles. He received nearly as much applause as Prince.

As much as I enjoyed the concert, my favorite part was when Prince sat on a stool and sang with his guitar. The volume was more subdued so I did not fear for my hearing. The music was so fine and Prince was enigmatic and in control, performing his magic. For that space in time, the world was transformed into paradise. ■

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

“EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED”

As part of downtown Springfield’s Beautification Through Art Project, 18 local artists turn mundane utility boxes into works of art.



Renee Flowers, POV’s Artist in Residence, tackles a utility box at the corner of Bridge and Dwight Streets.



Renowned artist Lorraine MacAlpine begins her creation on a utility box located at the corner of Boland Way and Main Street.

THE ARTS

CHILDREN'S BOOK CORNER



The Bookworm is Terri Schlichenmeyer. Terri has been reading since she was 3 years old and she never goes anywhere without a book. She lives on a hill in Wisconsin with two dogs and 11,000 books.

You are the best kid... at something.

You can run the fastest. You can jump the highest. You're the best skipper, the best hopper, or the best dancer. But what if there was somebody better than you? See what might happen in **"The Quickest Kid in Clarksville"** by Pat Zietlow Miller, illustrated by Frank Morrison.

Alta was the fastest runner in Clarksville, Tennessee, and everybody knew it.

PEN & INK



JUANITA TORRENCE-THOMPSON: Pushcart nominee. Playwrite. Published fiction, children's stories, feature articles, hundreds of her award-winning poems in dozens of U.S. and international journals, 12 anthologies, 7 books including her *Talking With Stanley Kunitz* (2012). Writes print & online newspaper poetry columns; produces poetry salons and reads internationally. Former Editor-in-Chief and Publisher of award winning *Mobius, The Poetry Magazine*. Her poetry is translated into 15 foreign languages. *Talking With Stanley Kunitz* and *New York and African Tapestries* were best pick by Small Press Review. *Mobius, The Poetry Magazine*, best pick 2007 thru 2012 www.poetrytown.com

Challenged

By Juanita Torrence-Thompson

The physically challenged are to be admired

They must be thick skinned to endure snubs, pitying,

giggles, cringes and looks through or beyond them

If they're new to this state they soon learn who their friends are

—those who find time to call, send cards or offer assistance

They know what to do when life gives them lemons

Copyright 2009 by Juanita Torrence-Thompson

"The Quickest Kid in Clarksville"

By Pat Zietlow Miller, Illustrated by Frank Morrison
c.2016, Chronicle Books \$16.99 / \$23.99 Canada 40 pages

Reviewed by Terri Schlichenmeyer

She wasn't as fast as Wilma Rudolph, but Alta was close and that made her dream. What, she wondered, would it be like to have three Olympic gold medals hanging around her neck? Would Wilma bring her medals to the parade she'd be riding in? The parade was tomorrow; Alta and her friends were even making a banner for it.

And then some girl Alta had never met before came "sashaying" over with the brand-spankingest, whitest shoes Alta had ever seen. She

said her name was Charmaine and her shoes sparkled – they were just *made* for running. Alta's shoes had holes in them but shoes can't tell who'll win a race. Not even Wilma had the best things, at first.

Alta challenged Charmaine to a race – and won.

Charmaine challenged Alta to another race – and Charmaine won.

Alta was sure that was because Charmaine tripped her. Or because Alta's toe was poking out of the front of her shoe, which really made her sad because Mama said those shoes had to last...

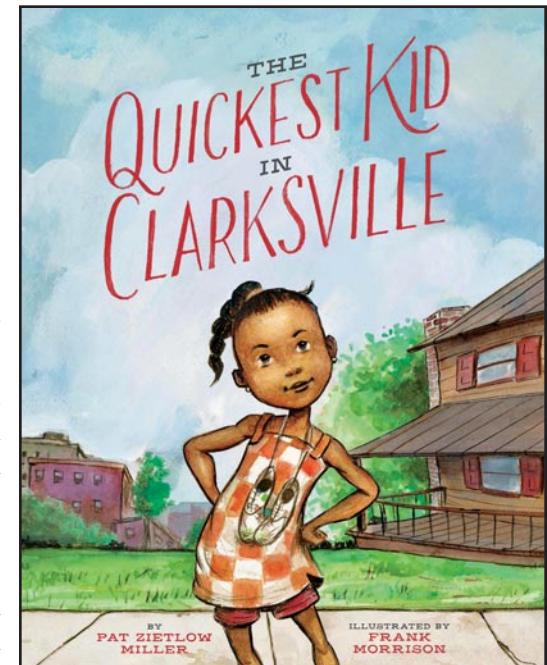
On parade day, while Alta and her friends were finishing the banner, Charmaine came by, strutting "like she's queen of the block." Alta wasn't having any of that; she far preferred to remember that Wilma Rudolph, the fastest woman alive, was coming to town to be in a parade. Maybe she might even see the banner, and she might wave.

As Alta started to run to the parade route with the banner, she suddenly realized that the banner was heavy and awkward. It wrapped itself up and caught the wind. It was long, too. There'd be no way she'd get to the parade in time.

How would she ever make it?

Who likes to lose? Nobody, that's who, but there are times when losing isn't a bad thing.

Sometimes, it means winning



and "The Quickest Kid in Clarksville" shows your child how that works.

There's a lot of sass and attitude inside this book, and charm all over: author Pat Zietlow Miller's main character has scads of it, in fact, but it's a confident boldness that kids just can't miss. Thanks to artwork by Frank Morrison, the fierceness never leaves Alta's face, even when her new adversary steps into the 'hood – a frenemy who's surprisingly equal to Alta – leading to a show-down, an ultimate olive branch, and an ending that'll make you smile.

If your kids are curious, Miller also includes a page on the real Wilma Rudolph, putting this book into further perspective. That may be too much info for younger readers, but 5-to-8-year-olds might find "The Quickest Kid in Clarksville" to be the best. ■

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THE ARTS

PEN & INK



BRENDA'S CHILD has made it her life's mission to inspire people through poetry and stories and through leading by example with courage, confidence, and integrity. In April 2007, she self-published her first book of poetry, "A Piece of My Mind...Poetic Confessions of a Self-Proclaimed Diva." Since then she has published four more titles. For more information, email: brendaschild@brendaschild.com

Behind The Scenes

By Brenda's Child

"All the world's a stage"
 the spotlight is shining bright
 it's show time and you're the headline.
 No worries, your performance is on "fleek"
 You make this shit look easy.
 But behind the scenes:
 People will envy you,
 Want to be like you
 but their pride won't let them admit it.
 Others will cross their fingers that you don't make it,
 because somehow *your* success means *their* failure.
 Behind the scenes:
 you will have sleepless nights,
 moments of self-doubt,
 wonder if anyone understands,
 the difficulty in keeping balance,
 the hardcore hustle, the dream,
 You will ask yourself if it's worth it,
 and wish sometimes you could just run away.
 Behind the scenes:
 you will work while others play,
 find out who is phony and real
 among family and lifetimes friends.
 You will have to end relationships
 that no longer nourish you,
 even if it hurts.
 You will want to quit,
 but you can't because
 behind the scenes:
 they are watching,
 because if you can do it, they can too.
 So while others throw shade
 you must continue be the light.
 True, your circle will grow smaller,
 but authentic and more closely knit.
 The show must go on despite the critics.
 You have to keep shining
 because you were not meant to fit the mold,
 instead you meant to break it.

Happy Father's Dad: The Gift That Keeps On Giving

Dear Dad:

I wondered what I could possibly give you for a Christmas gift that was under fifty dollars and semi worthwhile to you. After pondering for the last week, I decided that I would give to you what you passed down to me.

"Vision"

*It's hard for me to express what I'm feeling inside
 So I have to let the poem cry...*

So many times I relied on your strength inside
 see you showed me how to persevere with pride...
 "Vision" you say is key,
 yet for so many... blind they walk lacking the courage to see
 not me...for your very presence allowed me to be
 that son who desires nothing except to be like dad.

If that is not "vision" then I'm afraid I've failed...
 Yet failure is simply a starting point on the path to success.
 I must have forgotten that you taught me that too—
 See in you...
 there are so many admirable traits and characteristics
 that only a person without "vision" would not aspire to replicate.

Trying times that tested my "vision" I looked
 And continue to look to your actions for a guide.
 While you led...I followed never questioning; because...
 You never questioned your commitment to me.
 Yes... if not before, then I definitely see now... Everything about
 you is what makes me proud.

Christmas—what do I need when I've received everything
 from you
 and could ask no more except
 for you to continue doing what you do.
 Without you I would not be the man I have become
 with the vision to see how great it is to be your "son."

*It's hard for me to express what I'm feeling inside
 So I have to let the poem cry...*

Merry Christmas...

From your proud son,
 Justin Hurst

PEN & INK

Voices from Inside (VFI) helps incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women in Hampden County build self-esteem and confidence, increase literacy and communication skills, and develop leadership skills with creative writing workshops, performance opportunities, and facilitation training.

SYSTEMS

By Sonia Mendez

You slammed her against the walls
Taking her soul with you.
An agonizing pain that can be seen
By the bruises on her forehead,
And the blood on her lip.

My heart skipped
As you slaved
Her children away
Into your dungeons.

Like wolves, they can be
Heard in the night,
Howling for the moon
To come to their rescue.

I remember, you're the one
Who used his pride
To declare victory.

Invisible tape,
Unable to break,
She looks on headstrong.
To your surprise,
She doesn't look down.
And she won't
As long as I am around.

Glass, Rock, Lighter

By Pennie Woods

Lighter heats glass,
Melts rock,
Exhale...
Glass cools off,
Rock turns to smoke,
A nameless smoke, whitest of white,
Takes over my entire life.
Consuming my once-normal air,
That I have memories of breathing as a child,
Staring up into the then crispy black sky of night,
Speckles of stars become my tears.
Rock, lighter, glass, shatter painfully,
As my cold, worn but smooth hands tremble...
Inhale...
Exhale...

ANGRY JUSTICE

By Sonia Mendez

Feeling angry about the need for justice.
I honestly don't have freedom at all.
Want to add my name to the Bill of Rights
'cause I have been left out.

I'm going to school but what
am I learning?
I have kids but they belong
to the state.
I grow some vegetables in my back yard and
I get fined for eating.
The water I drink is poison to my body.
I have an illness.

The clothes I wear
force a bullet through my heart.
My gun, meant to protect me,
cannot be drawn to control the intruder.

I'm black, I'm Puerto Rican
A minority: says who?
I'm labeled, I'm imprisoned,
I have no freedom.
Feeling angry about the need for justice.

WRITE

By Pennie Woods

Why should I?
Why *should* I write?
It makes me feel too much
It makes me find myself.
It teaches me about the mistakes I made,
Which I cannot change.
Hopefully, as I do write
It will
Free my thoughts
From all those negative
Chains...

FOOD TALK

THE URBAN COOK

Green Thumb

By Rhonda Jones



Rhonda Jones is a Personal Caterer and a Food Consultant rjcooks@aol.com

Summer has snuck up on me once again. I had plans to start a vegetable garden in my mind but like years past, I'm at a standstill. I don't have a green thumb and at the rate I'm going, I think I'll just stick to cooking and leave the gardening to those who love to do it and don't mind sharing the fruits of their labor.

When we first moved into our house, we decided to plant some fruit trees on our property line instead of putting up a fence. We felt a natural fence would be more pleasing to the eyes. Over 16 years have passed since we planted those trees and one summer day last year, my neighbor's children were in my yard eating my apples.

Now to tell the truth, we forgot that we had even planted the apple trees because we weren't looking to eat the apples; we just wanted coverage. We allowed the kids to eat our fruit until we started to see more kids in the yard on our yard chairs trying to reach the fruit. This situation took us back to when my husband was growing up and his family had a peach tree in their yard which grew sweet delicious peaches and my husband said every time they would leave the house and come back home, people would be in his yard stealing their fruit and when they saw my husband's family driving up, they would scurry away. Of course my father in-law put a stop to that.

This is the beginning of a new summer so we're waiting patiently to see if it will be me or my husband who will put a stop to the apple thievery. You see my neighbor's children

and their friends don't even run and hide. They waive and eat our apples all at the same time. I'm thinking I'll just let it be and learn how to grow fruit trees in a container on my deck.

I did some research and found some fruits and vegetables that grow good in containers so if you ever get into my situation you'll be all set. This is a new journey for me. I'm going to try at least planting two types of fruits in containers this summer. I might even get bold and try to plant some vegetables in containers. Hopefully, I won't get carried away and have a yard full of those five gallon white buckets. That wouldn't be a good look plus the neighbors might begin to talk.

Tree Fruits

1. Apples can be grown in a container: you can also grow them on the balcony or other small spaces.
2. Kumquats
3. Avocados
4. Blackberries
5. Blueberries
6. Pomegranate
7. Cherries
8. Figs
9. Pears

Citrus Fruits: Citrus trees are said to be good for beginning gardeners and are easy to grow in containers and indoors.

1. Dwarf oranges
2. Grapefruit
3. Tangerines
4. Meyer lemons
5. Limes

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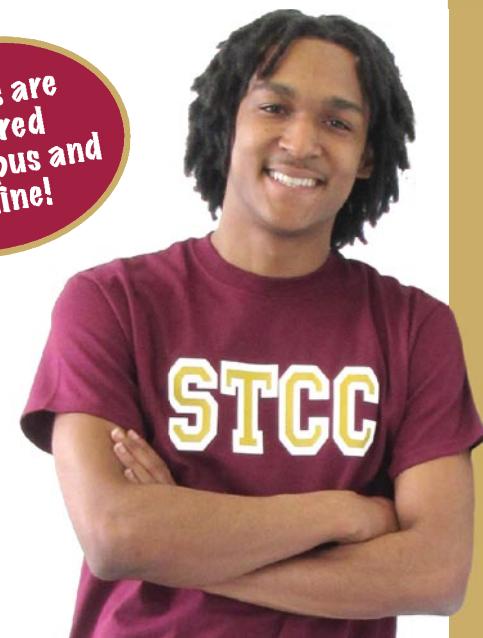
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GOOD NEWS

June 2016



Jay Griffin,
Stone Soul Festival
Program Chairman
hayjay252@msn.com
Tel: 413-636-3881
or
413-739-2947

Stone Soul is planning a **Stone Soul Mason Square Outlet** beginning **Saturday, May 28th**. All vendors are welcome each Saturday and Sunday leading up to the **Stone Soul Festival**, which is **September 1-4, 2016**. All vendors should contact Karon Tyler at (413) 777-6693 for more information.

- ◆ Steven Martin's son, Clarence Hill, a member of the U. S. Army, is home from Germany. Proud father and mother are glad to be able to spend time together.
- ◆ The Opioid Manifesto is making progress; several training events were held at the Stone Soul Cultural Center to discuss treatment and prevention of opioid overdose.
- ◆ We've had regular visits from Victor Carreras to discuss the importance of (**peace of mind**) as we enjoy our golden years.
- ◆ Thanks for the consistent support of Ms. Anonymous as we make this journey together.
- ◆ The Food Cart at 41 Colton St. will open June 1st. Items on the menu are: hot dogs, chicken, BBQ ribs, brisket, etc. Special fish fry on Fridays.

Send us your good news (birthdays, births, weddings, anniversaries, etc.) by June 15th for the July 1st 2016 edition of the *Point of View*. We will acknowledge the Good News each month. The maximum submission is 15 words. There is a \$5.00 cost that must accompany your Good News information. Send to: Stone Soul, Inc., P. O. Box 90031, Springfield, MA 01109

— Let's get the *Good News* rolling!

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno Issues Statement on the Passing of Ron Brace III

April 25, 2016 — It is with a heavy heart that I express my sympathy, thoughts, prayers and encouragement to the Brace family. I spoke to Ron's grandfather, Ron Sr. yesterday morning on Ron III's untimely passing. Having gone to school with Ron III's dad, Ron Jr. at the High School of Commerce, I know first-hand of the Brace family's strong community commitment to our Springfield. Ron III never forgot and relished his Springfield roots. In the aftermath of the June 2011 tornado, Ron was right there with New England Patriots' owner Robert Kraft in donating and raising funds towards our tornado recovery efforts. He will be solely missed, especially to our youth population of Springfield.

Respectfully,
Mayor Domenic J. Sarno

STATE SENATE CANDIDATE



Charlie Baker

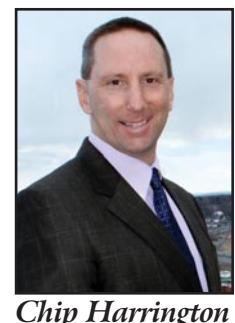
Boston — Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker has endorsed Ludlow School Committee Member, small business owner and part time police officer Chip Harrington for State Senate in the 1st Hampden & Hampshire District.

"We need more public servants like Chip Harrington on Beacon Hill. As a law enforcement professional and small business owner, Chip has a proven record of working for his community. His campaign for State Senate is driven by his passion for public service and Chip will always put people ahead of partisan politics. I strongly endorse Chip Harrington for State Senate and urge voters to support him this November. I'm with Chip!" stated Governor Baker.

Late last year Governor Baker was the highest rated Governor in the country and even has high marks among Massachusetts Democrats.

Governor Charlie Baker: I'm With Chip!

Having this early endorsement serves as a huge boost to the Harrington campaign in a purple district, that was represented by long-time GOP State Senator Brian Lees and now by former Obama Staffer Democrat Eric Lesser.



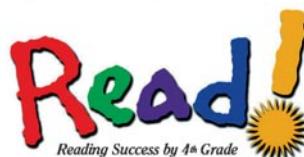
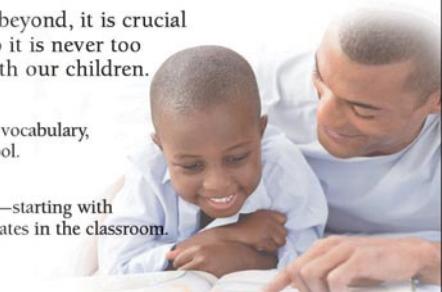
Chip Harrington

"I watched Governor Baker as the GOP nominee run a common sense and moderate campaign for Governor and that is the reason why I now fashion myself as a "Baker" Republican. Like most voters that I speak with, we are both truly moderate. I promise the voters to serve in that style as a State Senator; I will put people over politics because I know that a good idea is a good idea regardless of what side of the aisle it comes from," stated Harrington. ■

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- Make books a part of a child's life.
- Good school attendance—showing up every day—starting with preschool is important... a child's learning accelerates in the classroom.



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SPRINGFIELD SPORTS

YOUTH PREMIER SOCCER



David Kelley is the co-founder and Vice President of SFC. He serves as current Head Coach of BU15 Premier team and BU14 District Select Team. He can be contacted at: Dkelley@springfieldfc.net

Hi, my name is Nylan Baldwin. I'm fifteen years old and I play soccer for Springfield Football Club (SFC). I've been playing soccer since I was three years old, and I've loved playing the sport all my life. The excitement of scoring a goal, the pressure of defending against talented players, and the exhilaration of playing the game has always been a big part of my life. Soccer was not a very popular sport in the United States. However, after the World Cup was hosted by the United States in June of 1994, soccer has taken off as a popular sport among young players.

Generally, soccer teams have at least ten field players and one goalkeeper. These players are defenders, midfielders or forwards. The defenders' primary job is to stop the other team from scoring goals. Midfielders cover both the defending and attacking positions and provide the assistance that the defenders and forwards

need to do their job. And last are the forwards, also called a striker. Their job is to score as many goals as possible. Our team uses the squad number system. The squad number system is used to identify different positions on the field. For example, the goalie is usually a number one or the center striker is number nine.

On my team I am a defender. I play the outside right defensive position, otherwise known as the number two. As a number two, I help to defend the goal from the other team's attacking players, while also running up with the attacking players on my team to help score goals. Because I have such a versatile position, I have to run a lot. This is because I must provide wide options when our team is on the attack. But if the other team counter-attacks and I'm not back to help defend, then they have a better chance of scoring goals. I've been playing for SFC for a couple of years and I've enjoyed playing for them. The entire club looks out for one another and has helped to shape me into the player I am today.



The Planned Learning Achievement for Youth (P.L.A.Y.) recently celebrated their 25th Anniversary with a John B. McLendon, Jr. Memorial Basketball Game featuring Western Mass High School Senior Basketball All Star players.

Passion and Pride

By Nylan Baldwin

This past fall I played on the Cathedral/Holyoke Catholic varsity team as a freshman. This is a great accomplishment for a freshman. I believe my SFC training is what allowed me to play on my high school's varsity soccer team. My coaches are very instructive, kind, and knowledgeable. They are passionate about soccer and want what is best for the team. They always know how to make a plan that will help us succeed on the field and they always answer our questions and concerns if we are ever unclear about a certain strategy or tactic. Springfield FC is a great soccer club that I am glad to be a part of and I think anyone who



Nylan Baldwin

is interested in soccer should join because these coaches will change your life for the better. Passion and Pride. ■

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JUNE 2016 EVENTS

For more events, go to: www.afampov.com

**ON-GOING
THRU JUNE 18**

**Art for the Soul Gallery Art in the Atrium
Artwork Sale**

When: 12—5pm Wednesday—Friday;
1—6pm Saturday

Where: Classical Condominiums,
235 State St., Springfield, MA

THRU SEPTEMBER 25

Amherst Historical Society presents Artifacts Inspire

When: 12noon—4pm Fridays—Sundays

Where: Simeon Strong House,
67 Amity Street, Amherst, MA

Info: **FREE and Open to the Public**

WEDNESDAY—1

Annual Flag Raising commemorating National Caribbean American Heritage Month

When: 10am

Where: City Hall Steps,
36 Court Street, Springfield, MA

Info: **FREE and Open to the Public**

THURSDAY—2

3rd Annual Great Futures Dinner & Auction presented by Boys & Girls Club Family Center

When: 5:30pm Cocktails;
7pm Dinner & Program

Where: Ludlow Country Club,
1 Tony Lema Dr., Ludlow, MA

Info: \$75; 413.739.4743
bgauthier@bgcafamilycenter.org

FRIDAY—3

2nd Annual Caribbean Heritage Scholarship Awards Gala

When: 5:30pm

Where: Barney Carriage House,
Forest Park, Springfield, MA

Info: \$55; tickets, call 413.726.9006

SATURDAY—4

John J. Duggan will host their 17th Taste of Duggan and More Annual Community Event

When: 8am—5pm

Where: John J. Duggan Academy,
1015 Wilbraham Rd., Springfield,
Info: **FREE & Open to the Public;**
Booths available; call
413.787.7410; Rain Date 6/11

Harriet Beecher Stowe Center presents Inspiring Action: Real Stories of Social Change

When: 3—5:30pm

Where: Immanuel Congregational
Church, 10 Woodland St.,
Hartford, CT

Info: **FREE & Open to the Public;**
RSVP at 860.522.9258 x317

Berkshire Bach's 25th Anniversary Spring Choral Concert with James Bagwell and Bard Baroque Ensemble

When: 6pm

Where: First Congregational Church,
251 Main St., Great Barrington,
Info: \$\$; www.berkshirebach.org/; 413.528.9555

MONDAY—6

2016 Hole Lot of heart Golf Open

When: 11am

Where: Springfield County Club,
1375 Elm St., W. Springfield, MA
Info: \$\$; 413.262.3223 or traci.heath@heart.org

TUESDAY—7

Conversation with Author Series: Elizabeth Corcoran Murray and V. Jane Schneeloch

When: 1:30—2:30pm

Where: Holyoke Public Library,
250 Chestnut St., Holyoke, MA
Info: **FREE and Open to the Public;**
library@holyoke.org or 413.420.8101

THURSDAY—9

Springfield Museums Culture & Cocktails Season Concludes with "Seussian Soiree," Appeal for Donations for Seuss in Springfield: Building a Better Quadrangle

When: 5—8pm

Where: 21 Edwards St., Springfield, MA
Info: \$15 nonmembers; For tickets, www.springfieldmuseums.org; 413.263.6800 x459

54th Annual Meeting Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

When: 4:30pm Tours; 6:15pm Business Meeting; 7:30pm Buffet Supper

Where: Gateway City Arts,
92 Race St., Holyoke, MA

Info: \$; 413.781.6045; www.pvpc.org

THURSDAY—9 & FRIDAY—10

Healing Racism Institute of Pioneer Valley will hold its Spring Healing Racism Two-Day Session

When: 8:30am—4:30pm

Where: Holyoke Community College,
303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke,
Info: \$\$; www.healingracismpv.org or 413.734.8336

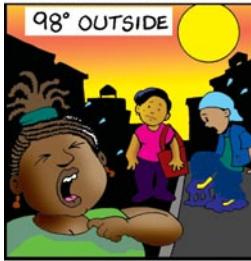
FRIDAY—10

Springfield Partners Community Scholarship Breakfast

When: 8am

Where: La Quinta Inn & Suites,
100 Congress St., Springfield, MA
Info: \$25; springfieldpartnersscholarship.org

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ship.eventbrite.com; 413.263.6500 x6521

Free Dinner for Cancer Survivors and their Caregivers

When: 5pm

Where: Central High School,
1840 Roosevelt Ave.,
Springfield, MA
Info: RSVP required, call 413.493.2100 linda.remillard@cancer.org

SATURDAY—11

Community Music School of Springfield presents Springfield All Youth Music Festival

When: 11am—3pm

Where: 127 State St., Springfield, MA
Info: **FREE and Open to the Public;**
413.732.8428 or communitymusicschool.com

Passages Gallery presents Metro Jazz Quartet

When: 6—9pm

Where: 509 Farmington Ave.,
Hartford, CT
Info: \$15; Light refreshments \$5; BYOB
RSVP seating at 860.523.3232 or passagesgallery@aol.com

Harriet Beecher Stowe Center celebrates Harriet Beecher Stowe's 205th Birthday

When: 9:30am—5pm

Where: 77 Forest St., Hartford, CT
Info: **FREE & Open to the Public;**
860.522.9258 x318; CT Open House Day w/family activities

Presiding Elder Herbert L. Eddy Retirement Luncheon

When: 12noon—3pm

Where: Chez Josef, 176 Shoemaker Lane,
Agawam, MA
Info: \$55; 617.661.1110 or pastorellis@spcambridge.org

SUNDAY—12

Springfield Preservation Trust presents Annual Spring House Tour, featuring 7 McKnight Historic District Homes

When: 1—5pm

Where: 127 State St., Springfield, MA
Info: \$15 advance; \$20 day of tour;
413.736.0629; SpringfieldPreservation.org

Xi Xi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. presents its 12th Annual HATS OFF!

When: 3—6pm

Where: Springfield Sheraton,
One Monarch Pl., Springfield, MA
Info: \$45; 413.530.4156; [www.facebook.com/events/793409770793585/](http://facebook.com/events/793409770793585/)

TUESDAY—14

Free Vendor Workshop sponsored by the Springfield Redevelopment Authority, "Connecting Your Business to the Commonwealth"

When: 9:30am—12:30pm

Where: FutureWorks Career Center,
1 Federal St. #103-3,
Springfield, MA

Info: Register at www.mass.gov/SDO

SATURDAY—18

Storowton Village Free Opening Day Festivities

When: 11am—3pm

Where: The Big E, Memorial Drive,
West Springfield, MA

Info: **FREE and Open to the Public;**
413.205.5051; TheBigE.com/sv

Passages Gallery presents Nick DiMario Quartet

When: 6—9pm

Where: 509 Farmington Ave.,
Hartford, CT

Info: \$15; Light refreshments \$5; BYOB
RSVP seating at 860.523.3232 or passagesgallery@aol.com

FRIDAY—24 & SATURDAY—25

Sumner Lodge #5 150th Anniversary Weekend

When: Friday 5—Until; Hospitality Night

Where: 257 Tyler St., Springfield, MA

When: Saturday 6pm—Midnight;
Semi-Formal Anniversary Ball

Where: Castle of Knights,
1599 Memorial Dr., Chicopee,
\$55 P/P required for both events;
For tickets, call 413.657.2199 or
413.364.0157

SATURDAY—25

Springfield Dragon Boat Festival

When: 8am—4pm

Where: North Riverfront Park,
121 West St., Springfield, MA

Info: **FREE and Open to the Public;**
[www.pvriverfront.org/events/](http://www.pvriverfront.org/events;)
413.736.1322

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Kudos to Revitalize CDC!

By Rosalie Sutton



Kudos to Revitalize CDC, its sponsors, staff and volunteers for a job well done in the beautification of Lebanon Street, Greene Street, Nelson Avenue and Monson Avenue.

The project, which had been planned for the past year, took place on Saturday, April 23, 2016, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. This was Revitalize CDC's 4th Annual GreenNFit Block Rebuild. The first year's efforts in 2013 was concentrated on Tyler Street. In 2014, Pendleton Avenue was targeted and in 2015, King Street

received a make-over. Each year there are over 1,000 volunteers.

This year yards were cleaned and cleared of debris. Flowers, bushes and other greenery were planted. A deck was built, a roof completed, porches were painted—just to name a few of the projects. It was truly amazing and a real blessing to see so many people willing to come together, give up their Saturday and volunteer to help others. The area residents are not only grateful but also inspired and motivated as a result of the hard work and spirit of the volunteers.



The first annual Tres Chic Ladies Brunch, hosted by Swanson Meetings & Event Planning, Diane Swanson, Event Planner, Extraordinaire, was held on Saturday, April 30th at La Quinta Inn and Suites. Seventy-five ladies attended, along with 14 small business vendors. Alysia Cutting was the MC and the event included a book signing by speakers Brenda's Child, Crystal Senter-Brown, Natasha Clark and Lynnette Johnson. In keeping with the spirit of the theme, Diane honored her sister, Carolyn Mutcherson, for being an inspirational and supportive "tres chic" lady, with a warm spirit. Diane plans to continue this tradition and honor a lady each year at the event. To book an event with Diane, visit her website at www.swan-events.com or email her at swanmeetings@gmail.com.



I'd like to give a personal thank you to all the wonderful "angels" who worked on my house. My porches were beautifully painted, my yard cleaned up, and flowers were planted. I was very humbled when several persons thanked me for allowing them to work on my house.

My heartfelt thanks goes out to Baystate Mason Square Health Center and its staff, Baystate Health Center and staff, sponsor United Bank and all of the other contributors and sponsors.

Finally, a special note of thanks goes to Ethel, Delores and Moyah for your diligence and encouragement. ■

MassMutual Honored by Junior Achievement with U.S. President's Volunteer Service Award

Springfield, MA - MassMutual has been recognized by Junior Achievement (JA) as a 2014-2015 U.S. President's Volunteer Service Award recipient. MassMutual is receiving the President's Volunteer Service Award at the bronze level for providing more than 5,000 volunteer hours during the year.

"We are grateful to Junior Achievement for recognizing MassMutual's efforts in moving the needle on financial literacy for today's youth," said Nick Fyntrilakis, Vice President, Community Responsibility, MassMutual. "Our long-time partnership with JA and the dedication of our employees and financial professionals have helped thousands of students understand the importance of using money wisely, hopefully setting them on the path to financial success." ■



Jennifer Connolly, President of Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts and Nick Fyntrilakis, Vice President, Community Responsibility at MassMutual



Willette Y. Johnson a Retired Springfield Public Schools Educator and an Educational Consultant and Entrepreneur. CEO of WhyJsJava, Inc.

The word of the Lord reminds believers to trust God and do good. We find agreement in the “trust God” instruction; but, the “do good” portion leaves us open to interpretation. On Friday, April 29th and Saturday, April 30th, members of the Greater Springfield community had an opportunity to attend and bear witness to a “do good” event that should go down in local history as amazing!

Dr. Shirley Jackson Whitaker, a physician and community activist, yearned to create a way to pay homage to over 4,000 lynched slaves—men, women, and children—who were never respectfully laid to rest. Through perseverance, prayer, and hard work, her vision became a reality. Whatever you know about the atrocities of slavery that were perpetrated for over 200 years in the United States of America was dwarfed by the presentation of *Ashes2Ashes*. The disregard for human life and the unfathomable mistreatment of black people by those who “owned us” was an acceptable and honored practice in many areas of our country.

For well over a year, Dr. Whitaker planned a Homegoing Celebration for the Unburied and Terrorized: A Living Memorial. She shared her vision with family and friends, sought information about the unspeakable practice of lynchings, researched descendants of victimized slaves, organized a plan, invested money, solicited help, and moved forward with tenacity to bring the event to fruition.

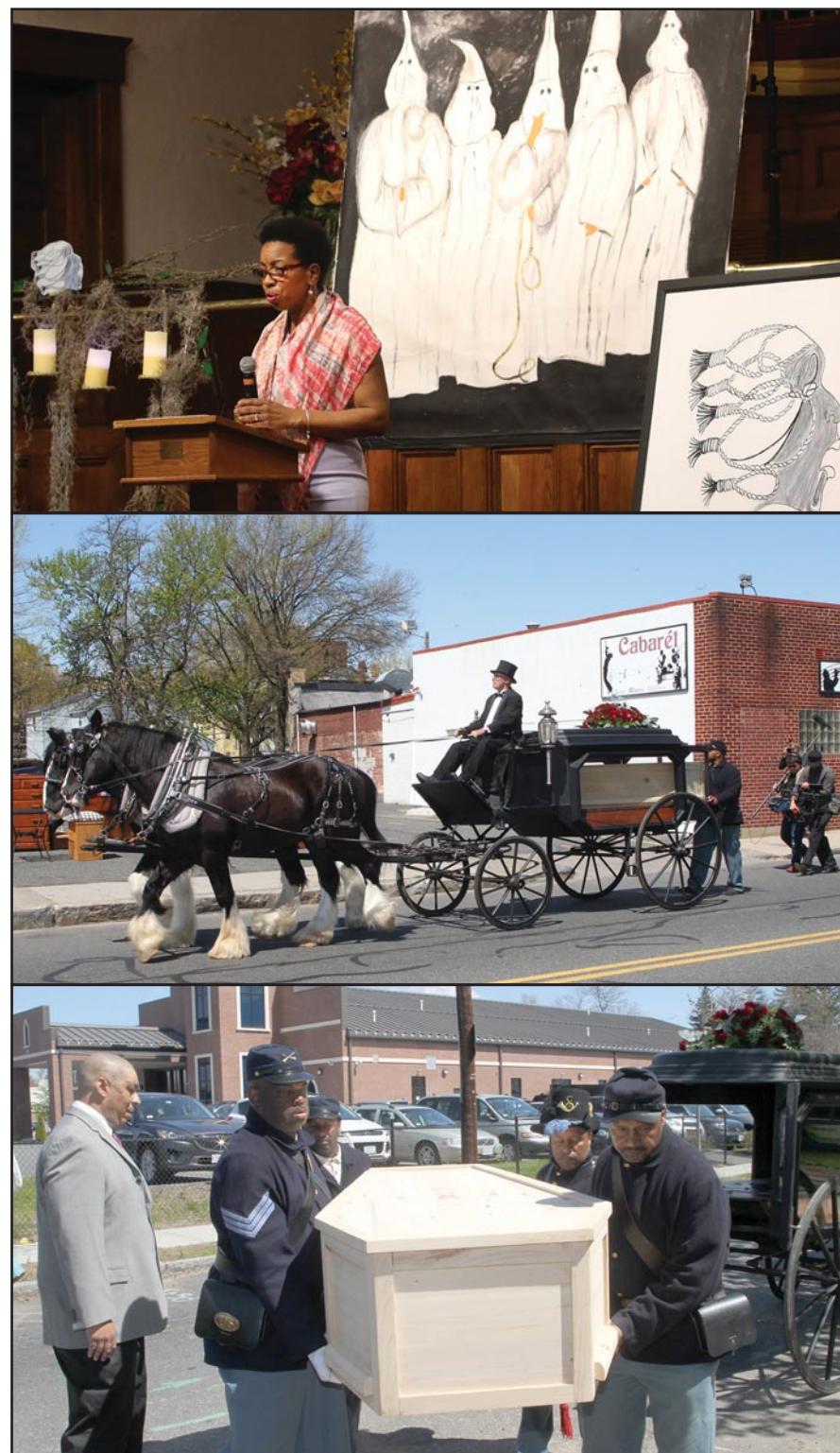
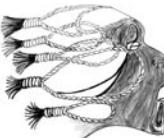
For portions of two days, hoards of curious spectators ventured to St. John’s Congregational Church in Springfield to participate in what was probably the largest symbolic funeral in the country.

Dr. Shirley Jackson Whitaker...You Did Good!

By Willette Johnson

Ashes to Ashes

Homegoing Celebration for the Unburied and Terrorized | A Living Memorial



Day 1. People entered the historic Legacy edifice on Friday evening via a candlelit path and occupied seats in the sanctuary. The Awakening (a.k.a. the wake) began with the entrance of

a wooden casket, made by students at Putnam Academy, accompanied by dutiful ushers. For the next hour, we experienced welcome words from Dr. Whitaker, artistic verbal perform-

ances, musical selections, and historical depictions of “strange fruit” hanging from trees while Ku Klux Klansmen relished in their accomplishments of ridding the world of another valueless “nigger.”

Day 2. On Saturday, a horse drawn carriage bearing the wooden casket processed from Springfield Technical Community College to St. John’s Congregational Church, accompanied by military veterans. As funeral directors guided the casket into the church, the Homegoing Celebration continued. Rev. Dr. Calvin J. McFadden, Sr., Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook, and Dr. Shirley Jackson Whitaker served as officiates. Attendees spent the next two hours being enthralled by prayers, scripture readings, songs from various musical genres, and testimonies of “lynched” slaves as portrayed by performers during the reading of the obituary. World renowned bass player, Avery Sharpe, favored us with an original selection honoring one of his ancestors who was tied to a railroad track as a punishment for talking to a white woman. An incredibly powerful and moving eulogy was delivered by Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook, former member of President Obama’s cabinet.

The impact of *Ashes2 Ashes* will have a lasting effect on all who attended this celebration of life. When each audience member called the name of a tortured slave or terrorized African American who was never, in deference, laid to rest, we solidified the belief that one is never really gone when someone is left to speak their name.

Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free? No, there’s a cross for everyone, and there’s a cross for me. Dr. Shirley Jackson Whitaker, you trusted God and you did good!!! ■



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